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OVER TROOP WITHDRAWAL FROM SYRIA

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FOCUS ON CHARACTER
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Rafale boost for Indian airspace

Rajnath receives fighter jet, inducts it in IAF with puja & Om

PTI ■ MERIGNAC (FRANCE)

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Tuesday formally received the Indian Air Force's first Rafale fighter jet from a series of 36 such aircraft purchased from France.

Singh attended the handover ceremony, along with his French counterpart Florence Parly, at aircraft maker Dassault Aviation facility in Merignac, southwestern France.

The Minister performed a brief Shastra Puja on the new aircraft as he emblazoned it with an "Om" tilak and laid flowers and a coconut, just before he was to take off in it for a sortie. He was joined by senior representatives of the Indian Armed forces to mark the induction ceremony.

"Our Air Force is the fourth-largest in the world and I believe that the Rafale Medium Multi-Role Combat Aircraft will make us even stronger and will give a boost to India's air dominance exponentially to ensure peace and security in the region," Singh said, addressing the gathering in Hindi.

"I have been told that the French word Rafale means andhi in Hindi or gust of wind. I am sure that the aircraft will live up to its name," he said.

The RB001 Rafale, denoting the initials of Air Chief Marshal Rakesh Bhadauria who played a key role in striking the deal for the jets in his

previous role as IAF deputy chief, was unveiled just moments ago behind him, with the Indian tricolour as its backdrop.

"Today marks a new milestone in the Indo-French strategic partnership and indeed a new high in the bilateral defence cooperation. Such achievements encourage us to do more and that will be on my agenda when I meet Minister Parly today," Singh said, in reference to the annual Indo-French Defence Dialogue scheduled for later on Tuesday in Paris.

"This is a historic and landmark day for the Indian Armed forces, which reflects the depth of strategic partnership between India and France. Today marks Vijayadashami — the victory of good over evil — as also the 87th Indian Air Force Day. And therefore a symbolic day in so many ways," he added.

Parly described the Rafale as a symbol of the best France has to offer India to protect its sovereignty and also of the French commitment to the 'Make in India' initiative.

"It is no coincidence that this ceremony falls on Dussehra and also the Indian Air Force's 87th anniversary. It is a reflection of the paramount importance we give to our cooperation with India," said Parly.

"This is just the first step of a long journey, as we are com-



Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has a ritual gesture onto a Rafale jet fighter during a handover ceremony at the Dassault Aviation plant in Merignac, near Bordeaux, southwestern France on Tuesday

mitted to meet all needs of the Indian Army. It marks a big day in the history of our industrial cooperation and we remain fully committed to the Make in India initiative," she said.

This range of Rafale fighter jets have been specially designed to meet the needs of the IAF, which its manufacturer described as a new step in the company's long-standing

relationship with India.

"The history of our relationship started in 1953 with delivery of Toofani for the Indian Air Force and since then we have had a continuous and unflinching commitment to this country, supported by successive French Governments," said Eric Trappier, CEO of Dassault Aviation.

Continued on Page 4

RSS: Lynching being used to defame India

Bhagwat says mob violence alien to Bharat

TM RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh Chief Mohan Bhagwat said on Tuesday that while his organisation had never supported those involved in attacks against members of other community, branding incidents of mob violence as "lynching" are efforts to defame the country and the entire Hindu society and also to create fear among the minority community members.

Addressing the annual Vijayadashmi rally at the RSS headquarters in Nagpur, Bhagwat said, "Nowadays, there have been reports that members of a community in our society have been attacked by another community, making them victims of social violence...The Sangh has never supported the people who were involved in such incidents and it stands against each and every such incident."

"Swayamsevaks are working in this direction so that such incidents do not take place. But by branding such incidents by



the words like lynching, denoting the traditions which were alien to Bharat and belong elsewhere, efforts are underway to defame our country and the entire Hindu society and create fear among the so-called minority communities," the RSS chief said.

Bhagwat — who in his speech heaped praise on the re-elected BJP-led NDA Government for its decision to nullify Article 370 and spoke in glowing terms about Indian scientists for the Chandrayaan 2 mission — conceded that the incidents of mob violence were not one-sided.

The RSS chief said there were reports of incidents happening on both the sides, involving allegations and counter allegations. "Some incidents have been deliberately fabricated while some others have been published in a distorted manner," he said.

Continued on Page 4

CAPSULE

2 DIE AFTER CYLINDERS EXPLODE IN DELHI

New Delhi: Two women died and a man was injured after two LPG cylinders exploded in northeast Delhi's Karawal Nagar area on Tuesday morning. P2

CHINA CALLS KASHMIR BILATERAL ISSUE

Beijing: As Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan arrived here on Tuesday for talks with Xi Jinping ahead of the Chinese President's important visit to India, China said the Kashmir issue should be resolved between New Delhi and Islamabad, significantly omitting its recent references to the UN and UN Security Council resolutions. P4

BSF ON ALERT AS PAK DRONES SPOTTED

Ferozpur: A search operation was launched in the region after a drone was spotted by BSF on Monday night near HK tower Hussainiwala border here. "BSF spotted the drones last night. Initially, the drone was seen flying on the other side of border but later it was also spotted entering the Indian side.

2 TERRORISTS KILLED IN PULWAMA ENCOUNTER

Srinagar: Two terrorists were killed in an encounter with security forces in Pulwama district of Jammu & Kashmir on Tuesday, an official said. P6

Kejriwal fails to get MEA nod to visit Denmark for meet

He was to speak on city's fight against pollution at C-40 summit

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

After the Ministry of External Affairs "refused" political clearance to his visit, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal will not be able to attend the C-40 Climate Summit in Denmark, official sources confirmed.

The CM was expected to speak at the summit on his Government's effort in lowering air pollution in Delhi and present the set of initiatives taken by the AAP dispensation that led to the 25 per cent reduction in air pollution.

Terming the Centre's decision to withhold the clearance "unfortunate", Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader Sanjay Singh on Tuesday said it would affect India's image.

He also wondered why the Centre was "so much" angry with the AAP



Government. Kejriwal was to lead an eight-member delegation for the summit slated to begin on October 9 and end on October 12.

Singh said Kejriwal was not going on a vacation but to tell the world how Delhi managed to reduce its air pollution by over 25 per cent through its schemes like odd-even.

Singh said the Centre's decision will "send a wrong message in the international community." "What will the people think about how our federal structure works? Why is there so much anger against us from the Centre?" he said.

The MEA, however, gave clearance to West Bengal Urban Development Minister Firhad Hakim, claimed sources. In response to media

query over Kejriwal's proposed visit to Denmark, the MEA last week had said a decision on the issue is taken based on multiple inputs. "I do not answer query specific to political clearance. And if you understand how it functions, we get hundreds of requests for political clearances every month from Ministries, secretaries, bureaucrats. A decision is based on multiple inputs," MEA spokesperson Raveesh Kumar had said.

"Some of the inputs we get from the mission and it take into account the nature of the event where the person is going to participate. It takes into account the level of participation from other countries and also the kind of invitation that is extended," he had added.

Squadrons who made Balakot airstrike a success decorated

Ghaziabad: Two squadrons and one signal unit of the Indian Air Force that were part of the Balakot operation were decorated with citations on the occasion of 87th Indian Air Force Day on Tuesday.

Air Chief Marshal RKS Bhadauria awarded citations to 51 Squadron, the 9 Squadron and 601 Signal Unit for their role in airstrike on terror camps in Balakot in February.

Continued on Page 4



The effigy of demon king Ravana in flames during Dussehra celebrations in Jammu on Tuesday

PTI

Promotion for top tax official who cried foul against CBDT chairman

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

A top tax official, who reportedly made unprecedented attack on CBDT chairman alleging victimisation, has been promoted to the apex grade equivalent to Special Secretary, according to an official order.

Alka Tyagi, Chief Commissioner of Income Tax (Unit 2) in Mumbai, had reportedly written to Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, making serious allegations against CBDT chairman Pramod Chandra Mody, saying a previously disposed of vigilance case against her was now being used by him as a "weapon of blackmail" to stall her posting.

An October 3 order of the CBDT said "consequent upon

approval of the Competent Authority" Tyagi has been "promoted to the grade of Principal Chief Commissioner of Income Tax (level 17 in the pay matrix ₹2.25 lakh)".

Consequent upon the promotion, she was posted as Principal Director General of Income Tax (Training) at the National Academy of Direct Taxes in Nagpur, the order said. An official explained that the promotion tantamount to "washing away of past sins" as one gets promoted only after vigilance clearance.

"You cannot get promoted if you are under any cloud," he explained, rejecting theory of she being victimised. On she being transferred to Nagpur, the official said employees have a right to being promoted but

they don't have a right over place of posting, which is a prerogative of the Government.

The Indian Express had on Saturday reported that Tyagi had in her allegations against Mody stated that she was repeatedly told to drop proceedings in a "sensitive case" involving "serious allegations".

Tyagi, a 1984 batch Indian Revenue Service (IRS) officer, had alleged that an old vigilance case against her, which was disposed of by Mody himself, was now being used by him as a "weapon of blackmail" to stall her posting.

According to Indian Express report, her complaint details a pending vigilance enquiry pertaining to banking transactions linked to her family.

Continued on Page 4

Drug demands revive opium cultivation

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

Opium cultivators, who were de-licensed or banned between crop year 1999 and 2017, can once again undertake opium poppy farming, subject to clearance from the Narcotics Commissioners.

The Centre's move is aimed at increasing the country's opium production. Opium is the main source of alkaloids such as morphine, codeine and the baine, used in anti-addiction therapies and medicines that treat extreme pain, such as in cancer patients.

The Centre grants license to farmers to grow opium in only three States: Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh. The Ministry of Finance has issued guidelines for grant of license for cultivation of opium poppy for 2019-20 that begins on October 1 and

ends on September 30 next year. The average yield of opium cultivators has been fixed at 56 kg per hectare in Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan and not less than 52 kg in Uttar Pradesh.

As per guidelines, to retain

license for opium cultivation, an average yield of minimum qualifying yield (MQY)-Morphine is fixed of 4.5 kg per hectare in these States.

As per the notification, all eligible cultivators will be

issued a license for 10 acre.

However, cultivators whose yield last year was 58 kg per hectare and above will get a license for 15 acre, those with average yields of 60 kg per hectare and above will get 20 acre and those with 65 kg per hectare and above will be able to grow opium over 25 acre.

"The Central Government has notified the general conditions for grant of license for cultivation of opium poppy on account of the Central Government during the opium crop year commencing on the October 1, 2019 and ending with September 30, 2020," the Ministry of Finance notification said.

The cultivators who get their opium poppy crop ploughed back in excess of 50 per cent of total of areas cultivated during the crop years 2018-19, 2019-20 and 2020-21

may not be eligible for a license to cultivate opium poppy in 2021-22.

According to the Central Bureau of Narcotics, the cultivated area under opium poppy has declined from 26,000 hectare to 3,000 hectare in the past 10 years. As many as 30,000 licenses were issued in three States in 2018.

"The Government would consider issuing more licenses to farmers this year with good performance in the past in light of proposed augmentation of capacity of the Government Opium and Alkaloid Works, adequate demand of opium for domestic and export purposes, provided the concerned farmers have satisfied the minimum qualifying yield (MQY) and other conditions of the licensing policy of the relevant year," officials said.

Continued on Page 4



City air quality deteriorates

SAPNA SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

Due to predominant wind directions and relatively low wind speed, air quality in Delhi and National Capital Region (NCR) has started worsening. On Tuesday, ambient air quality in Noida Sector 62 was recorded at 388 µg-m³ by the US embassy, highest of the season so far.

Situation in Delhi was also not good as City's Mandir Marg, Anand Vihar, ITO, Chandni Chowk, Pusa Road, and PGDAV college, Srinivaspuri recorded higher values of Suspended Particulate Matters (SPMs).

Notably, the prescribed standards of air quality in Delhi as per Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) are 60 µg-m³ and 100 µg-m³ for both PM 2.5 and 10 respectively.

System of Air Quality and Weather Forecasting and Research (SAFAR), a unit of Ministry of Earth Science (MoES) said that the predominant wind direction continues to be northwesterly. High winds speed that persisted for the last two days is likely to

slow down by today evening. "Deterioration of air quality towards the middle of the moderate category is predicted for Wednesday. Dry weather is likely to persist over the north-west Indian region and further air quality deterioration is predicted to the higher end of the moderate category for the next two days," SAFAR mentioned in air quality weather forecast.

Citing minute incidents of biomass burning in north India, SAFAR also said that the activity has not reached a magnitude to have any significant impact on Delhi air quality and any drastic deterioration is not expected until the strengthening of mid-tropospheric anticyclone as part of monsoon.

Meanwhile, air pollution data plays pivotal role in analysing air quality status, different monitoring stations are failed to display values of harmful pollutants. Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC), responsible pollution monitoring body has failed to display the values of Particulate Matters (PM), Sox, Nox and Benzene of different major areas. Red zone Anand Vihar is one of them.

Deaths highlight LPG cylinders easy access

SHEKHAR SINGH/CHANDAN PRAKASH ■ NEW DELHI

The tragic death of mother daughter duo in North East Delhi has once again raised the issue of sale of illegal small gas cylinders. There is an organised mafia that pilfer Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) cylinders by using crude equipment and is rampant in the National Capital.

The practice of transferring the highly inflammable gas from commercial cylinders or domestic cylinders to small but illegally made LPG cylinders is not only illegal but recipe for disaster. This illegal business took two lives while another one was injured and is battling for his life in hospital.

The areas such as Mukherjee Nagar, Gandhi Vihar, Vijay Nagar, Chattarpur Enclave, Sangam Vihar, New Ashok Nagar, Vikaspuri, Wazirabad, Dwarka, Khajuri several other areas across National Capital where office goers, migrants and students live, use such small LPG cylinders for domestic purpose.

The investigation by The Pioneer revealed these small cylinders are filled by shopkeepers at Rs 70-80 per kg. The cylinders refilling shops can be seen in residential areas across the city.

"The small cylinder weighs around 5kg and is sold in 'black' for Rs 850. There is a profit in this but there is also risk while filling



small cylinders," said a shopkeeper in Chattarpur Enclave Phase-II. The irony is that these small cylinder filling shops don't even have a fire extinguisher and people can be seen smoking cigarettes near these shops inviting untoward incident anytime.

This is quite common a practice in every locality right under the nose of the authorities who are aware of refilling points; however, a concrete legal to stop the illegal transfer of LPG into small cylinders, is yet to be taken.

The LPG mafia use crude method to transfer highly inflammable gas from one cylinder to

another. They just use a connector for the purpose. They also sell cylinders to hotels and restaurants which are supposed to be their regular clients.

Unauthorized domestic gas refilling units are operating across the city. Such refilling centers are prevalent in areas preferred mostly by the students and working professionals who belong to different states of India.

Arjun Sharma, an IAS aspirant who lives in Gandhi Vihar of North Delhi said he is using small cylinder for the last three years and get it refilled at nearby shops. He can find such gas refilling units in

almost all corners of the area. "Undoubtedly there is risk to get it refilled without any protective appliances or technique but do we have any option," he asked?

What is surprising that the civic agencies have turned a blind eye towards the problem and their missionary zeal went kaput when it came to enforce the law?

However, when asked, officials of the civic agencies turned down the claim, saying that the officials keep conducting checks in areas under its jurisdiction. "We cannot keep a vigil 24*7 but keep inspecting such violations time to time," he added.

Mother, daughter killed as two LPG cylinders explode

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

In a tragic incident, two woman died and one man sustained injuries after the two Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) cylinders exploded while one of them was being refilled. The incident occurred on Tuesday morning at northeast Delhi's Karawal Nagar area.

The deceased have been identified as Rambiri (62) and her daughter Hemlata (38) while the injured has been identified as Rajesh (42), all residents of Karawal Nagar. Police said that Rajesh was running a general store and he used to fill small LPG cylinders in the area.

According to Atul Garg, Chief Fire Officer (CFO), Delhi Fire Service (DFS), a call regarding the incident was received at 10:45 AM on Tuesday following which two fire tenders were rushed to the spot.

"Two women had died on spot while Rajesh was rushed to Guru Tej Bahadur (GTB) hospital where he is undergoing treatment and his condition is said to be stable," said Garg.

"During initial investigation, it was revealed that the cause of fire was explosion in cylinder. A small cylinder was being refilled by domestic LPG cylinder when the incident occurred," said Garg.

"Rajesh was filling small cylinder at the house of Rambiri when due to leakage the cylinder caught fire and exploded. Inquest proceeding have been initiated. Further who ever will be found guilty, action will be taken against the accused person," said a senior police official adding that further investigation is going on.

Work towards empowerment of women, exhorts PM

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday urged the people to work towards furthering the empowerment of women and ensuring their dignity by taking forward the spirit of Navratra, as he participated in Dussehra festivities in the national capital. He also urged the people that as a tribute to Mahatma Gandhi's on his 150th birth anniversary they should take up the mission of not wasting food, conserving energy and water and avoiding single-use plastic.

He said in a country where goddesses are worshipped during Navratra, people should take the spirit forward by working towards furthering the empowerment of women as well as protecting their dignity.

Prime Minister Modi was



Prime Minister Narendra Modi being presented with a portrait by a girl while attending Dussehra celebrations of Dwarka Sri Ram Leela Society at Dwarka in New Delhi on Tuesday. BJP MPs Manoj Tiwari and Parvesh Singh Verma are also seen. PTI

speaking at a Dussehra event organised by Dwarka Sri Ram

Leela Society where giant effigies of demon king Ravana and

those of Kumbhakarna and Meghanad were burnt, signi-

fying the triumph of good over evil.

Greeting people on the occasion, Prime Minister Modi said India is a land of festivals. "Festivals are the life of our country. This Diwali we should felicitate our daughters who have achieved something or who have inspired others," he said.

The prime minister also said that 'Air Force Day' was being celebrated today and the country is phenomenally proud of the IAF.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi applied 'tilak' on the forehead of participants playing the role of Ram, Sita and Lakshman at the stage. The 107-ft effigy of the demon king Ravana and those of Kumbhakarna and Meghanad were prepared with green crackers, said chairman of Dwarka Sri Ramleela Society Rajesh Gehlot.

Bangla Sahib Gurudwara bans plastic items within complex

The committee has also completely shifted to clean piped natural gas for preparing 'langar'

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Bangla Sahib Gurudwara has banned use of all types of plastic items within the shrine complex to commemorate 550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev. The Gurudwara committee has also completely shifted to clean piped natural gas for preparing 'langar' for around 35,000 people daily and has further completely banned use of wood and charcoal.

Manjinder Singh Sirsa, president of the Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Management

Committee (DSGMC), said that the biggest heritage Sikh shrine situated in the heart of national capital has banned disposable plates, glasses, spoons, thermocol cup-plates and other single-use plastics, and switched to steel utensils for serving water and 'langar' (community meal) to devotees, Sirsa said.

"On an average, around 5,000 poly bags and thermocol cup-plates were used every day to distribute prasad, fruits and other items to devotees. Now these have been replaced with eco-friendly jute bags and dona-pattal (leaf bowls and plates) since October 2," he said.

The DSGMC has set up a recycling plant capable of handling two tonnes of flower and 'langar' waste and dry leaves

on a daily basis. The organic waste is converted into manure and vermicompost.

The fully automatic plant has been commissioned on an experimental basis at present to experiment with the zero-waste model and will be commissioned on full scale during current month, Sirsa said.

He further said that all the open spaces in gurdwara complex will be made green by planting eco friendly saplings. "Solar system has been installed to check carbon emission and provide clean energy besides heating etc in the gurdwara complex.

Further, the committee has also launched a massive awareness drive to educate and awaken visiting devotees to maintain hygiene, cleanliness etc," he added.



Devotees immerse idol of Goddess Durga in the Kalindi Kunj pond at the end of Durga Puja festival in New Delhi on Tuesday

Ranjan Dimri | Pioneer



Married women celebrate as they apply vermilion during Sindoor Khela on Vijayadashmi in New Delhi on Tuesday

Ranjan Dimri | Pioneer

7-foot long python rescued in NCR

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A 7-foot-long Indian Rock Python was left struggling for its life after getting entangled in a football net at TERI grounds in Gwal Pahari, Gurgaon - Faridabad Road rescued by the wildlife SOS and now is under medical supervision.

According to Wildlife SoS officials, the massive python found itself in a rather perilous situation after ending up in a football net on Monday. "The python was trapped in the synthetic netting of the goal-post. The large constrictor had

tried desperately to untangle itself, but this had caused the mesh to tighten around its neck."

Vinay Pathak, the caller, said, "We tried to help the snake, but it was stuck so badly there wasn't much we could do. Luckily, we were able to contact Wildlife SOS and they were here with their animal ambulance in record time. It was impressive to see the proficiency with which they handled the rescue."

Kartick Satyanarayan, Co-founder and CEO of Wildlife SOS, said, "The python's survival was paramount, because

the situation was too delicate to have anyone tamper with it. The snake was stuck at a very sensitive point and the slightest tugging could have torn its throat. It is testament to Wildlife SOS's awareness programmes, that the numbers of calls to us have increased and people know now that there are alternative ways to handle such situations."

In another incident, a rat snake created quite the panic in Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) after student stumbled upon the snake inside Godavari Hostel. Having conducted several wildlife rescues from the

sprawling campus in the past, the NGO was immediately notified of the incident. Following its successful rescue, the reptile was released back into the wild.

The Indian Rock Python (Python molurus) is a thick-bodied, smooth scaled nocturnal snake that mostly inhabits mangrove forests, scrub jungles, rainforests and grasslands. They primarily feed on rodents, fruit bats, birds, civets, deer and wild boar, and are found in India up to 6560 ft above sea level. They are also found in Pakistan, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka.

16-yr-old boy hangs self from tree at Sarita Vihar

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A 16-year-old boy allegedly committed suicide by hanging himself on a tree at South East Delhi's Sarita Vihar area.

According to Chinmoy Biswal, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), South East district, a police control room (PCR) call was received around 9:30 AM on Tuesday in which the caller said that one person is hanging

by tree between Metro Yard and Agra Canal drainage near Jasola Mother dairy.

"Acting on the call, an Emergency Response Vehicle (ERV) was dispatched for the spot. The deceased was identified as a resident of Abdul Fazal Enclave," said the DCP.

"During initial investigation, it was revealed that on the intervening night of Monday-Tuesday around 12 AM deceased suffered some minor injury after

he met an accident with RTA. When he reached home his parents got angry on him following which he left home for treatment," said the DCP.

"Police have also found deceased foot mark with blood which shows that he climbed and hanged himself on the tree. Body has been sent for autopsy at local hospital," said the police official privy to investigation adding that further investigation is going on.

WESTERN RAILWAY
SIGNAL AND TELECOM
ENGINEER WORKS
Tender No.: S&T/RTM/80/2019-20.
Name of work: Part supply and execution of balance work of various outdoor materials trenching, laying termination of S&T cables and system for Outdoor work at various stations in the section of Chittaurgarh - Nimach of Western Railway Ratlam Division (M.P and Rajasthan State) in connection with Nimach - Chittaurgarh Doubling Work. Estimated cost of work: ₹ 60974402.40. EMD: ₹ 454900/- . Bidding Start Date: 16.10.2019. Closing Date & Time: 30.10.2019 at 15.00 Hrs. For the above tender notice more details please visit Western Railway website www.irreps.gov.in
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DELHI'S AIR GETS CLEANER! POLLUTION DOWN BY 25%

CLOSURE OF THERMAL POWER PLANTS



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

Dipshabdarti/D/0169/19-20

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



AHEAD OF XI-MODI MEET China favours peace along border

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

In a conciliatory message ahead of President Xi Jinping's India visit, China on Tuesday pitched for jointly maintaining peace and tranquility along their border before a final settlement on the issue is found, noting that it is normal for neighbours to have differences.

Chinese Ambassador Sun Weidong, in an interview to PTI, said both the emerging Asian powers should not let the boundary dispute adversely impact the normal development of bilateral relations.

"Before the final settlement of the boundary question, we need to jointly maintain peace and tranquility in the border areas," he said.

"I want to point out that it is normal for neighbours to have differences. The key is to properly handle differences and find a solution through dialogue and consultation," the envoy said.



Sun called the the India-China boundary question as a "complex and sensitive" issue left over from history.

Over the past decades, not a single bullet has been fired at the China-India border area, and peace and tranquility has been maintained, he said, adding "boundary question is only (one) part of China-India relations".

"We need to keep it in the larger picture of China-India relations and do not let the boundary dispute affect the normal development of bilateral relations," he said.

The Chinese President is scheduled to arrive in Chennai on Friday afternoon to hold the second informal summit with Prime Minister Narendra Modi in coastal

town of Mamallapuram. Both sides are expected to formally announce the dates of Xi's visit to India on Wednesday.

The India-China border dispute covers 3,488-km-long Line of Actual Control. China claims Arunachal Pradesh as part of southern Tibet while India contests it. Both sides have been maintaining that pending the final resolution of the boundary issue, it is necessary to maintain peace and tranquility in the border areas.

The two sides have already held over 20 rounds of border talks under the framework of Special Representatives dialogue which was set up to find an early solution to the border dispute.

There has been indication that the second informal summit between Modi and Xi may focus on ways to further enhancing peace and tranquility along the border. The first informal summit

between Modi and Xi took place in picturesque Chinese lake city Wuhan in April 2018, months after a 73-day long face off between the armies of the two countries in Doklam tri-junction in Sikkim sector raised fears of a war between the two Asian giants.

In the summit, Modi and Xi decided to issue "strategic guidance" to their militaries to strengthen communication and build trust and understanding.

"At present, following the important consensus of our leaders to properly handle boundary question and promote the growth of bilateral relations, and with their political guidance, the two sides have been pushing forward the Special Representatives' meeting process bearing in mind the overall bilateral ties," the envoy said. He said the effort has been to find a fair, reasonable and mutually acceptable solution to the boundary question.

'Balakot strikes reflect major shift in Govt policy'

PTI ■ GHAZIABAD

The Balakot air strikes reflect a major shift in the government's way of handling terrorism attacks and show its resolve to punish the perpetrators of terrorism, Indian Air Force chief R K S Bhaduria said on Tuesday.

In his Air Force Day message, Bhaduria, who took charge as the Chief of Air Staff a little over a week ago, said the IAF must maintain a high serviceability of combat equipment and exceptional training standards to ensure operational success in all future operations.

"The strategic relevance of this (Balakot strike) is the resolve of the political leadership to punish the perpetrators of terrorism and the capability of the IAF to execute a strike inside Pakistan. This has been a major shift in the government's way of handling terrorists attacks," he said in a written message published in a booklet on the occasion of 87th anniversary of the Indian Air Force. Without naming Pakistan,



Bhaduria said the present security environment in India's neighbourhood is a serious cause of concern and the Pulwama terror strike is also a stark reminder of persistent threat to defence installations.

"While security of all our assets is of paramount, I also expect air warriors to pay particular attention to the security of our information and cyber networks," Bhaduria said in his message.

"We must always be ever ready to respond to any contingency," he said. In a separate address at the Hindon Air Base, he pointed out that the geo-political environment has been rapidly changing and uncertainties have created numerous challenges to national security.

"It is extremely important that we are always vigilant and alert to the existing sub-conventional threat. In the year gone by, the IAF has demonstrated its resolve and capability in punishing the perpetrators of terrorism and we need to be ever prepared to meet any contingency that challenges the defence of our country," he said, referring to the Balakot strikes.

Post the Pulwama attack on February 14 that killed 40 Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) personnel, the IAF launched air strikes on terror camps at Balakot in Pakistan.

Bhaduria said the IAF also acknowledges the contributions of all personnel of commands, stations and units who silently and professionally contributed to the success of the air strikes on the terrorist camps at Balakot earlier this year.

He said the IAF has operationalised indigenously made surface-to-air missile Akash systems and many more such systems will be inducted. In future, the IAF will also induct the Arudhara and

Mountain radars, he added. Balakot dominated the Air Force Day Parade. The 51 Squadron, the 9 Squadron and 601 signal unit of the Indian Air Force were also awarded citations by Bhaduria for their role in the Balakot air strikes.

Wing Commander Abhinandan Varthaman and fighter pilots, who were a part of the Balakot operation, participated in the flypast.

After the Balakot strikes, Pakistan launched an air strike on India. In the process, Varthaman engaged a Pakistan Air Force aircraft in a dogfight and downed the enemy jet during an aerial combat. He was held captive for three days.

The IAF, Bhaduria stressed, is committed to work with dedication to enhance the 'jointness' among three services.

He said the IAF is on the path of rapid modernisation through acquisition of crucial technologies and critical capabilities such as the Rafale fighter aircraft, S-400 Surface-to-Air Missile, precision weapons, advanced electronics and early warning systems.

Resolve Kashmir issue bilaterally, says China

PTI ■ BEIJING

As Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan arrived here Tuesday for talks with Xi Jinping ahead of the Chinese President's important visit to India, China said the Kashmir issue should be resolved between New Delhi and Islamabad, significantly omitting its recent references to the UN and UN Security Council resolutions.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Geng Shuang during his media briefing here on Tuesday did not make any official announcement about Xi's visit to India.

However, Chinese officials informally said an announcement would be made simultaneously in Beijing and New Delhi on Wednesday. The Foreign Ministry has also called for a special media briefing on Wednesday on "Chinese leader's outbound visit".

"India and China have a tradition of high-level exchanges. Both sides have communication exchange over high-level visits. Any new information will be released soon," Geng said in response to questions on Xi's visit to India.

OMITS UN SECURITY COUNCIL'S RESOLUTIONS

Both India and China are major developing countries of the world and major emerging markets, he said.

"Since the Wuhan informal summit (last year), our bilateral relations have gathered good momentum," he said.

"We have been advancing our cooperation and properly managing our differences. We have a tradition of high level exchange and our two sides are maintaining communication on high level exchange in the next phase. We should make good atmosphere and environment for this," he said.

When asked about Khan's visit to Beijing ahead of Xi's trip to India and whether the Kashmir issue will figure in his talks with the Chinese leaders, Geng said that China's stand is that the Kashmir issue should be resolved between India and Pakistan. "And so you are paying attention to the Kashmir issue, right? China's position on Kashmir issue is clear and consistent", he said.

"We call on India and Pakistan to engage in dialogue and consultation on all issues including Kashmir issue and consolidate mutual trust.

This is in line with interest of both countries and common aspiration of the world," he said. His comments marked a significant shift on what China has been saying on Kashmir in recent weeks in the aftermath of India's move to revoke Article 370 of the Constitution removing the special status to Kashmir.

In its first reaction on August 6, the Chinese foreign ministry issued two separate statements. In one statement, China also expressed its opposition to India's move to create a separate Union Territory of Ladakh highlighting Beijing's territorial claims in the area.

The second statement said, "we call on both India and Pakistan to peacefully resolve the relevant disputes through dialogue and consultation and safeguard peace and stability in the region".

Nation doesn't buy arms to bully others: Rajnath

PTI ■ MERIGNAC

India does not purchase arms to threaten any country but to increase its defence capabilities, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said on Tuesday after his nearly 25-minute sortie in the Rafale combat jet which he described as "very comfortable and smooth".

Singh, who changed into combat flight gear for the ride after he had performed a Shastra Puja on the plane at Merignac airport, said the aircraft will enhance the Indian Air Force combat capability massively -- intended only for self-defence.

"We do not purchase arms and other defence equipments to threaten any country but to increase our capabilities & strengthen our defences.

The credit for the acquisition of the Rafale jets must go to PM @narendramodi. His decisiveness has greatly benefited our national security," Singh tweeted.

Describing his sortie in Rafale as a memorable and once in a lifetime experience, 68-year-old Singh said, "I had never imagined that I would be flown at supersonic speed; a very comfortable and smooth

flight during which I was able to observe the many capabilities of the jet, its air-to-air and air-to-ground combat capabilities".

On September 19, Singh flew in the Tejas fighter aircraft from the HAL airport in Bengaluru, becoming the first defence minister to fly in the indigenously-built light combat aircraft (LCA).

"This aircraft marks a massive enhancement in the Indian Air Force combat capability but that enhancement is not for attack purposes but as a deterrent for self defence. And, the credit for this milestone goes to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, whose decisiveness has made this crucial air enhancement possible today," he said soon after landing. "I perform Shastra Puja every year in Lucknow and today I took the Rafale as the Shastra for the Puja here in France," Singh added.

Giving a timeline for the delivery of the 36 jets acquired by India, the minister said he expects the first 18 aircraft to be delivered by February 2021, with the remaining expected by April-May 2022.

Air Marshall Harjit Singh Arora, the Vice Chief of Air

Staff who watched over as the minister took flight in a sortie in the Rafale aircraft, said that the newly-acquired Rafale combat for the IAF will mark a significant enhancement in India's air potency once they are stationed at Ambala in Punjab and Hasimara in West Bengal.

While the first of 36 high-precision Medium Multi-Role Combat Aircraft with 13 India-specific enhancements sought by the IAF was delivered during the symbolic induction ceremony to the defence minister, the IAF now expects to get delivery of one aircraft every month. These jets will remain in France for training purposes before the first four being ferried to India in May next year. The first set of 18, the squadron intended for Ambala, are expected to be in place by February 2021 and the remaining 18 for Hasimara by May 2022. "It is a historic moment today, which marks a significant enhancement in India's precision weapons capability defence system, with the most important aspect of the Rafale being its missile capability," said Air Marshall Arora, who has himself flown the aircraft as a co-pilot.

Lifting of advisory on tourists half-hearted initiative, says NC

PTI ■ SRINAGAR

Describing the lifting of an advisory which had dissuaded tourists from visiting Kashmir valley as "half-hearted initiative", the National Conference on Tuesday asked how can holiday makers venture into the Valley, reeling under a communication blockade and breakdown of economic activity.

Jammu and Kashmir Governor Satya Pal Malik on Monday directed lifting of an over two-month-old advisory which had asked tourists to leave the Valley due to "terror threat".

The governor directed withdrawal of the advisory with effect from October 10. The advisory was issued on August 2, days before the issuance of the presidential order revoking the special status of Jammu and Kashmir, negating the Article 370 of the Constitution.

"How can tourists venture out to the Valley where they will remain cut off from their families and the rest of the world in

absence of mobile telephony and internet -- the basic modes of modern day communication?" asked an NC spokesperson in a statement.

He said the deprivation of telecommunication facilities has caused enormous difficulties to the Valley residents, who feel like having been pushed to the "stone age". "The closure of business establishments and breakdown of economic activity in Kashmir will come in the way of restoration of normalcy, as the people are feeling insecure," he said.

"The sense of insecurity has hugely jeopardised the academics from primary to higher education level," he added.

The spokesperson urged the state administration to "take earnest measures to instil a sense of confidence and security among people", which could have encouraged parents to send their wards to educational institutions and those connected with trade and commerce resume their economic activities.

Poster competition on Art 370: NCC cadets convey hope, draw optimistic picture

PTI ■ NAGROTA

Nearly 500 NCC cadets from Jammu conveyed through posters their hopes for a peaceful and prosperous Jammu and Kashmir after the abrogation of provisions of Article 370.

The students, drawn from 55 schools and colleges from 10 districts of the region, are undergoing a 10-day training at an National Cadet Corps (NCC) camping ground at Nagrota in the outskirts of Jammu city.

The poster competition on the theme "The Development in J&K after Abrogation of Article 370" was organised at the camp ground on Tuesday.

The posters presented Article 370 as a cause of disunity, discrimination, division and deaths. It also radiated hope for beginning of a new era of peace, progress, prosperity and development and end of terrorism and corruption in the State.

Cadet Kashish Kunwar, a second year student of government college for Women in Udhampur, said "based on the theme given, I have titled my poster 'Need no special status-we are one'. Kashish's partner in the poster was Mushaid Hussain of GDC, Bhaderwah (Doda). Their poster carries their optimism that J&K now will fully be a part of India and

will progress with better opportunities for employment, education and overall growth.

"J&K will now become the actual crown of India which till date was missing. I have also conveyed through my poster that with our bleeding hand holding the Ashok Chakra we wish that even after so much of bloodshed due to insurgency we the youth of J&K hope for peaceful change towards growth and prosperity".

A 10-day Combined Annual Training Camp (CATC) for NCC cadets of Jammu region has been organised by 1 J&K Arty Battalion NCC, Poonch, at the NCC camping ground at Nagrota from October 1-10.

Naidu calls for eliminating social evils on Dussehra

New Delhi: Vice President Venkaiah Naidu on Dussehra called for eliminating social evils like casteism, fundamentalism, corruption and discrimination that impede the progress of the society and the nation.

He and former prime minister Manmohan Singh on Tuesday participated in the Dussehra celebrations at the Ram Leela grounds here.

Speaking on the occasion, Naidu extolled the virtues of Lord Rama's kingdom which was believed to have been an ideal state and said Mahatma Gandhi also dreamt that India should aim for 'Ram Rajya'.

Underlining that 'Ram Rajya' envisages a society based

on virtue, morality and justice as the core ideals, he said that to Gandhi, it meant a nation that ensured equal rights to "both prince and pauper". "The epic of Ramayana reminds us of our duty towards the world, society and family. The Ramayana defines the relationship of human beings with each other, and with mother earth, nature, birds and animals. This message gains new relevance in the current global context of formidable challenges to world peace and prosperity," he said.

Naidu and Singh also applied 'tilak' on the forehead of participants enacting the role of Ram, Sita and Lakshman on stage.

Promotion for top tax official who cried foul...

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She stated that her husband, V Raman Kumar, is a non-resident businessman and a former IRS official. In 2012, Kumar sold his Nasdaq-listed firm Mmodal. The vigilance matter began with a 2016 enquiry by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) into "some large transactions" in banks accounts of her family members wherein she was a signatory. "Exhaustive" enquiry did not find any violations.

Tyagi's office handled several high-profile assessment cases. Some of them are the Deepak Kochhar - ICICI Bank case, the Jet Airways tax evasion schemes case, and tax notices sent to Mukesh Ambani's wife and children for undeclared foreign assets.

Squadrons who made Balakot airstrike a success...

From Page 1

Wing Commander Abhinandan Varthaman and fighter pilots, who were a part of the Balakot operation, also participated in the flypast. Varthaman was leading the bison formation of MiG 21 aircraft. The fighter pilot had downed an enemy jet during an aerial combat with Pakistan in February and was held captive for three days. In his Air Force Day address, Bhaduria said the IAF acknowledges the contributions of all personnel of commands, stations and units who silently and professionally contributed to the success of the airstrike on the terror camps at Balakot.

The Srinagar-based 51 Squadron, to which Varthaman was attached during the Balakot strike, was also involved in thwarting the retaliatory attack by the Pakistan Air Force, a day later.

PNS

RSS: Lynching being used...

From Page 1

"However, it must be accepted that these tendencies of violence have somehow or the other crossed the limits of the law and order and wreaked havoc by eroding the mutual relations in the society," the RSS chief said.

Lamenting that the prevailing state of social unity, equality and harmony in Bharat was not up to the desired level, Bhagwat charged that such forces who did not want the country to be strong and vibrant, were taking advantage of the situation.

"Diversities of caste, creed, language and region are being used to separate one from another; turning them to differences; widening the fault-lines already existing in the society; imposing fabricated identities on manufactured separations, thereby creating diverse and conflicting streams in the national mainstream," he said.

Bhagwat said that while the people had to understand conspiracy was being hatched create clashes between the two communities, "everyone should keep away from talking in provocative lan-

guage or indulging in provocative acts". Congratulating Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah for showing courage to annual Article 370 of the Constitution and in the process fulfilling the expectations of the people in the interest of the country.

"Removal of Article-370 has been already in the thought of the ruling party. But this time by skilfully garnering the support of other parties in both houses, with strong logic and plea in consonance with public sentiment the work was accomplished, for which the members of the ruling party, including the Prime Minister and Home Minister, and other political parties who upheld the public sentiments in Parliament deserve congratulations," Bhagwat said.

"This effort will come to fruition only when justice denied under the influence of Article 370 is restored, injustices occurred are brought to an end. It will happen when our Kashmiri Pandits who were unjustly driven away are brought back and rehabilitated and allowed to remain secure, fearless, patriotic and Hindu," he said.

Alluding to Chandrayaan-2 mission, Bhagwat said: "Although the mission did not attain full success as expected, achieving so much in the first attempt itself is a feat not accomplished so far by the entire world. Due to this daring mission of our scientists, the world's admiration for our country's intellectual genius and scientific prowess and commitment to realise the goals through hard work

has increased". "The matured intellect and action of the people, an awakened sense of pride in the country and firm commitment of the government along with experience of our scientific expertise- all these pleasant feelings have made the last year memorable forever," he said.

Dwelling on the economic recession prevailing across the world, Bhagwat said: "Slowing down of the world economy has left its impacts everywhere. Many countries including Bharat have to suffer the resultant of the ongoing global trade war between the US and China".

Expressing confidence that the country would definitely come out of recession, Bhagwat said: "The Government has taken many initiatives to tide over the situation in the last one-and-a-half months. This gives a definite indication of the government's sensitivity towards people's interests and its prompt and proactive attitude. We will definitely come out of this cycle of so called recession".

Averring that those leading our economy were competent enough, he said that to strengthen the economy, the government had to take steps such as allowing Foreign Direct Investment and disinvestment of industries.

Bhagwat, however, had a word of caution for the Government when he said that while implementing many government schemes and welfare policies at the lower level, more alacrity and efficiency and avoiding unnecessary stringency could set many matters right.

Rafale boost for Indian airspace

From Page 1

"These aircraft, which are on course to be delivered on scheduled as per the agreement signed in September 2016, have been created to meet the highly demanding needs of the Indian Air Force, which operates in a very sensitive geopolitical environment," he said.

It was revealed that an Indian Rafale project monitoring team has been based in France since August 2017 to ensure the smooth implementation of the project, aimed at considerably enhancing India's air combat fleet.

In Bordeaux, Singh began with a tour of Dassault Aviation's final Rafale assembly line before the induction ceremony, which concluded with the Shastra Puja. He was then prepped for a sortie in the newly-acquired two-seater jet.

"It is indeed a great honour to be able to fly in this new fighter jet," said Singh, just before take off.

The Minister was accompanied by Armed Forces personnel including Air Marshall Harjit Singh Arora. Representatives of the top military brass from the French side were also present on the occasion.

India had ordered 36 Rafale fighter jets from France in a deal worth Rs 59,000 crore in September 2016.

While the formal handover ceremony takes place this week, the first batch of four Rafale jets will fly to their home base in India by May 2020. All 36 jets are expected to arrive in India by September 2022, for which the IAF has been reportedly undertaking preparations, including readying required infrastructure and training of pilots.

The Rafale is a twin-jet fighter aircraft able to operate from both an aircraft carrier and a shore base. The manufacturers describe it as a fully versatile aircraft which can carry out all combat aviation missions to achieve air superiority and air defence, close air support, in-depth strikes, reconnaissance, anti-ship strikes and nuclear deterrence.

Drug demands revive opium cultivation

From Page 1

Areas known for opium cultivations are Pratapgarh, Udaipur, Bhilwara, Chittorgarh and Jhalawar in Rajasthan; Barabanki, Bareilly, Lucknow, Faizabad, Shahjahanpur, Gazipur, Mau, Budaun in Uttar Pradesh; Mandasaur, Ratlam, Neemuch, Agar Malwa, Ujjain, Jabua and Rajgarh in Madhya Pradesh.

According to the United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC) report, India alone accounted for six per cent of the world's cannabis herb (ganja) seizures in 2016 (nearly 300 tonnes), and reported seizing even higher quantities in 2017 (353 tonnes) - a 20 per cent increase compared to 2016.

Opp slams Bhagwat for lynching remark

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat's statement on Tuesday describing lynching as a foreign phenomenon has evoked a strong reaction from Opposition leaders. While Congress slammed Bhagwat over his claims and questioned whether the RSS felicitates and celebrates those who are accused in lynching cases, the Samajwadi Party (SP) and Left leaders said this exposes the real face of the government's ideological head.

Former Union Minister Anand Sharma said that it is not whether the incidents of lynching have come from Europe or anywhere else, but it is the mindset of the organization or people involved in it who are there to encourage such hatred in the society.

"I want to ask one question to Bhagwat and RSS that isn't the killing of people by hatred and provocation illegal and unlawful in a democratic country like India. Rather than criticizing it is unethical on part of head of an organization to justify hatred, in any form," Sharma, also the Congress spokesman said in a statement.

Addressing the RSS's Vijayadashmi rally in Nagpur on Tuesday morning, Bhagwat said it was wrong to use the term lynching in the Indian



Congress president Sonia Gandhi and former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh prepare to shoot arrows at the effigy of demon-king Ravana during Dussehra celebrations at Red Fort in New Delhi on Tuesday

context. The term was being used to defame the country, he claimed. Bhagwat also said that there was no recession as the country's economy was growing at the rate of five per cent.

Congress also took on RSS chief for his statement that there was no economic slowdown in the country.

AIMM chief and Lok Sabha MP Asaduddin Owaisi also hit out at Bhagwat and

alleged he was not trying to stop lynching incidents. "The victims were Indians. Who garlanded convicts? Who draped them in (tricolour)? We're a Godse loving BJP MP. There can't be a bigger defamation of India than ideology that killed Gandhi/Tabrez. Bhagwat isn't saying stop lynching, he's saying 'don't call it that'." Owaisi said through a tweet message. Dismissing Bhagwat's state-

ment that 'lynching was an alien or foreign' concept, the CPI(M) said the veteran leader would do well if he made a reality check on the growing incidents of it and stop patronising the same.

"Mohan Bhagwat has said that it is defaming India to say this (lynching happening in India) and it is ruining the image of India. And it is nothing to do with India and Indian culture. In fact, it is Mr Mohan

Bhagwat who is in Contempt of Court. In fact, it was Supreme Court of India in 2018 expressing the concern in increasing the mob lynching. This looks like mobocracy instead of democracy. And it the Supreme Court which had taken note of the increase on the cases of mob lynching and given a set of directions to the government and this government led by Modi has refused to implement those suggestions, including a suggestion to have a stand-alone law against lynching. In fact, Governors appointed by this government has refused to give nod to the state government to implement such laws," Karat observed.

Former Uttar Pradesh Chief minister and SP chief Akhilesh Yadav too questioned the RSS chief and asked whether it was fair to blame only one community for "lynching" and was it not being blown out of proportion.

Senior Congress leader Shashi Tharoor also came down heavily on the Sarsanghchalak and said 'a crime is a crime' whether you call it with any 'bharat culture-approved term' or not.

"The word 'lynching' happens to come from West which means action of a mob attacking an individual without trials. You can call it with any bharath sanskriti-approved term, it is still a horrible crime, a crime is a crime."

PM to address 4 election rallies in Haryana, 9 in Maharashtra

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the main face of the BJP campaign in the Assembly polls, would be addressing four rallies across Haryana and nine in Maharashtra.

In Haryana, Modi would hit the campaign trail from Ballabgarh on October 14, according to Union Minister Narendra Singh Tomar.

Tomar, who is also the party's election in-charge for the state, said the BJP will win 75 seats and return to power in the state for a second consecutive term.

The state will go to polls on October 21 and results will be declared on October 24. In Haryana BJP is hoping to return to power as Congress is beset with internal dissensions.

In Maharashtra where BJP is fighting elections together with its ally Shiv Sena, Modi will address nine public rallies. Assembly polls are scheduled on October 21 in Maharashtra where BJP-Shiv Sena is seeking a second-term.

BJP president Amit Shah is the second BJP star campaigner in Maharashtra who is slated to address 18 rallies from Latur district this week.

Modi will kick-off his campaign with a rally in Jalgaon in North Maharashtra

on October 13 followed by a second one at Sakoli in Bhandara district of Vidarbha, the same day. Modi will address three rallies on October 16 at Akola, Partur (Jalana district) and Panvel (Navi Mumbai) followed by meetings at Parli (Beed district), Satara and Pune on October 17, according to party sources.

In Maharashtra, the BJP-Sena combine is pitted against Congress-NCP alliance which has seen a number of their senior leaders crossing over to the other side.

In Haryana too BJP has roped in many senior leaders from the opposition camp to strengthen its chances in the poll. The internal rift in the Haryana Congress was evident recently when its erstwhile state chief Ashok Tanwar who was replaced by Selja Kumara at the behest of former state Chief Minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda, resigned from it as a mark of his protest. Tanwar was ironically appointed Haryana Congress Chief by none other than the former Congress President Rahul Gandhi.

"We will win 75 seats in Haryana. Have faith in our target. During general elections, we had said we will cross 300 seats and we did so," Tomar told reporters here.

The mood is in favour of the saffron party in the state because of several reasons including transparent administration, a strong central government and better implementation of the schemes, he said.

Noting that Haryana was known for corruption, he said after many years, there is a transparent BJP government in the state with Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar taking several measures to bring in transparency.

"Khattar has taken several steps to curb corruption. The filling up of teachers' post in a transparent manner and without taking any bribes -- has created a massive impact on the peoples mind," Tomar said.

The Union Minister also mentioned that farmers are benefiting from various central schemes including Rs 6,000 annual income support under the central scheme PM-KISAN.

Since Haryana contributes significantly to the armed forces, people have welcomed the central government's decision of abrogation of provisions of Article 370, which gave special status to Jammu and Kashmir, he added.

In the last assembly polls, the BJP had won 47 seats with 33.2 per cent vote share.

FIR AGAINST 49 CELEBRITIES

Tharoor, Gowda write to Modi, express srtrong protest

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Senior Congress parliamentarians Shashi Tharoor and Rajeev Gowda have written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressing their "strong protest" over the registering of an FIR against 49 eminent citizens who had raised concerns about the rising mob lynching cases.

While Tharoor urged Modi to take a public stand welcoming dissent and assure the nation of his "commitment to upholding Freedom of Expression even when it involves disagreement with you or your government," Gowda questioned PM whether in 'Naya Bharat' will the FIRs be filed every time a citizen is critical of the government.

The former Union Minister and Congress MP from Thiruvananthapuram also said those criticising the prime minister should not be considered "anti-nationals". India's history as an independent nation would have been a different one if those who dissented under the British Raj had not shown the courage to do so, he said.

"We are deeply disturbed by the FIR filed in Muzaffarpur, Bihar against a group of 49 concerned Indian citizens, who wrote a letter to you, on July 23, 2019, highlighting the rise of mob lynchings in the country," Tharoor said in the letter.

"We would like to register our strong protest against the FIR," he added.

Tharoor said, "Mob lynching, whether triggered by communal hatred or triggered by rumours of child kidnapping,



"WE ARE DEEPLY DISTURBED BY THE FIR FILED IN MUZAFFARPUR, BIHAR AGAINST A GROUP OF 49 CONCERNED INDIAN CITIZENS, WHO WROTE A LETTER TO YOU, ON JULY 23, 2019, HIGHLIGHTING THE RISE OF MOB LYNCHINGS IN THE COUNTRY"

has become a disease that is spreading rapidly, and these citizens did the right thing in bringing it to your notice."

Tharoor also pointed out that Modi while addressing a joint meeting of the US Congress in 2016, had said the Constitution was a "real holy book" of his government.

An FIR was filed at Muzaffarpur in Bihar on October 3 against 50 eminent persons, including Ramchandra Guha, Mani Ratnam, Adoor Gopalakrishnan and Aparna Sen, who had written an open letter to the prime minister, raising their concern over growing incidents of mob lynching.

On his part Gowda asked

since when has writing a letter of concern to the elected leader of the country who is responsible for the welfare of each of its citizens irrespective of their caste, creed, gender, religion, or political opinion become the trigger for an FIR?"

"In the 'Naya Bharat' that you have promised the nation, are FIRs going to be filed every time a citizen is critical of the government or its policies?" Gowda asked. "Is the 'Naya Bharat' that you wish to create one where citizens shall not be heard and their concerns not addressed? Is the 'Naya Bharat' that you envision one where all parties and individuals disagreeing with the ruling majority will be outlawed and treated as enemies of the state?"

Allow student entrepreneurs with short attendance to sit for exams: AICTE to engineering colleges

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

In a big relief to students simultaneously striving attempting to be an entrepreneur, the HRD Ministry has directed all engineering colleges and technical institutions to allow student entrepreneurs to sit for examination even if their attendance is short.

The decision by the HRD Ministry's technical education regulator - All India Council of Technical Education (AICTE) - has been taken to encourage more students to take up research and innovation to turn into entrepreneurs and build a culture of ultimately becoming job givers than job seekers.

Official sources said the colleges have also been asked to explore provisions of on-campus accommodation to student entrepreneurs and permitting semester break for working on their startups.

"Student entrepreneurs should be allowed to sit for the examination, even if their attendance is less than the minimum permissible percentage, with due permission from the institute. The institutions should allow their students to take a semester or year break or even more depending upon the decision of review committee constituted by the institute to work on their startups and re-join academics to complete the course," said a senior HRD ministry official.

The AICTE has told institutions that they can also award academic credits. "Student entrepreneurs may earn academic credits for their efforts while creating an enterprise. Institutes should set up a review

committee for review of start-up by students, and based on the progress made, it may consider giving appropriate credits for academics," the official said. "The institutes should explore provision of accommodation to the entrepreneurs within the campus for some period of time," he added.

According to the council, for strengthening the innovation funnel of the institute, access to financing must be opened for the potential entrepreneurs. "The institute should link their startups and companies with wider entrepreneurial ecosystem and by providing support to students who show potential, in pre-startup phase. Connecting student entrepreneurs with real life entrepreneurs will help the students in understanding real challenges which may be faced by them while going through the innovation funnel and will increase the probability of success," the official said.

The steps comes few days after HRD Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank had stated higher education institutions, including the IITs and NITs, should encourage research for development of such products and techniques which can be commercialised as it will help contribute to the economy.

"Innovation is the most important requirement in building a new nation as it will not only explore talent but also improve the economy by creating new employment opportunities," the HRD minister said at the Ministry's Innovation Cell Festival last month that had showcased more than 70 top students' innovation from across the country.

Anaemia in kids health problem in all States except Kerala

PNS/AGENCIES ■ NEW DELHI

School kids in the age group of 5-9 years from all States except Kerala are suffering from anaemia in various ranges from mild to severe, according to the findings of the Comprehensive National Nutrition Survey (CNNS), 2016-18.

Anaemia was a moderate or severe public health problem among pre-school children in 27 states, school-age children in 15 states and adolescents in 20 states, the report said.

Anaemia was most prevalent at more than 50 per cent among both boys and girls under two years of age and thereafter, decreased steadily to 11 years of age to about 15 per cent.

Overall, 41 per cent of pre-schoolers aged 1-4 years, 24 per cent of school-age children aged 5-9 years and 28 per cent of adolescents aged 10-19 years had some degree of anaemia.

The survey noted that the severity of anaemia varied across age groups. Among pre-schoolers, 22 per cent had mild anaemia, 18 per cent had moderate anaemia and 1 per cent had severe anaemia.

Among school-age children, 10 per cent had mild anaemia, 13 per cent had moderate anaemia, and 1 per cent had severe anaemia. Among adolescents, 17 per cent had mild anaemia, 10 per cent had moderate anaemia and 1 per cent had severe anaemia.

An increased prevalence was observed among older adolescents. Anaemia was more prevalent among female adolescents 12 years of age and older at 40 per cent compared to their male counterparts at 18 per cent.

The prevalence of anaemia



Anaemia was a moderate or severe public health problem among pre-school children in 27 states, school-age children in 15 states and adolescents in 20 States

also varied by the schooling status of children and adolescents.

Compared to those currently in school, anaemia prevalence was higher among out-of-school children aged 5 to 9 years and adolescents aged 10-19 years.

Additionally, the prevalence of anaemia decreased with a higher level of mother's schooling among both school-age children and adolescents.

In all three age groups, anaemia was most prevalent among scheduled tribes, fol-

lowed by scheduled castes. More than half (53 per cent) of pre-schoolers and more than one-third of school-age children and adolescents (38 per cent each) belonging to scheduled tribes were anaemic.

The prevalence of anaemia decreased steadily with an increase in household wealth in all three age groups.

Among pre-schoolers, the prevalence of anaemia was highest in Madhya Pradesh (54 per cent), followed by Haryana (48 per cent) and Delhi (47 per cent) and was lowest in Nagaland (8 per cent) and Manipur (10 per cent).

Among school-age children, Tripura (41 per cent), Assam (35 per cent) and Jharkhand (34 per cent) and West Bengal (34 per cent) had the highest prevalence of anaemia and Kerala (3 per cent), Jammu & Kashmir (7 per cent) and Manipur (7 per cent) had the lowest prevalence.

Among adolescents, West Bengal (46 per cent), Tripura (41 per cent) and Assam (37 per cent) had the highest prevalence of anaemia, while Nagaland (8 per cent) and Kerala (9 per cent) had the lowest prevalence.

Blaming Modi Govt, BJP for sedition case against intellectuals absolute falsehood: Javadekar

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Hitting back at its critics for blaming the Modi government for the registration of a sedition case against 49 intellectuals and artists, the BJP on Tuesday said it was an "absolute falsehood" spread by vested interests and asserted that the development had nothing to do with either the party or its dispensation at the Centre.

Putting up a strong defence of the government, senior BJP leader and Information and Broadcasting Minister Prakash Javadekar noted that the FIR was filed after a Bihar court's order on a petition. The government has not filed the FIR, he added.

"This has nothing to do with the BJP and the government. This is a canard which is always spread to defame the Modi government and used to give an impression that there is a choking of freedom of expression in a draconian fashion under it," he told PTI.

"This is an absolute falsehood spread by vested interests and tukde-tukde gang," he said.

The FIR was lodged in Bihar's Muzaffarpur district against 49 intellectuals, including Aparna Sen, Adoor Gopalakrishnan and Ramchandra Guha, for alleged sedition after they wrote an open letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi against growing incidents of lynching.

The case was registered after a chief judicial magistrate passed an order on a petition filed by a lawyer alleging that the writers had tarnished the image of the country.

Several groups and opposition parties have targeted the Modi government over this. Javadekar refrained from naming anyone but said that spreading falsehood and falsification of facts is an old practice of critics to defame the Modi government.

"This is exactly what is happening in this case. This whole gang has network world over. But people know who stands for what," he said.

Intake well construction threatens MP ecosystem

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

A move is afoot for allowing the construction of an intake well for drawing water from Madhya Pradesh's National Chambal Sanctuary to Sheopur district despite concerns raised by the State Chief Wildlife Warden and Wildlife Institute of India (WII) that such a structure not only threatens the survival of gharials, crocodiles and turtles located on both sides of the river bank but also the fragile ecosystem.

The region is the last abode of gharial, Batagur turtle, Indian skimmer and also has a significant population of national aquatic animal Gangetic Dolphin and state fish Golden Mahasheer, most of these being critically endangered Schedule-I species on the verge of extinction.

However, ignoring the warnings, the MP State Wildlife

Board last year gave green signal to the proposal and has 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 for 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 will 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 has corroborated the State Chief Wildlife Warden's concerns as 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.

Inquisitively, this report has not been 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 too had suggested 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.

National Chambal Gharial Sanctuary is spread across three states- Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh. It is estimated that at present, there are merely 200 gharials in the forests.

According to a study by the WII in 2010, "The construction of pillars, the intake well and the jack well will adversely affect the river bed and the sand bar directly; are likely to change the river morphology, which will affect the gharial nesting beaches and enhance sedimentation in the downstream."

"If these projects become operational, there will be no flow in the river and there will be deficit in water availability in the downstream." Experts say that the flow regime of the river has already shown a declining trend in the last two decades and resulted in isolated sub-populations of gharials and dolphins.

Mahabalipuram turns into fortress ahead of Modi-Xi meet

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN
■ CHENNAI

The coastal town of Mahabalipuram (Mamallapuram in Tamil), 56 km south of Chennai has been literally taken over by the State Police as well as Central forces by Tuesday noon as a prelude to the visit of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping.

The heads of States of India and China are scheduled to meet at the sea side heritage town on Friday and Saturday as part of their efforts to resolve the outstanding issues between the two countries. This is the first time Tamil Nadu is hosting a summit level meeting between two heads of States. The hill station of Coonoor in south west Tamil Nadu had hosted the border talks between India and China in April 2007. The Indian delegation was led by the then National Security Advisor M K Narayanan and the then deputy Foreign Minister of China Dai Bingguo. Though the media in

Chennai was upbeat about the meet, it turned out to be a damp squib with both sides issuing communiqué stating that further talks would be held in future too.

Various wings of the central and State Governments have thrown a security blanket around Mahabalipuram town which has been declared a no-go area till Saturday for tourists and travelers.

Though the weather in Mahabalipuram is no different from that of Chennai, the seashore town is a globally reputed tourist attraction. The UNESCO has declared it a heritage site because of the presence of sculptures dating back to thousands of years. It is reported that Prime Minister Modi and President Xi would meet on Friday and take a stroll along the sea shore where there are many ancient monuments and temples.

Mahabalipuram has been selected as the venue of the summit talks as a tribute to the Kings of the Pallava dynasty (275 CE to 897 CE) with

An illuminated view of Mahabalipuram temples ahead of the second informal summit between Prime Minister Narendra Modi & Chinese President Xi Jinping in the seaside temple town of Mamallapuram on Tuesday



whom the Chinese rulers had entered into a security pact to counter the influence of Tibet, according to Narayanan, the former NSA. S Ramachandran, veteran archaeologist, said Tamil Nadu and China had ties dating back to the Song Dynasty (960-1279).

"During the reign of the Song dynasty (960-1279), Raja Raja Chola sent a delegation of emissaries to China by 1014 following a representation from the Chinese rulers, seeking trade ties," said Ramachandran.

There are several sources, including a 14th century

Chinese reference in support of the Chola king's delegation to China 1,000 years ago, said the archaeologist, who was formerly with the Tamil Nadu Government Archaeology Department.

Narayanan is of the view that the informal talks between the two leaders are mere trust building exercises and there is no possibility of any surprise elements coming out of the two-day long discussions.

The statement by Wang Yi, the Chinese Foreign Minister in the UN General Assembly expressing apprehensions over

India's decision to dump Article 370 of the Constitution and his demand to resolve the Kashmir issue in accordance with the UN Charter, resolutions adopted by the UN Security Council and bilateral agreement has upset India, according to foreign policy experts. The Chinese are also watching with concern the military exercises planned by India in Arunachal Pradesh and also the emergence of an axis consisting of India-Russia-Japan and Australia to checkmate Chinese dreams of emerging as a regional super

power. It may also be remembered that the armies of both the countries had a stand off in the border even as Xi Jinping was on a State visit to India and was being entertained by Prime Minister Modi on the banks of Sabarmati in Ahmedabad in September 2014.

Experienced foreign policy experts are of the view that the summit level talks would not throw out any surprise elements. "Chinese manufactured crackers have literally silenced the cracker units in Sivakasi in Tamil Nadu. If both the countries could do something over this, millions of families in Virudhunagar district in Tamil Nadu would be obliged to the two world leaders," said the owner of a cracker unit in Sivakasi.

Stalin wishes positive impact

PTI ■ CHENNAI

DMK president M K Stalin on Tuesday said the upcoming Indo-China summit to be held at Mamallapuram near here is a thing of pride for Tamil Nadu and wished a positive impact for the global community from the meet.

Stalin, Leader of the Opposition in the Tamil Nadu Assembly said like India, China was also home to an ancient civilisation and culture.

"The summit between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping to be held in Tamil Nadu is a thing for pride for the State," he said in a statement.

Ancient rulers of Tamil Nadu-Pallavas and Chola emperor Rajaraja had links with China, he said adding about 2000-year-old Chinese coins were discovered in the State.

Tamil Nadu and China had trade ties dating back to many centuries and Chinese monk Hiuen Tsang had visited Kanchipuram and the summit was now set to be held in Mamallapuram which falls under Kanchipuram district, he said.

Hailing Mamallapuram as an artistic town that was recognised as a World Heritage site, Stalin thanked the Central government for choosing Tamil Nadu for the informal meet.

The DMK chief said "let the talks bring light (indicating a positive impact) not only for the two nations but also to the global community."



Two terrorists killed in Pulwama encounter

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

In a day-long operation, joint teams of security forces on Tuesday eliminated two terrorists belonging to the proscribed Lashkar-e-Tayyiba (LeT) terror outfit in Kawni village of Awantipora in South Kashmir's Pulwama district.

Initially, the security forces eliminated one dreaded terrorist identified as Ufaid Lone alias Abu Muslim of Awantipora and recovered arms and ammunition.

During the general search and combing operations, security forces noticed presence of another terrorist hiding behind thick corn fields in the same area. The security forces later neutralised the second terrorist.

According to official sources, "the operation was launched on the outskirts of Awantipora late last night after a tip off was received by the security forces about the presence of terrorists hiding in the area".

Police spokesman in Srinagar tweeted, "Encounter



took place at the outskirts of Awantipora town on Tuesday. One terrorist killed. The killed terrorist identified as Ufaid Lone @ Abu Muslim of Awantipora".

The police spokesman said, Ufaid Lone was affiliated with proscribed terror outfit LeT and was involved in several terror crimes & civilian atrocities as per police records.

According to police, Ufaid Lone was active in the area since July 2018 after joining the ranks of LeT. He was mainly active in the general area of Awantipora police station and

across Jhelum in areas of Reshipora and around Airforce base Malanpora.

Local police authorities also claimed Ufaid Lone threatening and beating shopkeepers and fruit growers not to start business activities post abrogation of Articles 370 and 35A.

He also tried to rope in local youth and was motivating them to join terror ranks to carry out terror strikes. The second terrorist killed in the encounter was identified as Abbas of the same village Kawani.

AMMK weakens as leaders ditch Dinakaran

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN
■ CHENNAI

Tamil Nadu politics took a new turn on Sunday as V Pugazhendhi, a close confidant of jailed VK Sasikala, former aide to late J Jayalithaa, declared lack of trust and confidence over TTV Dinakaran, general secretary of the Amma Makkal Munnetra Kazhagam (AMMK), the breakaway faction of the AIADMK.

Pugazhendhi is the Karnataka unit secretary of the AMMK and was one of the most visible faces of the Dhinakaran faction. The revolt by Pugazhendhi has come at a time when most of the senior leaders of the AMMK are leaving the party to join either the DMK or to return to the parent party AIADMK. Last month saw Tanga Tamilchelvan, considered close to Dinakaran walking out of the AMMK and joining the DMK. He has been appointed as the organising secretary of the party by president MK

Stalin.

The split in the AIADMK immediately after the demise of Jayalithaa led to the party getting a drubbing in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections. The AIADMK which had won 37 out of the 39 seats from Tamil Nadu in the 2014 Lok Sabha election has to content with just one seat in the 2019 election as the DMK literally walked all over the party.

Pugazhendhi, who has been challenging the leadership of Dhinakaran for quite some time got upset with the latter's decision not to field candidates for the October 21 by-elections scheduled from Vikravandi and Nanguneri assembly constituencies.

"We are not averse to declaring our support to the AIADMK. If the party (the AIADMK) and the government of Amma (late J Jayalithaa) face a crisis, we will be the first to fight as sepoys," said Pugazhendhi while speaking to journalists at Coimbatore late Sunday after a conclave

with his close associates.

Dhinakaran had removed Pugazhendhi from the list of AMMK speakers. It is reported that this led to a lot of heartburn among Pugazhendhi and his followers. What caught the attention was the compliments showered on Chief Minister Palaniswami and his cabinet colleague Velumani for resolving the water dispute with Kerala.

"It is interesting to note that most of the prominent faces in the Dhinakaran camp are leaving him and joining the AIADMK. But it is too early to tell whether the move would strengthen the AIADMK," said K C Palanisamy, former AIADMK leader who was removed from the party by chief minister Palaniswami and his deputy O Panneerselvam.

According to Palanisamy, the developments would not weaken the AIADMK. "But there are lot of issues before the AIADMK. V K Sasikala is an important factor despite the fact that she is serving jail term.

Her approach to the AIADMK and what she proposes to do after her release from the prison are crucial. As on date the government led by EPS is stable but the same could not be said about the party," said Palanisamy.

His petition challenging the appointment of Edappadi Palaniswamy and Panneerselvam as the joint convener and convener respectively is under the consideration of the Supreme Court.

The Congress, which is an important ally of the DMK is watching the situation with caution. "The Congress and the AIADMK were natural allies. Our alliance with the DMK is only because of compulsion," said a veteran Congress leader.

The results of the by-elections to the assembly constituencies of Vikravandi and Nanguneri scheduled for October 21 would be the first signs of political changes, if any, of the troubles in the AMMK. The party is not contesting the by-polls.

Cong to hold meet on Oct 9, race for Karnataka Leader of Opp hots up

PTI ■ BENGALURU

The Congress in Karnataka would hold its legislature party meeting on Wednesday to strategise its action-plan for the upcoming legislative session, even as the race to the post of Leader of Opposition in the State Assembly intensified from within.

At a meeting called by leader of the Congress Legislature Party Siddaramaiah, legislators are likely to discuss damage caused by floods and relief measures undertaken by the Government, cut in allocation of funds to constituencies represented by party MLAs, and also drought in the state, among others, sources said.

The session is scheduled for three days from October 10 to 12 at 'Vidhana Soudha', the State Secretariat here.

33% reservation for women in BDC polls historic: J&K BJP

PTI ■ JAMMU

The Block Development Council polls in Jammu and Kashmir are historic as this is the first time that 33 per cent reservation is extended to women in the local bodies elections post abrogation of Article 370, the State unit of the BJP said on Tuesday.

BJP spokesperson Priya Sethi said that in addition to 33 per cent reservation for women, the Block Development Councils have also been reserved for SCs as per their population and this has happened only because of the Modi Government.

The reservation extended to women is a welcome step and a historic one too towards the empowerment of women in the state.

Out of 316 BDCs, election will be held on 310. Of them, 172 have been reserved — 78 for women, 48 for ST, 21 for SC women, 18 for SC and seven for SC women. The BDC polls in the State are scheduled for October 24.

She urged all panchs and sarpanchas to vote in favour of BJP candidates across Jammu and Kashmir. She lambasted at former Chief Minister Omar Abdullah and his Government and said that in 2011, the Omar Abdullah Government had ordered to conduct the BDC elections in November 2012 but then the process was shelved at the eleventh hour.

Over 62.71 lakh pilgrims have visited Vaishno Devi shrine so far this year

PTI ■ JAMMU

Over 62.71 lakh pilgrims have paid obeisance at the famous Vaishno Devi shrine atop the Trikuta hills in Jammu and Kashmir's Reasi district so far this year, officials said on Tuesday.

The number included 3,64,643 pilgrims who visited the cave shrine during the Navratras which concluded on the auspicious occasion of Mahanavami on Monday — the highest in the past several years, they said.

They said the footfall at the shrine was over 15 lakh post the scrapping of the special status of Jammu and Kashmir on August 5.

While the restrictions, placed as a precautionary measure across the State in the aftermath of the abrogation of provisions under Article 370 of the Constitution, were eased within a week in Jammu region where the Vaishno Devi shrine is located, normal life continued to remain disrupted in Kashmir for the 65th consecutive



day on Tuesday. Ever since the inception of the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board in 1986, the shrine has witnessed an ever-increasing number of devotees.

The footfall in the yatra which was 13.96 lakh in 1986, increased to its highest of 1.04 crore in 2012. It saw 93.24 lakh pilgrims in 2013, 78.03 lakh in 2014, 77.76 lakh in 2015, 77.23 lakh in 2016, 81.78 lakh in 2017 and 85.87 lakh pilgrims in 2018.

The officials said over 5 lakh pilgrims visited the shrine in January this year but the number fell to 2.69 lakh in February, the month in which a Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) suicide attack on a CRPF convoy in Pulwama dis-

trict of south Kashmir killed 40 jawans.

The subsequent events like India's preemptive air strike on a JeM camp in Pakistan's Balakote on February 26 in response to the February 14 Pulwama terror attack, parliamentary elections in the country and restrictions on the movement of civilian traffic to facilitate smooth movement of Amarnath pilgrims from Jammu to Kashmir had some impact on the arrival of pilgrims at the shrine as only 4.62 lakh devotees visited the shrine in March.

However, the number of pilgrims marked an upward trend in April when 6,90,893 people visited the shrine, followed by 8,07,125 in May, 11,59,715 in June and 8,45,071 in July, the officials said.

The issuance of an advisory by the state administration on August 2, asking Amarnath pilgrims and tourists to leave Kashmir due to a "terror threat" had an impact on the footfall at Vaishno Devi shrine, with only 6,02,088 pilgrims joining the yatra to the shrine in August.

Brus criticise Mizoram Govt over 9th round of repatriation

PTI ■ AIZAWL

Six organisations in as many relief camps in North Tripura district on Tuesday criticised the Mizoram Government for carrying out the ninth round of Bru repatriation "without accepting the demands" of the inmates of the relief camps.

The ninth round of repatriation started from October 3 and is scheduled to continue till November 30.

A total of 51 Bru families returned to Mizoram since the repatriation began on October 3. In the ninth round of repatriation which is termed as the "final" one, altogether 4,447 Bru families, lodged in six relief camps in Tripura, are scheduled to return to the neighbouring state from where they had fled since 1997 following ethnic clashes.

Modi formed OBC panel which earlier Govts didn't do: Shah

PTI ■ BEED

BJP president Amit Shah on Tuesday said Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed the issues of backward classes by setting up an OBC commission, which the previous Governments could not do in last 70 years.

He also lauded the Prime Minister for integrating Jammu and Kashmir with India by abrogating Article 370.

Addressing a Dussehra rally organised in Maharashtra's Beed district, he said, "The previous Governments in last 70 years could do nothing for the Other Backward Classes. It was Modi who formed the OBC commission to address their issues through the constitutional framework."

Further lavishing praise on Modi for abrogating Article 370, "The Prime Minister integrated Jammu and Kashmir



with India. His work should reach every home in this (Marathwada) region."

The BJP-led central Government has been undertaking several developmental projects, he added.

The Dussehra function in Beed was organised by Maharashtra Cabinet Minister Pankaja Munde.

She organised a special welcome for Shah with the firing of 370 canons in air and waving of 370 flags, to appreciate the Centre's decision to abrogate the Article which granted special status to Jammu and Kashmir.

Rajasthan will be freed from Congress after 2023: Poonia

PTI ■ JAIPUR

Newly appointed Rajasthan BJP president Satish Poonia on Tuesday said the State will be "freed" from the Congress after 2023 and it will become an "invincible fortress" of the saffron party.

Targeting the Congress Government, Poonia said it has "betrayed" the people of the state in its 10-month rule.

"Rajasthan will be free from the Congress after 2023 and the State will become an invincible fortress of the BJP," he said.

The next Assembly elections in Rajasthan are scheduled in 2023. Addressing the part workers after formally taking over

the charge as the State president, Poonia exhorted them to work hard for the BJP's "mission Congress-free Rajasthan".

He claimed that anti-incumbency has started developing against the Congress government in the state as it has "failed" to deliver.

"Usually, anti-incumbency develops after three-four years but it is visible even after 10 months of the Congress government's rule in the state," Poonia said.

He also asked the party workers to ensure the victory of the party in the October-21 bypolls on Mandawa (Jhunjhunu) and Khimsar (Nagaur) assembly constituencies of the state.



Police officers perform traditional Shastra Puja (weapon worship) at a police station on the occasion of Vijaya Dashmi in Mumbai on Tuesday

Congress, Pawar-led NCP will 'come together in future': Shinde

PTI ■ PUNE

Senior Congress leader Sushilkumar Shinde on Tuesday said his party and the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) will "come together in the future".

The former Union Minister said he and NCP president Sharad Pawar were raised under the same tree (in the Congress), though the Maratha strongman does not openly speak about it.

"Even if the Congress and NCP are two different parties, but today I would like to tell you that in the future we will come closer to each other... The NCP and Congress will come together because now they are also tired and we are also tired," he said, without

Talking about himself and Pawar, Shinde said he is just eight-and-a-half months younger to the NCP leader

elaborating. Shinde was speaking at a public meeting in his home district Solapur in western Maharashtra.

Talking about himself and Pawar, Shinde said he is just eight-and-a-half months younger to the NCP leader.

Both leaders are in their late 70s. "We were raised under one tree... Our bringing up took place in the lap of one mother (the Congress) and we came forward under the leadership of Indira Gandhi and

Yashwantrao Chavan. "That is why today we have regrets in our hearts and he, too, has the same feeling... The only difference is that he (Pawar) is not expressive about it but when time will come, he will speak about it," he added.

Pawar left the Congress to establish the NCP in May 1999 along with his colleagues P A Sangma and Tariq Anwar.

The Congress and the NCP later joined hands to rule Maharashtra for 15 years (1999-2014). They were also allies in the Congress-led ruling coalition UPA 1 and 2 at the Centre (2004-2014).

The two parties have entered into a seat-sharing arrangement for the October 21 Assembly polls in Maharashtra.

RSS firm on Bharat being 'Hindu Rashtra': Mohan

PTI ■ NAGPUR

Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh chief Mohan Bhagwat on Tuesday said the RSS is firm on its vision that "Bharat is a Hindu Rashtra", and Hindus need to unite if they want to be heard by the world.

Addressing the Vijayadashmi function of the RSS at Reshimbagh ground in Maharashtra's Nagpur city, he said all Indians working for the nation's glory and enhancing its peace are "Hindus".

"The vision and proclamation of the Sangh regarding the identity of the nation, social identity of all of us, and the identity of the country's nature, are clear, well-thought-of and firm that Bharat is Hindustan, Hindu Rashtra," he said.

He said Hindus need to unite and possess power if they wish to be heard by the world.

"Those who belong to Bharat, those who are descendants of Bharatiya ancestors, those who are working for the ultimate glory of nation and

joining hands in enhancing peace, respecting and welcoming all diversities; all those Bharatiyas are Hindus," he asserted.

"We believe a Hindu person accepts plurality, respects faith and works for the betterment of the country. These things sound good to ears but the world listens to the mighty," he said.

The RSS has been saying the same thing for last 10 to 15 years, Bhagwat said.

"I was the RSS chief in 2009 as well, but not so many people were here to listen to me. Today, there are more people, because of the growth of the RSS in various sectors," he said.

"The world does not listen to you without you having some power. Nobody cares for the weak, nobody even tries to protect the interests of those who are weak," he said, quoting an ancient Sanskrit verse which says that when it comes to sacrifice, a goat is always preferred over a horse, an elephant or a tiger.

The RSS chief also brushed aside the allegations of RSS and its associates being 'Islamophobic' or averse to non-Hindu worshippers.

"It is true that Islam came to India through some invaders and there had been some battles. The memories of it have lingered longer in minds (of people). But still, it does not mean unifying Hindus is part of opposition to Islam. No swayamsevak (a common RSS worker) thinks this way," he said.

But, some insignificant persons talk on these lines which have never been endorsed by the RSS, Bhagwat stated.

"But, their statements are labelled as our stand. The propaganda takes shape in such a way," he said.

Bhagwat further spoke on Hinduism and how it welcomes plurality. "A Hindu person is who believes there is an ultimate truth in the existence of the world, which is seen by us in different forms, there are different types of peo-

ple, different ways to understand truth and even different ways of seeing things. Everyone at their place is right," he said.

"Nobody needs to change it or end it... You can walk on your own path of faith, you will reach the destination one day. All can cohesively achieve it. You decide your own way to salvation," Bhagwat said.

He said whether one wants to believe in soul or not, one can decide.

"You decide whether there is one form of God or several. It is up to you. Follow the dharma, but making it into a sect creates problems," the RSS chief said.

"There is only one dharma out there. It is called humanity, which nowadays is known as Hindu dharma," he added.

Bhagwat said it is the people of this country alone who embraced plurality and accepted difference of opinions. "No other country has such an approach towards life. If this cannot be called Hinduism, then what to call it?" he wondered.

No recession, no need for too much discussion: Bhagwat on slowdown

PTI ■ NAGPUR

Too much discussion about the "so-called" economic slowdown is unwarranted as it makes businesses and people wary and leads to decline in economic activity, RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat said here on Tuesday.

The Government was taking measures to improve the situation, and we must have faith in it, Bhagwat said, addressing a gathering of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh on the occasion of Vijayadashmi.

"The country is growing. But the world economy goes through a cycle, and at times it faces some hurdles that slow down the growth. Then it is called a slowdown,"

Bhagwat said.

An economist told me that you call recession only when you report growth rate of below zero. But we are having a growth rate of around 5 per cent. One can show concern towards it, but there is no need to discuss it," he said.

"Discussion over it leads to creation of an atmosphere, which affects (people's) conduct. Too much discussion about so-called slowdown would make the people in business and trade believe that economy is really slowing down and they would become more conservative in their actions. It will eventually slow the growth of our economy further," he said.

TMC MP Nusrat Jahan defies clerics, celebrates Durga Puja



SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Trinamool Congress MP Nusrat Jahan on Tuesday sharply reacted to criticisms that her taking part in Durga Puja celebrations was un-Islamic and that she should first change her name (read religion) before doing so again.

Jahan an actor-turned MP from Basirhat constituency said "being a free citizen of a free country I have all the rights to take my own decisions. Besides my name has been given to me by my parents and I have earned fame myself. So I will not take suggestions about what to do with my name or surname for that matter." Jahan this year married business man Nikhil Jain.

The TMC MP also said that her taking part in the celebrations was a symbol of harmony among religions. "I have my own way of portraying harmony towards all religions. Born and brought up in Bengal I feel I am doing the right thing by following the typical Bengali culture which stands for religious unity."

Muslim clerics had earlier criticised Jahan for offering prayers at a Durga Puja pandal

on the Mahashanti day and asked her not to repeat that again. "It is un-Islamic as Islam does not permit praying any other God. Her conduct has become Islamic because she is not practicing Islam and also because she has married a person who is not a Muslim Mufti Asad Kasmi a cleric had earlier said.

"The Islam does not need any person who bears an Islamic name but actually defames the Islam," the senior functionary Itehaad Ulema-e-Hind said earlier said wondering why the MP was insulting Islam by offering prayers to multiple Gods.

Defying the directives issued by the cleric Nusrat on Tuesday took part in Vijaya Dusmi festival and said she would continue to do so as she had learnt this from her parents, school and Bengali society.

Meanwhile, the festive mood of Kolkata refused to diminish even on the Vijaya Dusmi day even as devotees continued to hop pandals of top fifty Durga Pujas that would take part in Durga Carnival in the laterpart of this week.

Sena chief comes with host of promises at Dussehra rally

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Shiv Sena president Uddhav Thackeray on Tuesday announced that his party if voted to power along with the BJP in Maharashtra, would make farmers in the State debt-free, provide people "a meal for ₹10", 30 per cent rebate on electricity consumed up to 300 units, free bus service for rural students and medical check-up in rural areas for mere one rupee.

Using the Shiv Sena's customary Dussehra rally virtually to come out with his party's manifesto for the State Assembly polls scheduled for October 21, Uddhav said: "If voted to power, we will provide a good meal for ₹10, 30 per

cent rebate on power consumed up to 300 units and medical check-up for mere one Rupee in rural areas."

Addressing a large rally at the Shivaji Park at Dadar in north-central Mumbai, Uddhav — whose party has for the past three been crusading for the loan waiver of distressed farmers in the State — said that if the Shiv Sena-BJP alliance Government returned to power in the State, it would make all farmers in the state "debt-free". "I am not for mere loan waiver, but I am all for making farmers debt-free," the Sena president said.



Uddhav also promised that the Sena-BJP Government would make sincere efforts to increase employment in the state.

Recalling the memories of late Shiv Sena chief Bal Thackeray, Uddhav said: "Annulment of Article 370 was the dream of late Balasaheb. We have realised that dream. We will now go ahead and

realise his another dream of building Ram Mandir at Ayodhya."

Uddhav also rooted for the enactment of Uniform Civil Code in the country. "The Shiv Sena does not believe caste, community and religion. We would like the Centre to bring in Uniform Civil Code. Let's see who will prevent the implementation of the Uniform Civil Code," he said.

In an effort to defuse resentment within the party ranks over the denial of tickets to several aspiring candidates and to win over the party's rebels in the fray, Uddhav said: "I apologise to all those who have been denied the Sena ticket to contest the elections."

Bring special law to construct Ram temple in Ayodhya: Uddhav

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Shiv Sena president Uddhav Thackeray on Tuesday called for enactment of a special law to pave the way for construction of a Ram temple at the disputed site in Ayodhya.

He said for his party the Ram temple issue is above politics and not related to the upcoming Assembly polls in Maharashtra.

Thackeray also justified his decision to ally with the BJP for the October 21 assembly polls in Maharashtra, an arrangement under which the Shiv Sena had to settle as a

junior partner.

Addressing the Sena's annual Dussehra rally at Shivaji Park in central Mumbai on Tuesday night, Thackeray said Prime Minister Narendra Modi has advised no body should speak about Ram mandir since the matter is being heard in the Supreme Court.

But, the case is pending for the last 35 years. Courts are closed on the day when Ram killed Ravan. The day Ram returned to Ayodhya too, that day also courts are closed. But, the issue is whether Ram was born in Ayodhya.

Country to get BS-VI fuel from next April, vehicular pollution to be down by 80-90%: Javadekar

PTI ■ JAIPUR

Bharat Stage (BS)-VI fuel will be available in several big cities of the country, including Jaipur, from April 1 next year and the initiative will reduce vehicular pollution by 80-90 per cent, Union Environment minister Prakash Javadekar said here on Tuesday.

"An investment of ₹60,000 crore has been made for this. The initiative will reduce vehicular pollution by 80-90 per cent," Javadekar said after planting a sapling at the Malviya National Institute of

Technology (MNIT) here.

He said the government has prepared a national clean air programme for 122 cities of the country under which schemes for reducing pollution will be made.

Earlier, Javadekar had informed the Rajya Sabha that fuel conforming to stringent BS-VI emission norms was introduced in the national capital to reduce air pollution.

The minister also informed the Upper House that sale of BS-VI compliant vehicles would begin in the country from next year.

Kolkata bids adieu to Goddess Durga

PTI ■ KOLKATA

The four-day-long Durga Puja festivities in Bengal came to an end on Tuesday, with revellers queuing up near river banks and lakes for idol immersion as they bid adieu to the goddess.

Dressed in traditional outfits, devotees scrambled to touch the feet of Maa Durga as chants of "Asche Bochor Abar hobee" (till next year) rent the air.

Women offered sweets and prayers to the goddess, while the young danced merrily to the rhythmic beats of dhak. People were seen exchanging greetings and hugging each other.

Since afternoon, colourful processions, accompanied by drum beats, dotted the streets of Kolkata.

Amid tight security cover, puja organisers were seen flocking the Ganges ghats in the city, which has been decked up for the occasion.



Devotees watch an effigy of demon king Ravan being burnt on the occasion of Vijayadashmi in Ajmer on Tuesday

PTI

Centre preparing DPR on interlinking of rivers: TN CM

PTI ■ CHENNAI

The Centre was preparing a Detailed Project Report (DPR) on interlinking of the Godavari and Cauvery rivers, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister K Palaniswami said here on Tuesday.

The DPR was being prepared after talks with the Telangana and Andhra Pradesh governments, he said.

The Chief Minister was talking to reporters after calling on Telangana Governor and former Tamil Nadu BJP President Tamilisai Soundararajan.

To a query, Palaniswami denied having taken up the issue with Soundararajan and said the meeting was just a courtesy call.

"The Centre has already taken steps on the issue," he said. On reports that the Karnataka government has moved the Supreme Court for constructing a dam at Mekedatu across the river Cauvery, Palaniswami recalled that the Environment Ministry had not given its nod for it.

He pointed out that case filed by the Tamil Nadu government against the construction of the dam was pending in the Supreme Court.

Noting that former Karnataka Minister D Shivakumar had issued statements that a dam would be

constructed, Palaniswami said a contempt of court case had been filed against him in the apex court.

Palaniswami recalled that the he had written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Water Resources Ministry, stating that a dam should not be constructed across the river Cauvery as it would affect Tamil Nadu.

"Through letters and also via memorandum submitted to the Water Resources Ministry and Prime Minister (Narendra Modi) in person, I have taken up the issue, requesting that a dam should not be constructed across Cauvery.

Based on that, the Water Resources Ministry issued a statement on July 19 that the dam should not be constructed at Mekedatu," he said.

To a query about prevalence of dengue fever across Tamil Nadu, he claimed that the virus has spread in the state from Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.

"In Telangana 9,000 people have been affected. The virus has spread in Tamil Nadu from Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. Steps are being taken to control it," he said.

The virus was not confined to just India and even developed nations like Singapore had reported nearly 10,000 cases of dengue, he said.

Yogi offers prayers at Gorakhnath Temple as Goraksha Peethadhishwar

PTI ■ GORAKHPUR

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on the occasion of Vijayadashmi on Tuesday conducted a special worship at Gorakshpeeth in his capacity of Goraksha Peethadhishwar.

A grand procession of Goraksha Peethadhishwar was organized in the temple premises, which saw participation of a large number of devotees, amidst tight security, temple sources said.

As per the tradition, the Chief Minister had been present at the temple for the last

four days, they said, adding accompanied by the temple priests and others, the chief minister came out for a special 'puja' of Nathji.

Around 100 followers of Nathji armed with swords and tridents walked beside Goraksha Peethadhishwar Adityanath chanting vedic mantras, the said.

Amid the sound of conch shells and bells, the procession went to the sanctum sanctorum of the main temple and worshipped Nathji, the sources said, adding the worship lasted for an hour.

Following the worship,

Adityanath offered prayer to all the deities in temples and later reached the statue of Lord Bhima and worshipped him.

After paying floral tributes to Mahant Digvijaynath and his guru Mahant Avaidyanath, he again reached the temple and offered prayers and visited the cow sheds.

The 'tilakotsav' program of Goraksha Peethadhishwar was performed in Tilak Hall of Gorakhnath Temple in which thousands of devotees who came from far and wide applied Tilak and took blessings of Goraksha Peethadhishwar, sources added.

Gandhinagar Statue of Unity cycle expedition to mark IAF Day

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

A cycle expedition of the South Western Air Command (SWAC) was received at the Statue of Unity in Gujarat's Narmada district where it arrived from its headquarters in Gandhinagar to mark the 87th Indian Air Force (IAF) Day celebration on Tuesday.

Several air warriors, including women officers, took part in the expedition that was flagged off from the SWAC headquarters in Gandhinagar on Monday to celebrate the anniversary and also to spread the message of healthy living.

The cycle expedition covered a distance of around 230 km to reach the Statue of Unity in Kevadiya in Narmada district to mark the IAF Day.

"The cycling expedition was flagged in by Air Marshal S K Ghotia, Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief, SWAC, at the Statue of Unity on October 8, 2019, a defence release said.

"The contingent was flagged off on October 7, 2019 from Vayu Shakti Nagar, Gandhinagar. The cycling expedition was organised to spread the message of keeping fit and mentally agile, it said.

This Maharashtra village worships demon king Ravan

PTI ■ AKOLA

For most of us, the festival of Dussehra is a day to celebrate Lord Ram's victory over Ravan, symbolising triumph of good over evil, but residents of a tiny village in Maharashtra's Akola district worship the demon king with equal fervour.

An enormous black stone statue of Ravan, with 10 heads and 20 arms, stands tall in Sangola village where, according to locals, the Lanka king is being worshipped for the last 200 years.

Even as the rest of the country burns effigies of Ravana on Dussehra, the demon king is worshipped in Sangola for his "intelligence and ascetic qualities," local



priest Haribhau Lakhade told PTI.

According to some senior citizens in the village, Ravan was a formidable scholar.

"We believe that Ravan abducted Sita for political reasons and preserved her sanctity. We believe in Lord Ram, but we also have faith in Ravan, which is why we don't burn his effigies," villager Dnyaneshwar Dhakre said.



A man rows his boat loaded with lotus leaves through polluted waters of Dal Lake in Srinagar on Tuesday

PTI

भारतीय विमानपत्तन प्राधिकरण AIRPORTS AUTHORITY OF INDIA

NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER (ID No.: 2019_AAI_32544_1)

Item rate tenders are invited through e-tendering portal by AGM Engg. (Civil) CHQ-NER, Airports Authority of India, Operational offices, Rangpuri, New Delhi-110037 on behalf of Chairman, AAI from the eligible contractors for the work of "Extension of Apron & Construction of New Link Taxiway at Civil Enclave, Silchar" for an estimated cost ₹16.36 Crore with a period of completion 18 (Eighteen) months including 03 (three) months considered for rains. Last date and time of submission of bid document is 04.11.2019 up to 1800 hrs. For detailed information log on to CPP Portal: <https://etenders.gov.in/eprocure/aap> or www.aai.aero. Further clarification/corrigendum, if any, will be notified through CPP Portal/AAI website.

N-58/2019-20

We will speak

About 180 more notables stand up for the rights of 49 of their peers against whom FIRs have been filed for sedition



A serious offence requires serious proof. That too of intent. But given the recent directive by a Bihar court that called for a chargesheet to be filed against 49 notables, simply because they expressed concern about the state of affairs, it means we have ceased to believe in the democracy of dissent. And are quite okay with the chastisement of notables, who form the intellectual and cultural wealth of a nation because of the diversity of views they bring to the table and reset the moral compass when it goes awry.

Their only fault was that they had written an open letter to the Prime Minister, raising concern over the rising number of lynching incidents in the country. Open letters have been the most peaceful form of political protest movements around the world and the letter writers were just exercising their constitutional right. Besides, they were not making any tall claims, they were quoting National Crime Record Bureau (NCRB) figures as the basis of their concern. Although the ruling BJP has distanced itself from the development, and the Bihar police claimed that it had filed the FIR pursuant to the court order, it has now the entire artiste community up in arms. Over 180 cultural and literary personalities have come out in the open to condemn the charges and endorsed the original letter. Not only that, they are prepared to generate wave after wave of support if their free speech invites censure or legal action. Benegal, who has been a bard of independent India by documenting social change through his films, had even clarified in the earlier letter that the sacredness of Ram was dear to the Indic consciousness and was being defiled as much violence was being perpetrated by wrongfully invoking his name. But the trouble with discourse that has been simplified into binaries of nationalists and traitors is rationality itself. The debate between Left-liberal domination of civil discourse through decades and the new-found assertion and inclusion of Rightist thought is not new. Yes, there should be all shades of opinion and interpretation in the plural matrix of India but does that behave we won't look at their distortions, some of which indeed challenge the expansive aura of the Vedic civilisation? Does it also mean that we stop debate with repressive State action?

In no way did the writers attempt to fuel disaffection or seem to be a threat to national integration. Is stirring conscience inflammatory? It was, therefore, surprising that the matter was taken up by the chief judicial magistrate at a Muzaffarpur court. Besides, without even any preliminary investigation being done, which is mandatory for an FIR to be filed, the court concluded that the contents of the said letter were "seditious." Invoking various provisions of the Indian Penal Code (IPC), the court booked them for several criminal offences, including sedition, public nuisance, hurting religious feelings and insulting with intent to provoke breach of peace. Surely, matters related to sedition are not new, it being an umbrella term to lump anybody who is in disagreement with State policy. There have been many cases in recent times where voices of dissent, in the form of slogans, write-ups, a statement or for that matter even a social media post raised in any part of the country, have been met with charges of sedition, irrespective of the Government at the Centre or respective State Governments. There have also been enough debates on the very purpose of the sedition law, a colonial relic which served as a tool of oppression in the imperialist era and has no place in a democracy. Ironically, the same law has ceased to exist in the UK but continues here. Even the Supreme Court has narrowed down its meaning to (i) a person who causes violence or (ii) a person encourages people to create violence. But the lower judiciary seems to have ignored its directive. If the ruling BJP indeed wants to rescue Hindu pride, then it must look at our civilisation. We have had ancient city-states that functioned in the spirit of democracy. So there should be space for dissent, not incarceration, the Opposition as competition, not criticism. The BJP leadership must realise that it certainly is the ruling party but does not rule the cultural ethos. Besides, greater Hinduism has survived despite its many offshoots. Politicians should remember that if they reject the larger definition, they will end up suffering the most. This then is the real problem, the Hinduness of our civilisational thinking being challenged as "anti-national." Simply because the blame-game is easier than deep introspection.

Welcoming the Rafale

It is appropriate that the IAF took delivery of its first four Rafale fighter jets on the auspicious day of Vijay Dashami



It might be just a coincidence but the Air Force Day this year coincided with the auspicious occasion of Vijay Dashami and depending on where in India you are from, this day celebrates the victory of good over evil. This, in a year when the Indian Air Force (IAF) had its greatest moment in two decades with the precisely planned Balakot strikes on Pakistani terrorist camps followed by the brilliant counter-attack on Pakistani planes as Wing Commander Abhinandan Varthaman shot down a Pakistani F-16. But

on this Air Force Day, India's Defence Minister was not present and the freshly minted Air Chief RKS Bhaduria took the salute at Hindon Airbase outside Delhi. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh is in Paris, France. Not for a junket but to receive the very first batch of the IAF's latest weapon, the Rafale.

This fighter jet, whose sordid acquisition saga has taken almost two decades and whose need was identified in the aftermath of the Kargil War, will be remembered for sinking the Congress' campaign for the 2019 general election. Thanks to Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's obstinacy, it will provide a much-needed boost to the IAF's offensive capabilities. However, with a planned order of just 36 aircraft, it will not even remotely cover the yawning gap between India and China. It is almost certain that there will be a follow-up order and now that the Opposition has been neutered in the country, that should pass without much controversy. But as the Air Chief said in his recent Press conference, India needs to invest money heavily in the next fifth-generation fighters and catch up with China, which is already deploying its stealth-capable J-20 fighters in numbers. It will still take a few months before the first Rafale fighters actually land up on Indian shores but the induction of these new planes should be a matter of pride for all of us and the Air Force in particular. On its 87th birthday, the IAF should feel mighty pleased with what it has achieved this past year, particularly while using ancient hardware. Now that it has a cutting-edge fighter, it should be able to fly higher and faster as well as attack harder. The Rafale is indeed a lovely birthday present to have and hopefully, will replicate the power of Maa Durga in defeating demons.

Break the impasse

The international community is keen on an India-Pakistan dialogue. The Government must seize the window of opportunity at the grand opening of the Kartarpur Corridor



ASHOK K MEHTA

Even as Prime Minister Narendra Modi was in Gujarat to commemorate the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, the Father of the Nation, (not father of India as US President Trump called Modi in New York), the focus willy nilly spilled over to Modi's grand conquest of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) with his speech and earlier the historic Howdy Modi event in Houston. The celebrations about Modi's diplomatic successes in making India count were presented at a party rally in Ahmedabad with a large cut-out of Modi and Trump in the background. Thanks to the BJP's unmatched skills in event and media management, only the perceived positives registered abroad in the aftermath of neutralising Article 370 and ordering the reorganisation of Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019, were highlighted.

The Government's zealous claim that the remaking of Jammu & Kashmir (J&K) was an "internal matter" has not attracted popular endorsement that it expected. Rather, the discreet diplomatic silence by the international community on the internal matter of the Kashmir makeover has been construed as a positive. More than two months after the seismic internal changes in J&K, some nations have questioned their legality and many more, the human rights attending the lockdown of the former State. India's "internal matter" has certainly been internationalised. Not surprisingly, strategic allies, Pakistan and China, both with contiguous borders with J&K, were the first to take pot-shots.

Beijing objected to making Ladakh a Union Territory as it undermined its territorial sovereignty, calling the action "unacceptable." On August 5, Union Home Minister Amit Shah had said in the Rajya Sabha that J&K means Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir and Aksai Chin as determined by the Constitution of India and J&K Constitution which has evaporated. China cannot question the legality of the constitutional changes in Kashmir when it has illegally constructed China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) in Gilgit-Baltistan and its human rights record in Xinjiang is appalling.

Despite Foreign Minister S Jaishankar's rapid clarification that changes in the Indian Constitution had no implications for either the external boundaries of India or the Line of Actual Control (LAC) and that "India is not raising any additional territorial claims and will not affect ongoing border talks", China announced last month that the 22nd round of border talks between Special Representatives, which was to prepare for the next Wuhan-like summit, stands postponed. China's permanent representative to the UN, Zhang Jun, said that by changing status quo in J&K, India has caused tensions in the region and challenged China's sovereign interests. Northern



Army Commander Lt Gen Ranbir Singh's visit to China was postponed. Due between October 11 and October 13, the Xi-Modi summit stood unconfirmed till the time of writing. The Chinese are probably doing to India what the latter did to the former — not confirming Modi's attendance in BRICS till the last minute in 2017 during the Doklam standoff. Pakistan and its leaders in cahoots with China have gone ballistic with Prime Minister Imran Khan threatening the spectre of a nuclear war over Kashmir. And with Trump offering five times to mediate on Kashmir if both countries were willing, Kashmir is centre-stage and was never a matter internal to India. UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres has remarked: "In order to resolve the Kashmir dispute, talks between India and Pakistan are essential." "Human rights must be respected in J&K," he stressed.

Turkey, Malaysia, the UK's Labour Party and the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) have all criticised India for unilaterally altering status quo but all South Asian countries and Russia have endorsed India's stand that J&K was its internal matter. But the real concern is over human rights and freedom that most countries have echoed. The lockdown is on people's mind. UK Foreign Secretary Dominic Rabb said, "The Kashmir dispute is a bilateral issue between India and Pakistan; yet human rights concerns make it an international issue." After the Trump-Modi bilateral on the sidelines of the UNGA, a State Department readout asked India to take "rapid action to lift restrictions in J&K, release detainees and start political dialogue to reduce tensions in the region." On September 6, while the Indian Embassy in Washington said that J&K was an internal matter, the US State Department advised respect for human rights and lifting of lockdown. On October 22, the US House of Representatives will discuss the human rights situation in Kashmir.

The focus is shifting from the constitutional changes in Kashmir to issues of curtailment of fundamental rights of Kashmiris in the guise of national security and protection of civilians. In the Supreme Court, petitioners seeking lifting of lockdown and return to normalcy were informed by the Government that restoring use of internet and cell phones would adversely affect security

as Pakistan would use them to peddle fake news. It also said that cell phones came into use in India in 1995 but were allowed in J&K in 2005, implying "so where's the hurry?" Fingers crossed. So far there's been no spectacular terrorist attack either in J&K or the rest of India. The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) meet in October to determine the status of Pakistan may have acted as a deterrent. The international community is keen on an India-Pakistan dialogue that will lower tensions in the region. India will insist that Pakistan create the appropriate climate free of terrorism for the resumption of talks that were suspended in 2013 following the beheading of an Indian soldier on the Line of Control (LoC) and followed by serial terrorist attacks in Kashmir. Pakistan's Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi has said that Pakistan will not engage India in talks till the siege in Kashmir is lifted. Is this a new impasse?

According to the Simla Agreement, both Governments agreed to discuss further modalities and arrangements for durable peace and normalisation of relations, including a final settlement of J&K. The Lahore Agreement echoed sim-

ilar spirit and sentiments. The window of opportunity could be the grand opening of the Kartarpur Corridor on the occasion of the 550th anniversary of Guru Nanak in mid-November when President Ram Nath Kovind, Prime Minister Modi and former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh are likely to attend. New Delhi, at the very least, must start a conversation with Islamabad. By its hasty actions to alter the constitutional status of J&K, sidestepping the rule of law, democracy and federalism — demoting a State to a Union Territory, a never done anywhere injunction — without the consent of Kashmiris is unfortunate and tragic. Expecting Kashmiri acquiescence to this fate on the pretext of development is living in a fool's paradise. Messrs Modi and Shah have re-hyphenated India and Pakistan over Kashmir, externalised what they imagined was an internal matter and in one stroke, opened up two adversarial fronts — bringing Pakistan and China still closer together.

(The writer is a retired Major General of the Indian Army and founder member of the Defence Planning Staff, currently the revamped Integrated Defence Staff)

SOUNDBITE

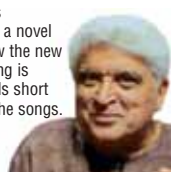
We haven't really got together to analyse why we got defeated. The departure of Rahul Gandhi after the Lok Sabha defeat has left everyone in a lurch.

Senior Congress leader —Salman Khurshid



An average Hindi film's screenplay is nearer to a novel than a short story. Now the new cinema that's developing is gradually going towards short story and is rejecting the songs.

Lyricist —Javed Akhtar



India and China should resolve disputes peacefully through dialogues at the regional level and jointly uphold peace and stability.

Chinese Ambassador —Sun Weidong



We would like to believe that you (PM Modi) too would support the right to freedom of expression so that the *mann ki baat* does not turn into *maun ki baat*.

Congress leader —Shashi Tharoor



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Good sense prevails

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "SC saves Aarey for now" (October 6). The Supreme Court has done well to intervene to stop further felling of trees in the Aarey forest. But much damage was already done. Nevertheless, the stay order must be seen as a partial victory for environmentalists and activists.

Hundreds of trees in the eco-sensitive zone were cut under the cover of darkness. A judicial order, whenever it is pronounced, cannot resurrect the axed trees. It will take decades for the trees to grow but it takes just a few minutes to hack them down.

It is to state the obvious that the Aarey green belt is essential for the maximum city to contain pollution and keep it liveable. Nobody is against a metro facility, as environmentally-conscious people, we are against one in Aarey forest because it is established at the cost of the environment. We should be able to do without a facility that requires the chopping down of trees.

In cutting down the trees, the administration deprived the birds and bees of their homes.

Sedition laws need a makeover

During the debate that took place in the Constituent Assembly on Article 13 in which sedition was initially incorporated, Congress leader and educationist KM Munshi expressed concern about the way "notorious Section 124A of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) was sometimes construed" and how the public opinion was changing considerably under a democratic Government. Former Finance Minister TT Krishnamachari argued that even the word "sedition" needed to be "resented". While welcoming the amendment moved in regard to the deletion of the word sedition, Sikh leader Sardar Bhupinder Singh Man recalled the first occasion when Section 124A was included in the IPC and especially framed for securing the conviction of nationalist leader Bal Gangadhar Tilak. This timely intervention prevented the incorporation of sedition as an instance of an exception to freedom of speech.

The Supreme Court in *Shreya Singhal vs Union of India* (2015), while striking down the Section 66A of the Information Technology Act, observed that the "open-ended" and "vague" terminology in the penal provisions could be even deceptive, for it might "trap the innocent". Therefore, "vagueness" in itself is a ground to invalidate a statute. The over-enthusiastic involvement of the State and its intolerance to ideologically different ideas is against the spirit of democracy. The politics of intimidation being carried out



against scholars and Opposition leaders is condemnable and the Government, in no way, can escape responsibility for containing this deep current of majoritarianism by merely drumming up nationalist fervour. It is time flagrant instances of misuse of the sedition law and the tendency to invoke it against those involved in dissent forms of dissent, political or ideological and scathing criticism of Governments are taken into consideration. Instead of scrapping the provision altogether, its definition should at least be narrowed down to prevent its potential misuse.

Shreyans Jain
New Delhi

When we fell trees we are not only poorer by that much green cover but also digging our own graves. We hope and pray that the realisation that our survival depends on the protection of the

environment dawns on our tree-cutting netas to make the right choice between nature and unsustainable development.

G David Milton
Maruthancode

NZ sets precedent

Sir — It was interesting to see New Zealand withdraw the controversial "racist" Africa and

Middle East refugee policy. Indeed, this is the best way forward. It has been said that the media houses played a very crucial role in annihilating the controversy around the policy. The so-called refugee policy seems to have been following very hard rules against migrants from regions like Asia. We are all human beings and any bias against humanity should be resisted and protested with the help of media and the citizens as well.

P Senthil
Via email

Time to introspect

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "SC saves Aarey for now" (October 6). It was good to see that environment activists as also artistes from the Bollywood industry came together to express their concerns surrounding the environment. With people being aware of the need to protect green cover, the Government, too, needs to realise the importance of ecological resilience.

Shambhavi
Via email

Send your feedback to:
letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

Learn to analyse chart patterns

For a novice, stock price movements are puzzling. However, a trained eye can see patterns in these flows and make better predictions



HIMA BINDU KOTA

One size does not fit all as far as investment strategies go. People are unique in their preferences, tastes, needs and requirements and so should be their investment styles. Depending upon their risk appetite, investors can either choose fundamental or technical analysis to invest in stock markets.

Fundamental analysis, both quantitative and qualitative, help people in picking up stocks for the long-term. While the fundamental analysis typically answers the question "what to buy", the technical analysis provides key to the question "when to buy."

Technical analysis or chart analysis is the study of market action, using price charts to forecast the price direction. The cornerstone of the technical philosophy is the belief that all factors that influence market price — fundamental information, political events, natural disasters and psychological factors — are quickly discounted in market activity. In other words, the impact of these external factors will quickly show up in some form of price movement, either up or down.

Chart patterns are geometric shapes found in the price data that can help a trader understand the price action as well as make predictions about where it is likely to go.

The two most popular chart patterns are reversals and continuations and can be found across any timeframe. A continuation pattern signals that the trend will continue once the structure is complete, whereas a reversal pattern signals that a prior trend will reverse upon completion of the sequence.

However, reversal patterns are not usually sudden and dramatic. When an uptrend changes to a downtrend or vice versa, it slows down, pulls back, goes in the direction of the trend and comes back, till slowly it is reversed. A change in the perception of the price of a given stock results in the change in trend, which in turn changes either the demand or supply of these stocks. This eventually moves the stock prices either up or down.

In an uptrend, the demand for a scrip slowly increases its price, whereas in a downtrend, the low demand and high supply of the stock brings it down. This tug of war between buyers and sellers makes price swing between optimistic and pessimistic perception level and invariably creates reversal patterns on the charts before the trend changes to the opposite side. Continuation patterns, when they occur, indicate that a price trend is likely to go on and are a pause in the price action of varying durations as they generally occur mid-trend. A pattern is considered complete when it has formed and then "breaks out" of that mould, potentially continuing with the former trend. Continuation patterns can be seen both in bullish and bearish markets and are found in different shapes but for the most part, they look quite similar. Common continuation patterns include triangles, flags, pennants and rectangles.

Having a good knowledge of continuation chart patterns allows investors to speculate positively about the course of the trend. It allows them to add more to their existing position and helps investors to hold on for a longer period without worrying about temporary market setbacks.

Similarly, reversal patterns allow us to speculate positively about the end of the trend. We can square off our position at a right time to book maximum profits. It also allows us to take position in the opposite direction, at the right time. On the whole, good knowledge of reversal patterns allows us to have smaller losses and larger profits. Some of the common reversal patterns that an investor should keep a look out for are Head and Shoulders, Double Tops and Bottoms, Wedges and Rounding Bottoms.

Although chart patterns are an integral part of technical analysis, they alone may not be sufficient. Traders should combine these techniques with technical indicators and other forms of technical analysis to maximise their odds of success. Technical analysis, however, is not a long-term strategy, where actions are taken frequently by monitoring the ups and downs of the stock market constantly and speed is important.

Support and resistance are common concepts in the world of technical analysis. Traders usually buy and sell stocks at these levels because they indicate how well a stock might (or might not) perform. For a novice, stock price movements are haphazard up and down movements without any rhyme or reason. However, a trained eye can see patterns in these random movements.

(The writer is Assistant Professor, Amity University)

POINT COUNTERPOINT

LYNCHING ITSELF IS A WESTERN CONSTRUCT AND ONE SHOULDN'T USE IT IN THE INDIAN CONTEXT TO DEFAEME THE COUNTRY.

—RASHTRIYA SWAYAMSEVAK SANGH CHIEF MOHAN BHAGWAT



IT IS AS MUCH A LIE TO SAY THAT RSS HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH LYNCHINGS AS IT IS A LIE TO SAY THAT RSS IS ANTI-CASTEIST.

—CONGRESS SPOKESPERSON SACHIN SAWANT

Not mission impossible

No matter how dismal the economic scenario, it is possible to pull the country out of the slowdown and prevent it from going into a full blown recession



ABHISHEK RAJA

There is no doubt that India is currently facing an economic slowdown and the Narendra Modi Government is fighting with its back to the wall to keep a full blown recession at bay.

A recession is a period when fiscal performance declines significantly and is typically recognised after two to three consecutive quarters of decline in the growth rate of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

Though while presenting the Union Budget the Finance Minister set a target of seven per cent GDP growth and a \$5 trillion economy in the next five years, there are fears that India could head towards an economic recession from here.

Former Reserve Bank of India Governor Raghuram Rajan has called the deceleration "very worrisome" and pointed out that the Modi Government needs to fix the immediate problems in the power and non-bank financial sectors and come out with a new set of reforms to energise the private sector to invest further to boost the economy.

However, no matter how dismal the scenario, it is not impossible to pull the country out of the current slowdown it is facing and prevent it from going into recession. But before we look at how to get the economy in the green, it would be prudent to look at what the worrying factors are.

Exactly how grim the situation is can be substantiated through various data analysis. Recently, the Index of Eight Core Industries was issued by the Government and the combined Index of Industrial Production (IIP) stood at 131.4 per cent in June 2019, which was merely 0.2 per cent higher as compared to the index of June 2018. This is a major worry but not the only factor for the doldrums the economy finds itself in.

The automobile sector is in negative growth. July sales of vehicles fell the most they have in 19 years, across categories, at 18.7 per cent year-on-year as per data released by the Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers. In the passenger vehicle segment, the fall was almost 31 per cent. There has been news of thousands of people being laid off and lakhs more set to lose their jobs in this sector. At Mahindra, the country's largest maker of utility vehicles and tractors, entry-level campus hiring will be reduced to about half. "As against around 400 we used to hire, we will take just about 200 this year", said Chief People Officer Rajeshwar Tripathi. The approach now is to minimise fresh hiring and enhance productivity, he said.

Tata Motors on the other hand has almost stopped external hiring, including campus hiring and has been encouraging internal job rotations to fill positions. Automakers have slashed production, which has affected about 3,50,000 jobs across vehicle manufacturing, components and distribution segments in the last three months. The affected employees include about 2,30,000 at dealers, 100,000 in the auto component industry and another 15,000 casual and temporary workers. Around 3,000 temporary workers have lost jobs with Maruti Suzuki as admitted by Chairman RC Bhargava. These were temporary workers whose contracts were

“ A STRUCTURAL DOWNTURN HAPPENS DUE TO LACK OF PLANNING BY THE GOVERNMENT. THIS INCLUDES POOR TAX PLANNING, GOVERNANCE AND A DYSFUNCTIONAL GROWTH MODEL SYSTEM. THIS SEEMS TO BE THE PROBLEM WITH THE ECONOMY RIGHT NOW. SO THE GOVERNMENT NEEDS TO BITE THE BULLET AND TAKE SOME QUICK MEASURES TO STOP THE SLIDE ”



not renewed due to the slowdown. This data is for Tier-I companies and if we add Tier-II and III firms, then the number could go up to one million.

There are issues in the telecom sector also. The entry of Reliance Jio has shaken up the entire market and with Jio offering nearly free data, every company is bleeding. Private sector players already have huge debts and losses and might not be able to service their interest in part or repay their loans in the long term. Government sector players like Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) and Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited (MTNL) are also suffering from losses and are unable to pay salaries to their staff regularly. MTNL's standalone loss for the March 2019 quarter was ₹755.51 crore and BSNL reported a loss of ₹8,000 crore for the financial year 2018. Thus, in the long term, they will not be able to sustain continuous pressure of performance and competition with the current huge workforce and might fail altogether.

The real estate sector has been in negative territory since the 2008 global economic meltdown triggered by the US subprime loan crisis. The Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Act, 2016 (RERA) was introduced with the thought that it would help revive the dwindling fortunes of the sector but this was not sufficient. It is said that over 12.75 lakh houses are lying unsold in India's top 30 cities, compounding the problems of the real estate sector which is already grappling with a severe liquidity crunch as Non-Banking Finance Companies (NBFCs) have curtailed lending to developers following the collapse of IL&FS last year. With the sector facing a cash deficit, more and more builders are becoming bankrupt and this will impact every sector of the economy.

The RBI in its 2018-19 annual report released recently said that the deceleration was cyclical in nature. But

due to the factors discussed above, it appears to be both cyclical and structural. Now the question arises, what is cyclical and structural slowdown? A cyclical downturn is one in which a country faces a deceleration every four or five years. Suppose if a country is growing at a rate of eight or nine per cent, then a time will come when it will face a decline because we can't grow at a fixed pace for a number of years. This is a natural correction.

A structural downturn happens due to lack of planning by the Government. This includes poor tax planning, governance and a dysfunctional growth model system. This seems to be the problem with the economy right now.

So the Government needs to bite the bullet and take some quick measures to stop the slide. First, it needs to rationalise the Goods and Services Tax (GST) even if it leads to loss in revenue in the short term. The GST system currently has four slabs at five per cent, 12 per cent, 18 per cent and 28 per cent. On top of the 28 per cent slab, a cess is levied on automobiles, luxury and demerit goods.

From the time late Arun Jaitley was the Finance Minister, the Government has been saying that the "GST will become a two-tier tax with merger of 12 per cent, 18 per cent slabs" but that has still not been done. However, now we should move the automobile sector from 28 per cent to the 18 per cent slab so that it encourages people to purchase vehicles and consequently boosts the automobile sector.

Though this move will hurt the Government — as a report by Kotak Institutional Equities estimated that a 10 per cent GST cut on automobiles across the board could cost the Treasury ₹45,000 crore in a year — but to get out of the economic crunch this recourse will have to be taken. This sum can be easily managed from the RBI surplus and it will also stop the job losses in the

automobile sector. We should also focus on increasing rural consumption and reviving the agriculture sector. For example, sugarcane arrears of ₹20,000 crore should be given to farmers so that they can buy tractors and other necessary equipment and inputs needed for boosting agriculture produce and income, which in turn will also give a fillip to the economy as increasing household incomes boost rural buying power.

The liquidity crisis needs to be addressed. Even though the Government has infused a capital of ₹70,000 crore in Public Sector Banks (PSBs), this is not enough for PSBs reeling under a major Non-performing asset crisis. Also, NBFCs that are also running into losses should get some tax reliefs and capital.

The Government also needs to revive job creating industries like textile, auto, electronics, infrastructure and subsidised housing.

This, it can do by reducing taxes and putting in place a mechanism for easy disbursement of loans so that small companies can easily get capital to invest into their business and generate employment.

The Government needs to identify new export markets and take advantage of the ongoing trade war between the US and China. It must come out with new measures to attract both US and Chinese companies in order to maximise our exports.

Healing the sick economy might require other tough measures like initiating much-needed structural reforms in the areas of labour laws, taxation and legal reforms in order to enhance the ease of doing business but it can and must be done to keep the country out of a recession and in pursuit of fulfilling the vision of India becoming a \$5 trillion economy by 2024-25.

(The writer is an author and GST and economics specialist)

Just what the doctor ordered

While informal summits of the kind planned at Mamallapuram will be of enormous value in the changing India-China relationship but with both countries headed by strong leaders, optics are likely to overtake substance



KALYANI SHANKAR

Mamallapuram, the ancient port town near Chennai is getting ready to host the Chinese President Xi Jinping for an informal summit with Prime Minister Narendra Modi from October 11-13.

After winning his second term, Modi formally extended an invitation to Xi in June at the Bishkek summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation and the latter responded positively at that time.

The optics would show Modi receive Xi near the Arjuna's Penance sculpture and the photo sessions would cover the Five Rathas (chariots), Krishna's butterball and the

Shore Temple as they stroll along the premises.

Though with just a few days to go, China is yet to officially confirm Xi's proposed visit to India but Beijing's envoy has said that the two countries should unleash the "positive effect of the Wuhan informal summit" as they look ahead, giving the impression that all is on track for the meeting.

This would be the second informal summit between the two leaders after Wuhan, which was held in April 2018 in China. A lot of significance is being attached to this meeting amid tensions between the two countries on the Kashmir and border issues. The Wuhan exercise, the first-of-its-kind between the two leaders, was touted as a great success as it gave strategic guidance to the militaries on both sides to strengthen their relations in the backdrop of the Doklam standoff. Since then, Modi and Xi met 10 times, though it was mostly in multilateral summits. The Mamallapuram summit is expected to give a further push to ties.

The summit has no set agenda as the two leaders are expected to hold free-wheeling discussions just as they did in Wuhan where they had six intense sessions in 24 hours. While New Delhi is tight-lipped, the Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying told a media briefing recently, "For those things like Kashmir, I don't think it will be a major topic occupying the talks, that is my understanding." On the border question, Hua said, "Both sides can work together to safeguard, maintain and to make sure the border and the border areas be kept in peace and stability." It is expected that they might touch upon various subjects of mutual interest, including strategic communications, global issues, border related discussions and boosting people-to-people contacts keeping aside



contentious issues. The timing of the summit is indeed interesting because China is engaged in a trade war with the US and handling the protests in Hong Kong, while India has its hands full dealing with Kashmir and the economy.

Why Mamallapuram? The history of the port town goes beyond the Pallava Dynasty. According to legends it was called 'Kadalmala' (the land of sea and mountain.) Its religious centre was founded by the seventh century Pallava king

One of the reasons for choosing Mamallapuram for the summit is its old connection with China as ancient Chinese, Persian and Roman coins found there reveal its earlier existence as a seaport. Historical records also show that the Pallava kings established cultural, defence, trade and commercial ties with Southeast Asia, including China. Importantly, Buddhism travelled to China via Mamallapuram. Bodhidharma, a Pallava prince, traveled to China in 642 AD and

became not only an icon in China but also the 28th patriarch of Buddhism. The famous Chinese scholar and political philosopher Huang Tsung had recorded details of his visit to the Pallava capital Kancheepuram. According to China experts, The Tang dynasty of the Chinese even appointed the third king of Pallavas, Rajasimhan XI as their general for South China.

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar put it in perspective recently claiming that the talks would be held in "as warm a spirit as Wuhan" pointing out that "it is important for both India and China, which are rising powers, to find equilibriums because each has their own expectations of the world and of each other."

The two leaders are meeting in the backdrop of Beijing's open support to Pakistan in internationalising the Kashmir issue after the abrogation of Article 370. New Delhi frowned at the recent speeches made by the Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi supporting Imran Khan at the United Nations General Assembly. All these have certainly diluted the Wuhan spirit. Moreover, New Delhi remains wary of the growing Pakistan-China strategic nexus and Beijing's business and strategic forays into India's neighborhood. On the other hand, Beijing is suspicious of the growing closeness between New Delhi and Washington when the trade war between China and the US continues. Despite all that, New Delhi has shown restraint on Hong Kong revolts, claiming that it is their internal affair.

A relaxed summit on the shores of Mamallapuram, even if it is for just seven hours of private interaction, is expected to bring down the political temperature. Obviously, the two sides want to keep it a low profile affair as neither expects any breakthrough. While informal summits of this type will be of enormous value in the changing China-India relationship but with both countries headed by strong leaders, optics are likely to overtake substance.

(The writer is a senior journalist)

No Tata Nano production in first 9 months of 2019

Just one unit sold

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Tata Motors has not produced a single unit of its entry-level car Nano in the first nine months of 2019 but sold just one unit in February in the domestic market although it is yet to officially announce that the model has been discontinued.

The company has so far been maintaining that no decision has been made yet on the future of the Nano saying production planning of a car is a "conscious management of demand, system inventory and planned efficiencies".

It has, however, admitted that in its current form the Nano will not meet the new safety regulations and BS-VI emission norms.

As per regulatory filings by the company, there was no production and sales of the Nano in the domestic market in September this year making it the ninth consecutive month that Tata Motors has not produced the small car.

After selling just one unit in February this year, the company has also not sold a single unit of the Nano in the rest of the months of the year so far, according to the filings.

Nano, which was unveiled in January 2008 at the Auto Expo with much expectations of being the people's car, could not live up to the billing. Its sales have been dwindling over the years.

In the January-September period 2018, Tata Motors had produced a total of 297 units and sold 299 units of the Nano



in the domestic market, according to the filings.

On the issue of discontinuing the Nano, Tata Motors has insisted that "Decisions on product life cycle is a holistic view taken after considering the market developments, regulations and emerging competitive landscape. Any such decisions are announced as and when it's taken".

Company officials had, however, hinted that production and sales of the Nano would stop from April 2020 as Tata Motors has no plans to invest further on Ratan Tata's dream car to meet strict emission norm under Bharat Stage-VI and other safety regulations.

The Nano was launched in the market in March 2009 with an initial price of Rs 1 lakh for the basic model despite cost escalations, with Tata insisting that "a promise is a promise".

However, from the beginning, Nano courted trouble. It was originally planned to be rolled out from Tata Motors'

proposed plant at Singur in West Bengal, where it faced intense political and farmer protests against land acquisition. The company had to shift its production to a new plant at Sanand in Gujarat.

Instances of the car catching fire initially after it was launched didn't help its cause either. Tata had admitted that the company made the mistake of promoting the Nano as 'the cheapest car'.

It became a loss-making model for Tata Motors with ex-Tata Sons chairman Mistry, who was abruptly removed from the post, even went on to claim that the Nano "consistently lost value, peaking at Rs 1,000 crore".

Mistry also termed the Nano as one of the "legacy hotspots" and there was "no line of sight to profitability for the Nano, any turnaround strategy".

He had also claimed that Tata Motors did not stop producing the car due to "emotional reasons."

Maruti cuts production for 8th straight month in Sep

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Reeling under a prolonged slowdown, Maruti Suzuki India (MSI) reduced its production by 17.48 per cent in September, making it the eighth straight month when the country's largest car maker lowered its output. The company produced a total of 1,32,199 units in September as against 1,60,219 units in the year-ago month, Maruti Suzuki India (MSI) said in a regulatory filing.

Passenger vehicles' production last month stood at 1,30,264 units as against 1,57,659 units in September 2018, a decline of 17.37 per cent, it added.

Production of mini and compact segment cars, including Alto, New WagonR, Celerio, Ignis, Swift, Baleno and Dzire stood at 98,337 units as against 1,15,576 units in September last year, down 14.91 per cent.

Similarly, production of utility vehicles such as Vitara Brezza, Ertiga and S-Cross declined 17.05 per cent to 18,435 units as compared with 22,226 units a year ago.

Mid-sized sedan Ciaz saw its production reduced to 2,359 units in September from 4,739 units in the same month last year. Light commercial vehicle Super Carry's production was also trimmed to 1,935 units last month from 2,560 units in September 2018, the filing said.

In August, the automaker had cut its production by 33.99 per cent at 1,11,370 units.

Tata Motors also reported a 63 per cent drop in production of passenger vehicles in September at 6,976 units as compared to 18,855 units in the same period last year.

Ahead of Xi's visit China for fair environment for its companies in India

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Ahead of Chinese President Xi Jinping's visit to India, China on Tuesday hoped that New Delhi will provide a more "fair, friendly and convenient" business environment for Chinese companies to operate in the country, asserting that both the Asian giants should forge greater cooperation to boost trade and investment.

The comments by Chinese Ambassador Sun Weidong, in an interview to PTI, came amid the US asking leading countries to not allow Chinese telecom giant Huawei to roll its 5G mobile networks. India is set to carry out trials for 5G services mobile network and has not taken any decision yet on whether to allow Huawei in the trials.

Sun said there is huge potential for China and India to expand business and trade ties and both the countries should uphold free trade and jointly speak out against trade protectionism and unilateralism in the current situation of rising uncertainties in the "external environment".

China has been engaged in a bitter trade war with the US in the last few months. "China encourages Chinese companies to invest in India and hopes that India will provide a more fair, friendly and convenient business environment for Chinese companies to operate in India," the ambassador said.

The US has already banned Huawei, the world leader in telecom equipment and the number two smartphone producer, over concerns of secu-

The comments by Chinese Ambassador Sun Weidong, in an interview to PTI, came amid the US asking leading countries to not allow Chinese telecom giant Huawei to roll its 5G mobile networks

The Chinese President is scheduled to arrive in Chennai on Friday afternoon to hold the second informal summit with Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the coastal town of Mamallapuram in Tamil Nadu. Both sides are expected to formally announce the dates of Xi's visit to India on Wednesday.

Sun said more than 1,000 Chinese companies are operating in India and they have increased their investment in industrial parks, e-commerce and other areas with a total investment of \$8 billion. Without mentioning the timeframe, he said these companies created 2,00,000 local jobs in the country.

The Chinese envoy also said that both India and China should work together to promote regional economic integration and speed up negotiations on the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (RCEP).

The RCEP, comprising 10-member ASEAN bloc and six other countries -- India, China,

Japan, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand, is engaged in negotiations for a free trade pact.

About India's concerns on ballooning trade deficit, Sun said Beijing has never pursued a policy of trade surplus, and the trade imbalance between the two countries is largely the result of differences in their industrial structures.

"China has taken active measures to increase imports from India, including lowering tariffs on some Indian imports, sending purchasing delegations to India, and assisting in the export of Indian agricultural products and pharmaceuticals to China," he said.

"Over the past five years, China's imports from India have increased by 15 per cent. In the first half of this year, India's trade deficit with China fell by 13.5 per cent year on year, and its agricultural export to China doubled over the same period last year," he added.

He said Chinese mobile phone brands such as Xiaomi, VIVO and OPPO have been well-established in the Indian market and Indian companies are also actively expanding in the Chinese market, with a cumulative investment of nearly \$1 billion.

"According to Indian statistics, more than two-thirds of Indian companies investing in China are making steady profits. With a combined market of over 2.7 billion people and a GDP of 20 per cent of the world's total, China and India enjoy huge potential and broad prospects for economic and trade cooperation," he said.

US blacklists 28 Chinese entities over abuses in Xinjiang

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

The US has blacklisted 28 Chinese companies from purchasing any American products for being implicated in human rights violations and other abuses in China's Xinjiang region.

The US Department of Commerce said the action restricts the export of items subject to the Export Administration Regulations (EAR) to entities that have been implicated in human rights violations and abuses in China's campaign targeting Uighurs and other predominantly Muslim ethnic minorities in the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region.

"The US Government and Department of Commerce cannot and will not tolerate the brutal suppression of ethnic minorities within China," Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross said.

"This action will ensure that our technologies fostered in an environment of individual liberty and free enterprise are not used to repress defenseless minority populations," he said.

Located in Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region and throughout China, these entities have all been implicated in the implementation of China's campaign of repression, mass arbitrary detention, and high-technology surveillance, the Department of Commerce said.

The entity list identifies persons or organisations reasonably believed to be involved, or to pose a significant risk of being or becoming involved, in activities contrary to the national security or foreign policy interests of the US.

Festival season: Mercedes-Benz delivers over 200 cars in single day

PTI ■ MUMBAI

German luxury carmaker Mercedes-Benz said on Tuesday that it has delivered over 200 cars of various models to customers in Mumbai, Gujarat and other cities in a single day as part of the festival season sale.

Dussehra and Navratri deliveries, which were made on Tuesday, outperformed the number of cars sold on the same festival day last year, indicating a strong festive mood, the company said in a release.

Mercedes-Benz delivered over 125 cars, the highest ever, to the customers on Dussehra in Mumbai and another 74 cars to customers in Gujarat on Navratri festival, the company said.

"The overwhelming customer response resulting in deliveries of over 200 stars in Mumbai and Gujarat and some other markets during Dussehra and Navratri signify that we have similar level of excitement and fascination from customers, which we witnessed in 2018; and that is a positive development for us," said Martin Schwenk, managing director and chief executive officer, Mercedes-Benz India.

Ensure strict implementation on ban of import of e-cigarettes: Revenue to Customs

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The revenue department has asked customs officials to ensure strict implementation of prohibition on import of e-cigarettes after the country banned production, import and sale of these electronic devices and similar products citing health risk to people, especially youth.

E-cigarettes are technically called the ENDS (Electronic nicotine delivery systems).

The commerce ministry has already issued notifications to prohibit import and export of e-cigarettes or any parts or components like refill pods, atomisers and cartridges. In a recent circular to senior officials of the customs department, the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) has asked them to ensure "strict implementation" of the notifications of the commerce ministry "so that any attempts of import/export of such goods can be effectively prevented".

The ban on the production, import, export, transport, sale or advertisements of e-cigarettes has been imposed through an ordinance.

Many science journals have already said nearly three million people in the US are regular users of e-cigarettes and in

a matter of four to five years, between 2011 and 2015-16, there has been over 900 per cent growth in e-cigarettes in the US. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had said while announcing the government's decision to ban ENDS last month.

She said that e-cigarettes, which unfortunately was promoted in the country initially as a way of quitting smoking, are becoming a "style statement".

"It is believed that there are more than 400 brands, none of which is manufactured in India yet. They come in over 150 flavours. But the smoke exhaled by e-cigarettes users contains very high level of residual nicotine which affects passive smokers badly. The impact of e-cigarettes... Has already caused a lot of concern in the US and many western countries," she said.

According to an official statement also said unlike the tried and tested nicotine and non-nicotine pharmacotherapies that are known to help people quit tobacco use, the WHO does not endorse e-cigarettes as cessation aids.

Apart from nicotine, e-cigarettes may also be used for delivery of other psychoactive substances, it added.

SC declines Oil Min request to stay sharing of documents on Reliance penalty

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

New Delhi: In a setback to the Oil Ministry, the Supreme Court has dismissed its petition against an order seeking disclosure of documents that formed basis for levy of USD 3 billion penalty on Reliance Industries over KG-D6 natural gas output not matching targets.

A three-member international arbitration panel, hearing Reliance and its partner's challenge to the government levying penalty because of unutilised capacity due to production not matching targets, had asked the ministry to share an array of documents that formed basis for its actions.

The Oil Ministry first challenged the disclosure before the Delhi High Court, which on December 18, 2018 dismissed the petition. It then challenged it in the Supreme Court, which on August 5, 2019 dismissed it saying it was "not inclined to interfere" with the earlier order.

The government had between 2012 and 2016 disallowed Reliance and its partners from recovering the cost of USD 3.02 billion for KG-D6 output lagging targets. The penalty in form of disallowance of recovery of certain costs was levied because the Oil Ministry and its technical arm DGH felt that the output lagged targets because the company did not drill the committed number of wells on the fields and created excess capacity.

Tomar tells Commerce Ministry to protect farmers' interest in RCEP trade pact

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

New Delhi: Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar on Tuesday said he has communicated to his commerce counterpart to protect the farmers' interest in the proposed Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) trade agreement whose negotiations are in the final stages. The RCEP is a proposed free-trade agreement (FTA) between the 10-member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) and its six FTA partners — China, India, Japan, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand.

"Farmers' interest is our priority. We have communicated to the commerce ministry to keep in mind the farmers' interest," Tomar told reporters when asked about the country's farm sector concerns in the proposed RCEP.

He, however, did not share about concerns or possible impact of the proposed RCEP on local farmers. The agriculture ministry has made a detailed presentation to Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal, who is going to visit Bangkok later this week for the RCEP ministerial meet. However, the dairy industry has demanded the government to exclude dairy products from the purview of the proposed trade pact to save the domestic dairy farmers.

Crisis-hit Nissan names China unit head Makoto Uchida as new CEO

AFP ■ YOKOHAMA

Crisis-hit Japanese automaker Nissan on Tuesday named Makoto Uchida as new chief executive, elevating the insider currently heading the firm's China unit as it overhauls its leadership after the Carlos Ghosn scandal.

The board also announced that India-born Ashwani Gupta, currently at Nissan partner Mitsubishi Motors, would be appointed Nissan's chief operating officer, with Jun Seki, another top Nissan executive, named vice COO.

The appointments, to take effect by January 1, come after months of turmoil for the automaker in the wake of the arrest of former chief Ghosn on allegations of financial mis-

conduct. Former CEO Hiroto Saikawa resigned last month after an investigation prompted by the Ghosn scandal revealed he was among Nissan executives who received excess pay by altering the terms of a share price bonus.

It was the latest in a series of blows for the firm, which has seen sales plunge and been forced to slash jobs since Ghosn's shock arrest.

Nissan executives speaking at a hastily announced late-night press conference said they believed the new leadership could steer the firm back to health.

"The board concluded that Mr Uchida is the right leader to drive the firm forward," said chairman Yasushi Kimura. Masakazu Toyoda, who

chaired the nomination committee, stressed that all three men "are global citizens".

"And they attach importance to alliances and they are motivated to do speedy decision-making," he added.

"We believe this structure is the best way to surmount the difficulties the company is facing."

Uchida is a senior vice president at Nissan and has been with the firm since 2003, with reports describing him as having been key to Nissan's growth strategy.

He has long been involved in joint projects with Renault, a key point given the fraught nature of Nissan's relationship with its partner in a three-way alliance with Mitsubishi Motors.

Home textile exporters demand release of pending RoSCTL dues

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Home Textile Exporters' Welfare Association (HEWA) has demanded the government to release pending dues under a taxes and levies rebate scheme.

In March, the government had announced the Rebate of State and Central Taxes and Levies on Export of Garments and Made-ups (RoSCTL) scheme, which provides rebate on all embedded taxes on exports, but HEWA claimed exporters are yet to receive the refunds from this scheme which are pending for the past 7 months.

"Christmas festival sale is coming and Indian exporters have received orders from all over the world but due to the pending RoSCTL and GST refunds, non-availability of credit from banks and cost escalation, the exporters are having lack of funds to fulfil orders on a timely basis," the association said.

The association submitted a memorandum in this regard to Textiles Secretary Ravi Capoor on Monday here.

The made-ups segment comprises home textiles products such as bed linen, pillows and carpets.

Under the scheme, maximum rate of rebate for apparel is 6.05 per cent while for made-ups, this goes up to 8.2 per cent.

With \$100m outlay, RailYatri to expand intercity bus ops

PTI ■ KOLKATA

Online travel startup RailYatri is planning to expand its 'IntrCity' bus service in the country over the next two years by increasing its fleet to 2000 from the existing 65 with an investment of up to \$100 million, a top official said.

Backed by latest technology, the firm is set to create a multi-modal intercity transportation solution for at least one-million passengers who fail to get their train tickets confirmed in a day, he said.

"Our brand IntrCity is already operational in 12 cities with a current fleet of 65 buses. We are working to expand fleet size to 2,000 with pan-India connectivity on all the important routes over the next two years.

India, US should sign totalisation agreement for social security: TPCI

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Trade Promotion Council for India (TPCI) on Tuesday suggested that India and the US should sign totalisation agreement as it will provide social security to Indian professionals in America.

TPCI Chairman Mohit Singla said that the totalisation agreement is an international social security pact that eliminate dual social security taxation, both in the home country and in the nation where an employee works. He said that this agreement should be part of the trade deal being negotiated by India and the US.

"Once it is signed, the agreement would benefit workers of both the countries and

ensure equality of treatment," Singla said in a statement.

Indian works are paying whopping taxes on their income in the US. So, either they are allowed to avail all social security benefits after eight years or their working visa is extended beyond 10 years so that they are not adversely impacted and get all benefits at par with US citizens, he added.

It is a long pending demand of India for early conclusion of the totalisation agreement or Social Security Agreement with the US. It aims to protect interests of professionals of Indian-origin who contribute more than USD 1 billion each year to the US social security.



India voices concerns over \$1.3 bn of unpaid assessments at UN

PTI ■ UNITED NATIONS

India has voiced concerns over a whopping \$1.3 billion unpaid assessments at the United Nations even as the current regular budget financial year ends in three months.

Secretary General Antonio Guterres warned on Monday that the UN may run out of money for operations by the end of October as the world body is struggling with a deficit of \$230 million.

Guterres raised the alarm last year also and said the organisation was facing an unprecedented shortage of funding for its core budget and will need to make urgent cuts unless member states pay up.

"We note with concern that while the current regular budget financial year ends in three months, around 1.3 billion dollars of assessments for this and past year are outstanding. These unpaid assessments will have implications on the work of this Committee also during the session," First Secretary in India's Permanent Mission to the UN Mahesh Kumar said on Monday.

Speaking at a session of the Organization of Work of the Fifth Committee, which deals with administrative and budgetary matters, Kumar said it was important to emphasise that payment of assessed con-

tribution in full, on time, and without preconditions is a legal obligation of the member states.

He said during the last few sessions, the Committee had deliberated and approved major reforms proposed by the Secretary General.

In this regard, the annual budget for the Organisation, perhaps the most important and complex element of the reforms has also been approved on trial basis.

"While discussing the budget figures for 2020, we should also seek its alignment with established budgetary procedures and practices. Our ask has been that the reforms, while rationalising processes and structures, should also strengthen the intergovernmental nature of the UN," he said.

Kumar stressed that India hoped that the efficiencies generated from the reforms would be utilised for developmental

work of the organisation.

He voiced concern over proposed cut in the budget of bodies like United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), UN Economic Commission for Africa, UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean and the UN Economic and Social Commission for West Asia.

India also expressed support for Comoros, Sao Tome and Principe, and Somalia, who would have ordinarily fulfilled their financial obligations to the UN but for the genuine economic difficulties faced by them.

"We fully endorse the recommendation of Committee on Contributions that these member states be permitted to vote in the General Assembly until the end of its seventy-fourth session," Kumar said.

UK says chances of Brexit deal fading fast

AFP ■ LONDON

The British Government said on Tuesday that the chances of a Brexit deal with the European Union were fading fast, as the two sides remained unwilling to shift from their entrenched positions.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson's office gave a gloomy assessment after a call between Johnson and German Chancellor Angela Merkel on Tuesday morning.

In a statement to British media, Downing St. Said Merkel had told the prime minister that "a deal is overwhelmingly unlikely" unless Northern Ireland remains in a customs union with the EU — something the U.K. Says it can't allow.

Downing St. Said that "if this represents a new established position, then it means a deal is essentially impossible not just now but ever."

The German government had no immediate comment. EU leaders have demanded more "realism" from Britain in



response to a Brexit plan proposed by Johnson.

The bloc says the proposals don't fulfil the U.K.'s commitment to a frictionless border between Northern Ireland and EU member Ireland. Johnson, meanwhile, has urged the bloc to compromise.

French President Emmanuel Macron has said the EU will assess by Friday whether a deal is possible.

Johnson insists the EU will leave the EU on Oct. 31 even without a deal. Many economists say that will disrupt British trade and plunge the country into recession.

The British government says it is taking steps to mini-

mize the pain.

It is due to publish more details of its plans for a no-deal Brexit later Tuesday.

Many in the EU — and in Britain — are skeptical that Britain will leave the bloc on Oct. 31, because the U.K. Parliament has passed a law compelling the government to ask the EU for a delay to Brexit if no deal is agreed upon by October 19. Johnson says he will obey the law, but will not ask for a delay.

It's not clear how those two statements can be reconciled but it's clear Johnson wants to pin the blame for any delay on Parliament and the EU, so that he can campaign as a champion of Brexit in a U.K. Election that's likely to be called soon. Keir Starmer, Brexit spokesman for the main opposition Labour Party, said the Downing St. Statement was "yet another cynical attempt by No. 10 to sabotage the negotiations."

"Boris Johnson will never take responsibility for his own failure to put forward a credible deal. His strategy from day one has been for a no-deal Brexit," he said.

Merkel warns UK Brexit deal 'unlikely' without compromise: London

AFP ■ LONDON

German Chancellor Angela Merkel told British Prime Minister Boris Johnson on Tuesday that his Brexit plan was doomed to fail without further compromise on the Irish border issue, a Downing Street source said.

In a phone call, Merkel warned the British leader that a deal was "overwhelmingly unlikely" unless he dropped his opposition to keeping British-run Northern Ireland in the European Union's customs union.

But Johnson has repeatedly said he will not shift on the issue, pointing to a collapse in the negotiations just weeks before Britain's scheduled EU exit on October 31.

According to the BBC, the prime minister's office believes talks are now "close to breaking down".

In Berlin, a spokesman for the German government confirmed to AFP the two leaders had spoken but said he would not comment on the content of the call.



Johnson unveiled a new plan last week aimed at keeping Britain's border with EU member Ireland free-flowing after Brexit -- a crucial issue in the divorce talks between Brussels and London.

It envisages keeping Northern Ireland aligned with the EU's single market regulations, but part of a UK-wide customs territory.

But this would mean customs checks on the Irish border, something the EU has long opposed.

Israeli PM's pre-indictment hearing concludes: lawyer

AFP ■ JERUSALEM

A four-day hearing into allegations of corruption against Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu came to an end on Monday, one of his lawyers said.

"The hearing ended tonight," the premier's lawyer, Yossi Ashkenazy, told reporters.

"We presented all our arguments which must, logically, confirm that all the indictments must be annulled," he added.

Only Netanyahu's lawyers and not the premier himself attended the closed-door hearing, which provided a final chance to convince Attorney General Avichai Mandelblit he should not be indicted.

The hearing covered three separate cases in which Netanyahu is accused of acting on behalf of wealthy supporters and businessmen in exchange for gifts and favourable news coverage.

It came as attempts by Netanyahu -- who has been in office for a total of over 13 years -- to form a unity government following September 17 elections are at an impasse.

Netanyahu has denied the



Israel's attorney general Avichai Mandelblit arrives for the pre-indictment hearing for Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at the Ministry of Justice in Jerusalem on Monday. State prosecutors and Netanyahu's lawyers are wrapping up the pre-indictment hearing over a slew of corruption allegations.

allegations against him, calling the corruption investigation a "witch-hunt" and alleging it has been motivated by his enemies' desire to force him from office.

The premier had asked that the hearing be broadcast live because he has "nothing to hide".

Mandelblit dismissed the request in no uncertain terms, saying the hearing was intend-

ed to convince the legal authorities, not the public.

The attorney general's deliberations on whether to issue the indictments are expected to continue for weeks.

Netanyahu is not required to step down as prime minister if indicted, only if convicted with all appeals exhausted.



An Extinction Rebellion climate change protester hugs an inflatable planet Earth near Downing Street in London on Tuesday. Hundreds of climate change activists camped out in central London on Tuesday during a second day of world protests by the Extinction Rebellion movement to demand more urgent actions to counter global warming.

Treason case against Musharraf to be heard daily from October 24: Court

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

A special court in Pakistan on Tuesday said the high treason trial of former military dictator Pervez Musharraf will start on October 24 as his counsel is down with dengue fever.

A three-member tribunal headed by Justice Waqar Ahmad Seth directed all parties to submit their written arguments before the next hearing.

The bench had decided last month to conduct 75-year-old Musharraf's trial on a daily basis from October 8 to conclude the case pending since December 2013. However, an application was submitted on Tuesday on behalf of his counsel for deferment of the hearing for two weeks as the coun-

sel was down with dengue fever. The court accepted the plea but said that hearing would be held on daily basis from October 24.

The previous Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) government had filed the treason case against the former army chief in 2013 over the imposition of extra-constitutional emergency in November 2007, which led to the confinement of a number of superior court judges in their houses and sacking of over 100 judges.

The trial in the high-profile treason case has not seen much progress since Musharraf left for Dubai in March 2016 after his name was removed from the no-fly list.

He has not returned since, and is said to be suffering from Amyloidosis, a rare condition for which he has been admitted to a hospital.

The special court has declared him a proclaimed offender and ordered the confiscation of his property owing to his no-show. The case has been virtually stalled as Musharraf's presence is important to record his statement.

Musharraf ruled Pakistan from 1999 to 2008. A conviction for high treason carries the death penalty or life imprisonment.

More dead wild elephants found at Thai waterfall, toll at 11

AP ■ BANGKOK

Wildlife officials in Thailand say they have discovered the carcasses of five more wild elephants downstream from a waterfall where the bodies of six other elephants were found last weekend.

National Parks spokesman Sompote Maneerat says the carcasses were discovered by a drone being used to investigate how the first six elephants plunged to their deaths at the Haew Narok — Ravine of Hell waterfall in Khao Yai National Park in northeastern Thailand.

Park officials say the first group of elephants evidently



died when trying to reach a dead calf.

Sompote said Tuesday that the death toll of 11 is the highest number of elephants to die in a single incident in Khao Yai.

The elephant population at the park is estimated to be about 300.

China punishes NBA as crisis over democracy tweet deepens

AFP ■ SHANGHAI

China on Tuesday scrapped plans to air NBA exhibition games as the league faced an escalating punishment campaign in the lucrative Chinese market ignited by an American basketball executive's pro-democracy tweet.

The National Basketball Association also faced a counter-attack in the United States, where presidential candidates, influential senators, and fans accused it of bowing to authoritarian China.

The crisis erupted Friday when Houston Rockets general manager Daryl Morey tweeted support for protesters in the semi-autonomous southern Chinese city of Hong Kong who are demanding greater freedoms.

The NBA, seeking to balance its interests in the Chinese market against American free

speech values, found itself squeezed by both sides in a reflection of the broader tensions between the global superpowers.

The league initially put out statements that senior US politicians slammed as bowing to China for financial reasons, while Rockets star guard James Harden apologized.

But NBA Commissioner Adam Silver on Monday insisted his organisation supported Morey's right to express his opinions.

China's Communist Party-controlled broadcaster responded on Tuesday, announcing it had shelved plans to broadcast a pair of pre-season exhibition games to be held in China this week and was considering more punishments. "We believe that any comments that challenge national sovereignty and social stability are not within the

scope of freedom of speech," China Central Television (CCTV) said on its social media account.

"To this end, CCTV's Sports Channel has decided to immediately suspend plans to broadcast the NBA preseason games (China Games) and will immediately investigate all cooperation and communication involving the NBA," Chinese Internet giant Tencent, which streams NBA games to hundreds of millions of fans in China each year, quickly followed suit.

Also on Tuesday, a number of Chinese actors and singers said they would boycott the two exhibition games pitting the Los Angeles Lakers against the Brooklyn Nets.

An associated hashtag, "Several stars quit NBA games", was the most-discussed on China's leading social media platform Weibo on Tuesday



Workers dismantle signage for an NBA fan event scheduled to be held on Wednesday night at the Shanghai Oriental Sports Center in Shanghai, China on Tuesday. Chinese state broadcaster CCTV announced Tuesday it will no longer air two NBA preseason games set to be played in the country.

morning, with more than 350 million "reads". China's government said Morey's tweet was "wrong".

"How can you have

exchanges and cooperate with the Chinese side without understanding the (mindset of) the Chinese people. That's not going to work," foreign

ministry spokesman Geng Shuang said at a regular press briefing.

Nets players, executives and NBA China officials were to appear at a publicity event at a Shanghai primary school on Tuesday afternoon, but the league abruptly cancelled it just two hours before it was to start, giving no explanation.

Meanwhile the Global Times, a nationalist paper known for communicating the ruling Communist Party's attitudes to the world, issued a blunt warning to global firms that speaking out on human rights and other sensitive issues would cost them market access.

"The problem is that Morey's freedom is at the expense of (the) Rockets' huge commercial interests, which the team is unwilling to give up. It's a paradox with which Americans are grappling," the editorial said.

"The biggest lesson which can be drawn from the matter is that entities that value commercial interests must make their members speak cautiously." In his first public comments on the controversy, Silver late Monday spoke in support of freedom of expression.

"I think as a values-based organization that I want to make it clear... That Daryl Morey is supported in terms of his ability to exercise his freedom of expression," Silver told Japan's Kyodo News agency.

"There are the values that have been part of this league from its earliest days, and that includes free expression," he added, speaking in Japan, where the Rockets and Toronto Raptors play several exhibition games this week.

However the NBA's initial statement in English on the furore said it was "regrettable" that Morey's views had "offend-

ed so many of our friends and fans in China".

A Chinese-language version of the statement went further, saying the organisation was "deeply disappointed by the inappropriate remarks".

In the United States, Democratic presidential candidate Beto O'Rourke, a Texan, deemed the NBA's initial statements an "embarrassment." Florida Senator Marco Rubio, a Republican, also accused the NBA of throwing Morey "under the bus" to "protect (the) NBA's market access in China." "This is bigger than just the @NBA. It's about #China's growing ability to restrict freedom of expression here in the US," he added in a series of tweets. And Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, a Democrat, warned "no one should implement a gag rule on Americans speaking out for freedom".

Macron vows 'unrelenting fight' against Islamist terror

AFP ■ PARIS

French President Emmanuel Macron vowed an "unrelenting fight" against Islamist extremists on Tuesday as he paid tribute to the four Paris police staff stabbed to death last week by a radicalised colleague.

Mickael Harpon, a 45-year-old computer expert in the police intelligence-gathering department, used a kitchen knife and an oyster shucker to kill three male and one female colleague in a 30-minute rampage that ended when an officer shot him in the head.

The attack in the police's inner sanctum caused shock in France, where the government is being pressed to answer how Harpon's radicalisation went unnoticed, despite him having high-level security clearance. "We will wage an unrelenting fight in the face of Islamist terrorism,"

Macron vowed at a ceremony at the police headquarters near Notre-Dame cathedral where the attack took place.

Macron said it was "inconceivable and unacceptable" that Harpon, who had worked for the police since 2003, had managed to carry out an attack "in the very place where we pursue terrorists and criminals." He blamed the attack on "a distorted, deadly Islam" which he vowed to eradicate and vowed to build in France "a society in a state of vigilance".

At the same time he warned against lapsing into a climate of permanent suspicion, assuring: "This is not a fight against a religion but against the distortion of it which leads to terrorism." Thursday's attack brought to 255 the number of people killed in attacks blamed on, or



claimed by Islamist radicals since 2015.

Harpon, a father of two, had converted to Islam about 10 years ago and adopted increasingly radical beliefs.

He had been in close contact with a headline Salafist imam in the months before his rampage last week, according to investigators.

Le Parisien newspaper reported Tuesday that a USB key containing details on dozens of his police colleagues had been found among his possessions. The paper, which citing unnamed sources

close to the inquiry, said it was not clear if Harpon had gathered the data as part of his job or had surreptitiously extracted it, as well as whether he had shared it with others.

The key also contained several propaganda videos from the Islamic State group, it added.

The four victims of the attack -- Damien Ernest, Anthony Lancelot, Aurelia Trifiro and Brice Le Mescam -- were posthumously awarded the Legion of Honour, France's highest civilian award, at Tuesday's remembrance ceremony.

Their coffins, which were draped in French flags, were borne into the courtyard of the building by fellow officers.

Interior Minister Christophe Castaner has faced opposition calls for his resignation after initially claiming that Harpon never gave the

"slightest reason for alarm" before going on the rampage.

On Tuesday, the minister was subjected to a closed-door grilling by a parliamentary intelligence delegation ahead of questioning later

by a parliamentary commission.

He will then be questioned by a Senate panel on Thursday as to why the red flags, including Harpon's public approval of the 2015 massacre of 12 people at the Charlie Hebdo newspaper, were not included in Harpon's file.

Castaner has attempted to fend off the criticism, saying that concerns expressed by Harpon's colleagues over his behaviour were never added to his file. In the wake of the the attack the interior ministry set up a dedicated cell to track potential Islamic radicals within the ranks of the security forces.



An Afghan brother and sister play at a recycling center in Kabul, Afghanistan on Tuesday

AP

Trump faces Republicans' wrath over troop withdrawal from Syria

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

Donald Trump has defended his decision to withdraw US troops from the key areas of northern Syria ahead of a planned Turkish operation in the region, saying America is not a "police force" and will not fight "endless" wars, even as the Republicans vehemently criticised the President's abrupt move with some terming it a "betrayal" of the Kurds.

President Trump's comments on Monday came a day after the White House announced the withdrawal of the US troops from Syria's northern border. The US move effectively abandons the Kurds, who were America's main ally in the fight against the ISIS.

Trump claimed that the US was thrilled at his decision of withdrawing the American forces from Syria.

"We want to bring our troops back home. It's been many years."

It's been decades, in many cases. We want to bring our troops back home. I got elected on that. If you go back and look at our speeches, I would say we want to bring our troops back home from these endless wars," Trump told reporters at the White House. "I campaigned on the fact that I was

US PRESIDENT DEFENDS HIS DECISION

going to bring our soldiers home, and bring them home as rapidly as possible," he said.

During the 2016 presidential campaign, Trump had promised to bring back US troops from Syria and Afghanistan. During his interaction with the reporters, Trump said with the endless wars the US forces were doing policing and not fighting. "The US is like a police force over there (Syria). We're policing. We're not fighting; we're policing. We're the greatest military force ever assembled because of what I've done over the last three years with USD 2.5 trillion," he said, adding that "we're not going to be there longer".

The troop withdrawal announcement came after the White House said it would step aside to allow for a Turkish operation. President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has warned could come at any moment.

"We're going to be watching Turkey and we hope that

they and all of the other countries - or some of the other countries, including the European Union - go in and do whatever they're supposed to do with these captured ISIS fighters and families," Trump said.

"I have told Turkey that if they do anything outside of what we would think is humane ... They could suffer the wrath of an extremely decimated economy," he warned. "I've done it once. I did it with Pastor Brunson. You remember the Pastor Brunson? And they wouldn't give Pastor Brunson back, and they ended up giving Pastor Brunson back pretty quickly. Their currency fell at record levels and lots of other things happened. It was good. I have a very good relationship with President Erdogan. I want to see it happen," he said.

Pastor Andrew Brunson, an American who ran a Protestant church in the Aegean city of Izmir, was detained for terrorism charges. He was later released following the pressure from the US. Trump said there was a need for other countries to do their bit in terms of fighting wars. He said the US had defeated ISIS.

"When we were at 96 and 95 and 97 per cent, I sort of said



let the other countries in the area finish it off," he said.

Trump alleged that the European countries did not help the US in fighting wars. "These countries are rich, in most cases. They're powerful. They've got armies. They can do the work. But we're not bringing 50-, 60-, 70-, or even 100,000 people to Guantanamo Bay in Cuba," he said.

"We're not going to pay them for the next 50 years, or paying to take care of them for the next 50 years. So we told Europe - we did a great service to the world. And we did a great service to Europe in particular, where so many of these fighters came from," he added.

Trump has faced a barrage of criticism from within his

own party, including Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, Senator Lindsey Graham and former US Ambassador to the UN Nikki Haley.

Calling the move "a major blunder", Graham, usually a staunch defender of Trump's foreign policy, said that it was "an impulsive decision that has long-term ramifications" and "cuts against sound military and geopolitical advice". Utah Senator Mitt Romney, who is one of the few Republicans to criticise the president on other issues, also tweeted that the pullback was a "betrayal" that "says America is an unreliable ally." The move, he said, "facilitates ISIS resurgence" and "presages another humanitarian disaster". McConnell warned that "a precipitous withdrawal" would benefit

Russia, Iran and Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, and increase the risk that the Islamic State would "regroup".

"We must always have the backs of our allies, if we expect them to have our back. The Kurds were instrumental in our successful fight against ISIS in Syria. Leaving them to die is a big mistake."

"TurkeyIsNotOurFriend," Haley said in a tweet.

Iran opposes Syria military action, Zarif tells Turkey

AFP ■ TEHRAN

Iran's top diplomat Mohammad Javad Zarif told his Turkish counterpart Mevlut Cavusoglu in a phone call that Tehran is opposed to military action in Syria, the foreign ministry has said.

"Zarif voiced opposition to military action" and "urged respect for Syria's territorial integrity and national sovereignty," Zarif was quoted as saying in a statement issued late Monday.

The Iranian foreign minister also "stressed the need for the fight against terrorism and for the establishment of stability and security in Syria".

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said on Monday that Turkey was poised to launch a military operation against Kurdish forces in northern

Syria, after US President Donald Trump gave him the green light.

Trump's decision to withdraw US troops from the region has faced strong criti-



cism in the US, including from his own allies who have accused him of turning his back on Kurds who took heavy casualties in the US-backed campaign against the Islamic State (IS) group in Syria.

In their phone call, Zarif told Cavusoglu that the Adana agreement was "the best approach for Syria and Turkey and for addressing their concerns". Ankara and Damascus signed the agreement in 1998 to ease tensions after Turkey threatened Syria with military action if it did not expel Turkish-Kurdish rebel leader Abdallah Ocalan from its soil.

Turkey says the YPG is a "terrorist offshoot" of Ocalan's Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK). The United States worked closely with the YPG to recapture swathes of territory from IS.

Imran arrives in China to meet Xi

PTI ■ BEIJING

Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan has arrived here on Tuesday on a two-day visit to China during which he will hold talks with the top Chinese leadership, including President Xi

Jinping, and discuss issues of regional and bilateral significance.

Prime Minister Khan was received by Chinese Minister for Culture Luo Shugang, Ambassador of China to Pakistan Yao Jing and the Pakistan officials, Pakistan's state-run APP news agency reported.

Khan will reportedly meet the country's top leadership, including President Xi, and discuss issues of regional and

bilateral significance.

Khan's visit to China, third since he took over as Prime Minister in August last year, acquires significance as it comes days ahead of President Xi's planned high-profile visit to India to take part in the 2nd informal summit with Prime Minister Narendra Modi at Mamallapuram near Chennai this week.

However, there has been no official announcement here yet on Xi's visit to India. Khan will have separate meetings with President Xi and Chinese Premier Li Keqiang to discuss issues of regional and bilateral significance, an earlier APP report said.

Khan's visit takes place at a time when tensions have spiked between Pakistan and

India after New Delhi ended the special status of Jammu and Kashmir on August 5.

Beijing, the all-weather ally of Islamabad, has backed Pakistan over the Kashmir issue, with its Foreign Minister Wang Yi saying, "no actions that would unilaterally change the status quo should be taken".

Khan will also discuss expansion of projects under the China-Pakistan

Economic Corridor (CPEC) framework besides cooperation in agriculture, industrial and socioeconomic sectors, the report said.

Khan is also expected to attend the China-Pakistan Business Forum in Beijing on Tuesday.

Earlier, the media reports

said Khan would hold talks with the top Chinese leadership to revive the stalled USD 60 billion CPEC projects.

The CPEC was launched in 2015 and several projects under the first phase are close to completion.

But the progress on next phase projects has slowed since Prime Minister Khan came to power last year.

Khan while chairing a meeting on the economic corridor on Wednesday said removal of all bottlenecks in the CPEC projects and their timely completion was the top priority of the government, the Dawn newspaper reported.

He said he would visit China and meet its leadership to strengthen

friendship between the

two countries.

The Pakistan daily reported that most of the CPEC-related projects have been stalled due to certain reasons, including prevailing financial crunch confronting the government and non-cooperation of the bureaucracy due to fear of the National Accountability Bureau, the anti-corruption watchdog.

The CPEC is the flagship project of President Xi's pet multi-billion Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

The CPEC has also become a major irritant in India-China relations with New Delhi voicing its opposition to the infrastructure project as it traverses through Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK).

Two soldiers killed in terrorist attack in Niger: Ministry

AFP ■ NIAMEY

Two soldiers were killed and five others wounded in a "terrorist" attack in southwest Niger, a region that until recently had been spared jihadist raids, the interior ministry said Monday.

"A detachment of the security and defence forces (FDS) clashed Sunday with heavily armed terrorists in a valley near Dogon Kiria," the ministry statement said.

"Following intense combat the enemy was pushed back," it said, leaving two soldiers dead and five wounded, while

the "enemy" casualties were not yet known.

It was the second such attack in the Dogondoutchi region which up to now had been spared raids by armed jihadist groups.

In February, two gendarmes and a civilian were killed in an attack by armed men at Bagaji, a village in the region.

Dogondoutchi is near Nigeria but several hundred kilometres from where the Boko Haram jihadists have carried out deadly incursions in the southeast Diffa region of Niger.

On the other hand, Dogondoutchi is near Niger's Tahoua region where several areas bordering Mali are under a state of emergency from attacks.

Niger's President Mahamadou Issoufou has called on the West and the United Nations to come to the country's aid.

But the presence of French, American and German forces in Niger as well as the UN troops in neighbouring Mali has been unable to curtail the attacks which have been increasing.

Dark matter and exoplanet discoveries win Nobel Physics Prize

AAFP ■ STOCKHOLM

Canadian-American cosmologist James Peebles and Swiss astronomers Michel Mayor and Didier Queloz on Tuesday won the Nobel Physics Prize for research that increases the understanding of our place in the Universe.

Peebles won one-half of the prize "for theoretical discoveries that have contributed to our understanding of how the Universe evolved after the Big Bang," professor Goran Hansson, secretary general of the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences, told a press conference.

Mayor and Queloz shared the other half for the first discovery, in October 1995, of a planet outside our solar system -- an exoplanet orbiting a solar-type star in the Milky Way.

"Their discoveries have forever changed our conceptions of the world," the jury said.

Developed over two decades since the mid-1960s, Peebles' theoretical framework

is "the basis of our contemporary ideas about the Universe." Peebles built upon Albert Einstein's work on the origins of the

Universe by looking back to the millennia immediately after the Big

Bang, when light rays started to shoot outwards into space. Using theoretical tools and calculations, he drew a link between the temperature of the radiation emitted after the Big Bang and the amount of matter it created.

His work showed that the matter known to us -- such as stars, planets, and ourselves -- only make up five percent, while the other 95 percent are made up of "unknown dark matter and dark energy". In a telephone interview at the press conference, Peebles said that what those elements actually are is still an open question.

"Although the theory is very thoroughly tested, we still must admit that the dark matter and dark energy are mysterious," Peebles said. He also advised young people con-



Didier Queloz

templating a career in science that, while awards were "charming" and "very much appreciated, they should do it for the love of it."

"You should enter science because you are fascinated by it. That's what I did," Peebles, 84, is Albert Einstein Professor of Science at Princeton University in the United States, while Mayor, 77, and Queloz, 53, are both professors at the University of Geneva. Queloz also works at the University of Cambridge in



Michel Mayor

Britain.

Using custom-made instruments at their observatory in southern France in October 1995, Mayor and Queloz were able to detect a gaseous ball similar in size to Jupiter, orbiting a star 50 light years from our own Sun.

Harnessing a phenomenon known as the Doppler effect, which changes the colour of light depending on whether an object is approaching or retreating from Earth, the pair proved the planet,



James Peebles

known as 51 Pegasus b, was orbiting its star.

The Nobel jury noted that the discovery "started a revolution in astronomy" and since then over 4,000 exoplanets have been found in our home galaxy.

"Strange new worlds are still being discovered," challenging our preconceived ideas about planetary systems and "forcing scientists to revise their theories of the physical processes behind the origins of planets".

In a statement, the two astronomers hailed their win as "simply extraordinary", saying the discovery was "the most exciting of our careers".

Professor Martin Rees of the University of Cambridge said this year's awards also seemed to show a "welcome broadening of the Nobel criteria."

"In the past, astronomy has been included primarily when the discovery involves some new physics," Rees said.

The prize consists of a gold medal, a diploma and the sum of nine million Swedish kronor (about \$914,000 or 833,000 euros).

The trio will receive the prize from King Carl XVI Gustaf at a formal ceremony in Stockholm on December 10, the anniversary of the 1896 death of scientist Alfred Nobel who created the prizes in his last will and testament.

In 2018, the honour went to Arthur Ashkin of the US, Gerard Mourou of France and Donna Strickland of the US for laser inventions used for advanced

precision instruments in corrective eye surgery and in industry.

This year's Nobel prize season kicked off on Monday with the Medicine Prize awarded to Americans William Kaelin and Gregg Semenza, and Britain's Peter Ratcliffe.

They were honoured for research into how human cells sense and adapt to changing oxygen levels, which opens up new strategies to fight such diseases as cancer and anaemia.

The winners of this year's Chemistry Prize will be announced on Wednesday.

The Literature Prize will follow on Thursday, with two laureates to be crowned after a sexual harassment scandal forced the Swedish Academy to postpone the 2018 award, for the first time in 70 years. On Friday the action moves to Norway where the Peace Prize is awarded, with bookies such as Ladbrokes backing Swedish teen climate activist Greta Thunberg. The Economics Prize wraps up the Nobel season on Monday, October 14.

Louvre opens huge outpost to protect art from flooding

AP ■ LIEVIN

The Louvre opened a new sprawling art conservation center Tuesday some 200 kilometers from Paris to protect the museum's priceless artworks from its flood-prone storage reserves.

The Louvre Conservation Center in Lievin, northern France, will help protect valuable works from the swelling Seine River as major floods grow more frequent and the riverside museum has found itself lacking safe storage space. Protecting the museum's works -- many of which are out of public view in the belly of the former palace -- has taken on additional urgency in recent years after severe floods in 2016 and 2018 forced the Louvre to evacuate endangered artworks from basements and to close exhibits.



Team USA celebrates winning the gold medal in the women's team final at the Gymnastics World Championships in Stuttgart, Germany on Tuesday. Left is team Russia, silver medal, and right is team Italy, bronze medal. AP

Sri Lanka's ballot paper with extraordinary length of over two feet: EC

PTI ■ COLOMBO

Sri Lankan Election Commission said on Tuesday that plastic ballot boxes would be imported for next month's presidential polls as the ballot paper has an extraordinary length due to a record number of candidates.

A total of 35 candidates would be contesting the presidential poll on November 16 - the highest ever in Sri Lanka's history. "The specimen ballot paper is 26 inches in length," Election Commission chief Mahinda Deshapriya said in a statement. He said that existing ballot boxes might have to be

modified and that larger polling booths would have to be constructed during the election. "There will be 70 polling agents per candidate at each polling station and 175 agents per counting centre," he said.

He said the EC has been forced to make additional steps including importing of plastic ballot boxes. He said that the government will have to incur a cost of more than Rs 4 billion to conduct the poll. These expenses would be utilised to obtain utility and telecommunication services, and also recruit more staff for counting activities and other election-related duties, he added.

Zuma's son says not corrupt, but victim of S African political 'storm'

AFP ■ JOHANNESBURG

The son of South Africa's ex-president Jacob Zuma, accused by witnesses of acting as a conduit in a major web of state graft, said on Tuesday he was not corrupt, but was caught up in political crossfire.

Duduzane Zuma, 35, was testifying before a judicial inquiry probing allegations that his father organised a systematic plunder of government coffers in a scandal known as "state capture". "I'm looked at as a criminal, I'm looked at as this face of corruption, this guy that's plundered trillions out of this country," Zuma said as he wrapped his two-day testimony.

"So I just like to say to the public out there I'm not corrupt,

I have not taken money from anybody. I never have and I never will." He has been named in the media and by various witnesses that have appeared before the inquiry, as having been a channel for the Guptas, a wealthy migrant business family that allegedly had a corrupt relationship with his father. While Zuma was in office, the Guptas won lucrative contracts with state companies and allegedly held sway over his choice of cabinet ministers.

Zuma, whose father was president for nine years before he was forced to resign early last year over the graft scandals, said he believed he was caught up in national political battle.

"We will all be fooling our-

selves to think that there hasn't been political play in the background.

"I believe I'm unfortunately caught in a political storm," he said. Former president Zuma's successor President Cyril Ramaphosa has vowed to tackle corruption in South Africa, which has been led by the ANC party since Nelson Mandela came to power in 1994 after the end of apartheid rule. On Monday, Zuma, who was business partner with the Guptas, dismissed testimonies of previous witnesses, including that of a former deputy

finance minister Mcebisi Jonas, who said he was offered a \$40-million bribe by one of the Gupta brothers Ajay, at a meeting arranged by Duduzane Zuma.

The focus of institutes should be on character building of students instead of singularly stressing on percentage, says JASMINE GANDHI



Numbers don't matter

One can tell that student A is intelligent because he's a wonderful writer, and student B can solve any math problem you give her. It's a shame about student C, though. He's a superb artist but isn't very intelligent. And student D gets along with everyone but isn't very smart.

Unfortunately, this narrow definition of intelligence is heard too often in schools. Because we emphasise standardised test scores, we teach and reinforce success in areas that are subject based tests. However, how we define intelligence makes a philosophical statement about what we value in education.

The educative process guides us through the intricacies of knowledge perception from the social, cultural, moral, spiritual and ethical perspectives and brings understanding through the various modes of critical, analytical, creative, visual and abstract thought process.

In recent years, character building has been emphasised in education from primary school all the way up to further education and beyond. Producing students with good morals,

soft skills and skills for life is signified as an important aim of teaching. In practice, facilitating both character building exercises as well as following the strictures of curriculum is not only challenging but also a tight rope for schools to walk on. One element often falls by the wayside and there is no clear way of countering the imbalance.

Character building frameworks, like the six pillars of character developed by the Josephson Institute of Ethics, help to guide our understanding of where to begin when considering character building in students. The six pillars are trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and citizenship which covers some of the main character criteria which theoretically make students well-rounded.

In the 20th century, two great theories have been put forward in an attempt to interpret human differences and to design educational models around them. Learning style theory has its roots in the psychoanalytical community and is the fruit of cognitive science that focusses not only on subject comprehension but emphasises the development of the personality as well.



WITHOUT GOOD CHARACTER INSTILLED IN A PERSON, EDUCATION BECOMES A BANE. THE BENEFITS OF EDUCATION, WHICH IS TO LIBERATE HUMANS FROM THEIR MISERIES WOULD THEN BE NULLIFIED

Learning style theorists believe that learning is the result of a personal, individualised act of thought and feeling wherein the learner looks for images implied in learning—uses feelings and emotions to construct new ideas and judges the learning process according to its originality, aesthetics, capacity to surprise or delight and the ability to deal with challenging tasks.

Without good character instilled in a person, education becomes a bane, a tool for exploiting fellow human beings. The benefits of education, which is to liberate the humans from their miseries, would be nullified and in fact, the world may become a worse place. The current focus in our school system is a single-minded drive to improve educational attainment. Yet education is much more than a mechanistic process which achieves its highest state with the maximisation of academic performance. Exam success is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for being an educated human being. As human beings, we are not machines but flesh and

blood, with capacious minds, with bodies, with emotions, and with a soul.

To conclude, it would be true to say that learning and understanding concepts are more important than the rat race of getting marks. In fact, in the process of chasing good marks we tend to forget emotional intelligence, social skills and other aspects of education. What we are aiming for is the Holistic Development of a student and not just making them able to acquire degrees. It is not enough for young people to emerge from school with a string of exam passes and for schools to pat themselves on the back, thinking that the box has been ticked and the job done. This is only a part of the whole education journey. Families have a key role in the development of the finished product. Academic attainment and exam success can never be more than part of the story of the profound moral responsibility of schools to children, parents, society and the nation.

The writer is Director, Billabong High International School, Noida

QUOTE OF THE DAY

Education is for improving the lives of others and for leaving your community and world better than you found it
— Marian Wright Edelman

Online live classes is new norm

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Gradeup, a preparatory platform for competitive exams, published a research report with a focus on deeper insight into the preparation patterns of students & benefits and scope of live online learning for students in India. The survey for the report was conducted over the course of three months through email, online surveys, telephonic and personal interactions, with over 10,000 students preparing for competitive exams such as JEE, NEET, Banking, GATE and SSC, amongst others.

The rise of emerging technologies has led to a significant increase in Ed-tech platforms across the globe with millions of students registering to use these. In the Indian context, however, what Gradeup found through extensive research is that, the usage and consumption of the content on these platforms still remains limited owing to gaps in existing learning mechanism and aspirant's needs. This indicated the need for greater engagement to motivate students with continuous, mentored learning.

With these factors in mind, Gradeup launched Gradeup Classroom — Live Classes, to give students a virtual classroom learning experience from the comfort of their homes.

The findings suggest that,

of the students who are currently using offline modes for exam preparation, 70 per cent would shift to online learning if given access to live online classes. Of these, over 80 per cent cited access to expert faculty as the primary reason to make this shift. Additionally, over 90 per cent of the total participating students say that they would choose online modes of learning rather than offline coaching. Factors such as convenience of preparing from home, access to live classes, and cost-benefit are the top three drivers for this choice. Further, 20 per cent of the total number of participants also said they would be willing to pay extra for access to live classes.

The survey further found that 63 per cent amongst those students that prefer online learning would choose live classes for their exam preparation, while a much lower proportion, at 29 per cent, would choose recorded lectures. The foremost reasons students stated for choosing live classes are interactive classes for instant doubt resolution and proper planning through a day-wise study plan. These findings are clear indicators that students are increasingly realising the benefits, and opening up to the idea of taking live online classes for their exam preparation.

Big Bang Edge Test

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

FITJEE on October 5, 2019 announced the launch of Big Bang Edge Test in New Delhi, country's largest assessment for schools students of class V to XI. Over the years, it has emerged as the most preferred assessment platform across India. The aim is to give a major academic thrust to a child in their quest for success.

Speaking at the event, Partha Halder, Centre — Head, FITJEE, North West Delhi said: "Big Bang Edge Test is held in October which is six months ahead of the next academic season, so whatever a child discovers now can start working on it immediately which gets reflected in their performance in the current class and also gets ready for the next class by April. It's a platform through which children can start early and move ahead of others in the competition."

Sport your degree

A career in sports management throws promising opportunities in India and abroad. DR NAYANA NIMKAR tells you how to make it a lucrative option

You're taking the strike, about to face the match's last ball. You need to score a boundary to win the game for your team. The bowler's charging in. He bowls a fiery bouncer at you. You judge the ball well and pull it. The ball's in the air. And your alarm goes off!

This is just one of the many what if scenarios you dream every other day. As a sports enthusiast, you might regret not making it as a successful athlete. But not playing the game doesn't mean you can't be a part of it. There are courses like MBA in Sports Management, which lets you switch to a managerial career in this field. Here are few reasons why you should consider it.

Turn your passion into a career: Instead of taking any job, you would desire a career in a field you're passionate about and would love to live every minute of. Therefore, opting for a career in sports management will not only appeal to the sports enthusiast in you but also to the tagline 'where work meets fun'.

Enjoy diverse opportunities: Contrary to popular belief, a career in sports management is more diverse than just sports event management. You can also pursue careers in other verticals such as



sports marketing and sports technology. If you want to specialise in either of these verticals, you can opt for an MBA in Sports Management.

Be part of a fast-growing industry: In a recent press event, Sanjay Gupta, MD of Star India, attributed the fast growth of India's sports industry by projecting its valuation to 10 billion dollars in the next five-seven years. It reflects the rising interest amongst the audience for sports other than cricket, considered as the most dominant sport. Thus, there is massive scope for you to make a career in sports management in your favourite sport.

The rise in advertisement and sponsorship revenue: In 2018, the Economic Times reported that sports-related advertising and spon-

ship revenue has crossed the \$1 billion mark in India. It shows the amount spent on athletes and teams to market products in the market. As a sports management professional, you can represent your clients in these meetings and seek out the best deal for them. You can also charge a commission for smoothly getting these deals over the line.

Work with high profile clients: The opportunity to work with high-profile athletes is a major draw for a career in sports management. From securing them the best contracts to coordinating their charity events, you will make decisions that benefit your client in every possible way. The competency you show in your decision-making will put you at the top of the management game.

An opportunity to travel worldwide: A career in sports management throws promising opportunities abroad. It could be joining an international sports agency or handling an international sporting event for the current one. Hence, if you love to travel, you are in the right job!

The writer is Director, Symbiosis School of Sports Sciences

Picture perfect career

Photography is one career that may click well for you, says DIVYA CHOUDHARY

There is an instant urge to use our mobile cameras the moment we see something picturesque. By the look of it, everyone is a photographer these days, but photography is a serious business.

Gone are the days, when photographers were the ones whom you would spot only at weddings or special occasions. The boom in e-commerce, social media and people's desire to make an impact on this platform to influence buyers or create personal branding have made photography a lucrative career option. Not only the sphere of practice in photography has increased manifold but it is also a flexible career option, which can be practiced as per one's convenience to make extra money and many times big money. In today's era of blogging and online shopping, photography has become an important component that influences the buyer to make a purchase.

Eligibility: Photography is both a science and an art. Understanding of the lens and the lighting proposition, a person from any discipline can learn photography. An aspirant can learn photography with either a full time or a part-time course. The course duration may vary from 11 months to two years. Candidates who have cleared the Class XII exam are eligible for the diploma/certificate courses in photography.



Average salary: Photography has a category of employment. The first is self-employment and the other is permanent employment. Most of the photographers are self-employed. A project may vary from one-hour job to a full day job or contracts. An average photographer may earn ₹5,000-₹5,00,000 or more for a project, depending on the scope of work, experience and the expertise of a photographer.

Scope of work: There is an immense scope of work, which is limitless. A good photographer can take up international assignments. Some of the notable scopes of work for today's photographers are as follows:

Commercial photography: Such photographers take pictures of merchandise, exterior and interior spaces, hotels, the machinery of factories, products of manufactures for

the brochures. **Wedding photography:** Wedding photography is a very popular and highly lucrative option to earn good money. With the booming wedding business in India, the pre-wedding shoots and weddings shoots get good business opportunities.

Event documentation: These days people and companies like to document their events to post it on social media. Event documentation is a regular source of business.

Advertising & Fashion photography: This is one of the best-paid sectors. Success in this stream depends on ability, efficiency and personality.

If you are adventurous, gregarious, disciplined, curious and have an eye for details photography can be a good career option for you.

The writer is Alumnus, Pearl Academy

Flame ties up for internship

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A total of 55 students from the undergraduate and postgraduate programmes of Flame University will support the global WageIndicator system from the current academic year. WageIndicator Foundation operates websites with wage and labour market information for over 40 million yearly users in 125 countries. All 55 students will be interns for WageIndicator.

This internship will provide them with a platform to learn and upgrade skills needed to convert data into easy to read mini-stories for web visitors and mobile phone users. They will develop management skills, data analysis skills, data visualisation skills and also learn about data and web journalism, content man-

agement, google analytics and SEO.

Students will assist in targeting different occupational groups in India and abroad with tailor-made wage and labour law information. This cooperation is the primary outcome of an agreement between the university and WageIndicator Foundation, which led to setting up of the WageIndicator Research Lab at the university.

"The internship provides an opportunity for the students to gain practical experience in real-life research initiatives. While working on softwares like STATA, SPSS, Tableau, PLONE and Google Analytics, they will collaborate with the global team of WageIndicator and observe their culture and management styles", said Prof Rupa Korde, Faculty of Economics, Flame University.

Coursera's new offering

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Coursera, an online learning platform, on October 3, 2019 announced Coursera for Campus — a new offering designed to help universities around the world respond to the unprecedented challenges posed by the fourth industrial revolution. Now any university — even those outside of Coursera's partner ecosystem — can use content on Coursera to deliver job-relevant, multi-disciplinary online learning to its learners. The universities will have

access to more than 3,600 high-quality courses that they can use to integrate into their curricula, offer credit-eligible and supplemental learning to their current students and deliver lifelong learning to their alumni, faculty and staff. Universities will also be able to use the world-class tools to author content and assessments, Coursera Labs for hands-on projects, and learning analytics to improve and track learner outcomes.

Coursera's 2019 Global Skills Index found that two-thirds of the world's population is falling

behind in critical skills.

Higher education globally is gearing up to address this crisis, but many universities are constrained by the capacity of their on-campus programmes and the challenge of recruiting expert faculty required to launch new programmes.

"Millions of job seekers will enter the workforce in the coming years, but higher education in many countries finds it difficult to deliver the skills students need in the age of AI and automation," said Jeff Maggioncalda, CEO of Coursera.

Transforming streets

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Ansal University in partnership with HKS Architects and key stakeholders including GDMA, MCG, Haryana Forest Department, Gurgaon Haryana Police and Rapid Metro, held an official ground-breaking event, right outside the university premises. The event focused on transformational street improvement that bolstered pedestrian safety and remodelling of the corridor that connects Golf Course Road and Ansal University Road.

The event was a part of a students' project that transforms the road facing the university into a pedestrian-friendly street through civic engagement facilitated by a collaborative association between students of Sushant School of Art and Architecture, Sushant School of Planning and Development and Sushant School of Design, of Ansal University.

The primary objective of this project was to promote ownership of the street and public spaces in the neighbourhood.



Hiring is the essence of progress for any industry and when considering a country that has a population of 1.2 billion, manpower should be the least of the issues. Yet, India suffers from a shortage of employability, as the majority of the youths stand unemployed, affecting the hiring and human resources trends greatly.

PRESENT SCENARIO

Unfortunately, the twist in the tale keeps getting complicated as instead of being an asset, human resource in our country is slowly declining into a liability.

The comparison is stark-India has the 7th largest economy in the world, growing at more than 7% rate and yet, it is dragging along a stagnant job market, which spells death-knell to growth and progress. Government data shows that the number of students passing from colleges is at least five times greater than the number of students getting placed. What the nation has forgotten is that the betterment of the youth of a nation should be treated as making a long-term investment which will yield results in future. But in order to bear fruit, one has to take care and nurture the plant- you reap what you sow.

UNDERSTANDING THE GAP

The actual number of

Evolved hiring is key

To have the skills to match the job profile, it is important to change recruitment policies, says RACHIT JAIN

unemployed youth in India is more than 31 million according to the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE). Youth4work, a path-breaking agency providing end-to-end solutions for professionals and employers, has skill tested the profiles of 3105423 users from all States of India.

However, the total number of jobs listed is 44970, which proves that the number of jobs isn't rising as per the requirement. This gap between job seekers and available jobs will get wider if we add the number

of fresh graduates entering the job market and immigrants coming in search of jobs from other cities.

SOCIAL MEDIA HIRING

Older, staid practices in hiring have also been a problem that the nation has been facing. With stagnant practices, the majority of the employers failed to lure in the right talent for their positions. Here social-media will play an important role, with its ever-evolving characteristic. Social Media enhances the outreach, helping

HRs to tap a larger number of candidates while eliminating the biases the recruiters often have.

TRAINING HELPS

Skilling is also an issue that the nation is heavily lacking in. With an undue focus on rote learning, students are kept in a blindside, far away from the right kind of knowledge and training that they really require. Artificial as well as virtual reality makes the content and mode of learning more engaging, helping students learn easier.

Visual cues, set in simulations are an engaging way to learn and disseminate information and hence should be considered as a worthy asset.

Corporate training will be aided by VR and AR for better understanding to employees, teaching them the nuances in a more real-time setting. Also, with the help of such technologies, HR departments can conduct webinars and conferences to counter stress and promote corporate wellness as well as teaching new joiners the essence of the organisation.

AN EDGE

There are many dedicated education players and marketplace models leveraging technology to fit the right candidates to job profile requirements. Digital platforms like Youth4work.com direct today's highly competitive youth on the right career path.

The platform encourages and guides the youth to help them grow in their respective fields.

They offer online courses, certification, and train students to get high scores in competitive examinations. They ensure that their investment in skill development and education is optimized for maximum job market penetration, helping the young stay employable and relevant in an increasingly demanding market.

The writer is Founder-CEO, Youth4Work

Humility is the dress of a true leader

In order to be a leader, it is important to make an impact on those you meet. Being modest is the key to going far in professional life, says DR VIKRAM A MUNSHI

Is there a dress code for leadership? If yes, what comes to your mind? Is it a sharp unisex business suit, or smart casuals with an open shirt, a sari or even an ensemble of jeans and a black turtle-neck? Those are the external packaging of a human body, which makes the body presentable and acceptable in its environment. What we are talking about is the packaging of leadership that makes it presentable and acceptable.

As a consultant and a coach, I meet people at various roles and responsibilities. Meeting CXOs, vice-presidents, junior managers, business heads, peons, executive assistants, I try to connect behavioural traits seen in leaders in people who are aspiring to be leaders. Based on these observations and interactions over the past 25 years, the dress code of leadership is — humility.

Let us not confuse humility with servility. The context of humility here is a lack of vanity. Why should humility (lack of vanity) be the dress code of leadership and not other adjectives like integrity and competence?

Vanity is agnostic to social strata, hierarchy, education and even organization type. In my opinion, vanity comes when we achieve something more than what we imagined we ever could. Whether it's the newly promoted bank clerk or even the young Turk VP of a private company, both may be "undressed" for leadership.

Humility arises from a self-perspective of not only what has one achieved but also the realisation that one's potential is greater than the achievement to date. This is a very critical point and at first go, it may even seem paradoxical to the concept of humility but it is this point that makes humility in leaders such a driving force.

A leader who exhibits humility indicates that he or she has set high goals for one and is not going to rest until they are achieved. This growth mindset will make the leader see her team as a catalyst or partners in the growth story. As a consequence, both the team and therefore the leader will grow.

A leader or a person, who is vain, is not good news for the team or the organisation. There are two impacts of vanity on leadership. Vanity is one of the biggest barriers to learning. Vanity is the manifestation of complacency and complacency is the precursor to stagnancy and decay, not only for self but also for the entire team.

Second, we all know that a leader should



Dr Vikram A Munshi
Founder, WhiteSpace Consulting & Capability Building

be a good listener. But more often than not you can observe that an 'undressed' leader is a poor listener. Unfortunately, in the era of soaring aspirations, in most places, humility takes a back seat to vanity and ego.

An 'undressed' leader is easy to spot. Just watch them how they behave with people less fortunate or powerful than them; like the security guard in their office, the parking attendant, and the waiter at the restaurant. Even in a social gathering, you will see these 'undressed' leaders' having a know-all attitude.

At this point, it is also worth mentioning, that both vanity and humility are independent of the official designation of the person or any other common measures of leadership that we use. The desire to learn and the behaviour with people less fortunate or powerful become two powerful indicators of humility or vanity.

Humility that stems from high standards and goals set for one and backed with self-awareness of progress made to date and the journey remaining is a powerful driving force of transformation in individuals, teams, and organisations.

In today's competitive and dynamic world where Gen Z believes in taking the plunges quickly, it is imperative to ensure that your wardrobe contains humility — the dress code for leadership for a successful long run.

In the last 10 years, there has been unprecedented growth in all facets of our global society. People who use to connect with each other on voice phones, can now connect on video calls, people who use to refer to Encyclopedia to acquire any information, now use Wikipedia.

Advance technologies like IoT, Artificial Intelligence, Robotics, Nanotechnology are not only taking away logic-based jobs, but have also started to impact the creative job market.

Technology is changing the way we think, work and live in our society. These changes are happening all around us with a speed which we can never imagine. On one side, where technology is making our world smaller and on the other it

is substituting for human mind, as never before. Not far are the days when Machines will be ruling the world.

The relevance and existence of global education system — schools and colleges — is under a severe threat. Already all information is available to the next generation on their technology platforms, this has initiated a debate on the existing education system and its relevance in today's time.

Despite of attending their classes in schools and colleges, Gen-Y in today's time is acquiring most of the information for their academics from internet and so are their teachers. There are children who have written 'To hell with school...' on their Facebook status, haven't gone to school for days and years, but are writing games for big gaming

MINDIT

companies. There are children who are studying in grade six and doing advance coding in Python. How are they doing all this? Where are they learning all this from?

Youtube recently announced to fund \$20 million for education content, Why? It is because, Youtube is the most used technology platform for training, learning and personal development. Online courses are slowly taking away the market share from traditional educational institutes.

In India e-learning market size was \$ 247 million with about 1.6 million users in 2016, this has expected to reach \$1.96

billion with about 9.6 Million users by 2021 (Source: VC Circle). Do you still think we need to ask where is this new generation learning from?

Our belief system still forces young minds to walk in the same rut. Government education policies instead of thinking forward, are rather looking behind and adamant to practice old age education system in the name of preserving culture. Our best of the technical colleges, are struggling to get faculty with new and contemporary technology skills.

Course structures are unable to match

pace with the changes in our society. They seem to have tied a knot in the iron rod.

You know the best part. Gen-Y doesn't bother to wait for the change, as they themselves are the Change. They are fast to acquire skills and capabilities required to achieve what they want in life.

Their best friend is technology which provides them access to all information, skills, certifications, faculty and related career opportunities. This has empowered them and therefore, the need for going to schools and colleges is also going down. The schools and colleges which in today's time have stringent admissions criteria shall strive to get students to their campus in the future.

It is high time that the government and related education bodies should go back to

their drawing boards and do a research on the changes in society with a futuristic view. The changes that technology is bringing to the society should be considered and the next generation should be supported to explore new avenues to not only acquire skills and capabilities of their choice, but also be given a relaxation in the way they want to do it.

We all have to learn to walk in pace with the changes happening to our society or else we will be left behind. There is a pertinent need to untie the knot in this iron rod as otherwise, it will catch rust and become irrelevant for any further use.

The writer is Achal Sharma, author of CorePeelers: A Journey To You Core. He is also a coach and a speaker



The Government of Canada launched the Vanier Canada graduate funding opportunities (Vanier CGS) programme in 2008 to strengthen Canada's ability to attract and retain world-class doctoral students and establish Canada as a global center of excellence in research and higher learning.

The scholars demonstrate leadership skills and a high standard of scholarly achievement in graduate studies in the social sciences and/or humanities, natural sciences and/or engineering and health.

International students can apply

Eligibility: Confirm that you and your nominating institution meet all the criteria below before you apply for a Vanier Canada Graduate Scholarship. Be nominated by only one Canadian institution, which must have received a Vanier CGS quota; Be pursuing your first doctoral degree (including joint undergraduate/graduate research programmes like: MD/PhD, DVM/PhD, JD/PhD – if it has a demonstrated and significant research component); Intend to pursue, in the

summer semester or the academic year following the announcement of results, full-time doctoral (or a joint graduate programmes like: MD/PhD, DVM/PhD, JD/PhD) studies and research at the nominating institution; Note that only the PhD portion of a combined degree is eligible for funding;

Not have completed more than 20 months of doctoral studies as of May 1, 2019;

Have achieved a first-class average, as determined by your institution, in each of the last two years of full-time study or equivalent.

Candidates are encouraged to contact the institution for its definition of a first-class average; and Must not hold, or have held, a doctoral-level scholarship or fellowship from CIHR, NSERC or SSHRC to undertake or complete a doctoral degree.

English language requirements: Applicants from outside the home country will often need to meet specific English language requirements in order to be able to study there.

Award: Each Vanier Canada Graduate award is valued at \$50,000 per year.

How to apply: The mode of applying is online. **Application deadline:** The last date to apply is November 6, 2019

STUDY CENTRES

Corporate training is an education programme that has been designed to improve the skills of existing or new executives. It is a training method that prepare an employee to fit into a new job. Today, almost all companies conduct training and induction programmes for the employees to train them about the latest technologies at the work-place.

The organisations hire a corporate trainer to teach topics like communications, leadership, presentation, planning and organising skills, client relationship management, business writing etiquette, and other job-specific functional and technical skills. No specific license, degree or certificate is required to become a corporate trainer, a degree however will take you places. A few colleges where one can study are:

- **University of Lucknow:** Institute of Management Sciences, Lucknow. **Course:** MBA Corporate Management
- **Jaksh Institute of Digital Marketing,** Pune. **Course:** Corporate Training
- **Center of Excellence for Professional Development,** Vishakapatnam. **Course:** Corporate Training
- **Web Marketing Academy,** Bengaluru. **Course:** Corporate Training
- **State Institute of Educational Management and Training,** Dehra Dun. **Course:** Corporate Training
- **Indian Institute of Training and Development,** Pune. **Course:** Corporate Training



GRAPHIC DESIGN AT LEVERAGE EDU

Location: Delhi
Stipend: ₹5,000-₹7,000 per month
Link: internshala.com/i/1738183
Application deadline: October 17, 2019

CONTENT WRITING AT INTERNSHALA

Location: Gurugram
Stipend: ₹20,000 per month
Link: internshala.com/i/1738184
Application deadline: October 31, 2019

RESEARCH (ECONOMICS) AT KOAN ADVISORY

Location: Delhi
Stipend: ₹5,000-₹10,000 per month
Link: internshala.com/i/1738185
Application deadline: October 18, 2019

MARKETING AT SOLUTIONING AUTOMATION AND MECHANIZATION CORPORATION

Location: Work From Home
Stipend: ₹5,000-₹7,000 per month
Link: internshala.com/i/1738186
Application deadline: October 17, 2019

WEB DEVELOPMENT AT WEB CONVERTS

Location: Bengaluru
Stipend: ₹7,000 per month
Link: internshala.com/i/1738180
Application deadline: October 31, 2019

OPERATIONS/CORPORATE RESERVATIONS AT CREENCIA TECHNOLOGIES

Location: Bengaluru
Stipend: ₹17,000 per month
Link: internshala.com/i/1738181
Application deadline: October 18, 2019

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT (SALES) AT CHAMPION INFOMETRICS

Location: Bengaluru
Stipend: ₹5,000-₹8,000 per month
Link: internshala.com/i/1738182
Application deadline: October 18, 2019

IN BRIEF

DOCTORS NEEDED IN GERMANY

In Europe, Germany has always been a sought after destination for education. The good news is unlike other countries like Ukraine, Philippines and China which attract hundreds of students for medical studies but are not able to provide jobs, in Germany they are in demand. More than 35% of the German population is above 55 years. The need to make up for skill

shortages in specialist areas means that there are lots of opportunities for qualified doctors to find work here. Second, the country, on an average, needs 6000 doctors annually. To validate please log on to www.make-it-in-germany.com.

Third, the speciality course in Germany in medicine are on the job training courses. When an MBBS targets for Germany he pursues the speciality while working in the best

medical facilities under the guidance of best of the specialists.

Fresh MBBS graduates from India can earn minimum Euro 48,000 annually while pursuing speciality. By the time it gets completed the salary gets double as well. However, the medical profession is strictly regulated and there are some conditions for international doctors.

The doctor needs to clear the German Medical Licensing Exam. This exam when compared to MCI is easier. Learning German and the field specific terminology in the language makes one eligible or trained to clear this licensing exam. The attainment of this license allows the young doctors to work as assistants and with time apply for speciality as well.

There are permanent residency options after three years of full-time job and equal treatment and opportunity.

Any doctor or nurse looking to going to Germany can log on to www.thecalculustgroup.com or contact us at info@calculusindia.com to know more.

SCHOLARSHIPS FOR NMAT BY GMAC TEST TAKERS

The Graduate Management Admission Council (GMAC), owner and administrator of the NMAT by GMAC exam, in collaboration with nine leading B-schools announced exclusive scholarships for NMAT by GMAC test takers for admissions to their flagship MBA programmes.

The NMAT by GMAC registrations with late registrations close on October 14. This is a great opportunity for students to avail

these scholarships being offered by leading B-Schools.

Candidates can schedule the NMAT by GMAC exam basis convenience and ease in the 75-day testing window from October 4 to December 14, 2019.

Aspirants can visit <http://www.nmat.org.in/scholarship/> for additional details about the scholarships and check the application criterion for each school.

AAKASH STUDENTS SHINE

In a path-breaking result, 1,421 students from Aakash Institute, the national leader in test preparatory services, have qualified the prestigious Pre-Regional Mathematical Olympiad Programme (PRMO). Resulting in a whopping 77% rise from 2018 when 800 students had been selected, registering one of the highest growths in the test preparation sector in the country for PRMO.

The number of selections from the institute for PRMO have been steadily rising for the past few years. 2018's 800 selections were a 100% rise from 2017 when 400 students had been selected for the Olympiad, a testimony of the innovative teaching methodology, curriculum and faculty at Aakash Institute. A graphical representation of the increase in PRMO selections from 2017-19 has been appended with the release for your reference.

Commenting on the impressive results, Aakash Chaudhry, Co-promoter-CEO at Aakash Educational Services Ltd, said: "The result this year has gone beyond all expectations. Congratulations to all our students who have performed well in the PRMO exam 2019. The credit goes to the hard work put in by our students and faculties as well as the quality test preparation imparted at Aakash. I wish them all the best for the future."

The PRMO is the stage 1 of the International Mathematical Olympiad (IMO). It is a three-hour exam with 30 questions held in different centres across India. On the basis the performance of students in the PRMO, qualified students from Classes VIII-XII then move on to the next stage which is the Regional Mathematical Olympiad.

Murray to play at Aus Open 2020

AFP ■ MELBOURNE

Andy Murray will make his Grand Slam return at the Australian Open in January, a year after career-saving hip surgery, tournament organisers announced Tuesday.

The British three-time major winner has been slowly working his way back to fitness and is now ranked 289th, up from 503rd just a week ago.

Murray, 32, won his opening match at the Shanghai Masters on Monday, beating Argentine qualifier Juan Ignacio Londero in three sets, following a quarter-final appearance in Beijing last week.

With his confidence seemingly growing by the day, Australian Open organisers said the former world number one had committed to extending his comeback into the majors in January.

"Confirmed: Andy Murray will return to compete at the #AusOpen in 2020," they tweeted.

The official Australian Open website said Murray "will return to the main draw with a protected ranking of number two and restored physical powers".

He has made the final five times at Melbourne Park, losing four times to Novak Djokovic and once to Roger Federer. However, arguably his most heartbreaking moment at the season-opening Grand Slam came not on the court but at an emotional press conference before this year's tournament.

Murray broke down in tears describing



ing how the pain in his right hip, which had been operated on six months earlier, had become unbearable.

"I can play with limitations. But having the limitations and the pain is not allowing me to enjoy competing or training," he said, later revealing that even walking his dog had become a gruelling ordeal. Tributes flowed for the well-liked

Scot, with Billie Jean King called him "a champion on and off court".

Players also farewelled him in an emotional video screened on centre court after he lost an epic five-setter to Roberto Bautista Agut, with most believing his Grand Slam career was over.

"It's very sad that you have to take that position, but sometimes life is not per-

fect," Rafael Nadal said. "I just want to say thanks for the things that you gave to our sport."

But the match against Bautista Agut rekindled Murray's competitive spark and he opted to fight on and undergo hip resurfacing surgery.

American doubles legend Bob Bryan had endured the procedure — which

involves inserting an artificial hip implant with a rod that goes right down to the femur — and warned Murray there would be no easy road back.

"No one's ever come back with this surgery on the singles court," he said at the time, adding that if anyone could do it a renowned fighter like Murray was prime candidate.

Murray said after his win over Londero that his movement on the court felt like it was steadily improving.

"In the beginning I didn't necessarily feel good, but last couple of weeks have been I think much improved," he said.

In 2013, Murray became the first British man to win Wimbledon for 77 years, ending the nation's obsession with finding a champion to follow in the footsteps of Fred Perry.

He repeated the feat in 2016, adding to a glittering career that also includes the 2012 US Open, two Olympic gold medals and 45 ATP crowns.

Australian Open organisers hope there will be another blast from the past if Belgium's Kim Clijsters can meet her goal of taking to the court again in January after an absence of more than seven years.

A crowd favourite in Melbourne, the 36-year-old retired to have a family but made a surprise announcement last month that she was making a comeback in 2020. Clijsters has won four Grand Slams, including the 2011 Australian Open.



Djokovic heaps praise on Medvedev

AFP ■ SHANGHAI

World number one Novak Djokovic hailed Daniil Medvedev as a "very complete player" on Tuesday, having lost to the young Russian in their last two matches.

The 23-year-old Medvedev is at a career-high fourth in the world and reached the final at the US Open, only to be on the end of an agonising five-set loss to Rafael Nadal.

Medvedev has won three titles this year including beating Djokovic on the way to claiming victory at the Masters in Cincinnati in August.

"The last several months he's been playing the tennis of his life," Djokovic said at the Shanghai Masters, where he is the defending champion.

"He's played finals at least in every event in the

last whatever, five, six events, which is amazing."

The 32-year-old from Serbia, who could again face Medvedev in the Shanghai semi-finals, said it was hard to find a weakness in the Russian's game.

"He's improved his movement, his fitness. He's got the big serve, he's got the height and he uses angles very well," said Djokovic.

"Backhand — hard to break that backhand, it's very flat.

"He doesn't make many mistakes and he can hit anything he wants from that corner.

"Forehand maybe has been his weaker side, but now he's improved that, so he's a very complete player."

Medvedev, seeded three, starts his Shanghai Masters later Tuesday against Britain's Cameron Norrie.

Fognini packs Murray's bags



AFP ■ SHANGHAI

Andy Murray went down in a bruising three-set defeat to 12th-ranked Italian Fabio Fognini on Tuesday at the Shanghai Masters.

In a bad-tempered match that stretched past three hours, the two players confronted one another near the end at the crossover.

Fognini plays the unseeded American Taylor Fritz or Russian seventh seed Karen Khachanov in the last 16 after a 7-6 (7/4), 2-6, 7-6 (7/2) victory.

It came hours after the Australian Open said the former number one Murray will make his return to Grand Slam tennis in January, a year after a career-saving hip operation.

The 32-year-old Briton says that his hip is now fine but he needs to build up his match fitness and speed across the court.

The three-time Grand Slam winner will be pleased at how he was able to go toe-to-toe with Fognini even as the match clock ticked past three tough hours on court.

But he will be kicking

himself for failing to put Fognini away when he was serving for the match at 6-5 in the third set.

The 32-year-old Fognini and Murray had a lengthy exchange at the net and bad blood boiled between them throughout.

They shared the briefest of handshakes at the end.

Murray, who generally looked more relaxed than he did in victory on Monday, was two points from winning the first set.

But the colourful Fognini fought back to level the set at 6-6, then edged the tie break.

He appeared to switch off in the second set, allowing Murray to level. The deciding third set was punishing, taking 22 minutes to play just two games.

Despite the defeat, Murray's comeback is going better than even he expected.

He reached his first singles quarter-final in a year at last week's China Open, defeating 13th-ranked US Open semi-finalist Matteo Berrettini on the way.

Two weeks ago in Zhuhai, southern China, Murray won his first ATP Tour singles match since surgery.

Bopanna-Shapovalov in last 16



PTI ■ SHANGHAI

India's Rohan Bopanna and his partner Denis Shapovalov entered the quarterfinals of the Shanghai Masters doubles event with a straight-set win over Russian pair of Karen Khachanov and Andrey Rublev here on Tuesday.

The Indo-Canadian pair notched up a 6-1, 6-4 win over Khachanov and Rublev in the opening round

The Indo-Canadian pair notched up a 6-1, 6-4 win over Khachanov and Rublev in the opening round.

The duo will now face the winner of the match between the pair of Borna Coric of Croatia and Runhao Hua of China and Polish-Brazilian combination of Lukasz Kubot and Marcelo Melo.

AFP ■ DORTMUND

Schweinsteiger calls time on career

Bastian Schweinsteiger is welcome to join the Germany coaching staff, national team coach Joachim Loew said just hours before the veteran midfielder announced his retirement on Tuesday.

"The time has now come and I will be finishing my active career at the end of the season," Schweinsteiger

wrote on Twitter. "Saying goodbye as an active player makes me feel a little nostalgic, but I am also looking forward to the exciting challenges that await me." The 35-year-old former Bayern Munich and Manchester United midfielder has effectively hung up his boots as his current

team Chicago Fire team failed to make the MLS play-offs. Shortly before Tuesday's announcement on social media by Schweinsteiger, Loew said the midfielder could join his staff.

"We will always have a place for him," said Loew in Dortmund where

Germany are preparing to host Argentina in a friendly on Wednesday. "I don't know what his plans are," he said, adding "any player who has ever played in the national team, and has the goal of being a coach, is always welcome here to get a taste of what it's like."

Stimac wants to try max No of players in NEUFC friendly

PTI ■ GUWAHATI

Indian national football team head coach Igor Stimac on Tuesday said that he will try out as many players as possible in the friendly match against Indian Super League side NorthEast United FC here on Wednesday.

Stimac said the match will be a good preparation for India's FIFA World Cup second round qualifier against Bangladesh to be played in Kolkata on October 15.

"We're very happy to have got a chance to play against Northeast United FC. This game will serve us very well to prepare for the Bangladesh match," Stimac said.

"I feel it will be a competitive game. It's a chance for my players to prove themselves and to earn a place in the team. It'll be nice to try as many players as possible. I expect them to do best to their abilities," he added. The team is currently in a



preparatory camp here for the match against Bangladesh.

Northeast United FC coach Robert Jarni was a former national teammate of Stimac and both were part of the Croatian side which finished third in the 1998 FIFA World Cup.

"It'll be a great pleasure for both of us. He was a fantastic player and a great coach as well. I wish him all the best for a successful career with Northeast United FC," Stimac commented.

"Back home, we face each other every day as we stay only 200 meters away. I see him while going to the market, the bank every time. But, I have never faced him as the opponent coach, it'll be an interesting battle for us surely," he said.

Stimac had summoned 29 players for the preparatory camp initially, but Jerry Lalrinzuala was not able to join the camp owing to some fitness issues.

Milan set to sack Giampaolo



AFP ■ MILAN

AC Milan are set to sack coach Marco Giampaolo after a dreadful start to the season, according to multiple reports in Italy on Tuesday.

The former European giants are 13th in Serie A — three points above the relegation zone. Giampaolo, 52,

replaced Gennaro Gattuso during the summer, but the former Sampdoria boss has suffered four defeats in his first seven games, including a 2-0 loss to city rivals Inter.

Milan went on to lose their next two matches against Torino and Fiorentina before last weekend's 2-1 victory at Genoa.

Former Inter Milan coach Luciano Spalletti is the 18-time Italian champions' first choice to replace Giampaolo, according to Gazzetta Dello Sport and Sky Sport Italia.

However, the 60-year-old has not been able to agree severance terms with Inter, who he guided back to the Champions League the past two seasons, and remains under contract until 2021, despite being replaced by Antonio Conte.

Former Inter and Fiorentina coach Stefano Pioli is now reported to be the favourite to take over the former seven-time European champions, who won their last title in Serie A in 2011.

Pioli previously coached Inter during the 2016-17 campaign and has reportedly been in the running to take over at struggling Genoa.

Former Roma and Marseille manager Rudi Garcia has also been touted among the possible candidates.

AC Milan finished fifth last season but lost their Europa League berth after accepting a European ban for breaching financial fair play rules.

NAVIN UPADHYAY ■ NEW DELHI

Another major scandal is all set to rock the Indian chess just days after Arjuna awardee and country's second Grandmaster Dibyendu Barua flagged alleged major irregularities committed by the 'ousted' West Bengal Chess Association secretary Atanu Lahiri, who is also joint secretary of the All India Chess Federation (AICF).

In the eye of the storm this time is Manoj Itkelwar, vice president of the AICF, who has also been part of the Indian chess delegations in several major international events. Facing serious charges of alleged financial and ethical improprieties leveled by Dilip Pagay, a well-known player, administrator, and former General Secretary of the Maharashtra Chess Association, Itkelwar recently sent in his resignation to AICF president PR Venketramma Raja.

The AICF, which in the past disaffiliated state chess association at the drop of a hat and sang paens on ethics and morality in chess, has looked the other way and referred the resignation to its council that will meet in

Delhi on October 20.

It remains a mystery why Itkelwar's resignation was not accepted even when he is facing such serious charges, which were first highlighted eight years ago by AICF vice president DV Sundar himself. Anyone familiar with the working of the AICF will know that Sundar is the last word in most of the important decisions taken by the AICF. In 2011, Sundar had forwarded an e-mail to several chess players and officials in which serious charges of financial and ethical improprieties were made against Itkelwar.

It's obvious that since he first highlighted those charges in 2011, Sundar's equation changed with Itkelwar. They have frequently shared dais and been at best of terms in public. But the charges refuse to go away. Dilip Pagay picked up the baton abandoned by Sundar and is determined to bring the matter to a logical conclusion.

Pagay has repeatedly asked the AICF president to allow him to attend the AICF council meeting so that he could present evidences to back his cases against Itkelwar. Last

Another scandal set to rock Indian chess as AICF vice-president puts in his paper

week, he shot off another letter to the AICF president once again pleading for a chance to present his case before the AICF central council on October 15 in Delhi.

Stating that he was happy that Manoj Itkelwar has finally put in his papers, Pagay expressed surprise that the resignation has not been accepted, and it was placed as an agenda item for the AICF Central Council meeting under the head: "Manoj Itkelwar resignation — To discuss and decide."

"I feel my complaint should be part of the agenda and I should be given a chance to present my case, which was denied even during the June 2019 AICF central council meeting," he wrote.

"I have been given to understand that efforts are on to consider my complaint to you against him as an intimidation and reject his resigna-

tion. If this happens, it will be a one-sided decision without hearing the complainant. The presence of Mr Itkelwar in the World Youth Chess Championship on the stage together with Mr Sundar gives credence to the claim that his resignation is a mere eyewash," he wrote.

"I wonder who will take the responsibility, either you as an AICF President or Mr Sundar, who controls the AICF, or the AICF Central Council if I manage to prove my allegations in the future against Mr Itkelwar after campaign to reject his resignation succeeds," he added.

Pagay asked Raja not to consider his letter as a gimmick but a genuine effort to save AICF from future ignominy because a whistleblower like him is only trying to help the game of chess.

In another letter on May 22, Pagay had said, that he had evidence



— documents, photographs and videos of financial and ethical mismanagement by Itkelwar which he would like to present to the AICF Council personally.

"To facilitate this, my humble request to you is to include this as an agenda item of the next AICF Council and grant me the permission to attend the next Council meeting. To the best of my knowledge,

former and present AICF/FIDE officials are aware of all this mismanagement but no action has been initiated yet against him," he had written.

Ironically, last year when AICF actively backed some 'elements' to stage a coup against official of All Bihar Chess Association soon after they hosted a National Junior and national premier championship in

a grand manner, the complainants were invited to present their charges in the AICF council. Why is Pagay not given the same privilege? Has AICF different rules for different people?

When contacted AICF secretary Bharat Singh Chuahan washed his hands off the whole affair, saying the matter was before the Central council. When asked why the AICF president didn't accept Itkelwar's resignation when he is facing such charges, Chuahan said he can't answer for the President.

On his part, Pagay is determined to take this matter to its logical ends. "I've more than enough materials to prove my case. The charges against Itkelwar are mind boggling. Sundar himself endorsed them in 2011," said Pagay.

"Can such a person continue to hold the office of AICF vice president? I'm determined to expose the people who have allowed him to hold such an office," he told *The Pioneer*.

With Pagay ready to bring the evidences in public, the world of Indian chess is set to be rocked by yet another scandal.



We don't ask for favourable tracks: Bharat Arun

Indian bowling coach says he's proud that Indian pacers skill set has nullified pitch factor

PTI ■ PUNE

The current Indian bowling attack has been lethal for a considerable length of time and coach Bharat Arun is happy that his wards have nullified the pitch factor with their amazing skill set and consistency.

Mohammed Shami's superb second innings effort in the first Test against South Africa in Visakhapatnam on a low and slow track which was supposed to aid spinners has been the talk of the town as much as Ravichandran Ashwin's seven-wicket haul when conditions were more conducive for batting.

"We don't ask for the kind of wickets that we get. For us to be the No. 1 team in the world, any conditions that come your way, you have to accept it as home conditions," Arun, who has done phenomenal job with the bowling unit, told reporters on Tuesday.

The mantra is on developing the skills rather than become a slave of the conditions, said Arun.

"When we go abroad, we hardly look at the wicket. We say that we are going to look at it as home conditions as wicket (track) is same for both teams. We are going to work on our bowling rather than looking at the wicket," the former India seamer said.

While he is happy that his pacers have performed even on the flattest of tracks, Arun finds it difficult to digest when people criticise sub-continental tracks that offer turn.

"When we get seaming tracks abroad, we get to hear that 'Oh Indians should learn to play on seaming track'. Seaming tracks are considered to be good tracks, but whereas if there is a track that assists spin, you say 'oh, how can you spin the ball on day 1'."

"When the ball seams, you accept it but when the ball turns

you don't accept it," the paradox baffles Arun.

However, as the top side in world cricket, Arun said conditions are secondary in their endeavour to remain the best in the business.

"Ideally, a normal wear and tear wicket for Test match is fine but if you want to be No. 1 team in the world, you can't be looking at wickets. You got to look at the bowling, adapt your bowling instantaneously for success."

He then provided Shami's example of how pure skills and technical knowledge can seal it in challenging conditions.

"In the last game, even though the wicket was abrasive, the ball did not reverse that much, what normally happens on Indian wickets. You then adjust your line and length when the ball is not reversing," he said.

"The particular wicket that we played the last game tended to keep a bit low and we realised it has to be more stump line and not outside the off-stump. Shami got four out of his five wickets bowled, so the line changed. Now, the quicker a bowler becomes aware of what is happening, chances of success increase," said Arun.

The freedom given by skipper Virat Kohli to the pacers on how much they want to bowl has also been a key to success, opined Arun.

"Different bowlers are dealt with differently. Bumrah and Shami come in short bursts but Ishant bowls a longer spell — about 7 overs. Shami has in fact said in one of his interviews that captain lets them do what they want. "He (Kohli) gives freedom to choose whether they want to bowl a short spell or a long spell. Bowlers are aware how they could be a lot more effective and they convey this to the captain," said Arun.

"WE DON'T ASK FOR THE KIND OF WICKETS THAT WE GET. FOR US TO BE THE NO. 1 TEAM IN THE WORLD, ANY CONDITIONS THAT COME YOUR WAY, YOU HAVE TO ACCEPT IT AS HOME CONDITIONS,"



SA is comfortable being uncomfortable: Muthusamy

PTI ■ PUNE

The South African players have been constantly pushed out of their comfort zone by a dominant India, a challenge that rookie all-rounder Senuran Muthusamy is relishing every moment.

Muthusamy had a decent Test debut in Visakhapatnam with scores of 33 and 49 not out apart from prize wicket of Indian captain Virat Kohli.

"We are still looking to grow as a side and enjoy being uncomfortable. No matter how you look at it, the guys are comfortable being uncomfortable and keep getting better," Muthusamy said.

The 25-year-old from Durban feels that he is on "right track" as far as his Test debut is concerned.

"I would have ideally wanted to win my first Test and make an impact with bat and ball but it really wasn't to be. I will take the start and hopefully try to do well if I am in the team for the next match," he said.

"If not, I will back the boys. I am sure we will look to carry the momentum. I am on the right track as I was fortunate to get some good time out in the middle."

Smith, Warner back for T20s



AFP ■ SYDNEY

Steve Smith and David Warner completed their return from the wilderness Tuesday when Australia recalled them to a 14-man Twenty20 squad to play Sri Lanka and Pakistan with a firm eye on next year's World Cup.

The star batsmen were both banned for a year for their roles in a ball-tampering scandal but have returned to Australia's Test, one-day and now Twenty20 sides.

"We are delighted to welcome Steve Smith and David Warner back into the T20 international fold," chief selector Trevor Hohns said. "Steve is a world-class batsman in all formats, while Warner is Australia's highest ever T20I runs scorer. He was also the leading runs scorer at this year's Indian Premier League with Sunrisers Hyderabad."

The Twenty20 squad named Tuesday will face Sri Lanka and Pakistan in coming weeks but Hohns said the focus was firmly on next year's World Cup, which will be held in Australia.

"It is almost a year to the day until Australia hosts the men's Twenty20 World Cup and we have selected this squad with that in mind," he said. "We have looked to put a

squad together that we think can take us through to that tournament." Despite their success in other formats, Australia have never won a Twenty20 World Cup, with an appearance in the 2010 final their best showing.

They are currently ranked fifth in the world but will be desperate to succeed on home soil in October-November next year.

Aaron Finch retains the skipper's armband, with wicketkeeper Alex Carey and pacer Pat Cummins sharing vice-captain duties. Ashton Turner returns from a finger injury to bolster the batting, while Adam Zampa edged out Nathan Lyon as the preferred spinner.

Cummins and Mitchell Starc will likely open the bowling attack, backed up by Andrew Tye, Kane Richardson and Billy Stanlake.

The three-match series against Sri Lanka will begin in Adelaide on October 27, followed by another three Twenty20s against Pakistan opening on November 3 in Sydney.

PIANS ■ LAHORE

Pakistan head coach-cum-chief selector Misbah-ul-Haq has urged the team to step up and not depend only on Babar Azam to get the runs after their harrowing T20I series defeat to Sri Lanka at home.

Pakistan lost the first two games, by 64 and 35 runs respectively, as the islanders took an unassailable lead in the three-match series in Lahore.

"We became number one in T20Is but if you dig deeper, our only strength was Babar Azam's runs and he didn't score in two games and we've been exposed."

"I think we need to find six match-winners, not one," said Misbah as quoted by www.cricketchat.com.pk.

"Until you don't have that powerhouse in the middle-order and a powerhouse at the top-order for the powerplay, you can't do well. Similarly in the bowling powerplay if you

can't get wickets and then in the death overs you can't finish well, you struggle and I think we have failed in all departments."

"It's an eye opener. We need to look at these things. If we were doing well, we couldn't do that here. Our strong points didn't deliver. We need to find other players, how long can you rely on one or two batsmen?" he added.

The head coach accepted responsibility for the twin defeats and said he needed to find solutions to the problems hampering the side.

"You are seeing problems with the team and I am also seeing them. We need to resolve these. It's not something that can be fixed overnight. It takes some time to fix these things," he said. "Obviously I am answerable but to make a

'Over reliance on Babar hurting Pakistan'



team, you need some time and to do that, you do some experiments. Only then do you get the answers to your questions. A lot of things are in front of us and we need to find solutions."

The 45-year-old also defended selecting opener Ahmed Shehzad and middle-order batsman Umar Akmal for the T20I series against the islanders.

"Shehzad's performance in PSL was excellent. Akmal's performance in all formats in domestic cricket was very good. Unfortunately in our circuit, we have no other batsman in T20s who gave performances like these," he said. "I think that any player who is out of the team should get a chance again, if he performs. We gave that chance on that basis but they didn't perform. All we can do is to give

them a chance." The third T20I will be played at the Gaddafi Stadium on Wednesday.

Meanwhile, former pacer Shoaib Akhtar lashed out at the team's dependence on Misbah alone.

"Pakistan cricket will never improve by giving one person the entire power and responsibility. You can save money by appointing one person as coach and selector, but the thing will only improve when the board will look for people who have an eye for the talent," Akhtar said.

Citing India's example, he said: "Virat Kohli is a bowler's captain. Kohli is not doing captaincy when he is with the bowlers, he is enjoying the bowlers rattling the opposition. It is a good thing that Indian bowlers have such a good captain."

Smriti out of ODI series

PTI ■ VADODARA

The Indian women's team was on Tuesday dealt with a major blow as opener Smriti Mandhana was ruled out of the three-match ODI series against South Africa beginning here on Wednesday due to an injury.

The 23-year-old suffered a fracture in her right toe after being struck by a ball during a net session on Sunday forcing her out of the series. Seam bowling all-rounder Pooja Vastrakar has been drafted in as her replacement. Head coach WV Raman said a call on Mandhana's return will be taken based on the assessment of the physios at the NCA.

"It is a mild fracture. It's difficult to fix the timeline as she still needs to get an MRI done. There is some swelling and it has to die down for the MRI to be taken. An assessment can be made only after that, Raman said at the pre-match a press conference.

Captain Mithali Raj said Mandhana's absence will give opportunities for other players. "She (Mandhana) is an experienced player. But other players have scored a lot of runs in the domestic games. This series is not part of the ICC Women's Championship. So that way it's a chance for us to try out new players. And I am positive that whoever gets a chance will utilise it fully."

India won the recently con-

cluded Twenty20 International series 3-1 against South Africa in Surat.

However, Mandhana struggled during the series, scoring 21, 13, 7 and 5 in her four innings.

Playing on familiar home conditions, the Indian women would definitely have an edge over the visitors in the upcoming series. The onus will be on veterans like Raj and Jhulan Goswami to guide the team with their experience. Harmanpreet Kaur, Jemimah Rodrigues and Veda Krishnamurthy will have to come good with the bat in the absence of Mandhana. The Proteas will be brimming with confidence after registering a 105-run victory in the sixth and final T20.

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India won the recently con-



PTI ■ STUTTGART (GERMANY)

India's disappointing run at the 49th World Artistic Gymnastic Championships continued with none of the men gymnasts qualifying for the finals in both the all-around and individual events here.

In the all-around qualification, Yogeshwar Singh was the best-placed Indian as he finished at the 92nd position after scoring 76.097, while

2010 Asian Games bronze medallist Ashish Kumar (73.632) and Aditya Rana (73.098) ended at the 122nd and 128th spots respectively.

In floor exercise qualification, Ashish (13.500), Aditya (13.000) and Yogeshwar (12.866) finished at the 77th, 125th and 136th spots respectively.

In pommel horse qualification, Yogeshwar (12.700) finished at 75th place, while Aditya (10.533) and

Ashish (10.100) ended at 173rd and 182nd respectively.

The Indian men were no better in the ring qualification as well as they finished outside the top 100. Ashish (12.766), Aditya (12.766) and Yogeshwar (12.266) ended at the 104th, 109th and 144th positions respectively.

The sorry state continued in parallel bars qualification with Ashish (13.100), Aditya (13.066) and

Yogeshwar (11.766) signing off at the 107th, 111th and 172nd spots respectively.

In horizontal bar qualification, Yogeshwar (12.766), Ashish (11.766) and Aditya (11.600) ended at 102nd, 164th and 173rd positions.

Earlier, the women's team comprising Pranati Nayak, Pranati Das and Aruna Reddy had also failed to make it to the finals of the individual events.

Indian men gymnasts disappoint at worlds

Mary Kom reaches quarters, Saweety exits

PTI ■ ULAN-UDE (RUSSIA)

Six-time champion M C Mary Kom (51kg) on Tuesday advanced to the quarterfinals of the World Women's Boxing Championships after a hard-fought victory in the last-16 stage here.

Mary Kom triumphed 5-0 against Thailand's Jutamas Jitpong, a spunky boxer who kept the veteran on her toes with an aggressive approach but just did not connect enough.

The third-seeded Indian, who got a bye in the opening round, spent the first three minutes getting a good measure of her opponent before taking control of the proceedings.

Mary Kom, chasing her first world medal in the 51kg division, picked up pace in the second round and was especially sharp with her counter-attacks.

However, there was disappointment for India when former silver-medallist Saweety Boora (75kg) lost her pre-quarterfinal bout in a split decision despite a valiant fight.

Boora was up against second-seeded Welshwoman Lauren Price. Price is a European Games gold-medallist and fetched a bronze in the last edition of the world showpiece.

She is also the reigning Commonwealth Games champion besides, being a three-time bronze-medallist at the European Championships.

With a fancied opponent like Price, it was never going to be easy for the Indian but she put her best foot forward. Boora seemed unfazed by her rival's reputation and managed to match her punch for punch for most part of the bout.

However, in the final analysis, the judges ruled 3-1 in Price's favour.