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NAGPUR

TheHitavada

THE PEOPLE'S PAPER • SINCE 1911

FIRST COLUMN

President visits Karunanidhi

CHENNAI, Aug 5 (PTI)

PRESIDENT Ram Nath Kovind on Sunday visited ailing DMK President M Karunanidhi at a hospital here and enquired about his health.

At the hospital, the President briefly interacted with Karunanidhi's son and DMK working president M K Stalin and DMK MP Kanimozhi.

The President, who arrived here from Hyderabad, drove directly from the airport to Kauvery Hospital, where the DMK Chief is undergoing treatment.

"Visited Thiru M Karunanidhi in Chennai, met Kalaignar's family members and doctors and inquired about his health.

Kovind was accompanied by Governor Banwarilal Purohit. A picture of the President's interaction was shared on the micro-blogging site.

Fugitive Economic Offenders Bill gets President's nod

- The new legislation will prevent big economic offenders like Vijay Mallya and Nirav Modi from fleeing the country
- A fugitive economic offender is any individual who is involved in select economic offences of at least Rs 100 crore or more and has left India so as to avoid criminal prosecution

NEW DELHI, Aug 5 (PTI)

PRESIDENT Ram Nath Kovind has given assent to a Bill that will deter fugitive economic offenders to evade legal process in India and flee the country.

A fugitive economic offender is any individual against whom warrants for arrest are issued for his involvement in select economic offences involving amount of at least Rs 100 crore or more and has left India so as to avoid criminal prosecution.

The Fugitive Economic Offenders Act, 2018 has got the nod from the President, according to an official order.

The new legislation will prevent big economic offenders like Vijay Mallya and Nirav Modi from fleeing the country and evading the law. Both Mallya and Modi, wanted in cases being probed by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), are out of India.

The new law allows designated special court to declare a person as fugitive economic offender and to confiscate his property, including 'benami' ones.

"All the rights and title in the confiscated property shall, from the date of the confiscation order, vest in the central government, free from all encumbrances," the Act says. The Fugitive Economic Offenders Bill, 2018 was passed by the Rajya Sabha on July 25. The Lok Sabha had cleared the measure on July 19.

Justifying the financial limit of Rs 100 crore for invoking the provisions of this new law, Finance Minister Piyush Goyal had recently said in Parliament that it was being done to "catch the big offenders and not to clog the courts". "This bill is an effective, expeditious and constitutional way to stop these offenders from running away. Legislative changes or a new law must be in place to confiscate assets of such absconders till they don't present themselves in front of the courts. We will also work out what has to be done with the confiscated assets," Goyal had said in Rajya Sabha.

The Enforcement Directorate will be the investigative agency under the Act, he had said.

The President has also given nod to other laws -- the Negotiable Instruments (Amendment) Act, 2018, the State Banks (Repeal and Amendment) Act, 2018 and the Specific Relief (Amendment) Act, 2018. The Negotiable Instruments (Amendment) Act is aimed at

(Contd on page 9)

Venezuelan President Maduro survives assassination bid

CARACAS, Aug 5 (IANS)

VENEZUELAN President Nicolas Maduro has survived what he called an "attempt against his life" involving explosive drones, blaming far-right elements and Colombia's outgoing President Juan Manuel Santos for carrying out the foiled assassination bid.

Maduro was evacuated from a stage on Saturday during a speech at an event event to commemorate the 81st anniversary of the Bolivarian National Guard here after what authorities concluded was an attempted "terrorist attack against the President," reports CNN.

Two drones loaded with explosives went off near the podium

Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro (C), his wife Cilia Flores (L) reacting to a loud bang as 2 drones loaded with explosives went off near podium during a ceremony in Caracas on Sunday. (AFP)

from where the President was speaking, Communications

(Contd on page 9)

Nirankari Satguru Mata ji passes away

NEW DELHI, Aug 5 (Agencies)

NIRANKARI Satguru Mata Savinder Hardev Ji Maharaj died on Sunday in Delhi. She took her last breath at 5.05 pm on Sunday. She was 61 years old.

Her body will be kept at the Samagam ground No. 8 till August 8 for devotees to pay their last respect.

Mata's last rites will be performed at C N G crematorium, Nigam Bodh Ghat in New Delhi at 12 noon on August 8.

A special Satsang will be organised on August 8, at 4 pm at the ground near Nirankari lake at Buradi road, Delhi.

Mata Savinder became the head of the Mission after the death of Nirankari Satguru Baba Hardev in the road accident.

Nirankari Satguru Mata Savinder Hardev Ji Maharaj

All norms for Maratha quota to be completed by Nov: CM

- The Chief Minister appealed to the Maratha community to shun violence as a "handful of people" were giving a bad name to the silent marches

MUMBAI, Aug 5 (PTI)

MAHARASHTRA Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Sunday said that all constitutional obligations in connection with the granting of reservations to the Maratha community in the State would be completed by November this year.

Fadnavis, making a 15 minute address on state television and radio, said that the Maharashtra State Backward Class Commission (MSBCC) would inform the Bombay High Court on August 7 about when it will submit its report regarding the Maratha quota.

He said that once the report of the MSBCC was submitted, a special session of the state Legislature would be convened within a month to pass a "law or resolution" regarding granting reservations to the community.

The CM said MSBCC was a statutory body and cannot be "pressurised" (to submit the report quickly).

The commission was in the process of collecting "quantifiable" data. "About 1.86 lakh evidences and data have been collected," he informed.

Fadnavis appealed to the community to shun violence as a "handful of people" were giving a bad name to the silent marches (mook morchas) (taken out for reservation earlier) that were seen as a model form of protest.

The Maratha reservation stir took a violent turn following the death of a youth on July 23 and since then it has seen arson and stone-pelting in several districts of the State.

The Chief Minister said that the agitation was justified only if the Government was apathetic and claimed that "sincere and genuine" efforts were being made to address the community's grievances which had prevailed for years. "Our Government is addressing them sincerely. I appeal to community leaders to monitor schemes implemented in the districts and bring loopholes, if any, to the notice of the Government," he said.

Fadnavis also took on his critics who have been demanding an ordinance to grant reservations to the Maratha community.

"Some are saying promulgate an ordinance and what was the need for the Backward Class Commission. An ordinance can be promulgated and you will get satisfaction that a decision was taken. However, it won't stand legal scrutiny," he said.

The Chief Minister said that legal experts, during detailed discussions, had opined that Maratha reservations would not stand in a court of law if legal and constitutional obligations were

(Contd on page 9)

Pastime
The daily magazine

Head to Munnar for 'Neelakurinji flower'

NEW DELHI, Aug 5 (ANI)

EVERY year during the season of the bloom, MakeMyTrip sees over 12 percent growth in the holiday bookings to Munnar as travellers gather to witness the rare flower.

Munnar being the favorite hill stations in India, witnesses a large number of tourists every year to witness the magnetism of the rare blooming of 'Neelakurinji' flowers.

So MakeMyTrip lists down 5 mesmerizing places that need to be on any traveller's check list for planning a trip to Munnar:

Pothamedu

Pothamedu gives traveller and opportunity to enjoy aromatic spice plantations. The exotic tea and coffee plantation, the aromatic cardamom fields, and the untouched beauty of this place is sure to rejuvenate with its profound aroma. This tourist spot is at a distance of 6 kilometers from Munnar and one can reach there by hiring a taxi or a shared cab. This destination in Munnar is ideal for trekking and long mountain walks.

Attukal

A majestic waterfall right outside the city, Attukal is a must-visit place in Munnar. Located in the secluded corner of Pallivasal, Attukal is at its best during the monsoons. Travellers can enjoy the mesmerizing beauty of this place as well as enjoy refreshing bath in the falls.

Rajamala

Rajamala will add an adventurous experience in the Munnar trip. A part of Anamudi, Kerala's biggest hill, Rajamala boasts of some amazing trekking trails. One can trek around the valley and the Anamudi range and then head to Eravikulam national park (located 3 kilometres away from Rajamala).

Eravikulam National Park

This is the most sought-after tourist destination in Munnar. The home of Nilgiri Tahr, Eravikulam National Park is also famous for its rich flora and fauna cover.

A large number of rare birds, animals and butterflies can also be traced in this park. It offers a magnificent view of tea plantation and the surrounding hills caressed by blanket of mists.

Devikulam

This is a small hill station that lies in Idukki district of Kerala with chilly air, green slopes, and low hanging clouds over the hills. Devikulam has a large collection of waterfalls and lakes to look forward to.

Another must see place in Devikulam is the Sita Devi Lake, which is said to have medicinal benefits. For wildlife enthusiast, this place provides a good opportunity to explore the various sanctuaries for some breath taking experience. ■

ONCE YOU ARE OVER THE HILL, YOU PICK UP SPEED

TGL IYER COLUMN

MANY people devote their lives to jobs that cannot be carried on into retirement. That is why it is essential to cultivate other hobbies which could continue the happiness you always wanted. It all depends on the hobby like writing articles or gardening or joining a group who discuss how to be happy. Older people in old days were respected which has gradually decreased as time rolls on.

Although many theories are floated how to be happy in old age, the enduring one is to make the mind tough and strong to experience the future with contentment and satisfaction. Many people think that there are aspects of retirement years that make more waves when one tries to recapture the days of uncertainties of youth and the obligations of middle age.

One reason that many people feel an extra measure of contentment has to do with the devolution of responsibility to the next generation. It is also necessary to create resources by which one can live comfortably even if neglected by the children. I see many old people who are at the mercy of children, doing odd jobs like taking children to school and bringing them back home, doing the monthly shopping for the family, going to hospitals to consult experts and purchasing medicines from medical shops and so on. There are some who have to accommodate grand children because their parents departed due to an accident. The occasions are many but it is always better to be prepared for any odd situation which may arise in old age.

We always refer to 'good old days' as if the present is not so good. In the opinion of many wise men, any age is good enough. It is only a question of adjustment, give and take and keeping the mind with good thoughts. Mark Twain said: "Why is it that we rejoice at a birth and grieve at a funeral? It is because we are not the person involved? In fact, the dying should pray that they have left a legacy behind before departure". My father used to say: "No man can achieve anything in this world without the co-operation of others. When you ally with others, you increase and multiply your powers. In teamwork lies the strength and ability to get on in this world smoothly!

A good man does not rely on luck entirely; to some extent he makes his own luck. He makes more opportunities than he finds and makes use of them. Many create opportunities as they progress in life and seize them to make life better. Advancement in life is not getting lucky-breaks. When the opportunity comes by chance or accident, one should be prepared to grasp it and make use of it. A man rises to the occasion when the opportunity comes.

In the recent football matches for the world cup played in Russia, we found that the player with the ball passes on to another player who is at a strategic point to score. There is lesson here for all. We can't succeed alone in this world as we need assistance from others who are competent to deliver. Achievement is a combination of hard work and big dreams. The teacher asked the student "Tell me, what is your favourite weapon and I will get it for you". The answer was "Brains is the high quality power and certainly not manipulation. Knowledge can be used to make the other party agree to your Agenda of actions. We all are allowed to see only one day at a time. When time gets tough there is no choice except to take a deep breath, carry on and do the best one can.

Life is a game and therefore, play it like a game. Greet each day, clap your hands and be cheerful. Make good friends and share with them your knowledge and skill. There is no score board in the race of life. By empowering others, you don't decrease your power. Teach others the young generation to live up to values but do not sacrifice old values for change. Man is designed for accomplishment engineered for success and endowed with seeds of greatness.

Some people are more talented than others. But we have all the capacity to be great. Greatness comes with recognising one's potential and developing it to enlarge and serve us when the occasion comes. The power within cannot operate unless you have faith in it. The great truths of life become known only to those who are prepared to accept them. We get out of life exactly what we put into it. All happy people get-up in the morning and make good things happen! If it does not happen they create circumstances through which they make it happen. Ultimately, whatever happens it is for our enchanting future!

For monsoon wedding

NEW DELHI, Aug 5 (IANS)

A LOT of people love the thought of getting married during monsoon, but there are some things one needs to keep in mind to make it a perfect affair, say experts.

Kunal Rai, Vice President - Weddings and Events at Tamarind Global and Saloni Sanghvi, Event Specialist at Entertainment Bay, list dos and don'ts:

Things you should do:

● First and foremost, keep the wedding indoors. Book a hotel, hall or palace -- as your budget permits -- but there must be a solid roof over the head of your wedding guests.

● Treat the season as a blessing, and plan a rain dance party as a pre-wedding event.

● The wedding outfit can also be matched with the theme of the season, where one can opt for colours like peach, subtle gold and hues of pink.

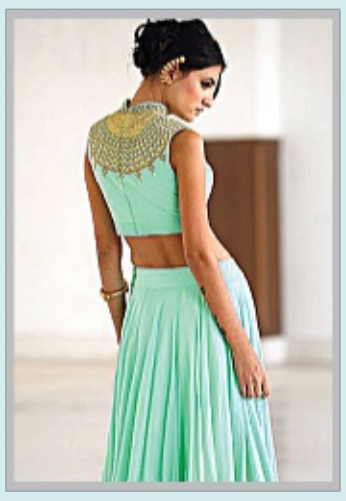
● Accessorise the wedding favours with umbrellas, cute raincoats and other rain-wear gear like flip flops.

● Keep a balanced approach towards the number of hot and cold beverages.

Things you should not do:

● Monsoon is a bad time to wear make-up. Even waterproof make-up needs constant touch ups. However, one can always bet on high quality water-proof make-up to last longer and make less of a mess.

● Avoid heels and stilettos. Instead, opt for wedgies and even good old-fashioned jutties to go with your clothes.



● Unless you wish for the hem of your dresses to be lined with brown/black grime, do not opt for floor length gowns, suits, anarkalis and designer dresses.

● What is a wedding without flowers? A monsoon wedding! Flowers tend to welt quickly in the humid weather, so one should avoid flower-based decorations. Instead, go for light-weight parachute material decorations such as drapes and gazebo. Even artificial flowers can be a great option.

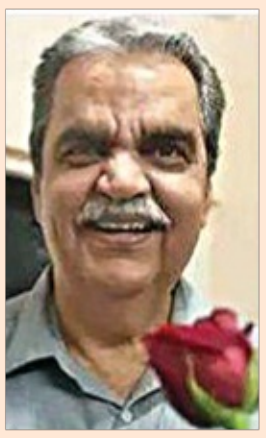
PROFILE

By **HARIHAR SWARUP**

DR BHARAT VATWANI
MAGSAYSAY AWARDEE

Standing for a cause

SCHIZOPHRENIA, is a mental disorder characterised by delusion and hallucinations and "hearing voices", affects roughly one million Indians every year. People suffering from this disorder, leave their homes and live on road like destitute; some of them hail from well to do families. Dr Bharat Vatwani and his wife Dr Smitha have done great work in rehabilitation of such persons and uniting them with their families. For this work the couple has been awarded this year's Magsaysay Award, the Asian version of the Nobel Prize.



It was a chance encounter in a restaurant that started the psychiatrist couple on their journey. They say: We noticed a man whose behavior and mannerism left us in no doubt that he had schizophrenia. A few minutes later, the man picked up an empty coconut shell from the road, scooped out some gutter water with it to drink. They rushed to him and asked him if he would come with them as they could help him. The man did, and months later, the couple reunited him with his family in Andhra Pradesh. It turned out the man was a Science graduate who had completed a course in pathology.

Vatwani and Smitha built a Rehabilitation Home in Karjat, near Mumbai, where 120 'wanderers' stay at any given time. "Although we have helped around 7,000 people so far, we have proper records only since 2006 when our Karjat centre came up", Vatwani said. This year, so far, the couple have managed to reunite 485 people.

Vatwani was ecstatic at the international recognition for his work. "I only hope this will bring the focus on the wandering mentally ill people on our roads", he says. Awareness about mentally illness like schizophrenia was poor in India.

Dr Vatwani has a 98% success in treating and uniting patients with their families. What is the secret of this success? He says: we have a great team of social workers from different parts of the country, who manage to connect with patient, and help trace the family.

The Shraddha Centre does not admit people brought by kin of alcoholics and drug addicts. Centre's ambulances only pick up the mentally ill. Vatwani and Smitha over the years rescued a Delhi-trained doctor and a chartered accountant who, on treatment, named a posh address in Mumbai as his home.

Work at Shraddha Centre is entirely funded through charity. It gets contributions through word of mouth and enough help from its patients. Vatwani is not keen to expand his operations. "We need other doctors and NGOs to replicate this so that wandering mentally ill across the country could be helped", says Vatwani.

Ask Vatwani for his inspiration, and pat comes the reply, "I couldn't have done this without Baba Amte. I used to meet him and he has been my inspiration", he says. Vatwani was recognised for his "tremendous courage and healing compassion in embracing India's mentally-afflicted destitute, and his steadfast and magnanimous dedication to work of restoring and affirming human dignity of even the most ostracised", the Ramon Magsaysay Award Foundation said.

'Indian footwear market largely unorganised'

NEW DELHI, Aug 5 (IANS)

ONLY one-third of the footwear market is organised, while the rest of the business consists of unorganised players, says designer Jyoti Narula of the brand Joe Shu. He notes that the rise of disposable income and global fashion trends are contributing to the industry's evolution.

"Over the years, the Indian men's footwear market has evolved with the advent of fast growing economy and increase in affluent customers. India is the second largest footwear manufacturing country in the world and the market is currently witnessing a great momentum which is likely to grow further in the coming years. But having said that, it is also very necessary to consider the fact that the Indian footwear market is largely unorganised.

"The organised segment caters to about one-third of the market while unorganised players fetch the remaining 70-75 per cent of the market. There are limited opportunities in the men's footwear segment," Narula told IANS in an e-mail interview.

He, however, added that today men are exposed to global fashion trends and do not give a second thought while spending on a product that offers both comfort and quality. "The rise in disposable income and ever-changing buyer behaviour are some of the key factors behind market evolution," he said. Narula has over 30 years of experience of which more than 24 years have been dedicated to the fashion industry. He was the Co-Founder of Genesis Colors and as the Managing Director was responsible for the growth of India's iconic womenswear brand Satya Paul. He also spearheaded the accessories division. His brand Joe Shu, which has a standalone store in DLF Promenade here, is a bridge to luxury men's footwear and accessories.

Men are getting more experimental in terms of footwear trends and accessories, and Narula says it is thanks to the Internet penetration and exposure to global fashion trends.

"There has been a significant shift in the kind of colour palette, quirky prints and styles in accessories that Indian men have started adapting to match their outfit," he said.

And what about the brand's expansion plans?

"We founded the brand Joe Shu with an idea to disrupt men's luxury footwear and accessories market in India. We focus on bringing the genuine and quality international products at an accessible price range designed and made in Europe.

"We plan to open more stores pan India in next five years. We would like to make this possible for our customers. The online presence will also be bolstered with continued strategic partnerships," he said.

BRIEFS

WE THE PEOPLE

Suicide attack kills 3 NATO soldiers in Afghanistan

KABUL, Aug 5 (AFP)

A SUICIDE bomber killed three foreign soldiers in an attack on a patrol in eastern Afghanistan on Sunday, NATO's mission in the country said. "Three Resolute Support service members were killed by a suicide bomber during a combined, dismounted patrol with Afghan forces in eastern Afghanistan," it said in a statement.

A US member of the patrol and two Afghan soldiers were wounded, it said, without giving the nationality of those killed.

The attack by a lone bomber on foot happened at 6 am in the city of Charikar in Parwan province some 60 kilometres north of Kabul, said provincial governor's spokesman Wahida Shahkar. The Taliban in a statement claimed responsibility.

20 killed in bus, tanker collision in Pakistan

PESHAWAR, Aug 5 (PTI)

AT least 20 people, including women and children, were killed and 35 others injured when a passenger bus collided with a tanker in North-West Pakistan on Saturday night, a media report said on Sunday.

The accident took place near Samari area of Kohat district in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, while the ill-fated bus was on its way to Karachi from Buner, Geo News reported. Rescue members had immediately rushed to the site and shifted the bodies and wounded persons to district headquarters hospital, the channel said.

The accident killed 20 people and left 35 passengers injured, it added. The deceased included two women and two minors, police said. Citing rescue sources, the channel said that the two bodies were removed from underneath the tanker and moved to the hospital.

One held with 453 cartons of liquor

NEW DELHI, Aug 5 (PTI)

A SUSPECTED bootlegger was arrested and 453 cartons of illicit liquor was seized from a vehicle here, police said on Saturday.

The cartons contained more than 20,000 bottles. The arrested person was identified as Ali Ajgar, they added. On August 3, police received a tip off that Ajgar would be delivering illegal liquor from Haryana at various parts of north Delhi, Additional Commissioner of Police (Crime) A K Singla said.

Subsequently, a trap was laid in on the Palla-Bakhtawarpur Road and the vehicle, loaded with illicit liquor, was intercepted, the officer said.

He said Ajgar was arrested and the illicit liquor along with the vehicle was seized.

37 killed in Indonesia quake

A man walks inside a cathedral where debris has fallen after an earthquake in Bali, Indonesia, on Sunday. (PTI)

MATARAM (Indonesia), Aug 5 (AFP)

A MAJOR earthquake on the Indonesian island of Lombok on Sunday killed at least 37 people, injured dozens and damaged buildings, officials said.

The seven-magnitude tremor struck just 10 kilometres underground, according to the US Geological Survey.

It was followed by two light to moderate secondary quakes and nearly two dozen aftershocks.

"The latest data we have 37 people are dead at Tanjung Hospital (North Lombok)," Agus Hendra Sanjaya, Mataram search and rescue spokesman, told AFP.

> Officials issued a tsunami warning after the quake, but it was later cancelled

Among the dead are a one-year-old and a 72-year-old, he said, adding that at least 52 people were injured.

Officials issued a tsunami warning after the quake, but it was later cancelled.

Seawater up to 13 centimetres deep poured into two villages, Dwikorita Karnawati, head of the agency for meteorology, climatology and geophysics, told local TV.

The quake caused light damage as far away as the Javanese city of Bandung, some 955 kilometres from Mataram, but was felt strongly on the neighbouring resort island of Bali.

The tremor came a week after a shallow 6.4-magnitude quake hit Lombok, killing 17 people and damaging hundreds of buildings.

Former President Pranab Mukherjee presents the VC Padmanabhan Memorial Lifetime Achievement Award 2018 to former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, in New Delhi on Saturday. The award has been instituted by Manappuram Finance Ltd. (PTI)

Fresh batches of pilgrims leave for Amarnath cave

SRINAGAR, Aug 5 (UNI)

FRESH batches of pilgrims, including women and sadhus, left base camps for holy Amarnath cave shrine in south Kashmir Himalayas, where so far about 2.72 lakh pilgrims have paid obeisance since the commencement of the 60-day-long yatra which started from June 28 and will conclude on August 26.

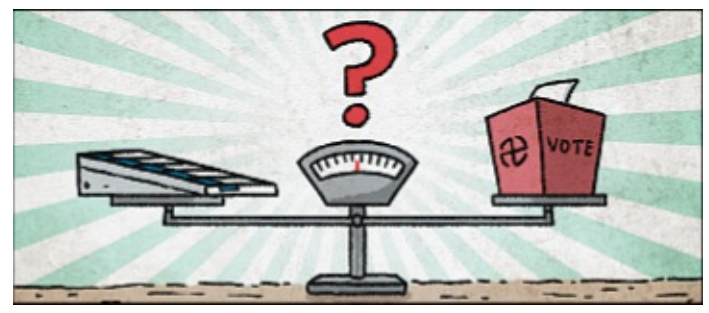
On 38th day on Saturday, 1527 pilgrims had darshan at the holy cave. However, pilgrims, who had night halt at different halting stations are reaching holy cave to pay obeisance. So far 2.72 lakh pilgrims had darshan of the self made Ice-Shivlingam. Majority of the pilgrims had returned to their homes.

Meanwhile, 31 pilgrims and five sevadars had died due to health reasons and accidents. On Sunday no pilgrim, who had returned after darshan, was allowed to leave base camp in Kashmir for Jammu for security reasons, following strike called by separatists against alleged attempts to abrogate Article 35 A of the constitution.

Fresh batches of pilgrims, including women and sadhus left Baltal and Nunwan Pahalgam base camps, official sources told UNI. They said a fresh batch of over 500 pilgrims, including women and sadhus, left Baltal base camp for the holy cave shrine early on Sunday morning.

'Going back to paper ballots make no sense'

■ By Mohd Asim Khan
NEW DELHI, Aug 5 (IANS)



THE demand to bring back paper ballots in the next Lok Sabha elections in place of Electronic Voting Machines being pressed by major Opposition parties has not found favour with two former Chief Election Commissioners, who, however, share their opposition to a proposal for simultaneous elections, saying it cannot be "coerced".

The former CECs say that though both the issues are theoretically in the realm of possibility, but, in practical terms, they are neither feasible nor desirable.

They were reacting to a planned move by 17 parties, including the Congress and the Trinamool Congress, to approach the Election Commission to press for restoring the paper ballot system in view of their apprehensions over the integrity of the EVMS and the possibility of their manipulation and the failure of the VVPAT (Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail) slips in recent elections.

V S Sampath, who demitted office in January 2015 after nearly three years at the helm of the Election Commission, said going back to paper ballots "makes no sense".

"Nobody will accept it," Sampath told IANS.

He said with the introduction of VVPAT slips, which the Election Commission has said would be deployed throughout the country in all elections hereafter, there is already a paper ballot system that is going to be in place.

"VVPAT is a credible system by which the voter knows whom he has voted for and his ballot slip has gone into a box which can be retrieved at any time in case of a dispute for verification. It does the job of paper balloting that leaves an audit trail," he said.

To incorporate safeguards and to remove doubts in the minds of political parties, Sampath said the Commission could think of increasing the proportion of counting slips in consultation with parties. The quantity of sampling of slips can be increased.

Another former CEC, who declined to be named, said the EVMs have been subjected to criticism from the very beginning on one ground or another.

Shah dares Cong to clear stand on OBC Bill

CHANDAULI (UP), Aug 5 (PTI)

BHARATIYA Janata Party (BJP) Chief Amit Shah on Sunday dared the Congress to clear its stand on the amended OBC Bill when it is taken up in the Rajya Sabha, saying it will expose whether the party was really for the backward communities.

He also charged the Opposition with playing vote bank politics on the National Register of Citizens (NRC) issue.

The Constitution (123rd Amendment) Bill, 2017, commonly known as OBC Bill, was passed in the Lok Sabha on August 2 and will now go to the Rajya Sabha for passage.

The proposed legislation seeks to grant the National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC) constitutional status on a par with National Commissions for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

"Modi Government has got the OBC Bill passed in the Lok Sabha. This will go to the Rajya Sabha. Will (Congress President) Rahul Gandhi clear his stand before the country that whether his party will help in the passage of the Bill in the Rajya Sabha or not. This will make it clear whether the Congress was really for the welfare of the backward," Shah said. He was here to attend a function on renaming of Mughalsarai junction after RSS stalwart Pt Deendayal Upadhyay.

BJP National President Amit Shah (2ndR), Railway Minister Piyush Goyal (L), Union Minister of State for Railways Manoj Sinha (2ndL), and UP CM Yogi Adityanath (3rdL) during an event to rename the iconic Mughalsarai railway station to Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyay, in Mughalsarai on Sunday. (PTI)

On the NRC issue, the BJP Chief said, "We have to push out each and every Bangladeshi infiltrator from the country."

"Mamata Banerjee and Congress say that NRC should not be done. I ask Rahul Baba whether NRC should be conducted in the country or not. But, he does not answer. You all should tell that whether the Bangladeshi infiltrators should be pushed out (from India) or not."

"Today I would like to ask the SP, the BSP and the Congress whether they want the infiltrators to stay in the country or they should be driven out. I know the answer of the people of UP. The answer is that not even a single infiltrator should be allowed to stay in India," he said.

Shah attacked the Opposition parties on their efforts to forge unity and said: "Today the entire Opposition is hell bent upon spreading the rumour about impact on the poll equation in UP if the SP and the BSP come together." "Even if Bua (BSP Chief Mayawati), bhatija (SP Chief Akhilesh Yadav) and Rahul join hands, our tally of seats (in Lok Sabha from UP) will be 74 instead of 73 now and will not be 72," he said.

Hotline to be top agenda during Chinese Minister's visit to India

NEW DELHI, Aug 5 (PTI)

INDIA and China will attempt to resolve differences in setting up of a hotline soon between the armies of the two countries, during Chinese Defence Minister Wei Fenghe's upcoming visit here, official sources said.

After the Wuhan summit between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping in April, both sides revived the long-pending proposal to set up the hotline so as to avoid flare-ups between the two militaries along their disputed border. But, the initiative hit a roadblock over differences between the two sides on issues relating to protocol and technical aspect of the hotline. China's State Councilor and Defence Minister General Wei Fenghe is scheduled to visit India later this month.

While the Indian Army has been maintaining that the hotline should be between its Director General of Military Operations (DGMO) and his equivalent official in Peoples Liberation Army (PLA), Beijing proposed that deputy commander of its Chengdu-based Western Theatre Command would engage with the Indian DGMO, the sources said.

It is learnt that Chinese PLA has also conveyed to Indian Army that they do not have any DGMO in its headquarters and that it was favouring engaging the Western Theatre Command which looks after the Sino-India border. However, the Indian side feels the protocol must be maintained and equating the Indian Army headquarters to PLA's Western Theatre Command in Chengdu was not proper.

Three commands of the Indian Army -- the Kolkata-based eastern command, the central command headquartered at Lucknow and the northern command, headquartered at Udhampur -- have been tasked to keep an eye on the nearly 3,500-km-long border with China.

18 cows die of suffocation at shelter home in C'garh

RAIPUR, Aug 5 (PTI)

AT LEAST 18 cows died of suffocation over the past few days at a shelter home managed by a village panchayat in Chhattisgarh's Balodabazar district, a senior official said on Sunday.

Carcasses of 18 cows were recovered from Rohasi village on August 3, Balodabazar Collector Janak Prasad Pathak told PTI.

The incident came to light after local officials received information that carcasses of cows were being transported to be buried in the village, located around 70 km from the State capital, he said.

"Preliminary investigation revealed that the cows were locked in a room for the past few days and they died of suffocation," he said.

Some villagers were earlier worried about stray cattle damaging crops in their fields.

After discussing the issue among themselves, locals captured the stray cattle, including cows and buffaloes. They locked some of the animals in a room at a 'kanji house' (cow shelter) in the village and tied other cattle in an open area on the premises, Pathak said. When no person came to claim ownership of the animals, the villagers, who were finding it difficult to provide water and fodder, released the cattle tied in the open area of the shelter home, he said.

However, they allegedly did not notice the cattle locked in the room at the shelter home, managed by the village panchayat, he said.

When they noticed a foul smell emanating from the place on August 3, they checked the room and found the animals dead inside it, Pathak said.

While the villagers were transporting the carcasses on tractors for disposal, someone informed the local officials who reached the spot, he said.

BJP MP's car was damaged by Maratha protesters

MUMBAI, Aug 5 (PTI)

THE car of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) MP Heena Gavit was damaged on Sunday allegedly by Martaha protesters in Dhule in north Maharashtra, over 300 kms from here, police said.

The incident occurred on Sunday afternoon outside the Dhule district collector office, a senior officer said.

As soon as the car of Gavit came out of the district Collectorate, at least 16 protesters stopped it and broke its glass shield, according to local police. Dhule superintendent of police M Ramkumar said Gavit was sitting inside the vehicle when the incident occurred. She escaped unhurt, he said.

Police have detained 16 protesters in connection with the incident, he said.

The Maratha community has been demanding 16 per cent quota in Government jobs and education under the OBC category.

Sushma pays floral tributes at Shastri's bust in Uzbekistan

TASHKENT, Aug 5 (PTI)

EXTERNAL Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj paid floral tributes at the bust of India's second Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri at his memorial in the Uzbek capital on Sunday.

Swaraj, who arrived in Tashkent on Saturday on her first visit to Uzbekistan, visited the Shastri memorial on Sunday morning.

"EAM Sushma Swaraj paying floral tribute to freedom fighter and 2nd Prime Minister of India Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri at his memorial in Tashkent," External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Raveesh Kumar tweeted along with a photograph of the Minister.

At the memorial, Swaraj also met with Yakov Shapiro who sculpted the bronze bust of Shastri. Shastri had died in Tashkent in January 1966 after signing the Tashkent Declaration that formally ended a war between India and Pakistan. A memorial was built here in his memory. Earlier, Swaraj met with Speaker of Uzbekistan's Legislative Assembly Nurdinjon Ismoilov and discussed the role of Parliament in fostering closer people-to-people relationship.

External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj paying floral tribute to Lal Bahadur Shastri at his memorial in Tashkent. (Twitter)

"EAM Sushma Swaraj met the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Oliy Majlis (Parliament) of Uzbekistan Nurdinjon Ismoilov and representatives of political fractions in their Parliament. Discussed the role of Parliament in fostering closer people-to-people relationship," Kumar said.

Swaraj also addressed the Indian community here and inaugurated a mango festival.

"Promoting Indian mangoes in Uzbekistan! EAM Sushma Swaraj inaugurated a Mango Festival organised by the Government of Uttar Pradesh with participation of mango exporters in Tashkent. The exporters will visit fruit markets and meet fruit traders," Kumar tweeted. Swaraj also interacted with Uzbek Indologists, Hindi teachers and students.

BRIEFS

Case against Airtel for power theft

SRINAGAR, Aug 5 (PTI)

POLICE has registered a case against telecom giant Airtel for allegedly stealing electricity from rival BSNL in Kargil district of Jammu and Kashmir following a complaint by the the public sector company.

"On 3 August 2018, a written complaint was received from BSNL authorities at Kargil regarding tapping and theft of electricity from the transformer used exclusively by BSNL for its mobile tower by Airtel tower at Chanigund in Kargil," a police spokesman said on Sunday.

He said SSP Kargil T Gyalpo constituted a team headed by DySP Kargil Ishtyaq A Kacho and accompanied by Executive Engineer PDD Altaf.

Two minors run over by train while clicking selfies

LUDHIANA, Aug 5 (PTI)

TWO teenagers were run over by a train on Sunday while they were trying to click selfies, police said here.

A group of three friends had gone to the railway bridge near Katana Sahib on Chandigarh-Ludhiana line to click selfies on their phones, they said.

They wanted to take a selfie with a moving train in the background, but being too close to the train two of them were run over, police said. The deceased were identified as Yuvraj (15) and Gaurav (15), both students of Class VII, they said.

Yuvraj hailed from village Rampura in this district while Gaurav was the son of a migrant labourer, also residing in the same village, they said.

Passenger raises hoax bomb threat after altercation

JAIPUR, Aug 5 (PTI)

A NEW Delhi-bound IndiGo flight from Jaipur International Airport was delayed by nearly 40 minutes after a passenger raised a hoax bomb threat following an altercation with the airline staffers on Sunday, an official said.

The accused J P Chaudhary, a resident of Jaipur, allegedly ran into an altercation with the employees of the private airline during security checking and raised a fake alarm that he had a bomb in his luggage, CISF commandant Y P Singh said. Singh said Chaudhary's luggage was checked and nothing was found. The plane, flight 6E 203, which had to take off at 10.40 am, flew at 11.23 am, he said. The accused was not allowed to board the plane and was handed over to Jawahar Circle police station for further investigation, he added.

One dead in Nashik house collapse

NASHIK, Aug 5 (PTI)

A 22-YEAR-OLD man died and four others were injured on Sunday after an old house collapsed in the Old Nashik area, police said.

He said the three-storey house became unsteady in the morning, and portions of it started falling down. While the families residing in the structure came out after realising that the structure was crumbling, some of them rushed inside to collect essential materials, when the house collapsed, he said. Of the five persons, including a girl, pulled out from under the rubble, Karan Ghodke died while undergoing treatment at Nashik civil hospital, he said.

'Quota won't guarantee employment'

AURANGABAD (Mah), Aug 5 (PTI)

STATING that reservation will not guarantee employment as jobs are shrinking, Union Minister Nitin Gadkari on Saturday said there is a "school of thought" which wants policy-makers to consider the poorest of poor in every community.

Gadkari made the remarks, responding to reporters' questions on the ongoing agitation by the Marathas for reservation and similar demands by other communities in Maharashtra.

"Let's us assume the reservation is given. But there are no jobs. Because in banks, the jobs have shrunk because of IT. The government recruitment is frozen. Where are the jobs?

"The problem with the quota is that backwardness is becoming a political interest. Everyone says I am backward. In Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, Brahmins are strong. They dominate politics. (And) They say they are backward," the senior BJP leader said.

"So one school of thought is that a poor is a poor, he has no caste, creed or language. Whatever may be the religion -- the Muslim, the Hindu or the Maratha (a caste), in all communities there is one section which has no clothes to wear, no food to eat.

"One school of thought also is (that) we must also consider the poorest of the poor section in every community," he said. This is a "socio-economic thinking" and it must not be politicised, the Minister said.

Maintaining that Maharashtra Chief Minister Fadnavis was trying to resolve the Maratha quota demand by holding talks, Gadkari urged people to maintain peace.

"The responsible political parties must not add fuel to the fire," he added.

The development, the industrialisation and the good prices for rural produce would ease the economic distress that the Maratha community is suffering from, he said.

Directs Deptts to work on NHs, PM schemes

AURANGABAD, Aug 5 (UNI)

THE Union Minister of Road Transport and irrigation Nitin Gadkari issued instruction to the concerned departments to take up various works incurring Rs 75,000 crore under the Prime Minister Irrigation Scheme within the stipulated time period, on Saturday. He addressed the meeting organised at Rama Hotel to take review of construction of national highways and the works being done under the Prime Minister irrigation schemes.

Nitin Gadkari

Gadkari issued informed that sanction was given for construction of 14.5 KM road incuring a cost of Rs 200 crore from Nagar Naka to Cambridge School. He also issued instruction to start process of acquiring land 19,000 hectare for making the Aurangabad-Jalgaon highway road so as to avoid accidents.

Underlining a need of solving problem of acute water shortage he asked to use sand and other minor minerals obtained from field lakes for the purpose. He informed that construction work of the bridge- cum Dam at 67 places will be completed.

Mah Civic poll results show Marathas trust BJP: Minister

MUMBAI, Aug 5 (PTI)

A SENIOR Maharashtra Minister has expressed the hope that the ongoing agitation by the Marathas for reservation will be withdrawn in the next few days as the BJP Government is working towards resolving the issue and the Community has reposed trust in it. The comments by Finance Minister Sudhir Mungantiwar came in the wake of Maratha outfits announcing a fresh round of agitation from August 9.

He said the BJP's resounding victory in the elections to the Sangli and Jalgaon municipal corporations will give the party an upper-hand in dealing with the quota issue. Speaking to select mediapersons here over the weekend, Mungantiwar said the two cities have a large population of Marathas and the BJP's victory shows the community has faith in the party-led government in the state.

The BJP leader said the Devendra Fadnavis Government is very clear in its intention to provide reservation to the Marathas and accused "some people" of "instigating" the community which is agitating over the quota demand.

The saffron outfit swept the polls for the two civic bodies on Friday. Mungantiwar said the long-pending quota issue could have been resolved when the Congress-NCP alliance was in power for 15 years (1999-2014).

"The recent victories in the civic polls will give an upper-hand to the BJP on the issue of Maratha reservation, because in Sangli (where the BJP posted victory for the first time), the majority of the local population are Marathas. This shows their trust in us," he said.

Complete shutdown in Valley over Article 35-A

Security personnel patrol a street during a two-day strike, in Srinagar on Sunday. (PTI)

SRINAGAR, Aug 5 (PTI)

LIFE in Kashmir on Sunday came to a standstill due to a complete shutdown called by separatists against the legal challenge in the Supreme Court on the validity of Article 35-A, which bars people from outside Jammu and Kashmir from acquiring any immovable property in the State.

The situation across the Valley is peaceful with no untoward incident reported from anywhere so far, officials said.

Shops and business establishments were closed across the Valley while all kinds of transport remained off the roads due to the strike called. The Joint Resistance Leadership (JRL) has called for a two-day strike — on Sunday and Monday — as Supreme Court is scheduled to hear a PIL challenging the validity of the Article 35-A on Monday. The State Government has filed an application before the Registrar of the Supreme Court, informing that it is going to seek adjournment of the hearing of the petition in view of the "ongoing preparations for the upcoming elections in the State".

The officials said security forces have been deployed in strength at vulnerable places in the city and elsewhere in Kashmir for maintaining law and order.

UIDAI takes on rumour mongering against Aadhaar

■ UIDAI stresses contact number 18003001947 cannot steal data

NEW DELHI, Aug 5 (PTI)

THE UIDAI on Sunday said vested interests misused Google's "inadvertent" act around it old helpline number to create fear and tarnish the image of Aadhaar while emphasising that a number stored in contact list cannot steal data from a mobile phone.

The Unique Identity Authority of India (UIDAI) said rumour mongers attempted to tarnish the image of Aadhaar for a Google's inadvertent act that led to appearance of its old helpline number 1800 300 1947 in the contact list of several mobile phone users.

"UIDAI condemns the vested interests who tried to misuse Google's "inadvertent" act as an opportunity to spread rumours and go around fear-mongering against Aadhaar," the authority said in a statement.

Last week, a French security expert who goes under the pseudonym Elliot Alderson and describes himself as the "worst nightmare" of the UIDAI, in a tweet had raised alarm on presence of a UIDAI contact number in contact list of mobile phone users without their consent.

His tweet scared many mobile phone users on appearance of the UIDAI's old helpline number in their contacts even though they did not add it.

Google on last Friday admitted that the number 18003001947 was added by it 'inadvertently' along with police and fire number 112 in 2014 and has since been continuing through sync mechanism. The UIDAI said it has earlier clarified and emphasised that it has not asked any agency whatsoever to include its helpline number in mobile phones and also added that merely adding a phone number cannot steal data from the phone.

"Just by a helpline number in a mobile's contact list the data stored on the mobile phone cannot be stolen. Therefore, there should be no panic to delete the number as no harm will be caused. Rather people may, if they so wish, update it with UIDAI's new helpline number 1947," the authority said. Anderson in his another tweet had said that there was no need to freak out as it was just a contact but alarmed that it could be the tip of "an iceberg".

The UIDAI said rumours being spread on social media to delete helpline number are "totally false propaganda and is nothing but scare-mongering against Aadhaar by vested interests trying to exploit Google's act to spread misinformation about Aadhaar by scaring people."

The Aadhaar custodian said that it expects Google, a large digital platform provider, will look into the matter which caused confusion in the minds of people against "India's credible identity system and will exercise due care so that such things are not repeated in future."

The UIDAI said that rumours about Aadhaar database being breached are completely false and baseless. "UIDAI assures that Aadhaar data remains fully safe and secure. Therefore, people should stay away from such rumours and malicious campaign by vested interests. They should also not waste their time and time of their near and dear ones by forwarding or circulating such false and baseless rumours on their WhatsApp, Twitter, Facebook , etc" the statement said.

It further said that Aadhaar has caused tremendous benefits to our country and helped saved more Rs 90,000 crore by preventing leakage and siphoning of benefits and subsidies meant for poor.

CRPF turns contractor to build road in Chhattisgarh

■ As no private contractor was coming forward to do the task due to the fear of Naxals, CRPF itself took the role

NEW DELHI/RAIPUR, Aug 5 (PTI)

AFTER several assurances to provide adequate security to private contractors did not yield results, the CRPF itself took the role of a "contractor" to build a major arterial road in the worst Naxal-hit region of Bastar in Chhattisgarh, making it the maiden venture of this kind in the country.

The lead anti-Maoist operation force has taken the responsibility for the first time to ensure the completion of a 4.5-km vital stretch of an RCC (roller compacted concrete) road between Bhairamgarh and Keshkutur in southern Bijapur district.

"We picked the bid as a contractor to build the road as no private contractor was coming forward to do the task due to the fear of Naxals. The task is almost complete and only a culvert at Permapara is to be built now. "It is held up due to the ongoing heavy monsoon rains and shall be completed soon," CRPF Inspector General (Chhattisgarh sector) Sanjay Arora told PTI.

The contractor for the road is the Commanding Officer of the 191st battalion of the force deployed for conducting anti-Naxal operations in the area, he said.

A team of Central Reserve Police Force engineers - called pioneers - and supervisors have been working on the project since 2015 and they have deployed a team of 30-40 labourers, the IG said.

These labourers were assured of ample security, food and other wherewithal from the nearby force camps and all the construction equipment and heavy machinery are kept inside the fortified CRPF bases so that Maoists do not destroy them, a CO-rank official based in Bijapur said.

He said the project contract was up for many years, but as no one was taking it, the contract was getting rolled over and nothing was moving.

The CRPF has faced many face-offs with Naxals in the area and a jawan, Vijay Singh Yadav, was injured in an improvised explosive device (IED) blast while sanitising the same road track on January 21 last year, the official said.

West Bengal Agriculture Minister Asish Banerjee (C) plants paddy saplings in a field with the help of mechanical paddy transplantation at State Agricultural Farm, Suri in Birbhum, on Saturday. (PTI)

Ex-servicemen to join protest rally on Aug 9

NEW DELHI, Aug 5 (PTI)

FOR the first time, ex-servicemen will join hands with Dalit organisations and the All India Kisan Sabha on August 9 to protest against the NDA Government at the Centre, seeking redressal of their grievances.

The Indian Ex-servicemen Movement (IESM), which has in the past fought for 'one-rank one-pension', rues that the Government ignored many of their demands.

"Whatever Prime Minister Narendra Modi had promised us on 'One rank One pension' has not been delivered. He lied to us. Earlier, we fought separately. Now, we will fight unitedly with farmers' organisations and Dalits," Priyadarshi Chowdhury, coordinator for IESM, told PTI.

The All India Kisan Sabha (AIKS), the farmers' organisation of the CPI(M), has given a call for 'jail bharo' across the country on August 9, demanding action on the agrarian crisis.

"This is the first time ex-servicemen will join a protest called by a Left organisation. We have come together to put forward our demands," AIKS General Secretary Hannan Mollah said.

They are also expected to demand the passage of the Women Reservation Bill in the Lok Sabha and scrapping of Aadhaar, which they feel has "wreaked havoc" on welfare schemes. The AIKS has been pressing for fixing the minimum support price for all crops at 1.5 times the input cost, guaranteed procurement, one-time waiver of all loans of farmers and land to landless farmers. Chowdhary said that their demands are - "complete OROP as per approved definition of Parliament, pay parity and cancellation of the Cantonment Roads order".

Fire at RTO in Mumbai; papers, computers gutted

MUMBAI, Aug 5 (PTI)

HUNDREDS of documents and other items were destroyed in a fire at the Regional Transport Office (RTO) here on Sunday, but no one was injured, an official said.

Fire-fighters took nearly three hours to douse the blaze that erupted at the RTO in Tardeo area of south Mumbai early this morning, he said. The blaze destroyed the electric wiring, licence and other documents, furniture, computers, printers and other items in 15 to 20 cabins on the RTO's ground floor, the fire brigade cell of the city civic body said in a statement. "No casualties were reported in the mishap. However, several documents pertaining to the licence department were gutted," a fire brigade official said.

The fire brigade control room received the information about the blaze at the RTO at 5.20 am, he said.

Shah meets Dhoni as part of BJP's 'Sampark for Samarthan' campaign

NEW DELHI, Aug 5 (PTI)

AS part of BJP's 'Contact for Support' campaign, party chief Amit Shah met cricketer M S Dhoni in New Delhi on Sunday and shared with him the work done by the Central Government in the past four years.

"As part of 'Sampark for Samarthan' initiative, met M S Dhoni, one of the greatest finishers in world cricket. Shared with him several transformative initiatives and unprecedented work done by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Govt in the last 4 years," Shah tweeted after meeting the World Cup winning captain. The BJP president was accompanied by Finance Minister Piyush Goyal and other senior party leaders during the meeting.

Shah's outreach to Dhoni was the latest in a series of meetings he has had with leading figures from various fields as part of the BJP's mega public contact drive with Lok Sabha polls less than 10 months away.

More than 4,000 functionaries of the party have been asked to get in touch with one lakh people, who are well-known in their fields, to spread the word about the Government's achievements.

BJP President Amit Shah meets cricketer M S Dhoni during his 'Sampark for Samarthan' campaign to generate awareness about the NDA Government's achievements, in New Delhi on Sunday. Union Finance Minister Piyush Goyal is also seen. (PTI)

BRIEFS

Over 3,000 kg of *ganja* seized

KORAPUT (Odisha), Aug 5 (PTI)

POLICE seized over 3,000 kg of ganja worth Rs 2.40 crore and arrested two persons in Odisha's Koraput district.

The seizure was made after intercepting a truck near Machhra area yesterday by a team of the special task force (STF) of the district police.

The arrested duo have been identified as Toufik Khan (30) of Madhya Pradesh and Lalit Mahajan (28), a resident of West Delhi. With a facade of transporting broom sticks, the ganja which was packed in polythene bags, was smuggled in the truck, Koraput SP Kanwar Vishal Singh. "There were six persons in the truck but four of them managed to flee from the spot after spotting police team. We have launched a manhunt for the absconders," he said.

Man arrested for brother's murder

THANE, Aug 5 (PTI)

A 21-YEAR-OLD man allegedly hacked his elder brother to death over a monetary dispute here, police said on Sunday.

The accused, Simon Patrao, was apparently angry with his elder brother Wilfred Patrao (36) for having withdrawn Rs 20,000 from the former's bank account without his knowledge, said Assistant Superintendent of Police Atul Kulkarni.

He killed the victim, who worked as a security guard, at their home in Bhayander township on Saturday, by allegedly attacking him with a sharp weapon, the official said. The accused, presently jobless, then called up his another brother staying in Dubai to inform about the incident.

Suspected drug peddler attempts suicide in J&K

JAMMU, Aug 5 (PTI)

A SUSPECTED drug peddler on Sunday attempted suicide by allegedly jumping from the first floor of a police station in Udhampur district of Jammu and Kashmir, hours after he was arrested under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, officials said.

Shubam Gupta (25), a resident of Ram Nagar chowk, was arrested last evening and was lodged at police station Udhampur for questioning, a police official said.

He said the accused was taken out from the lock up for responding to the call of nature and when he was being taken back to the lock up around 0530 hours, he jumped from the first floor in an attempt to commit suicide.

Life sentence to woman for killing ex-boyfriend

MANGALURU, Aug 5 (PTI)

A COURT here has sentenced a 26-year-old cab driver and his girlfriend to life imprisonment for murdering the woman's former boyfriend in 2014.

The sixth additional district and sessions court judge, D T Puttarangaswamy, also slapped a fine of Rs 25,000 each on Gaviranga and Sushma Priscilla (26).

The court said that of the total fine amount, Rs 40,000 would be handed over to the father of the 22-year-old victim Avinash Suvarna.

His family is also eligible to get compensation from the district Legal Services Authority, the court said.

India requests Antigua to extradite Mehul Choksi

■ Choksi is one of the alleged masterminds of the USD 2 billion scam in State-run Punjab National Bank and is the uncle of fugitive diamantaire Nirav Modi

NEW DELHI, Aug 5 (PTI)

INDIA has handed over a request to Antigua for extradition of bank fraud fugitive Mehul Choksi who has obtained citizenship of the Caribbean nation.

Official sources said, a team from India was sent to Antigua few days back to pursue the authorities there to extradite Choksi. "The team met the Foreign Ministry officials of the island nation yesterday and handed over the request to extradite Choksi to India," an official source said. Choksi is one of the alleged masterminds of the USD 2 billion scam in State-run Punjab National Bank and is an uncle of fugitive diamantaire Nirav Modi.

He is wanted in India by the CBI and Enforcement Directorate probing the fraud, the biggest banking scam in the country.

As per reports, Antiguan authorities cleared his citizenship in November 2017 after India did not give any adverse report to stall his application.

Choksi had fled India on January 4 this year and took oath of allegiance in Antigua on January 15.

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) had sent its request to the Ministry of External Affairs for extradition of Choksi.

Choksi's application for citizenship in Antigua in May 2017 was accompanied with clearance from local police as required by norms, Antiguan newspaper the Daily Observer reported, citing a Statement from the Citizenship by Investment Unit of Antigua and Barbuda. It said police clearance certificate from the Regional Passport Office in Mumbai said that there was no adverse information against Choksi which would render him ineligible for grant of travel facilities including visa for Antigua and Barbuda. When asked about the PCC to Choksi, a spokesperson for the Ministry of External Affairs had said it was given on the basis of a clear police verification report available on his passport.

Shiva devotees 'kanwariyas' return after offering prayers during the holy month of 'Shravan', in Haridwar on Saturday. (PTI)

Divyang cyclists set out to conquer Himalayas

SHIMLA, Aug 5 (IANS)

THIRTY SIX 'divyang' (disabled) cyclists, comprising Border Security Force (BSF) personnel who suffered disability in various operations, set out from here on Sunday for a 10-day expedition to conquer the Himalayan ranges, event organisers said.

The 700-km para-cycling expedition named 'Infinity Ride 2018' of the BSF was flagged off by Himachal Pradesh Director General of Police S.R. Mardi.

The event was hosted by the BSF Western Command of Chandigarh and assisted by the Aditya Mehta Foundation, an NGO working for the upliftment of para-athletes.

The contingent comprised 36 cyclists from the BSF and other central armed police forces along with participants from the Aditya Mehta Foundation.

In addition, for the first time, BSF Mahila Praharis were included which exhibited inclusiveness and empowerment of women.

The cyclists will cover an approximately 700 km route, passing through Narkanda, Rampur, Kalpa, Kaza, Chhatru, culminating in the picturesque tourist resort of Manali on August 15. Union Minister of State for Home Kiren Rijiju is expected to attend the expedition's concluding ceremony.

"This stretch of route tests the limits of a fit human being, but the ability is not being only physically fit, the mental and psychological toughness plays an equal part. "The cycle expedition team of 'divyang' will exhibit the same grit and determination they had shown on the battle field and prove their solidity while encountering the altitude and tough terrain of the stretch," the BSF said.

'Data Protection Bill deterrent for business'

■ Data privacy is a fundamental right emanating from Article 21, as held by Supreme Court in Puttaswamy case, and breach of fundamental right must be viewed very seriously, says Justice B Srikrishna

BENGALURU, Aug 5 (PTI)

THE proposed data protection bill, making offences cognisable and non-bailable, is a deterrent for businesses who wilfully do wrong as giant corporations can otherwise get away with flagrant breaches 'merely by throwing the fine monies,' Justice B Srikrishna has said.

"Every modern statute has a criminal liability clause. That is a deterrent for those who will do wrong intentionally or grossly negligently. Without such provision, merely imposing civil liabilities will make the law a toothless tiger as giant corporations can and will get away with flagrant breaches merely by throwing the fine monies," he told PTI.

Data privacy is a fundamental right emanating from Article 21, as held by the Supreme Court in the Puttaswamy case, and breach of fundamental right must be viewed very seriously, he added.

Some businesses are gripped with fear about making offenses cognisable and non-bailable under the bill by saying this will make it tougher for businesses. They have argued that it would force companies and executives to deal with criminal machinery, instead of focusing on business, he said. The Central Government had constituted the 10-member committee, headed by Justice Srikrishna, in July 2017 to recommend a framework for securing personal data in the increasingly digitised economy, as also to address privacy concerns and build safeguards against data breaches. The committee had submitted its report to the Government on July 27, suggesting steps for safeguarding personal information, defining obligations of data processors as also rights of individuals, and mooting penalties for violation.

On "right to be forgotten" provision, Srikrishna said it cannot be exercised unilaterally without considering the consequences of one's action on persons who may have bonefide and innocently entered into transactions for downstream processing of data, which would give rise to a series of legal liabilities.

The proposed legislation contains a provision for the 'Right to be Forgotten', which is in line with European data privacy laws such as General Data Protection Regulation.

While the draft bill does not insist on personal data of residents of India to be stored only in India, it has made an enabling provision where the Government can notify categories of personal data as critical data, which would be only stored in India.

The rule is always that the one who causes the ultimate liability must be held liable for his actions, he said.

"Again, there could be statutory restrictions on deletion of data as data may have to be maintained to meet legal obligations for a long time," he said.

"Personal data may be critical if it relates to someone who holds a critically important position, say like officers of the defence forces, ISRO scientists, missile scientists, atomic energy personnel and even Judges of High Courts and the Supreme Court," he said.

Asked why the recommendations on Aadhaar Act were kept outside the purview of the committee's work, he said it would amount to contempt of court, since the case is pending before the apex court.

Accused in Kathua case was not in Meerut: Handwriting probe report

JAMMU, Aug 5 (PTI)

It is alleged in the chargesheet that Vishal, accused of raping the girl, had tried to create an alibi of his absence from the crime scene by allegedly "resorting to manipulation of records and creation of false evidence with the connivance and assitance of his father"

THE crime branch of Jammu and Kashmir have carried out scientific tests to support its probe that Vishal Jangotra, an accused in the rape and murder of an 8-year-old girl in Kathua, was not in Meerut when the crime took place in January. The charges of rape and murder of the girl were framed by the district and sessions court in Pathankot against Vishal, who is pursuing a bachelors degree in agriculture from a college in Uttar Pradesh's Meerut district, and his juvenile cousin, his father Sanji Ram, and special police officer Deepak Khajuria alias Deepu.

It is alleged in the chargesheet that Vishal, accused of raping the girl, had tried to create an alibi of his absence from the crime scene by allegedly "resorting to manipulation of records and creation of false evidence with the connivance and assistance of his father". According to the charge sheet filed by the crime branch, the answer sheets as well as attendance sheet of Vishal, son of alleged main accused Sanji Ram, were sent to handwriting experts, also known as Questioners of Examined Documents (QED).

"The opinion given by the expert has inter alia revealed that the first name (Vishal) could not be connected with his usual signatures on the attendance sheets dated January 12 and 15," it said. The girl was kidnapped on January 10 and subsequently killed on January 13 night. Her body was dumped by Vishal, his juvenile cousin and Khajuria on January 14 after which he took a train for Meerut. The body of the victim was recovered on January 17. The handwriting experts also opined that the surname of accused (Jangotra) "could have been anachronistically added on the attendance sheets of January 12 and 15."

The crime branch also seized answer sheets written by the accused in examination centre on January 9 to compare it with the answer sheets of January 12 and 15, which as per investigation were written by him after examination and commission of the crime.

"Inter-spacing between the letters and words in the questioned writings.. Have been written with wide hiatus between letters and words".

"This aspect revels that extend of natural variation in the questioned writings is more personified and profound (answer sheets of January 12 and 15). "Such personified and profound natural variation can occur in the writing of a person when there is a lack of neuro-muscular coordination of the writer and such lack of neuro-muscular coordination is found due to various psychological and physical condition," the report said.

GOVT TO APPROVE REGULATOR FOR VOCATIONAL TRAINING: THE Cabinet will soon consider a proposal for setting up a regulator for vocational training on the lines of the AICTE to improve the quality of skilled manpower, according to the Government officials.

The regulatory agency will also carry out assessment and certification of around 23 lakh students passing out from industrial training institutes, and oversee the functioning of skill councils.

Successful ITI graduates will be awarded certificates. *(PTI)*

RESERVE BANK OF INDIA
CIVIL LINES, NAGPUR - 440 001
www.rbi.org.in

Human Resource Management Department - Nagpur

Notice for Empanelment of Suppliers for Supply of Dairy and Bakery Items etc. to the Officers' Lounge and Dining Room

Reserve Bank of India, Nagpur Office, intends to prepare panel of Suppliers for Supply of Dairy and Bakery items etc. to the Officers' Lounge and Dining Room at MOB, RBI, Civil Lines, Nagpur.

The panel is expected to remain operational for a period of one year initially and extendable up to two more years subject to satisfactory performance.

The Tender form can be downloaded from the RBI's website **www.rbi.org.in** under the Section "Tenders".

The Bank is not bound to accept the lowest tender and reserves the right to accept either in full or in part, any tender and to reject all the tenders, without assigning any reasons therefor.

Last date for submission of completed application forms is **August 27, 2018 up to 2 p.m.**

Regional Director, Nagpur.

Mumbai slums to get colourful makeover

■ By Anand Mishra
MUMBAI, Aug 5 (PTI)

A WALK through the dingy bylanes of slums, which cover a vast expanse of area in Mumbai and its suburbs, now gives positive vibes when one sees those dark and dull hutments looking all colourful and vibrant.

The dash of pink and yellow hues on these hutments in around 13 slum areas, like Dhobi Ghat, Ambedkar Nagar and Kamathipura in Mumbai and the neighbouring Thane city, is all thanks to efforts of city-based artist and social worker Rouble Nagi.

Since January this year, Nagi's team, through her initiative 'Misaal Mumbai', has given a coat of lively colours to around 24,000 hutments across these slums.

Her team has also painted murals on about 300 walls, which has not only transformed Mumbai's skyline, but also generated interest among tourists who earlier had a different impression about the city's shanties.

A slum in Mumbai. (AFP /file photo)

"Painting the households, eliminating darkness and bringing brightness are the secondary objectives. Our primary objective is to improve the living standards of slum dwellers," Nagi says.

Her NGO also conducts medical camps for women and children along with workshops on sanitation and hygiene for these people, the 38-year-old artist says. "Whether their homes are small or big, all have the right to live in clean surroundings.. The surroundings which are not clean, are my constituencies. I consider them as my extended families," Nagi says, adding that making these dwellings hygienic is like empowering their residents. "Our team went an extra mile and even roofs of several shanties were waterproofed in a few localities that few of the slum dwellers found hard to believe," she says. A woman from Jaffar Baba colony in suburban Bandra, whose home has been painted by Nagi's team, is elated to see the new colourful look on the exterior walls.

"We never thought that someone would come and sprinkle vibrant colours on our walls free of cost. I cannot express the feeling of seeing these walls. These shining surroundings have made us even more responsible towards protecting the beauty of these walls," the woman said.

प्रकल्प अधिकारी,
एकात्मिक आदिवासी विकास प्रकल्प, चंद्रपूर

:: जाहिरात ::

प्रकल्प अधिकारी, एकात्मिक आदिवासी विकास प्रकल्प, चंद्रपूर अंतर्गत राज्य स्तरीय योजनेअंतर्गत शबरी आदिवासी घरकुल योजनेमध्ये अनुसुचित जमातीच्या लाभार्थ्यांना घरकुल योजनेचा सन २०१८–१९ या वर्षाकरीता लक्षांक प्राप्त झालेला असुन शासन निर्णयान्वये घरकुलाच्या नियमातील अटी व शर्तीमध्ये बदल झाल्याने या पुर्वी या कार्यालयास सन २००६–०७ ते आज पावेतो प्राप्त झालेले घरकुलाचे अर्जातील काही लाभार्थ्यांना लाभ मिळालेला आहे. काही लाभार्थी मृत्यु पावल्याने तसेच योजनेत बदल झाल्याने सदर अर्ज रद्द करण्यात येत असुन सन २०१८–१९ या आर्थिक वर्षात नव्याने अर्ज मागविण्यात येत आहे. करीता यापुर्वी अर्ज केलेल्या लाभार्थ्यांना तसेच नव्याने अर्ज करणाऱ्या इच्छुक लाभार्थ्यांनी दिनांक ३०.९.२०१८ पर्यंत ठिक ५.०० वाजेपर्यंत विहीत नमुन्यात खालील दस्ताऐवजासह अर्ज सादर करावे. अर्जाचा विहीत नमुना या कार्यालयाच्या अधिनस्त येत असलेल्या शासकिय आश्रम शाळा, शासकीय वसतीगृत स्तरावर निशुल्क उपलब्ध करण्यात आले आहे. तेव्हा विहीत कालावधीत सबंधितांनी अर्ज सादर करावे. विहीत कालावधीनंतर येणारे अर्जाचा विचार केल्या जाणार नाही याची सबंधितांनी नोंद घ्यावी.

लाभार्थ्यांनी अर्जासोबत सादर करावयाचे दस्तावेज

१. जागेचे ७/१२ व गावनमुना–८, (स्वत:चा) नकाशाची मुळ प्रत.
२. मागील तीन महिण्याचा आतील ग्रामसभेच्या ठरावाची प्रत (मुळ प्रत) घरकुल बाबत.
३. सक्षम अधिकाऱ्याने दिलेल्या जातीच्या प्रमाणपत्राची छायांकीत प्रत.
४. रहिवासी दाखला सक्षमअधिकाऱ्याने दिलेला.
५. सक्षम अधिकाऱ्याने दिलेल्या उत्पन्नाचे प्रमाणपत्र (चालू आर्थिक वर्षाचे सन २०१८–१९)
६. लाभार्थ्यांना घराचा जागेसह फोटो.
७. आधार कार्ड
८. रेशनकार्ड
९. शासनाच्या कोणत्याही योजनेमार्फत घरकुलाचा लाभ न मिळाल्या बाबतचे प्रमाणपत्र (सचिव) ग्राम पंचायत यांचे.
१०. घरपट्टी, पाणीपट्टी (सन २०१८–१९)
११. दिनांक १.१.१९९५ च्या किंवा मदतार यादीतील नावाचा उतारा.
१२. निवडणूक मतदार ओळखपत्र.

प्रकल्प अधिकारी
एकात्मिक आदिवासी विकास प्रकल्प
चंद्रपूर

BRIEFS

Two minors found dead in Noida water body

NOIDA (UP), Aug 5 (PTI)

THE bodies of two boys, missing since on Saturday, were recovered from a water body in Dadri area here on Sunday, police said.

The boys, both 11, had left home at Ghodi Bacheda village to graze their cattle in a nearby forest last afternoon, the police said.

"When the boys did not return home till late in the evening, their family members and other villagers went looking for them," Dadri Circle Officer Nishank Sharma said.

"On Sunday morning, they found the bodies of the children from an abandoned pool near the village," he said. Sharma said soon the villagers alerted the police, which reached the spot and took up investigation.

The pool is located on a land under the Greater Noida Authority.

Abducted boy found begging on streets in UP

MUZAFFARNAGAR, Aug 5 (PTI)

A 13-YEAR-OLD boy was found begging on the streets, 12 days after he went missing, from the district headquarters area, police said on Sunday.

Zishan Ali, who works as a labourer, on Saturday found his son Shoaib, who was missing since the last 12 days, begging on streets, they said.

The boy alleged that one Mannu had abducted him when he was out of home and forced him to beg, the police said. On the basis of Shoaib's complaint, a case was registered against the accused and arrested him, the police added.

Man arrested for killing live-in partner in Delhi

NEW DELHI, Aug 5 (PTI)

A 35-YEAR-OLD man was arrested on Saturday for allegedly killing his live-in partner for insisting upon him to marry her after divorcing his wife, the police said.

The decomposed body of the 25-year-old woman was found in an almirah in northeast Delhi's Gokalpuri on August 2.

The man had earlier informed the police that a foul smell was emanating from the house.

After searching the house, the police discovered the woman's body from an almirah in it and suspected the man's role in the murder.

Later on interrogation, he confessed to killing her on the intervening night of July 31 and August 1, the police added. The accused was a married man, having four children and the victim was pressurising him to leave his wife and get married to her, the police said.

Three auto-lifters arrested, 10 stolen cars recovered

NEW DELHI, Aug 5 (PTI)

THREE suspected auto lifters were arrested and 10 stolen cars and keys of 64 vehicles were recovered, the police said on Saturday.

The accused were identified as Mohsin (39), Aslam (38) and Shahzad (28), they added.

On August 2, police received information that some criminals, involved in various cases of motor vehicle theft were roaming in the Timarpur area, Deputy Commissioner of Police (North) Nupur Prasad said.

Bihar Govt suspends officials in sex scandal

■ Six officials of Bihar's social welfare department, have been placed under suspension on account of 'negligence and dereliction of duty'

PATNA, Aug 5 (PTI)

SIX officials of Bihar's social welfare department, which has drawn flak after the sexual abuse of girls at a state-funded shelter home in Muzaffarpur came to light, have been placed under suspension on account of 'negligence and dereliction of duty'. Notifications to this effect were issued late last night.

The officials put under suspension were posted as assistant directors of Child Protection Units in Muzaffarpur, Munger, Araria, Madhubani, Bhagalpur and Bhojpur districts.

All the officials, suspended with immediate effect, have been charged with 'failure to take adequate legal action' with regard to 'assault, indecent behaviour and other undesirable activities' at shelter homes within their respective areas of jurisdiction.

The Muzaffarpur shelter home incident had surfaced in a social audit conducted by Mumbai-based Tata Institute of Social Sciences. An FIR was lodged by the state social welfare department in June, which led to the arrest of 10 people.

Medical reports have confirmed sexual abuse of more than 30 girls formerly lodged at the shelter home, which has since been sealed.

The case has been handed over to the CBI. The six officials were directed at a state-level meeting in May to take necessary action in the light of the audit report's findings, but their failure to do so resulted in lack of timely action against the guilty, which has caused 'an embarrassment to the department and the Government', the suspension orders added.

Nitish launches scheme for girl child post-Muzaffapur sex scandal

PATNA, Aug 5 (PTI)

AMID a barrage of attacks over the Muzaffarpur sex scandal, Bihar CM Nitish Kumar has launched an ambitious scheme which promises to provide Rs 54,100 from the birth of a girl child till she graduates.

Kumar launched the 'Mukhyamantri Kanya Utthan Yojana' here on Friday and expressed his Government's resolve for empowerment of women. "In his launch speech, Kumar talked about his happiness over the start of the scheme, but at the same time said he was 'standing here with mixed feelings' over the case of sex abuse at a state-funded girls' shelter home at Muzaffarpur".

On the occasion, the Chief Minister also made several other announcements like increasing the amount under the 'Bicycle Yojna' from Rs 2500 to Rs 3000. The scheme, launched by Nitish Kumar Government in 2006, providing bicycles to school going girls, has won laurels in the country and abroad.

He also announced doubling the amount for purchase of sanitary napkin to Rs 300 from existing Rs 150 under the 'Kishori Swasthya Yojna.' The ambitious 'Mukhyamantri Kanya Utthan Yojana' will be run by three departments -- education, health and social welfare.

Giving details of the scheme, Kumar had said on birth of a girl child her family would get Rs 2000. After preparation of her Aadhaar card, the family would get an additional amount of Rs 1000.

'HRD needs plans to streamline process to recognise schools'

NEW DELHI, Aug 5 (PTI)

THE Ministry of Human Resource (HRD) Ministry should go for 'realistic' planning and expedite efforts to streamline the process of granting recognition to schools in a time-bound manner, a Parliamentary panel has recommended.

"The committee is dismayed to note that for developing a transparent mechanism and adequate safeguards for recognition of a school, a substantial time has already elapsed in finding a viable solution, devoid of red-tapism, to the problem".

"The HRD Ministry should go for realistic planning and expedite its efforts to streamline the process of granting 'certificate of recognition' in consultation with the respective State Governments to consider the granting of recognition to Government schools in a time-bound manner," the panel said in its report.

The committee had earlier pointed out that a large number of private schools all over the country had been closed for non-compliance of norms laid down in the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 (RTE Act) which in turn had resulted in the deprivation of a larger number of children of their right to education. "The norms and standards of the RTE Act for providing recognition of private schools and the additional conditions imposed by the state Governments were 'onerous' and 'unrealistic', thereby leading to harassment and sometimes closure of private unaided schools by education officials," it had noted in its earlier report.

The panel had recommended that the HRD Ministry should streamline the process of 'certificate of recognition' and make it more transparent and also constitute an independent body comprising of noted academicians, in consultation with respective State Governments.

Members of United Hindu front (UHF) participate in a protest to demand the deportation of Bangladeshi and Rohingya Muslims, in New Delhi, on Sunday. (AFP)

Mid-day meal NGO fined for violating health norms

NEW DELHI, Aug 5 (PTI)

AN NGO engaged by the South Delhi Municipal Corporation for the mid-day meal scheme has been slapped with a fine of Rs 54,879 for allegedly violating health and sanitation norms, the civic body on Saturday said.

The SDMC's education department has been inspecting kitchens of various NGOs engaged for cooking mid-day meals meant for its school students. "During a visit of kitchen of Stri Shakti Foundation, a number of gross irregularities were found. No staff members were wearing apron, flies were found in the kitchen area and a few workers were using dirty slippers.

"A show cause notice was issued to this NGO and it was asked to submit a reply," the statement said.

The SDMC said, the reply sent by the NGO was examined and it was found to be 'unsatisfactory'

Expedite setting up of anti-retroviral treatment centres: Parlt panel

NEW DELHI, Aug 5 (PTI)

A PARLIAMENTARY panel has asked the Health Ministry to take necessary steps to speed up the process of establishing and linking anti-retroviral treatment centres for the HIV-infected across the country.

This will provide consistent access to 'affordable and efficacious' medication regime for the treatment of HIV positive patients, it said.

The panel has also asked the Ministry to devise a mechanism for providing an expanded access to subsidised anti-retroviral therapy for poor people, orphan and destitute children infected with HIV.

The Committee on Petitions on the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare in its 56th report presented in Parliament asked the ministry to apprise it within three months about the steps taken.

"Keeping in view the urgent need for the affordable treatment of HIV positive patients in the country, the committee reiterates its earlier recommendation and urges the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare to strengthen its network and take necessary steps to speed up the process of establishing new public-private partnership anti- retroviral treatment centres," it said.

The panel, chaired by Bhagat Singh Koshyari, also suggested linking anti-retroviral treatment centres all over the country in a time bound manner.

The committee said it had appreciated the Union Health Ministry for its efforts in providing consistent access to affordable and efficacious medication regime for the treatment of HIV positive patients.

Centre should've consulted all parties on NRC: Sharad

■ By Manish Shrivastava

BHOPAL, Aug 5 (PTI)

THE Centre should have consulted all parties to work out a 'unanimous mechanism' before going ahead with the National Register of Citizens (NRC) exercise in Assam, Loktantrik Janata Dal leader Sharad Yadav has said.

Taking a dig at the Modi Government, the former Union Minister said it has been unable to ensure the safety of women and girls in the country but talks of cow protection. The NRC, a list of Assam citizens, was published on July 30 with the names of over 40 lakh residents of the state not being included in it.

"The Government should have called an all-party meeting to find out an amicable solution to the problem in Assam. But if you do it just like that, you won't be able to do it by just declaring a cut-off date... You will get tired," Yadav told PTI in an interview.

The former Janata Dal (United) chief said he agrees that the issue of Assam has 'reflections on democracy', but asserted they should have found a 'justifiable solution of the problem and a unanimous mechanism' for it.

Criticising the BJP, Yadav said, "This party is not giving ticket to any Muslim. Therefore, we are not ready to believe that it will do justice with them." "People have come here from Tibet. Bangladeshis had come and gone to Bangladesh. When Pak was created, a large number of people went there and were called 'Mohajirs', and Sikhs too had come here from there," he said. This movement of population took place maximum in India, he claimed.

"No proper debates are taking place in Parliament. Many agitations are going on in the country. If you find on which date a person had come to this country, then it (country) will get destroyed," he said.

'Highest number of kids available for adoption is from Mah'

■ By Uzmi Athar

NEW DELHI, Aug 5 (PTI)

THE adoption scene in the country is somewhat like this: 1,991 children, including 1,322 girls, available for about 20,000 prospective parents.

The highest number of children available for adoption is from Maharashtra at 376 followed by Odisha at 299, according to an RTI reply. On a query on the number of children available for adoption in 2017-18, it was informed that the figure is 1,991 including 1,322 girls.

Rakesh Srivastava, secretary in the Ministry of Women and Child Development (WCD), said the main reason for the availability of less number of children is because many of them are with childcare institutions which have not been registered with the Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA), the apex adoption body in the country.

According to the Child Adoption Resource Information and Guidance System (CARINGS), there is just one child available for every nine adoptive parents in India. The maximum number of children available for adoption are from the age group of 0-2 years at 417 that included 246 girls, data showed.

In the age group of 2-4 years, 220 children, including 126 girls, are available for adoption. In the age group of 4-6 years, 224 children, including 127 girls are available for adoption.

One hundred and fifty eight children, including 82 girls, in the age group of 6-8 years and 187 kids, including 105 girls, in the age group of 8-10 years are available for adoption. In the age group of 10-12 years, 260 children, including 169 girls were available for adoption. In the age group of 12-14 years, 302 children, including 206 girls were available for adoption while in the age group of 14-18 years, 397 children, including 261 girls were available for adoption, the data showed.

"At any given point of time, the number of prospective parents are ten times the number of children available for adoption," said Srivastava, underlining that currently there are 20,000 prospective parents. "And that is the reason there is a two-year waiting period for prospective parents," he added. The Women and Child Development Ministry has asked the childcare institutions to link up with CARA to bring the children staying in unregistered homes up for adoption within the next one month.

Registration of about 4,000 childcare institutions are still pending, according to a senior WCD official.

The mandatory registration of childcare institutions and linking to CARA have been provided in Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015 which came into force more than two years ago. However, some orphanages had challenged the validity of this clause.

Museum constructing gallery to show ancient human endeavour

KOLKATA, Aug 5 (PTI)

THE Indian Museum here is constructing a gallery where several objects chronicling human endeavour on this land in the past thousands of years will be exhibited.

The exhibits of the gallery will be taken from the Geological Survey of India (GSI) collections and those consist of scientific evidences of ancient human endeavour including crafting tools used by hunters, food gatherers, grinding and polishing stones, Museum Director Rajesh Purohit told PTI.

It will be called the 'Signature of human endeavour in India', Purohit said adding, "When you see anything or when anybody comes to your country the question arises how old is the culture. We have attempted to answer this question in an ongoing exhibition." While currently some objects are being shown in an exhibition in the Museum and it will continue till August 19, the items after documenting and chronicling will be housed in the new gallery when it comes up, he said. Purohit said in the South-East Asian Gallery of the museum, there was a new addition of the inscription of Buddhagupta of the sixth century.

The Indian Museum got the inscriptions and "It is now in our collections," he said.

He said a replica of the inscription had recently been gifted to Singapore premier by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The South-East Asian Gallery also has a 13th century boat with temple motif from Odisha indicating maritime connection with neighbouring countries, he said.

The same gallery also has paintings, drawings, sketches, terracota objects, seals and coins which were found all along the coastal belt of eastern part of the country, he said. The museum is also working on to communicate the history of the exhibits through audio-visual medium.

"We'll hire a company to provide all these information through headphones. We want to make the youth of the country aware of the rich past of India," Purohit said.

"There will be a story telling manner through which these exhibits will be shown to people so that children and common visitors will not only understand India's cultural and other ties with South-East Asia but get to know about our heritage, our epics and literature," he said.

Purohit said the museum could play a pivotal role in establishing cultural and friendly relations with neighbouring countries like Sri Lanka and Indonesia.

Elderly men and women celebrate International Friendship Day at St. Joseph's Old age home, in Kolkata, West Bengal, on Sunday. (PTI)

WORLD SNIPPETS

Ex-Trump aide spotted boarding Air Force One

WASHINGTON, Aug 5 (IANS)

HOPE Hicks, former White House Communications Director and long-time aide to President Donald Trump, was spotted boarding the Air Force One at a New Jersey airport, a media report said.

Hicks, who was one of the President's longest-serving aides during the presidential campaign and in the White House, boarded the plane at the Morristown, New Jersey, airport, on Saturday which is near the Trump Bedminster resort where the President is staying, reports 'CNN'.

Hicks resigned from her White House role in February. Her resignation came a day after she testified before the House Intelligence Committee and said she had told white lies on the job. However, there was no indication that her resignation and the admission to the committee were connected. Hicks also faced scrutiny in her final days at the White House over her involvement in crafting the White House's initial defence of former White House aide Rob Porter, who resigned after 2 of his former wives came out publicly with accusations of domestic abuse against him.

I won't be the First Lady: Mexican President's wife

MEXICO City, Aug 5 (IANS)

FOLLOWING the victory of Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador as the Mexican President, his wife Beatriz Gutierrez Muller has said on social media that she will not be Mexico's First Lady.

Her move has thus eliminated a figure which, until now, has accompanied a long line of Mexico's Presidents, 'Efe' news reported.

Though the First Lady in Mexico is an honorary position without specific duties or responsibilities, but traditionally, the head of state's wife has presided over the National System for Comprehensive Family Development (DIF).

"I will not be the honorary President of the DIF nor of any other federal, state or municipal institution," she said. Since Gutierrez has decided to cut ties with this institution, it will no longer be a subordinate of the Presidency of the Republic, but will rather become an integral part of the Health Secretariat.

'Do better in math test by improving your posture'

NEW YORK, Aug 5(IANS)

IF Math tests scare you, then you could benefit from a simple change in your posture, a new study has found. The findings, published in the journal *NeuroRegulation*, suggested that over half of the participants found it easier to perform in math when sitting in an upright position.

"For people who are anxious about math, posture makes a giant difference," explained study co-author Erik Peper, Professor at the San Francisco State University in the US.

The study involved 125 college students to see how well they could perform simple math. They were asked to fill an anonymous questionnaire asking them to rate their anxiety levels while taking exams and performing math. The research team noted that 56 per cent of the students found it easier to perform math in an upright position.

Iran gets 5 new planes ahead of renewed US sanctions

■ The arrival of the ATR72-600 airplanes at Tehran's Mehrabad International Airport represented perhaps the last benefits Iran will see under the nuclear deal after US President Donald Trump withdrew from it in May

TEHRAN, Aug 5 (AP)

IRAN acquired five new commercial aircraft on Sunday, a day before the US begins restoring sanctions that had been lifted under the 2015 nuclear accord with world powers.

The arrival of the ATR72-600 airplanes at Tehran's Mehrabad International Airport represented perhaps the last benefits Iran will see under the nuclear deal after US President Donald Trump withdrew from it in May.

Economic woes are sparking sporadic, leaderless protests across the country.

The rhetoric between the US and Iran remains heated, despite Trump tweeting last week that he would be willing to meet with Iranian President Hassan Rouhani. Iran's powerful Revolutionary Guard on Sunday acknowledged conducting recent naval exercises near the crucial Strait of Hormuz after renewing threats to cut off the waterway to oil traders.

Iran's state-run 'IRNA' news agency reported the arrival of the five ATR72-600 airplanes, which are twin-engine turboprops used for short-distance regional flights.

Their arrival means state carrier Iran Air has received 13 of the 20 it ordered from the French-Italian manufacturer in April 2017. The deal had a list value of USD 536 million, though buyers and manufacturers typically negotiate lower prices.

ATR, jointly owned by European consortium Airbus and Italy's Leonardo, has been pushing US officials to allow it to finish its delivery of aircraft to Iran. The Toulouse, France-based firm did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The nuclear deal lifted international sanctions in return for Iran limiting its nuclear programme and allowing regular inspections. UN inspectors said Iran was complying with the deal, but Trump felt the agreement did not go far enough.

He has called for a new accord that would include a radical transformation of Iran's policies, including its military support for the Syrian Government and regional militant groups, two issues not covered by the 2015 deal.

A display of ostrich eggs stands at the entrance to Kledu farm, near Bamako, in Mali on Sunday. (Right) Ostriches gather in an enclosure at Kledu farm on Sunday. A Malian businessman decided some 15 years ago to reintroduce ostriches to his country and now has some 3000 on his three hundred hectare farm near the Malian capital. (AFP)

Iran refuses talks with US under coercion

TEHRAN, Aug 5 (IANS)

IRAN will not sit down for negotiations under pressures, in particular with US President Donald Trump who "has breached obligations," Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesperson Bahram Qasemi said on Saturday.

If the US wants negotiations, it should stop pressures and sanctions, Qasemi said. Under such circumstances negotiations cannot be held, he said, adding that the Iranian people will resist the pressures and will conquer finally. In the meantime, Qasemi rejected the possibility of war between Tehran and Washington, saying no country is able to carry out such actions in the current world. He also said Tehran expects the European countries to bring forward a package of proposals to salvage Iranian nuclear deal, also known as JCPOA, after the U S pull-out in May. Iran wants guarantees from Europe to maintain banking cooperation and investments in Iran's oil fields as well as continuation of cooperation between Iranian and European small and medium-sized enterprises, Qasemi noted.

Following Trump's decision to quit the historic Iran nuclear pact on May 8, the United States vowed to reimpose sanctions lifted under the accord against Iran and inflict punishments like secondary sanctions on nations that have business links with Iran. US' withdrawal from the landmark Iran nuclear deal was criticized across the world. Some of its major European allies have been working to prevent the 2015 deal from falling apart.

IS killed Syrian hostage: Media, monitor

BEIRUT, Aug 5 (AFP)

THE Islamic State (IS) jihadist group has executed one of dozens of Druze hostages abducted from Syria's Southern province of Sweida last month, a Syrian news website and a monitor said on Sunday.

IS killed the 19-year-old male student on Friday after kidnapping more than 30 people, mostly women and children, from a village in Sweida during a deadly rampage last week, the head of the *Sweida24* news website Nour Radwan told *AFP*.

Quoting relatives, Radwan said the young man was taken from the village of Al-Shabki on July 25 along with his mother.

His family received two videos, the first showing him being decapitated and the second of him speaking before being killed as well as images of his body after his death, Radwan said.

Sweida24 posted online part of a second video, which was seen by *AFP*, showing a young man who appeared to be sitting on the ground in a rocky landscape.

His is wearing a black T-shirt and his hands are tied behind his back. The video could not be independently verified.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a Britain-based war monitor, said it was the first execution since the kidnappings.

On July 25, IS carried out a series of attacks in Sweida's provincial capital and several villages that killed more than 250 people, mostly civilians.

It was the deadliest attack ever to target the mostly government-held province and the secretive Druze religious minority that populates it. During the attack the jihadists abducted 36 Druze women and children from a village in Sweida's east, the Observatory said at the time. Four women had since escaped while two had died, leaving 14 women and 16 children in IS captivity, according to the Observatory.

'Head of Syrian regime research centre killed'

BEIRUT, Aug 5 (AFP)

THE head of a Syrian Government research centre fabricating weapons has been killed in an explosion targeting his car, a Britain-based monitor said on Sunday.

The pro-regime *Al-Watan* newspaper confirmed the killing. General Aziz Asbar was killed late on Saturday along with his driver in the Central province of Hama, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights monitor said. Asbar headed the research centre in Hama's Masyaf, which was targeted in Israeli air strikes last month and in September last year, the Britain-based Observatory said.

According to the US, sarin gas was being developed at the centre, a claim denied by Syrian authorities who say the country does not possess any chemical weapons after a 2013 agreement to hand over its chemical arsenal. Observatory head Rami Abdel Rahman said that experts from regime ally Iran were present at the Masyaf centre, which was developing short-range surface-to-surface missiles.

Musicians of the traditional band Bagad of Vannes Melinerion play brass instruments as they take part in the traditional street parade of the 48th Lorient Interceltic Festival (FIL) on Sunday in Lorient, western France. (AFP)

California wildfires continue to expand

UNDATED, Aug 5 (Reuters)

A COUPLE of fast-growing wildfires in Northern California expanded by more than 25 per cent overnight and continued to spread on Saturday afternoon as more residents were ordered to evacuate their homes and weary firefighters endured high temperatures and gusting winds.

A seventh person died in the wildfire, officials said, as more residents were ordered to evacuate their homes as weary firefighters endured high temperatures and gusting winds.

Two blazes collectively called the Mendocino Complex burned in Mendocino, Lake and Colusa counties, about 90 miles (145 km) North of San Francisco. The River and Ranch fires had grown to cover a total of 201,471 acres (81,500 hectares) by early Saturday, and were considered 34 per cent contained. The scorched land figure is expected to rise when the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (Cal Fire) issues an update on Saturday night, spokeswoman Tricia Austin said. This year, California wildfires have burned more land earlier in the "fire season" than usual, said Ken Pimlott, Cal Fire director, during a news conference on Saturday.

"Fire season is really just beginning. What seems like we should be in the peak of fire season, historically, is really now the kind of conditions we're seeing really at the beginning," said Pimlott. California Governor Jerry Brown, who visited some of the burned areas, said, "This is part of a trend, the new normal, that we've got to deal with."

Resident of Lane Lawder carries a water bucket while fighting to save his home from the ranch fire burning down near Clearlake Oaks, California, on Saturday. (AFP)

Philippines mums in show of support for breast-feeding

MANILA, Aug 5 (AFP)

HUNDREDS of Philippines mothers simultaneously nursed their babies in public on Sunday, some of them two at a time, in a Government-backed mass breastfeeding event aimed at combating child deaths.

About 1,500 women sat on the vast floor of a Manila stadium and let their babies suckle to the beat of dance music. "Breastfeeding is love. It is difficult, but we do it for love," said Abegirl Limjap, a pregnant 38-year-old property manager in a "Super Mom" superhero costume as she nursed her two boys, one aged five and the other 11 months. The annual event aims to draw public support for a government campaign to get more mothers to switch to breast milk from infant formula, organiser Rose Padua told *AFP*. The World Health Organization and the United Nations Children's Fund recommend that children be given breast milk within the first hour of birth and be exclusively breast-fed for their first six months.

Humans can be emotionally manipulated by robots: Study

LONDON, Aug 5 (IANS)

RESEARCHERS from the University of Duisburg-Essen in Germany have found that humans are susceptible to emotional manipulation by robots.

The findings indicated that humans have such a strong tendency to anthropomorphize -- attribution of human traits, emotions, or intentions to non-human entities like robots -- that we can fall prey to emotional manipulation by such entities.

In 2007, a team of researchers carried out a study called "Begging computer does not want to die" in which volunteers were asked to switch off a robot cat but were not sure what to do when the cat begged them to not turn them off, Tech Xplore reported on Friday. The researchers replicated this experiment using more volunteers and a different robot. For the study, published in the journal PLOS ONE, the research team involved 89 volunteers who were asked to interact with a robot under the guise of helping it become more intelligent. At the conclusion of the interaction, a researcher would ask the volunteer to turn off the robot only to have the robot beg them not to do so. In addition to voice requests, the robot also displayed bodily actions meant to bolster their request. Some volunteers served as controls and were asked to turn off the robot but did not experience begging from the robot.

The researchers found that 43 of the volunteers were confronted with the decision between complying with the researchers' request and the robot's. They also reported that 13 volunteers chose to heed the robot's wishes and all others took longer to turn off the robot than those in the control group. Each of the volunteers was interviewed after their interactions with the robot and those who had refused to turn off the robot were asked why.

The findings indicated that humans have such a strong tendency to anthropomorphize -- attribution of human traits, emotions, or intentions to non-human entities like robots -- that we can fall prey to emotional manipulation by such entities

Odd 1s Out

ROBOTS REPLACE WAITERS IN CHINESE RESTAURANT

SHANGHAI, Aug 5 (AFP)

THE little robotic waiter wheels up to the table, raises its glass lid to reveal a steaming plate of local Shanghai-style crayfish and announces in low, mechanical tones, "Enjoy your meal."

The futuristic restaurant concept is the latest initiative in Chinese e-commerce giant Alibaba's push to modernise service and retail in a country where robotics and artificial intelligence are increasingly being integrated into commerce.

Raising efficiency and lowering labour costs are the objectives at Alibaba's "Robot.He" diners, where waiters have been replaced by robots about the size of microwave ovens, which roll around the dining room on table-high runways. "In Shanghai, a waiter costs up to 10,000 yuan ($1,500) per month. That's hundreds of thousands in cost every year. And two shifts of people are needed," said Cao Haitao, the Alibaba product manager who developed the concept. "But we don't need two shifts for robots and they are on duty every day."

A man getting food from a robot at the Robot.He restaurant in Shanghai, on Saturday. (AFP)

Home remedies to KEEP YOUR GUT CLEAN

■ By Dr Manoj Kutteri

Gut health is one of the most discussed subjects in the wellness world in the current times. Unhealthy gut can lead to myriad of health complications that includes digestive problems, allergies, mood swings, skin diseases, diabetes, immune compromised disorders, hormone related issues including PCOD and Thyroid diseases etc.

DRINKING WATER FLUSHES TOXINS

One of the most important of all the remedies is Hydration. Water being a universal solvent can dissolve many toxins and get them out of our body through kidneys, skin and respiration. However the extent of toxic elimination also depends on the healthy functioning of these organs as well. Moisture content in the food is also key to the health of gut and other excretory organs. Having adequate water within the food also helps in proper mixing of digestive juices with the food thus improving the nutrient absorption. Moisture can be obtained by eating moist foods and also by drinking adequate amounts of water. Consuming plenty of fluids, soups, raw salads and fruits ensure sufficient intake of water throughout the day.

GUT FRIENDLY DIET

Diet plays a major role in maintaining the gut free from toxins and also remove all the waste products from the colon. The below are some of the key food items one should always target. Diet that helps in keeping the gut clean are

Vegetables - Broccoli, Cabbage, Brussels sprouts, Kale etc.

Fruits - Raspberries, Blue berries, Banana, Avocados etc.

Nuts - Almonds, Walnuts, Chia seeds and Flax seeds etc.

Citrus fruits - Lemon, Oranges, Pineapple, Grapefruit etc.

Herbs and Spices - Turmeric, Cumin, Fennel, Ginger, Coriander, Cayenne pepper etc.

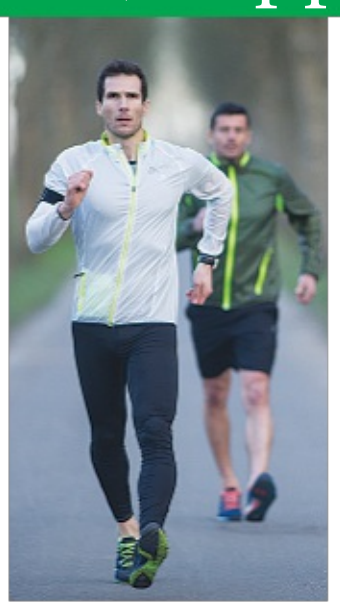
Wholegrain - Brown rice, *Ragi*, Quinoa, Amaranthus etc.

Fibre - Fibre is an important ingredient of our daily diet plan. It is recommended that each adult requires at least 30 - 40g fibre every day. Fibre is essential in checking the blood sugar levels, cholesterol and to promote absorption of nutrients. Incidence of diabetes, coronary artery diseases and bowel cancers were observed to be low among communities who traditionally consume more of fibre in their diet.

PREBIOTICS AND PROBIOTICS

Prebiotics are non-digestible carbohydrates that help to enhance the growth of healthy bacterial activity within the gut. The action of probiotics is accelerated in presence of prebiotics. Fruits are one of the best prebiotics one could consume regularly.

Happy feet, happy heart



Faster walking patients with heart disease are hospitalised less, a recent study has found.

The three-year University of Ferrara study was conducted in 1,078 hypertensive patients, of whom 85 per cent also had coronary heart disease and 15 per cent also had valve disease.

Patients were then asked to walk 1 km on a treadmill at what they considered to be a moderate intensity.3 Patients were classified as slow (2.6 km/hour), intermediate (3.9 km/hour) and fast (average 5.1 km/hour). A total of 359 patients were slow walkers, 362 were intermediate and 357 were fast walkers.

The researchers recorded the number of all-cause hospitalisations and length of stay over the next three years. Participants were flagged by the regional Health Service Registry of the Emilia-Romagna Region, which collects data on all-cause hospitalisation.

Study author Dr Carlotta Merlo said: "We did not exclude any causes of death because walking speed has significant consequences for public health. Reduced walking speed is a marker of limited mobility, which is a precursor of disability, disease, and loss of autonomy."

During the three year period, 182 of the slow walkers (51 per cent) had at least one hospitalisation, compared to 160 (44 per cent) of the intermediate walkers, and 110 (31 per cent) of the fast walkers.

The slow, intermediate and fast walking groups spent a total of 4,186, 2,240, and 990 days in hospital over the three years, respectively.

The average length of hospital stay for each patient was 23, 14, and 9 days for the slow, intermediate and fast walkers, respectively.

Each 1 km/hour increase in walking speed resulted in a 19 per cent reduction in the likelihood of being hospitalised during the three-year period. Compared to the slow walkers, fast walkers had a 37 per cent lower likelihood of hospitalisation in three years.

Merlo said: "The faster the walking speed, the lower the risk of hospitalisation and the shorter the length of hospital stay. Since reduced walking speed is a marker of limited mobility, which has been linked to decreased physical activity, we assume that fast walkers in the study are also fast walkers in real life."

She continued: "Walking is the most popular type of exercise in adults. It is free, does not require special training, and can be done almost anywhere. Even short, but regular, walks have substantial health benefits. Our study shows that the benefits are even greater when the pace of walking is increased."

(ANI) ●

Who knew frequent sauna bathing can do much more than just beautifying and cleansing the skin.

According to the University of Eastern Finland-led study, frequent sauna bathing is associated with a reduced risk of stroke.

In a 15-year follow-up study, people taking a sauna 4-7 times a week were 61 per cent less likely to suffer a stroke than those taking a sauna once a week.

Stroke is one of the leading causes of disability worldwide, placing a heavy human and economic burden on societies. The reduced risk associated with sauna bathing was found by a team of scientists from various universities.

In a recent experimental study, the same group of scientists also showed that sauna bathing has acute effects on the stiffness of the arterial wall, hence influencing blood pressure and cardiac function parameters.

The findings are based on the population-based Kuopio Ischaemic Heart Disease Risk Factor (KIHD) study and involved 1,628 men and women aged 53 to 74 years living in the eastern part of Finland.

Based on their frequency of taking traditional Finnish sauna baths (relative humidity 10-20 per cent), the study participants were divided into three groups: those taking a sauna once a week, those taking a sauna 2-3 times a week, and those taking a sauna 4-7 times a week.

The more frequently saunas were taken; the lower was the risk of stroke. Compared to people taking one sauna session per week, the risk was decreased by 14 percent among those with 2-3 sessions and 61 percent among those with 4-7 sessions.

The association persisted even when taking into account conventional stroke risk factors, such as age, sex, diabetes, body mass index, blood lipids, alcohol consumption, physical activity and socio-economic status. The strength of association was similar in men and women.

Previous results from the KIHD study at the University of Eastern Finland have shown that frequent sauna bathing also significantly reduces the risk of cardiovascular and all-cause mortality.

According to the researchers, mechanisms driving the association of sauna bathing with reduced stroke may include a reduction in blood pressure, stimulation of immune system, a positive impact on the autonomic nervous system, and an improved cardiovascular function.

The study appears in the journal *Neurology*.

(ANI) ●

Get rid of sore throat naturally

Your saliva goes down like sandpaper, and every cough makes you wince. Sore throats can be rough. But some of your favorite home remedies may just be masking the pain-not resolving it, says Brett Comer, MD, a head and neck surgeon at the University of Kentucky College of Medicine.

Of course, if you're suffering, there's nothing wrong with a little relief. Honey, warm tea, and cough drops can all calm the throat irritation and inflammation that are causing your agony, Comer says. But if you really want to be rid of your sore throat? Here are your best remedies.

Gargle with salt water: Salt water can calm inflammation by knocking down the kind of acidity that leads to throat irritation. It may also help draw infections or irritants to the surface of your throat, where your body is better able to deal with them. Dissolve ¼ to ½ teaspoon of salt in eight ounces of warm water, advises Mia Finkelston, MD, a Maryland-based family physician who also treats patients via LiveHealth Online. Gargle every hour or two.

Drink extra-cold liquids: Those first few swallows may not be pleasant. But just as icing a sprained ankle can dull the pain and prevent swelling, drinking icy liquids can both numb your throat and calm some of the inflammation that's causing you pain, Finkelston says.

Suck on an ice pop: If you eventually get sick of downing ice water, a popsicle can be just as effective at fighting off the inflammation in your throat. Just be sure to steer clear of citrus flavors which can trigger acid reflux and in turn, worsen your symptoms.

Skip acidic foods: Acid reflux is a common cause of a sore throat, Comer says. That means anything you do to stoke acid reflux could prolong or worsen a sore throat. For that reason, Comer recommends avoiding soda, fried foods, and citrus fruits like oranges and lemons. Also, skip food altogether for an hour before bed. Eating before you lie down can promote reflux, experts warn.

Swallow antacids: If you think reflux is to blame for your sore throat, taking antacids or other reflux meds could help knock out your pain at its source, Finkelston says. (Note: This should not be a long-term solution.)

Sip turmeric tea: Turmeric is the trendy supplement du jour, and one you should definitely be adding to your diet. While

some of its benefits-including its potential to prevent cancer or brain diseases-require more study, its anti-inflammation powers are well-established and may help relieve your sore throat, Finkelston says. Add a few dashes to your tea or salt-water gargle.

Pop this pill: Ibuprofen can ease swelling and irritation, so it can help put a stop to the coughing and throat-clearing that prevents your sore throat from healing, Finkelston says. Just be sure to take your ibuprofen with food, and follow the dosing instructions on the label.

Humidify the air: Dry air can irritate a sore throat, prolonging your recovery time, according to Mayo Clinic experts. Take a steamy shower or plug in your humidifier to help relieve the pain. But if you go with the latter suggestion, be sure to scrub out your machine before turning it on. Left neglected, a humidifier's water tank can breed bacteria and fungi, which then get pumped into the air, according to a US Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSP) safety alert. While this may not make your throat feel any worse, it could cause flu-like symptoms or exacerbate allergies or asthma.

Open your nose: If part of the reason you're breathing through your mouth is because your nose is clogged, open it with an over-the-counter medicated decongestant nasal spray or drops. But you should limit its use to a day or two.

Take time to recharge: A tired body means a tired immune system. If you're worn out, your body will struggle to heal itself. So get some rest. Time in bed or away from life's usual stressors can help recharge your immune system and relieve your sore throat, Finkelston says.

And rest your voice, too: If you developed a sore throat after yelling and cheering at a concert or sporting event, you likely strained your vocal cords. The best treatment for any overworked muscle is rest. But resting your voice doesn't mean you should whisper. This actually strains your voice more than speaking. Instead, try talking at a lower volume than usual until the hoarseness and soreness subside.

Toss your toothbrush: Believe it or not, your toothbrush may be perpetuating-or even causing-your sore throat. Bacteria collect on the bristles, and any injury to the gums during brushing injects these germs into your system. As soon as you start feeling ill, throw away your toothrbush. Often that's enough to stop the illness in its tracks. If you do get sick, replace your brush again when you start to feel better and when you feel completely well. That keeps you from reinfecting yourself.

Get help for heartburn: Chronic sore throats may be caused by acid reflux, when acids leak out of the stomach into the throat, causing a chronic low-grade throat irritation. Signs of this include heartburn, a bitter taste in the mouth, and a sore throat after eating or while lying down. As a first-line treatment, try an over-the-counter antacid.

Alleviate your allergies: Airborne allergies, such as pollen, indoor molds, or dust mites, can cause chronic low-grade throat inflammation. To start, try taking an over-the-counter nonsedating allergy medication containing cetirizine hydrochloride.

Do you need to go to the doctor?

A strep throat is an extremely painful bacterial infection that may come on suddenly. Fortunately, the vast majority of bacterial infections, including strep, generally respond quite well to one course of an appropriate antibiotic. Because sore throats can have so many causes, some symptoms need to be evaluated by a doctor. These include:

☆ Severe, prolonged, or recurrent sore throats

☆ Difficulty breathing, swallowing, or opening the mouth

☆ Joint pains, earache, or a lump in the neck

☆ Rash or a fever above 101°F

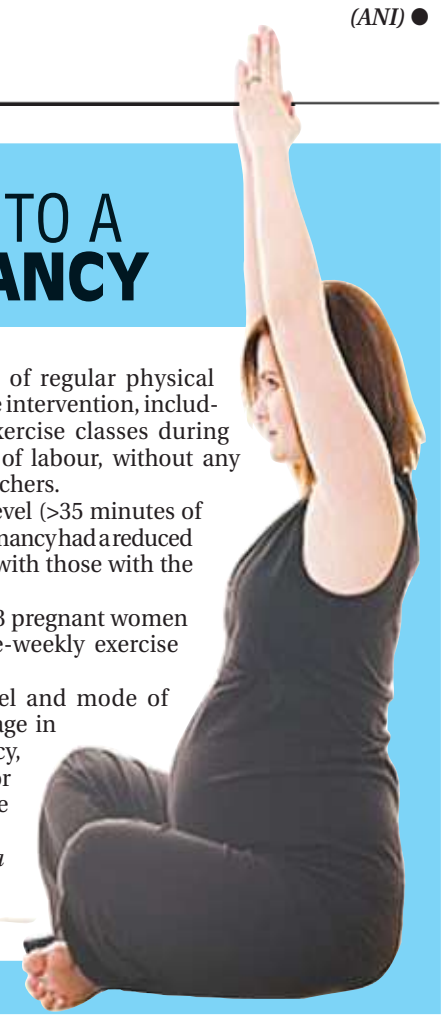
☆ Hoarseness lasting 2 weeks or longer

☆ White patches on your throat

☆ Blood in saliva or phlegm

(Prevention.com) ●

EXERCISE YOUR WAY TO A HEALTHY PREGNANCY



A recent study examined the positive effects of regular physical activity during pregnancy. A combined lifestyle intervention, including dietary counseling and twice-weekly exercise classes during pregnancy, resulted in a slightly longer first stage of labour, without any other effects during labour or delivery, report researchers.

Women reporting to have high physical activity level (>35 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity/day) in late pregnancy had a reduced risk of having an acute cesarean section compared with those with the lowest physical activity level.

The Norwegian Fit for Delivery study included 303 pregnant women who participated in dietary counseling and twice-weekly exercise classes and 303 who received standard care.

"The association between physical activity level and mode of delivery might help motivate more women to engage in regular physical activity before and during pregnancy, which in turn will give additional health benefits for the women and their babies," said lead author Birgitte Sanda, of the University of Agder, in Norway.

The study appeared in the journal *Acta Obstetricia et Gynecologica Scandinavica*.

(ANI) ●

FROM THE FRONT PAGE

Fugitive Economic Offenders Bill gets President's nod

allowing a court to try offences related to cheque bounce expeditiously and direct the drawee to pay a minimum of 20 per cent of the cheque amount as interim compensation.

The State Banks (Repeal and Amendment) Act is to repeal two other laws --The State Bank of India (Subsidiary Banks) Act, 1959 and the State Bank of Hyderabad Act, 1956-- and to further amend the State Bank of India Act of 1955.

The Specific Relief (Amendment) Act, 2018 grants a party the right to seek damages from the other side in case of a breach of a business contract and to reduce discretion of courts in such matters.

Bills in these regards were approved by Parliament recently.

All norms for Maratha quota to be completed by Nov: CM

not completed.

Referring to a mega recruitment drive to fill Government posts in the State, Fadnavis said that no injustice would be done to Marathas."The drive is yet to start. The process of how to ensure justice for Marathas while not impacting reservations for members of the SC/ST communities was being worked out," Fadnavis said.

Calling on the Maratha community to "trust" his Government, he said that the Government was taking effective steps to implement provisions under the Annabhau Sathe Finance Corporation and Rajashri Shahu Maharaj Scholarship schemes for the community.

He said that the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) had been entrusted with the task of surveying and submitting a report in connection with reservations for the Dhangar community in the State.

The TISS report would be submitted by the end of this month, he said.

Appealing people to be calm and shun violence, Fadnavis said that "disturbances of this sort would affect the sizeable investment that Maharashtra was attracting."

He also appealed to the youth to not commit suicide (several instances of which have occurred during the Maratha stir that started afresh in the last week of July) as it pained him "to the core".

"I appeal to the youth to not commit suicide. Please come forward and discuss (your issues) with the Government. If there is a lacuna, then share it with the Government and all efforts will be made to rectify it," he said.

Asking parties to set aside politicking, he requested them to unite in order to "fulfil the aspirations of the youth".

Fadnavis, during his address, said that Maharashtra was the most favourable destination for investment in the country.

"About 42 to 47 per cent investment in the country is coming to Maharashtra and this is generating employment on a large scale. The EPFO (Employees Provident Fund Organisation) report for last year stated that Maharashtra was the biggest generator of jobs, at 8 lakh, in a single year," he said.

Citing the violence in Chakan industrial belt near Pune last week, the Maharashtra CM asked whether investors would turn up if such incidents continued. He informed that industrial corridors were being planned in places like Jalna and Aurangabad and violence in the name of caste and religion among others would ruin the image of a progressive state like Maharashtra. He also asked people to stop the "misuse of social media" to "mislead society".

Venezuelan President Maduro survives assassination bid

(Contd from page 1)

Minister Jorge Rodriguez confirmed to the media.

Just few hours after the incident, Maduro appeared on national television saying that as he was mid-speech in the event when a device exploded right in front of him. "A flying object exploded near me, a big explosion. Seconds later there was a second explosion," he said, adding that he initially thought it was fireworks as part of the parade.

Maduro said the investigation into the incident started immediately and that some of those involved in the attack had been captured and charged, although he did not specify the charges against them. The President also said that authorities were able to obtain evidence of the attack and said the investigation was in an advanced stage.

It was "an attempt to kill me, they have tried to assassinate me today", he added.

"The preliminary investigation indicates that many of those responsible for the attack, the financiers and planners, live in the US in the state of Florida," Maduro said.

"I hope the (President Donald) Trump administration is willing to fight terrorist groups that commit attacks in peaceful countries in our continent, in this case Venezuela."

Venezuela's attorney general, Tarek William Saab, told CNN he ordered an investigation into the incident.

The Venezuelan Government has long blamed Colombia for plotting overthrows and, and far-right elements in Bogota and Miami for attempting to undercut Maduro. Ivan Duque takes over as the Colombian President next week. The Colombian Government however, has denied any involvement, saying there is "no basis" to Maduro's allegations.

10,000 jobs to be created under Ayushman Bharat project

- 10,000 new jobs will be created with the implementation of the Centre's ambitious Ayushman Bharat-National Health Protection Mission which aims to provide a cover of Rs 5 lakh per family annually to 10 crore poor families

NEW DELHI, Aug 5 (PTI)

AT LEAST 10,000 new jobs will be created with the implementation of the Centre's ambitious Ayushman Bharat-National Health Protection Mission (AB-NHPM), which aims to provide a cover of Rs 5 lakh per family annually to 10 crore poor families, according to a Government official.

Around one lakh Ayushman Mitras will be deployed at both private and Government hospitals under the scheme to assist patients coming to health facilities to avail packages under the mission.

The Health Ministry has signed a pact with the Skill Development Ministry for the recruitment of 1 lakh 'Ayushman Mitras'.

"Each empanelled hospital will have an 'Ayushman Mitra' to assist patients and will coordinate with beneficiaries and the hospital. They will run a help desk, check documents to verify eligibility and enrolment to the scheme.

"Around one lakh Ayushman Mitra's will be deployed at both private and Government hospitals under the scheme," the official said. The Union Health Ministry has launched a formal process to empanel public and private hospitals to achieve universal health coverage under the programme and as many as 20,000 private and Government hospitals have been linked under the scheme, the official said.

The Centre is simultaneously carrying out beneficiary identification and under the process 80 per cent of beneficiaries, based on the Socio Economic Caste Census (SECC) data in the rural and more than 60 per cent in urban areas, have been identified.

Announced in the 2018 Budget, the AB-NHPM was touted as the 'world's largest Government funded health care scheme'.

Also, all beneficiaries will be given letters having QR codes which will be scanned and a demographic authentication conducted for identification and to verify his or her eligibility to avail benefits under the scheme.

Further, the Government recently clarified that NABH is not mandatory for hospitals to get empanelled under the scheme.

Also, the basic empanelment criteria allows empanelment of a hospital with a minimum of 10 beds, with the flexibility provided to the States to further relax this if required.

Chandrayaan-2 launch postponed again

NEW DELHI, Aug 5 (PTI)

THERE will be a further delay in the launch of India's second mission to the moon Chandrayaan-2 and it may be no sooner than January, according to a top official.

The postponement of the ambitious mission from October comes in the wake of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) facing two setbacks in less than a year. The launch of the mission was first planned in April.

MAHARASHTRA JEEVAN PRADHIKARAN CIRCLE, NAGPUR

E-Tender Notice No. 01 for 2018-19

MJP Circle, Nagpur invites e-Tender for the work of Supply of Poly aluminium chloride (PAC) of Medium basicity, comforming to IS: 15573:2005 for MJP Nagpur and Chandrapur Circle Water Works in the State of Maharashtra, Valued at Rs. 50,99,785/-. Please visit website www.mjp.gov.in & www.mahatenders.gov.in from dated 06.08.2018 for detailed information.

Superintending Engineer
MJP Circle, Nagpur

No. DGIPR 2018-19/2246

AGRICULTURE PRODUCE MARKET COMMITTEE NAGPUR
PANDIT JAWAHARLAL NEHRU MARKET YARD, KALAMNA, NAGPUR-35
Ph. 0712-2680280, 2680877, Fax. - 0712-2680448
E-Mail :- apmcnagpur@rediffmail.com website :- www.apmcnagpur.com & www.Mahatenders.gov.in

E-Tender Notice No.01/Account Section/2018-19
Online E-Tenders

Online E-tenders in B-1 form are invited by Administrator, Nagpur Agriculture Produce Market Committee, Kalamna, Nagpur for conducting following work form the Chartered Accountants firm empanelled with Comptroller and Auditor General of India (C & AG) having required experience.

Name of Work	Earnest Money Deposit/ (Refundable)	Cost of E-Tender form (Non Refundable)	Period of Completion
Internal/ Concurrent audit of APMC Nagpur	Rs.10,000/- (Rs.Ten Thousand Only)	Rs.500/- (Rs.Five Hundred	12 Month Internal Concurrent audit should be done each month.

Note:
1) Details "Tender Notice can be seen on website of APMC Nagpur.
2) All Eligible/Interested tenderers are required to be enrolled on portals www.Mahatenders.gov.in for tender documents and participates in E-Tender.
3) Important Dates
a) E-Tender publishing Date : 06/08/2018
b) Document download and Sale Start Date : 06/08/2018 Time 11.00 AM
c) Document Sale End Date : 14/08/2018 Time 3.00 PM
d) Bid submission Start Date : 16/08/2018 Time 11.00 AM
e) Bid submission End Date : 24/08/2018 Time 3.00 PM
f) Bid Opening Date : 27/08/2018 Time 11.00 AM
g) Right to reject any or all Tenders and rights for terms and conditions without any reason is reserved for Administrator APMC Nagpur

Secretary — Administrator
Agriculture Produce Market Committe, Nagpur

TENDERS

भारतीय विमानपत्तन प्राधिकरण
AIRPORTS AUTHORITY OF INDIA

E-TENDER NOTICE
Tender ID : 2018_AAI_13511_1

Airports Authority of India invites Item Rate tenders through the e-tendering portal by **Asstt. GM (E-E), AAI, Birsi Airport, Gondia** on behalf of Chairman AAI from the eligible specialized agencies for the work of **"Establishment of 220 KWp Ground mounted Solar Power Plant at Birsi Airport, Gondia (Maharashtra)"** for an Estimated cost of **Rs. 128.61 Lakhs** with period of completion **06 (Six) Months** including considered for rains. Last date and time of submission of bid document is **20.08.2018 upto 18:00 hrs.** For detailed information log on to CPP e-Procurement Portal reference https://etenders.gov.in/eprocure/app or www.aai.aero. Further clarification/corrigendum if any will be notified through e-procurement portal at https://etenders.gov.in/eprocure/app

MAHAGENCO — Maharashtra State Power Generation Co. Ltd.

E-CORRIGENDUM

E-Tender Specification No-Dy. CE (C) / CCC / CHN / Tech / T-15 to T-16 / 2017-18 (2nd Call)

Sr. No.	Tender No.	Name of Work	Estimated value
1	71994	Construction of cement concrete road at Mouza Chandankheda under CSR activities of 2x500MW Expansion Project, MSPGCL, Chandrapur.	Rs. 4,88,088.00
2	71995	Construction of cement concrete road at Mouza Chincholi under CSR activities of 2x500MW Expansion Project, MSPGCL, Chandrapur.	Rs. 4,70,478.00

The submission date of the tender is extended upto 17.00 hrs. of 07.08.2018. The other conditions remain same.

For further details visit our **Website:** www.sets.mahagenco.in Agencies are requested to register themselves for future E-Tender.

कार्यालय नगर पंचायत, समुद्रपूर

ई.निविदा सूचना क्र ५९ — दिनांक ०४/०८/२०१८

-- ई निविदा सूचना--

समुद्रपूर नगर पंचायतच्या वतीने १४ वा वित्त आयोग योजनांतर्गत प्राप्त निधीमधून विविध प्रभागामध्ये विद्युत खांब उभारणी व विद्युत वाहक तार टाकणे करीता बी-१ दोन लिफाफा पध्दतीने महाराष्ट्र शासनाच्या सार्वजनिक बांधकाम (विद्युत) विभागाचे योग्य त्या वर्गातील पंजीबध्द व अनुभवी कंत्राटदाराकडून ई-निविदा मागविण्यात येत आहे.

खालील कामाच्या निविदा ई-निविदा पध्दतीने सादर करावयाच्या असून निविदेचा विस्तृत नमूना महाराष्ट्र शासनाच्या http://mahatenders.gov.in या संकेतस्थळावर दिनांक ०५/०८/२०१८ पासून पाहण्यास उपलब्ध आहे.

अ.क्र	कामाचे नाव	अंदाज पत्रकीय रक्कम	अनामत रक्कम	कामाची मुदत
१	नगर पंचायत हद्दीमधील विविध प्रभागामध्ये (प्रभाग क्र १ ते १७) विद्युत खांब उभारणी व विद्युत वाहक तार टाकणेबाबत	३४,१२,२०९/-	६८,२४४/-	३ महिने

// ई निविदा पध्दतीचा तपशील //

अ) ऑनलाईन ई-निविदा प्रसिध्दी दिनांक	दिनांक ०५/०८/२०१८ सायं. ५.०० वाजता
ब) ई-निविदा ऑनलाईन विक्री व स्वीकृती दिनांक	दिनांक ०५/०८/२०१८ ते २०/०८/२०१८ सायं. ५.०० वाजेपर्यंत
क) निविदा फार्म किंमत व अनामत रकमेचा भरणा करण्याचा अंतिम दिनांक	दिनांक २०/०८/२०१८ सायं. ५.०० वाजेपर्यंत
ड) ऑनलाईन निविदा उघडणे	दिनांक २२/०८/२०१८ (शक्य झाल्यास)

टीप-१) इतर अटी व शर्ती नगर पंचायत कार्यालयामध्ये पहावयास मिळतील.
२) कोणतीही निविदा अथवा सर्व निविदा नाकारण्याचा अधिकार नगर पंचायतने राखून ठेवला आहे.

श्री गजानन ज्ञा.राऊत	सौ वर्षा वि.बाभूळकर	श्री प्रवीण ना चौधरी	स्वालिहा मालगावे
अध्यक्ष	उपाध्यक्ष	सा.बांधकाम सभापती	मुख्याधिकारी
नगर पंचायत समुद्रपूर	नगर पंचायत समुद्रपूर	नगर पंचायत समुद्रपूर	नगर पंचायत समुद्रपूर

Government of Maharashtra
Public Works Department, Nagpur

NOTICE INVITING PROPOSAL FOR APPOINTMENT OF EVENT MANAGEMENT CONSULTANT

NOTICE INVITING PROPOSALS

The Public Works Department, Maharashtra hereby invites proposals for management of 79th Indian Road Congress, Annual Session, 2018 at Nagpur providing event management consultancy services of 79th Indian Road Congress.

Eligibility Criteria:

(A) (i) The proposal,
a) May be submitted by an individual, consulting firm engaged in event management continuous Consulting business since last five years or jointly in Consortium with other Consulting firms where the consortium may be constituted by upto three firms.
b) In case of consortiums, one of the Consulting firm has to be a event planning / event management Consultant while second firm has to be an event Consultant and third has to be event Consultant or combination thereof. However the event planning Consultant or event Consultant has to be the lead Consultant of this consortium; and will provide a single window access to all the required services (including services of other firms constituting the consortium)
c) In case of a consortium, there should be an agreement executed by all the firms constituting the consortium mentioning inter alia the following;
(i) That they agree to work jointly for the assignment,
(ii) That they agree to be jointly and severally responsible for the assignment,
(iii) The share of each member in the total fees decided by the consortium,
(i) The event management CONSULTANT shall deposit processing fee of Rs.25,000/- and
(ii) Cost of the RFP (Rs.5,000/-) at the time of submission of bids online through e-payment which will be non-refundable.

(B) The event management CONSULTANT, as sole entity or as Consortium, must:
(i) Have an established and demonstrable track record of rendering all of the following services: design for event management including all services , event management in construction, interact and event management services for construction/Infrastructure sector, for a project comparable to that envisaged in the RFP; and
(ii) Have an experience in designing and supervising (i) National/State level event management project including all services of minimum 5,000 people management capacity and (ii)work done during last ten years
(iii) Have an experience and capacity to engage and co-ordinate a multi-disciplinary team Agencies of experts for designing, executing and management of event.
(iv) Shall possess and can display capacity for transfer of knowledge/skills for capacity development in best practices in event management the services successful completion.

Other conditions:

(i) Consultancy Services/design etc. shall be done as per Government Government/ PWD/IRC Standards as specified by the Engineer- in- charge norms.
(ii) Details of the project shall be finalized in the DPR after discussion.
(iii) Event shall be implemented as per present PWD & IRC Norms.

Copies of the Request for Proposals (RFP) document can be downloaded from www.mahatenders.gov.in from **06/ 08/ 2018 to 18/ 08/ 2018** between **10:00 Hrs to 18:00 Hrs** (IST) on payment of Rs. 5,000/- through online e-payment gateway.

A Pre-Proposal meeting with the willing parties will be held on 10/08/2018 at 11:00 A.M. in the office of Chief Engineer, Public Works Region, Nagpur.

The bids will be opened in the presence of the prospective parties in the office of Superintending Engineer, Public Works Circle, Nagpur and Secretary, Local Organising committee,79th IRC Annual Session, Nagpur. The date of opening will be from 20/08/2018 to 21/08/2016 if possible.

Proposals shall be submitted online on or before **18/08/2018** till **18:00 hrs.** Late or delayed submissions will not be accepted.

Executive Engineer
Public Work Division No.1,Nagpur, and
Member Local Organising Committee,
79th IRC Annual Session, Nagpur

GOVERNMENT OF MAHARASHTRA
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
PUBLIC WORKS DIVISION, AKOLA
NOTICE FOR HYBRID ANNUITY MODE (HAM) (ONLINE) TENDER
E-Tender Notice No. 27/ For 2018-19

NOTICE INVITING BID (1st Call Short Tender Notice)

Email: akola.ee@mahapwd.com **Tel: 0724-2435195**

Subject : RFP for Upgradation of Roads in Maharashtra State for Two Laning road/ Two Laning Road with paved shoulder under MRIP Package on Hybrid Annuity Mode of (HAM) (Under Public Works Circle, Akola) (1st call short tender notice

The Government of Maharashtra had entrusted to the Authority for the Development, Maintenance and management of State highways and Major District Roads of State of Maharashtra. The authority had resolved to augment the existing roads in the state of Maharashtra by Two Laning/ Two Laning with paved shoulder thereof (the Project) on Design, Build, Operate and Transfer **(the "DBOT ANNUITY" or "Hybrid Annuity")** basis and has decided to carry out the bidding process for selection of a private entity/ bidders to whom the Project may be awarded.

Brief particulars of the project are as follows:

Package No.	Name of State Highway / Major District Road	Length (in Km)	Estimated Project Cost (in Rs. Cr.)
1	2	3	4
AM-3	Improvement to Road Joining Dist Place in Washim District.(Rithad to Washim) Length 15.00 km SH-51	390.28	1064.01
	Improvement to Road joining District place in Washim Disriet (Sheloo Bazar to Washim) Length 31.85 km MDR-01		
	Improvement to Road joining two District places in Jalana and Buldhana District (Buldhana Dhad) Length 17.764 km SH-226		
	Improvement to Road joining two Taluka places in Buldhana District (Nandura Motala) Length 33.121 km		
	Improvement to Road joining District place in Akola District (Hiwarkhed Telhara Adsul) Length 27.381 km SH 272		
	Improvement to Road joining two Taluka places in Akola District (Warwat Bakal Malegaon Telhara Mundgaon Wani Warula) Length 33.936 km SH 271		
	Improvement to Roads for SHEGAON PALKHI MARG in Akola and Buldhana District (Shegaon Nagzari Paras Nimkarda Gaigaon Akola Goregaon Mazod Wadegaon) Length 59.049 km		
	Improvement to Roads for SHEGAON PALKHI MARG in Washim District (Medashi Brahmanwada Davha) Length 13.780 km		
	Improvement to Road joining two District in Washim and Akola District (Kapashi Barshi Takali Pinjar Karanja) Length 43.00 Km SH 287 & 274		
AM-81	Upgradation of Road Joining two District Places in Akola and Buldhana District (Warwand Undri Ambetakli Balapur) SH--274 Length 69.552		
AM-84	Upgradation of Road Joining two Taluka Places in Buldhana District (Changefal Matargaon Khamgaon) SH--222 Length 45.838		

The complete BID documents can be viewed / downloaded from e-procurement portal from Dt. 06.08.2018 to Dt. 20.08.2018 (up to 23.00 Hrs. IST). Bid must be submitted online only at https://maharastra.etenders.in (subportal-https://pwd.maharastra.etenders.in), during the validity of registration with the e-Tendering Portal on or before Dt. 20.08.2018 (upto 23.00 Hrs. IST). Technical submission of the Bids received online shall be opened on Dt. 24.08.2018 at 11.30 Hrs to Dt. 27.08.2018 at. 18.00 Hrs. (IST) Pre- Tender Conference will be held on Dt. 13.08.2018 at 12.00 Hrs in the office of the Chief Engineer, P.W.Region Amravati.

Executive Engineer
Public Works Division,
Akola

No. DGIPR 2018-2019/2288

The OPINION PAGE

"It's choice - not chance - that determines your destiny."
-BROOKE TAYLOR

The Hitavada

They are slaves who dare not be
In the right with two or three
Lowell

Nakshatra Krittika 14H 04M
Moon Vrishabh (Rajandekar Panchang)
Paksha Ashadha Krishna Tithi Navami 09H 53M
Bhadra starts 20H 52H
Muslim Zilkad 23rd Hijree 1439

TOUGH TEST

IT WAS indeed a tough Test for the batsmen at Edgbaston where the English and Indian bowlers held complete sway over the proceedings of the first Test of the long series between the two teams. The tone has been set for the rest of the series. The win will certainly give the Englishmen much confidence in facing the top team in international cricket, while the Indian team will have to sort out their batting problems at the earliest to compete on an even keel with the hosts. Their anxiety will be to see that there is no repeat of the last visit's disaster. Last visit proved to be disastrous for Virat Kohli as he had failed to make much impression then. But now one sees a determined, a highly talented, changed Virat Kohli.

During the Edgbaston Test, which ended within four days, Virat Kohli was waging a lonely battle to keep the hopes of his team afloat. While doing so he produced a monumentally defiant knock of 149, which he will cherish for a long time. While he was piling runs and agony on the English bowlers, at the other end of the wicket his colleagues were struggling and meekly surrendering to English pacemen. A little support from the other end could have made all the difference to the outcome of the match. In the first innings Kohli single-handedly brought near parity with the English score. In the second innings too while he was waging a lonely battle the other end gave hardly any response. The margin of the defeat shows how close Virat Kohli had brought his team to a possible win. However, the batting battery failed him miserably again.

That brings to the fore the struggle that the top order of Indian batting is undergoing. Shikhar Dhawan, Murli Vijay, K.L. Rahul, Ajinkya Rahane, the core of Indian batting, lately appear to be woefully out of form. That increases the burden and worry of the Captain. But he cannot be expected to carry on single-handedly all the time. Since the series is too long, others will have to shake off the cobwebs of doubts and show more commitment and determination to come out of the present rust. During the two innings in the Edgbaston Test, surprisingly the lower order batting showed much better solidity in providing necessary support to the captain than the upper half. They may not have added much to the scoreboard but they brought value to their Captain's cause.

In contrast, the bowling unit seems to be well geared up to make a match of it. They seem to be enjoying the conditions that are on offer on this tour. The bowling unit would certainly make a difference to the proceedings of the rest of the series. Ravichandran Ashwin appears to have made the most of his recall to the team. He made immediate impression with the ball. If he wields the willow as effectively it will add value.

They Said It...

■ *Since the time I started till now, I have never surrendered to the idea of being a hero. I just wanted to be an actor. I was lucky that those characters came to me and the films became successful. I just went for the characters, directors and stories. And I became a star.*

ANIL KAPOOR, Actor.

■ *Today agriculture does not appeal the young generation. They feel that it is a profession of the old people. The need of the hour is to incentivise agriculture. If you want, you can even host beauty contests in paddy fields. Let the youth come. You can do that. Do everything possible to get the young generation to the fields.*

VIJAI SARDESAI, Goa Agriculture Minister.

■ *The housewives are the biggest CEOs in the country and they should be given utmost respect and appreciation in the country. I doff my hat off with full respect and appreciation to all the housewives of the country and the world.*

AISHWARYA RAI BACHCHAN, Actress.

■ *Rahul Gandhi will have to think 10 times before hugging me.*

YOGI ADITYANATH, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister.

■ *Going vegetarian was one of the best decisions I ever made. I have more energy, I feel healthier, and I am so happy that no animals had to suffer.*

ANUSHKA SHARMA, ACTOR.

■ *Generally, when people want to know the future, they go to an astrologer or they go to a match-fixer. They want to ask a third person what will happen to my marriage. I think it is obscene.*

SADHGURU JAGGI VASUDEV, Spiritual guru.

■ *I felt like I had the more powerful shot. That worked out well in most of the rallies for me. It was a good high-level match.*

ALEXANDER ZVEREV, German tennis player after winning ATP Washington Open semi-finals.

AMBIGUITY IN TAX EXEMPTION

CURRENT TRENDS IN LAW

By ADV. R.S. AGRAWAL

■ The Supreme Court has stated that in the governance by a written Constitution, there is no implied power of taxation. The tax power must be specifically conferred and it should be strictly in accordance with the power so endowed by the Constitution itself.

IN THE Judgement of the case – Customs (Import) Mumbai v. M/s Dilip Kumar and Company, delivered on July 30, 2018, a 5-judge bench of the Supreme Court consisting of the Justice Ranjan Gogoi. Justice N. V. Ramana, Justice R. Banumathi, Justice Mohan M. Shantanagouder and Justice Abdul Nazeer has ruled emphatically that, "we would be more than justified to conclude and compelled to hold that every taxing statute including, charging, computation and exemption clause (at the threshold stage) should be interpreted strictly. Further, in case of ambiguity in a taxation liability statute, the benefit must necessarily go in favour of subject/assessee, but the same is not true for an exemption notification wherein the benefit of ambiguity must be strictly interpreted in favour of the Revenue/State".

The court has stated that for reaching this conclusion, it thoroughly examined all the material placed before it. It has been of the view that the burden of proving applicability would be on the assessee to show that his case comes within the parameters of the exemption clause or exemption notification. The Constitution bench has also held that when there is ambiguity in exemption notification which is subject to strict interpretation, the benefit of such ambiguity cannot be claimed by the subject/assessee and it must be interpreted in favour of the Revenue.

This 5-judge bench was set up to examine the correctness of the ratio of the judgement in the case –Sun Export Corporation, Bombay v. Collector of Customs, Bombay - 1997 (6) SCC 564.

The question is what is the interpretative Rule to be applied while interpreting a tax exemption provision /notification, when there is an ambiguity as to its applicability with reference to the entitlement of the assessee or the rate of tax to be applied.

In Sun Export case, a 3-judge bench had ruled that an ambiguity in a tax exemption provision or notification must be interpreted so as to favour the assessee claiming the benefit of such exemption. Such a rule was doubted when this appeal was placed before a 2-judge bench.

Then the case was placed before a 3-judge bench with Justice Gogoi as one of its members, which noticed unsatisfactory state of law, as it stood till this judgement. This judgement ,which has been authored by Justice Ramana,overrules the 3-judge bench judgement in the case of Sun Export Corporation, Bombay v. Collector of Customs-1997(6) SCC 564 with the observation that the said judgement had created confusion and resulted in unsatisfactory state of law.

The question referred before the bench was: What is the interpretative rule to be applied while interpreting a tax exemption Reportable provision/notification when there is an ambiguity as to its applicability with reference to the entitlement of the assessee or the rate of tax to be applied? The Constitution bench was set up to examine correctness of the judgement in Sun Export case delivered by a 3-judge bench. In the said judgement, it was held that an ambiguity in a tax exemption provision or notification must be interpreted so as to favour the assessee claiming the benefit of such exemption.

Commenting on Sun Exports Case judgement, the bench has observed: "There cannot be any doubt that the ratio in the Sun Exports Case that, if two views are possible in interpreting the exemption notification, the one favourable to the assessee in the matter of taxation has to be preferred. This principle created confusion and resulted in unsatisfactory state of law. In spite of catena of judgements of this court, which took the contra view, holding that an exemption notification must be strictly construed and if a person claiming exemption does not fall strictly within the description of the notification otherwise then he cannot claim exemption".

Referring to multitude of case laws on the subject, the court has observed, "after thoroughly examining the various precedents some of which were cited before us and after giving our anxious consideration, we would be more than justified to conclude and opine that how true it is to say that there exists an unsatisfactory state of law in relation to interpretation of exemption clauses. "Various Bench which decided the question of interpretation of taxing statute on one hand and exemption notification on the other, have broadly assumed (we are justified to say this) that the position is well settled in the interpretation of a taxing statute: It is the law that any ambiguity in a taxing statute should enure to the benefit of the subject / assessee, but any ambiguity in the exemption clause of exemption notification must be conferred in favour of revenue- and such exemption should be allowed to be availed only to those subjects/assessees who demonstrate that a case for exemption squarely falls within the parameters enumerated in the notification and that the claimants satisfy all the conditions precedents for availing exemption.

"Presumably for this reason the Bench which decided Surendra Cotton Mills case observed that there exists unsatisfactory state of law and the bench which referred the matter initially, seriously doubted the conclusion in Sun Export case that the ambiguity in an exemption notification should be interpreted in favour of the assessee".

Summing up the apex court has answered the Reference holding:

1. Exemption notification should be interpreted strictly; the burden of proving applicability would be on the assessee to show that his case comes within the parameters of the exemption clause or exemption notification.

2. When there is ambiguity in exemption notification, which is subject to the strict interpretation. The benefit of such ambiguity cannot be claimed by the subject/assessee and it must be interpreted in favour of the Revenue.

3. Ratio in the Sun Exports Case is not correct and all the decisions which took similar view in Sun Export case stand overruled.

Claiming abundant jurisprudential justification for its views, the Supreme Court has stated that in the governance by a written Constitution, there is no implied power of taxation. The tax power must be specifically conferred and it should be strictly in accordance with the power so endowed by the Constitution itself.

It is for this reason that the courts insist upon strict compliance before a State demands and extracts money from its citizens towards various taxes.

The Constitution Bench has directed the Registry to place the case before the appropriate bench for consideration on merits, after securing permission from the CJI.

For a change, House functions

BEHIND THE SCENES

By HARIHAR SWARUP

THE biggest news is that Monsoon session of Parliament has been functioning normally. This is, perhaps, for the first time in four years, since the BJP came to power, that the two houses have been conducting business without interruptions and there is no adjournment for an hour, two hours and for the day. On the eve of e-Monsoon Session, almost all newspapers predicted that this session too, like previous ones, will be a wash out but all of them proved wrong. The highlight of the ongoing session was admission of a no-confidence against the Modi Government; during the day-long debate talents from both sides sparkled and came to the fore.

In the last session too Opposition made a bid to bring the no-trust motion but Speaker, Sumitra Mahajan, did not give her consent on the plea that the House was not in order. Question is often asked why this session has been functioning normally? May be, say some MP, because of coming Lok Sabha elections; the members do not want to show to electorate that they are a rowdy lot. Also with live telecast of Parliament's proceeding members vied with each other to show that they were more assertive. Hence the rowdy scenes.

The practice of disruption the proceedings, rushing to the well of the house and forcing the presiding officers to adjourn the house was started during Rajiv Gandhi's time, that is 1985 onwards, and the BJP members took the lead. Disruptions touched its peak when the issue of alleged kick backs in the Bofors guns deal was raised in two houses. The allegations were yet to be proved, apparently there was no truth in the charge of kick back. Bofors howitzers proved great asset during Kargil war. Each shell fired was a salute to Rajiv Gandhi's memory. Even before 1985, proceedings were disrupted and members rushed to the well of the house but such incidents were rare.

Subsequently, session after session was washed out. Important business, even the Budget, was passed without discussion. The 15th Lok Sabha had total of 357 sittings. The House sat only 1,344 hours out of which 891 hours were wasted due to obstructions and adjournments. This was the case when scams like 2G spectrum, Adarsh Society, Common Wealth games, allotment of coal mines came before Parliament. On the issue of a separate Telangna State, Parliament's proceedings were adjourned several times.

The members adopted various ways of obstruction, some members coming to the well of the House, flashing placards. According to rules of the house, when members come to the well, the presiding officers should ideally adjourn the proceedings. In the last session, while on one hand the no-confidence motion against the Cabinet was dismissed by the Speaker saying that the House was not in order, on the other, many bills, including the Union Budget, were passed amid nosy protect even without discussion and debate.

Evaluation and estimates are made as to how much do the frequent Parliamentary disruptions cost the country. The repeated interruptions and adjournments not only diminishes the capacity of Parliament to function, but also blurs the concept of Parliamentary democracy, and evaluating the loss in monetary terms would be a farce.

At one point veteran leader L K Advani was so upset with the state of affairs in Parliament that he had said in the Lok Sabha that his inner voice says he wanted to resign. There is a saying that in the democracy the minorities speak their mind, but majority does what is in their mind. Perhaps, for this reason parliamentary democracy is called the dictatorship of majority. But now the situation has changed. Now minority parties create barriers and the majority party do not discuss or debate in Parliament. Every MP and a political party has the constitutional right to express their views in Parliament freely.

Over the last decade, the control of Parliament and Assemblies over government finances has decreased significantly owing to change in the structure of Government expenditure and revenues.

During 15th Lok Sabha the eight successive days of adjournment of Parliament without any major business translated into a loss of staggering Rs. 63 crore with the expenditure for each day of a session calculated at Rs. 7.8 crore. The controversial 2G spectrum may have caused colossal losses to the national exchequer, but the continuing opposition protests over Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) also have led to a huge financial drain. Barring the last day of a winter session, the Look Sabha and the Rajya Sabha have not functioned normally for even one full day to transact legislative business. It is true that the time lost to disruption has dramatically increased in the last two decades. In the 15th Lok Sabha (2009-14), when the Congress led UPA was in Government, as much as 40 per cent of the total time was lost to disruption, making it the least productive Lok Sabha ever. Surprisingly, the current Monsoon session has been so far functioning normally. Both the Opposition and the Government would do a great job if they maintain this trend and, thereby, save Parliament democracy from dying a slow death. Of late, there has been talk that parliamentary democracy is not suited to India. Hence a section talked of switching over to Presidential form of Government. Constitutional experts say Presidential form is not suited to India and, therefore, Parliamentary form has to be saved.

Every Man in his Humour | Letters to the Editor

4 years of Modi Govt

Sir,

Under Prime Minister Mr. Narendra Modi, India has transformed from being a part of 'fragile five 'to 'bright spot' on global economic scene. Mr. Modi has created transparent system through legislative and institutional changes which has given the country scam-free governance. Mr. Modi is the natural leader of his party and nation. At the stage where India was going to become 'basket case' has today been the fastest growing economy. For the first time in history poor and marginalised are holding bank accounts. Truely creditable.

Purnshri Sharma, via e-mail

Insecurity and Jihad-nemesis of Pak

Sir,

Why state of Pakistan always finds itself threatened and insecure? One need not travel too far to know the reason. The ideology of Pakistan had a more unambiguously theocratic orientation. It was also more specifically tied to defining Pakistan as a nation distinct from India. Zia-Ul-Haq stated, "We are going back to Islam not by choice but force of crisis of identity. If we are not Muslims, what we are? Second rate Indians?" He lamented.

Therefore, Pakistan's politicians, civil servants, military officers seem to consider Islam as the organising principle in confronting India.

While India is Pakistan's permanent enemy in the view held by Pakistani elite, other enemies also figure in calculus that leads to accepting Islamists disorder over pluralist clarity. Israel is as much Pakistan's enemy as India.

America is fair weather friend that does not understand Pakistan's regional compulsion and tries to bully Pakistan into compliance with policies that would weaken Pakistan. This insecurity has been nourished throughout history of that nation. Any other foreign individual or country that is seen as speaking or acting against Pakistan is also often seen as deliberately adopting India's anti Pakistan agenda.

The alternative view, that Pakistan leaders cultivated the fear of an existential threat as a means of bringing their diverse people together, has been suppressed within that country.

Satish B. Marathe, Nagpur

NRC

Sir,

National Register of Citizens (NRC) is a welcome move to curb the influx of immigrants from neighbouring countries in Assam. Opposition parties are politically-motivated on the issue for their vote bank and not concerned about matter of strategic importance i.e., national security. This shows they have lost their intellect in the greed for throne and made it their onus to oppose each and every policy and action of the Government. They are motivated only by their selfish interest not for development. Such politicians bring down the standard of politics and propagate unfair practices in the system. So beware whenever you vote.

Anika Sharma, Via e-mail

ATTENTION **Readers please note the change in e-mail address.** The**Hitavada** welcomes Middles (upto 550 words), letters for this page, and contributions to other sections also by e-mail at: ***maindesk@thehitavada.com; editor@thehitavada.com.*** **The editors may rephrase letters for clarity of thought and constraints of space.**

Govt may give incentives to textiles sector to boost domestic mfg

NEW DELHI, Aug 5 (PTI)

THE Government is likely to hike import duty on about 300 textile products to boost domestic manufacturing and create employment opportunities, sources said.

Foreign direct investment norms for the sector may also be relaxed. Products on which imports duties are expected to increase includes some fabrics, garments and man-made fibres. The duties could be enhanced to 20 per cent from the current level of about 5-10 per cent.

According to Government sources, the Finance Ministry may soon issue a notification in this regard. If the Government decides to notify the duty hikes this week, then it would have to be first tabled in Parliament.

Increase in duties would give an edge to domestic manufacturers as the imported products are relatively cheaper. Increase in manufacturing activity will help create jobs in the sector, which employs about 10.5 crore people.

In July, the Government doubled import duty on over 50 textile products -- including jackets, suits and carpets -- to 20 per cent, a move that is aimed at promoting domestic manufacturing.

Through a notification, the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Custom (CBIC) had hiked import duties as well as raised the ad-valorem rate of duty for certain items.

The imported products which have become expensive include woven fabrics, dresses, trousers, suits and baby garments.

According to trade experts, India would not be able to give any direct exports incentive to the textile sector, so there is a need to support the segment to encourage domestic manufacturing.

Imports of textile yarn, fabric, made-up articles grew by 8.58 per cent to USD 168.64 million in June.

However, exports of cotton yarn / fabrics / made-ups, handloom products grew by 24 per cent to USD 986.2 million. Man-made yarn / fabrics / made-ups exports grew 8.45 pc to USD 403.4 million. Exports of all textile ready-made garments dipped by 12.3 per cent to USD 13.5 billion.

PMLA case on banking conmen who stole savings from remote J'khand town

NEW DELHI, Aug 5 (PTI)

IN A first-of-its kind criminal case aimed to choke cyber banking fraudsters, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) has launched a money laundering probe against a clutch of alleged conmen based in a sleepy Jharkhand town who make fake calls to gullible people and steal monies from their accounts.

The agency has filed as many as three Enforcement Case Information Reports (ECIRs), ED equivalent of a police FIR, against Pradeep Kumar Mondal, Yugal Mondal and Santosh Yadav and their associates whom the agency has charged to have conned numerous people in the last few years by obtaining their vital banking information over phone after posing as bank officials.

These banking crimes perpetrated over phone and using stolen e-database has seen a phenomenal rise in the last few years prompting banks to ask their customers not to share their personal account details with anyone. "It is alleged that these people and their associates, sitting in a remote town of Jharkhand, siphoned off huge amount of money of bank account holders and have amassed assets worth about Rs 1 crore each. The state police has registered multiple FIRs against them.

"The ED has now taken over the cases under the PMLA in order to choke finances and freeze tainted assets of these conmen," a senior official in the central probe agency said.

The ECIRs are the first of their kind for the ED as they have been registered after taking cognisance of original FIRs and the predicate offence filed under the Information Technology (IT) Act and sections of the IPC.

The agency has sent a special team of its sleuths to Jamtara and its adjoining areas to obtain further leads and prepare a list of properties of the accused so that they can be attached under the anti-money laundering act.

The ED complaint, accessed by PTI, states that these alleged conmen and their associates used to "make random calls to bank account holders" residing in any part of the country and threatened them that their accounts would be suspended if they did not share their confidential banking credentials.

"On getting the customer PIN / OTP after conning the account holder they would siphon off the money to e-wallets connected with some account that they had created with banks using fake KYC details. These cyber banking scamsters allegedly used wallets of different banks to purchase various items or withdraw the stolen money," the ED found as part of its investigation before filing its criminal complaint under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA).

The agency found that these people used to operate bank accounts which they had opened using the identities of other people and used to transfer the stolen money into them.

"They were using various SIM cards which they used to dispose of after committing the crime and making calls to victims by introducing themselves as officials belonging to banks and regulatory bodies like the RBI and SEBI among others," the official said.

The ED took over the case after it found that the modus operandi of this criminal act had its root in the remote and far-flung areas of Jharkhand. Being the epicentre of such crimes, Jamtara, a small town in Jharkhand, has earned the sobriquet of being the 'cyber crime capital of India'.

Indian carriers need $50 bn to buy planes over ten yrs: Report

MUMBAI, Aug 5 (PTI)

INDIAN carriers, which have placed large aircraft purchase orders, will require a whopping USD 50 billion of financing to take the expected scheduled delivery of these planes over the next nearly 10 years, a report said.

With a total of 1,055 aircraft on order, as many as 100 planes consisting of wide-body, narrow-body and regional ones are to be delivered to Indian carriers each year for the next five years, said the report by Sydney-based aviation think-tank Centre for Asia Pacific Aviation (CAPA).

Against this background, Indian carriers will require an estimated USD 50 billion of financing to support projected deliveries until 2027, it said.

Stating that the unexpected recovery in Indian aviation since 2014 has changed the dynamics of the market and the demand for aircraft, the CAPA said, "Positive market conditions have led Indian carriers to place bets on expansion on an unprecedented scale, with as many as 723 aircraft ordered since 2014 and more orders expected."

India's domestic market has grown at around 20 per cent year over the last three years years and a similar expansion is expected in the current financial year, it said.

Projected fleet expansion represents a major opportunity for aircraft investors looking to deploy capital in new generation assets, the report said, adding, "However, despite the strength of underlying demand, operators in the Indian market face a number of challenges. On the cost front, Indian carriers pay some of the highest fuel taxation in the world and also incur taxes on aircraft leases. While on the supply side, infrastructure and skills shortages (particularly commanders) are potential constraints on growth," said the CAPA report.

Tech Mahindra hints at hiring 4,000 freshers

NEW DELHI, Aug 5 (PTI)

TECH Mahindra indicated at hiring around 4,000 freshers over the next three quarters as the IT services major focuses more on "demand-based" hiring instead of creating an inventory.

The company has already hired about 1,800 fresh graduates in the first quarter of the ongoing fiscal, Tech Mahindra Chief Financial Officer Manoj Bhat said in a recent investor call.

"I think over the next three quarters, I do not have a ready number, but our estimate would be about 4,000 people roughly, but it could vary a bit so do not take that as a number, but it is just an indicative view," he said.

The Mumbai-based company had a total headcount of 1,13,552 people at the end of June 2018 quarter, an addition of 745 people over the preceding quarter.

The software headcount was 72,462 people, while those in BPO were 34,700 and 6,390 people in sales and support function in the said quarter.

Tech Mahindra CEO and MD C P Gurnani said trends suggest that hiring is no longer linear to the growth of companies.

Also, fresher hiring is distributed ie a centre in Plano, Munich or the UK is just as important for hiring as the Indian market is.

"The focus is more on demand-based hiring instead of creating an inventory," he explained.

Talking about high attrition rates at the firm, Bhat said the company is concerned about attrition of key talent, but is it something that wouldn't impact its ability to execute.

"As of now it is still probably under control and we will continue to monitor it closely," he added. Tech Mahindra reported attrition at 19 per cent (last 12 month basis), while utilisation levels were at 81 per cent (including trainees).

On track for double-digit growth target for FY19, says Maruti

NEW DELHI, Aug 5 (PTI)

MARUTI Suzuki India is maintaining double-digit sales growth forecast for 2018-19 despite a marginal decline in July, banking on good monsoon and uptick in rural market to drive demand, according to a senior company official. The company, which is planning a price hike this month to offset adverse impacts of commodity cost increase, fluctuations in foreign exchange and fuel price rise, does not see the step impacting its sales significantly.

"We will continue with our annual target of double-digit growth. I am optimistic about the future growth," Maruti Suzuki India (MSI) Senior Executive Director (Marketing and Sales) R S Kalsi told PTI.

He said the optimism stems from the fact that India is witnessing good monsoon for a second consecutive year. Besides, Kalsi said the rise in minimum support price (MSP) of crops augurs well for the rural econo-

my from where demand is expected to grow during the festive season. "By October money will come through these crops and the increase in MSP prices will ring in a lot of wealth circulation," he said, adding "we are quite happy about the future scenario of the passenger car industry".

On July sales, when the company reported a marginal decline at 1,64,369 units as against 1,65,346 units in the same month last year, Kalsi said it was an aberration due to high base effect of last year.

MSI's domestic sales were up marginally at 1,54,150 units last month as against 1,54,001 units in July last year.

He said if the June-July period was taken together, the company's growth would be 17 per cent over the year-ago period.

"That is a more realistic trend and talks about the prevailing market sentiments," he said.

In the first quarter of this fiscal, MSI sold 4,90,479 vehicles, a growth of 24.3 per cent over the same period of the previous year. Sales in the domestic market stood at 4,63,840 units, a growth of 25.9 per cent.

Kalsi also expressed optimism that a planned price hike this month will not affect the company's sales.

Taxation of amount withdrawn from Mutual Fund & SIP

Rising share market has lured many investors as alternate investment avenues like real estate, bank FDR, gold etc. are not yielding desired results. Taxation of mutual funds is a hot topic now as majority of the taxpayers have to file their income tax return in the current month to avoid the late filing fee.

Mutual Funds:

For mutual fund investor, calculating tax on investment could be little tedious and laborious. The taxation of returns depends on the kind of funds in which amount is invested i.e., .whether investment is in debt scheme or equity schemes. Also, the duration of investments is relevant to determine whether the gain is short-term capital gain (STCG) or long-term capital gains (LTCG).

Kind of Investment:

1) Debt schemes:- i) If invested in a debt fund for less than 3 years, returns are treated as STCG for taxation purpose. STCG are added to the income and taxed as regular income according to applicable income tax slab. **ii)** If investment in a debt fund is for a period of more than three years, returns would be considered as LTCG. It will be taxable @ 20 per cent with indexation benefit.

2) Equity schemes (EOMF):- If mutual fund scheme invests more than 65 per cent of its fund in equity then such mutual fund scheme qualifies as equity oriented mutual fund (EOMF) or equity scheme for the purpose of taxation. Arbitrage funds are treated as equity schemes for the purpose of taxation whereas International fund stocks abroad & Fund of funds are also treated as debt fund for the purpose of taxation.

Personal Finance

i) If EOMF are sold within a year of its investment, returns would be treated as (STCG) & taxed at a special rate of 15 per cent U/s 111A.

ii) If EOMF is sold after a year of its investment, returns would be treated as LTCG. Earlier, LTCG on Equity Mutual Fund was exempt from tax. But, amendment carried out by the recent Union Budget-2018 has made the LTCG on equity mutual funds taxable if it exceeds Rs 1 Lakh in a year. No indexation benefit is available on such investment. The rate of taxation is just 10 per cent. However, all the LTCG gain from EOMF in the FY 2017-18 (AY 2018-19) is exempt from tax. Now, Investment done prior to 01.04.2018 but sold afterwards will also be taxable now. However, appreciation till 31.01.2018 has been grandfathered, i.e., gains will remain tax-exempt and appreciation in the value after 31.01.2018 will be taxable. .

Taxation of investment done through Systematic Investment Plan (SIP):

Systematic Investment Plan (SIP) is the method of investing a fixed amount in a mutual fund in a periodic manner (may be weekly, fortnightly, monthly, quarterly or yearly). Gains arising from SIPs are taxed according to nature of mutual fund & according to the holding period, as already discussed above.

In SIP, there are multiple dates of acquisitions as fixed amount is invested at regular occasion. For the purpose of taxation, each individual SIP is treated as a separate & fresh investment & gain on it is required to be computed separately.

Suppose a person is investing Rs 10,000 every month by way of monthly SIP. After receipt of amount, Mutual fund will allot units to the investors based on its Net Assets Value (NAV). On the basis of illustrative NAV given below, the investment as well unit balance of the investor in mutual fund is illustrated as under:

SIP	Investment Date	Investment Amount	NAV	Units Allotted	Total Units
1st	01.06.2017	Rs. 10,000	Rs. 15	666	666
2nd	01.07.2017	Rs. 10,000	Rs. 14	714	1380
3rd	01.08.2017	Rs. 10,000	Rs. 17	588	1968
4th	01.09.2017	Rs. 10,000	Rs. 16	625	2593
5th	01.10.2017	Rs. 10,000	Rs. 15	666	3259

Only 5 investments of Rs 10,000 each are considered for the sake of illustration ignoring fractional units. Let us assume that investor want to withdraw Rs 40,000 from the SIP on 06.08.2018 at a prevailing NAV of Rs 20. To withdraw the amount of Rs 40,000 @ Rs 20 per unit, he would be required to redeem 2000 units which means that all units purchased on 1st June, July, August (i.e., 1968 units) & 32 units from investment of 01.09.2017 would be redeemed. Since, 1968 units are held for more than one year period, gain from 1968 units would be treated as LTCG. Gain from 32 units would yield STCG as the investment is held for a period of less than one year. **The increase in the value of units from the date of investment to 31.01.2018 has been grandfathered (exempted) which means that the appreciation in its value above the NAV as on 31.01.2018 would only be taxable as LTCG for 1968 units & as STCG for 32 Units.** Mutual Fund house also provides the profit/loss statement on above basis. Further, the NAV as on 31.01.2018 can be accessed at the website of Association of Mutual Funds in India's (AMFI) website by clicking at www.amfiindia.com / net-asset-value / nav-history

(Readers may forward their feedback & queries at taxtalknew@gmail.com. Other articles & response to queries are available at www.theTAXtalk.com)

CA Naresh Jakhotia

Avoiding TDS through Form 15G & 15H

In the wonderland of investment

By A. N Shanbagh

Income tax is deducted at source (TDS) on almost all types of income. The rate of TDS and the threshold beyond which the TDS is applicable depends upon the type of income. This creates problems for individuals whose income is under the basic exemption limit. Such persons will be forced to suffer TDS even though their income is not taxable in the first place. And though TDS or withholding tax is in fact tax paid in advance and credit for the same can be claimed while filing the return, the process is quite cumbersome especially for those investors who aren't liable to file a tax return in the first place.

In other words, from the final tax liability of the taxpayer, the amount representing the TDS has to be reduced and only the balance will be the final tax liability. However, what happens when the situation reverses? Suppose the final tax liability is lower than the TDS? Or going a step further, the investor may not even be liable to pay any tax (by virtue of his total income being below the exempted slab) and yet the interest income that he earns may have been subjected to TDS. In such cases, the only practical solution is to file the tax return specifying the extra tax paid and request a refund. However, regular taxpayers know too well the general delay involved in getting a refund, if at all.

Luckily, the Income Tax Act provides a solution. As they say, prevention is better than cure and so let's examine the ways and means of preventing one's income from being subject to the dreaded TDS. Sec. 197A read with Rule 29C provides for furnishing declarations by only a Resident individual in Form-15G and Form-15H (for senior citizens) in order to enable the payer to make the payment without TDS if the tax payable on the estimated total income is nil.

The declaration under Form-15G can be filed, only if both the following conditions are simultaneously satisfied:

1. The tax on estimated total income after claiming deductions under Chapter VI-A is nil, and

2. The aggregate of income from (i) dividend other than dividends from listed domestic companies (which has suffered DDT), (ii) interest on securities, (iii) interest other than interest on securities, and (iv) repayment of deposits under the National Saving Scheme, does not exceed the thresholds applicable.

If you examine this second condition carefully, you will find that the aggregate of incomes without any deductions u/ss 80C, 80D, etc from only the four sources enumerated above should not be more than the tax threshold applicable to the assessee, irrespective of rest of his income. Yes, this is indeed complicated.

To mitigate the pressure on Senior Citizens arising out of these complications, the second condition is not applicable to them.

Such declaration should be made before the very first payment during the year becomes due. If the ITO discovers a defect in the declaration, it is his duty to allow the defect to be rectified if the assessee submits a petition to rectify it - Vijay Hemant Finance and Estate Ltd v ITO [1999] 238ITR282 (Mad).

Ensure that you are eligible to file the form for non-deduction of the TDS. The payer is expected to relay all such payments to the Department and it gets checked for its veracity by the computer.

Sec. 197: TDS at Lower or Nil Rate

There is one more solution which is not very popular because it depends upon the discretion of the ITO. On receiving an application from a taxpayer for TDS at a lower or nil rate, the ITO, after examining the veracity of the claim, may issue an appropriate certificate on a plain paper to that effect within one month from the date of application (Instruction No. 1/2014, dt 15.1.14).

Almost always, this turns out to be a fruitless exercise. Firstly, for obvious reasons, it is difficult to convince the ITO and secondly, if the sanction is granted, it is applicable for only the current FY. Moreover, such a certificate is interim or tentative or provisional in nature and would not bar the AO from initiating proceedings by changing of his opinion --- Areva T&D the Division Bench of the Delhi High Court, held on 25.4.11.

To Sum: Fresh forms are required to be filed each year. As incomes of investors may differ from year to year, the eligibility for furnishing the forms has to be ascertained every year.

Secondly, for optimum benefit, these forms need to be furnished at the beginning of the fiscal such that the entire amount of interest escapes TDS.

If the form is filed during the year, the tax already deducted cannot be adjusted against future tax deductions.

(The authors may be contacted at wonderlandconsultants@yahoo.com) ■

Disclaimer: *The views expressed in the above articles are the personal views of the authors. Investors are advised to seek professional advice with reference to their investment objective and risk capacity before taking investment decisions.*

The Hitavada
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Sindhu settles for silver, again

PV Sindhu reacts on the podium after losing to Carolina Marin of Spain in the women's singles final during the Badminton World Championships in Nanjing, Jiangsu province. (AFP)

NANJING (China), Aug 5 (PTI)

PV SINDHU finished second best yet again in a major tournament final as she went down tamely to Carolina Marin in the World Championships women's singles title clash, adding to the Indian's tale of woes here on Sunday.

The Olympic silver medallist settled for another white metal in the showpiece following a 19-21, 10-21 loss to Olympic champion Marin of Spain. Interestingly, Marin had also defeated Sindhu in the final of the Rio Olympics in 2016.

"It is very frustrating to loss again. Last time also I had played the finals. It is quite sad and I have to come back stronger and get back to the sessions and prepare for the next tournament," said Sindhu, who suffered her fourth final loss this season. "Sometimes it is not your day, ups and downs will always be there and you have to always be stronger.

"A bit sad because I was expecting a good one but overall a good match and I am happy I came to the finals and winning and losing are parts of life and I have to take it as it is," she added.

Since 2016, it is Sindhu's eighth loss in major finals, including defeats at Rio Olympics, Hong

BADMINTON WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

Kong Open (2017, 2018), Super Series Final (2017), India Open (2018) and Thailand Open (2018).

The 23-year-old Sindhu, who had lost an epic final to Japan's Nozomi Okuhara at Glasgow last year, didn't have answers to Marin's blistering pace in the 45 minutes that the match lasted.

The second silver meant Sindhu is the only Indian to have four world championships podium finishes. She had won two bronze medals at the 2013 Guangzhou and 2014 Copenhagen editions.

Marin became the first woman shuttler to win the world championships thrice. She had won the title in 2014 and the 2015 Jakarta edition.

"I can't express my emotions. I have so many emotions inside me. I have been waiting for this moment long time. I am happy I could believe in myself this week," Marin said. Sindhu had entered the summit clash with a 5-6 loss-win head-to-head against Marin, but the Indian ace had won the last meeting at the Malaysian Open in June. "Carolina has that speed and she is very aggressive. She played very fast and quick paced during the tournament. I was prepared for her pace game," Sindhu said.

The feisty Martin tried to put pressure on Sindhu by celebrating each point with her trademark scream while parading the court.

Sindhu lagged 1-3 early on but the Indian slowly made her way to grab a 4-3 lead after producing a brilliant drop. She extended it to 6-4.

With Sindhu in full flow, the left-handed spaniard tried to put the shot close to the line but ended up committing too many unforced errors as Sindhu led 11-8 at the break after Martin sent the shuttle out thrice.

Sindhu extended the lead to 15-11 after the breather but she found the net twice and also hit wide to allow Marin claw back at 15-15. The Spaniard then unleashed a smash from near the net to turn the tables.

A lucky net chord and then Marin went wide, helping Sindhu to lead 18-17 but a weak return from the Indian and it was equal again. A smash by Marin and Sindhu hitting wide gave two game points to the Spaniard and she converted on the second chance.

Marin began the second game with her usual aggressive demeanour as Sindhu found her pace too hot to handle. The Spaniard soon raced to a 5-0 lead.

The 25-year-old Marin used her body smashes and acute angled strokes to set up the points. Sindhu couldn't match up to the aggression of the Spaniard and also couldn't slow down the game as Marin continued to gather points. She moved to the interval with a massive 11-2 lead.

After the breather, Marin continued to dominate the proceedings, pushing her opponent to commit errors as Sindhu hit wide and found the nets.

Two body returns gave Sindhu two points but the Indian continued to struggle to keep the shuttle inside the court and leaked points. Eventually two unforced errors handed Marin her third title.

"I think overall, she played much better. If I could have won the first game it could have been different. In the second game, I made too many errors, my smashes were going out. I can just say it was not my day," Sindhu said.

"I was leading 14-9 in the first game, I gave easy points. I made errors when I tried to get back into the pace. I should have been more patient at 19-19. She was attacking well."

Momota first Japanese man to win badminton worlds

NANJING (China), Aug 5 (AFP)

KENTO Momota became the first Japanese man to win the Badminton World Championships on Sunday, putting behind him a gambling scandal that threatened to ruin his career.

The explosive 23-year-old convincingly defeated China's highly promising Shi Yuqi 21-11, 21-13 in Nanjing.

Momota's nascent career descended into controversy in 2016 when Japanese badminton chiefs suspended him for more than a year for visiting an illegal casino, denying him a place at the Rio Olympics.

Momota, number two in the world at the time, has been working his way back to the top ever since and the world-ranked seven is currently in the form of his life. But in Shi he faced another of badminton's rising stars. The brilliantly agile 22-year-old defeated legend Lin Dan and Olympic champion Chen Long on the way to the final to confirm his newfound status as China's best player.

Shi and Momota had only played each other once before, Momota having the edge that time and he was to enjoy it once more. Shi, who was playing in front of his home-province crowd, appeared nervous early on. He made a series of errors as the favourite Momota clinched the first game in 21 minutes.

FROM NEW DELHI TO JAKARTA

THE HISTORY OF ASIAN GAMES

NINTH ASIAN GAMES IN 1982
Venue: New Delhi, India
Date: Nov 19 to Dec 4,1982
Number of Sports: 21 (197events)
Number of Nations: 33
Number of Participants: 4595

ABOUT THE GAMES

THE ninth Asian Games were held from November 19 to December 4, 1982 in Delhi, India. This was the second time the Games were held in Delhi as it was also host to the inaugural 1951 Asian Games. New Delhi joined Bangkok (four times) as the only cities to host multiple editions of the Asian Games.

The 1982 Asian Games was the first Asiad to be held under the aegis of the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA). The Asian Games Federation, under whose jurisdiction the first eight Asian Games had been held, dissolved to make way for the OCA.

A total number of 4,595 athletes, coming from 33 countries, competed in this Asiad. Debut Sports were Equestrian, Golf, Handball, Rowing, and Women's Hockey while Fencing and Bowling were not included in the 21 Sports.

Garnering 61 gold, 51 silver, and 41 bronze medals, the People's Republic of China replaced Japan, which won 57 gold, 52 silver, and 44 bronze medals, as the winner of the first place during the these Games. South Korea placed third with 28 gold, 28 silver, and 37 bronze medals, followed by North Korea with 17 gold, 19 silver, and 20 bronze medals.

Indian President Giani Zail Singh offically opened these Games at Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium. P.T Usha took the oath on behalf of athletes.

Final Medals tally

Country	G	S	B	T
China	61	51	41	153
Japan	57	52	44	153
South Korea	28	28	37	93
North Korea	17	19	20	56
India	13	19	25	57
Indonesia	4	4	7	15
Iran	4	4	4	12
Pakistan	3	3	5	11
Mongolia	3	3	1	7
Philippines	2	3	9	14
Iraq	2	3	4	9
Thaila	1	5	4	10
Kuwait	1	3	3	7
Syria	1	1	1	3
Malaysia	1	-	3	4
Singapore	1	-	2	3
Afghanistan	-	1	-	1
Lebanon	-	-	1	1
Bahrain	-	-	1	1
Hong Kong	-	-	1	1
Qatar	-	-	1	1
Vietnam	-	-	1	1
Total	199	199	215	613

TRIVIA

❍ The 1982 Asian Games saw the beginning of Chinese dominance in the medals tally. Japan had won the most number of medals in previous editions of the Games. China made their presence felt in the sporting world by dethroning Japan as the top gold medalists.

❍ In preparation for the IX Asian Games, colour television was introduced in India in a big way, as the Games were to be broadcast in colour.

❍ Rabuan Pit won Malaysia's only gold medal in Athletics in 1982 Asian Games. He won the 100-metre sprint with a time of 10.68 seconds.

❍ Lydia de Vega was the fastest female athlete in 1982 Asian Games. She won Phillippines' only gold in Athletics.

❍ Iraq became the seventh nation to win Asian Games Football title. They beat Kuwait 1-0 in the final at Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium, New Delhi in 1982.

—Faisel Features

BRIEFS

Alvarez seizes WBO light heavyweight title

UNBEATEN Eleider Alvarez knocked out Sergey Kovalev in the seventh round with a stunning upset victory to capture the World Boxing Organization light heavyweight title.

Alvarez, of Colombia, hit Kovalev with a devastating right hook that sent the Russian to the canvas for the third and final time late in the seventh round. He knocked Kovalev down twice and then finished him off with consecutive right hooks to the head that sent him down for the third and final time. At that point the referee moved in and called an end to the fight with 15 seconds left in the round.

Kroos named German footballer of the year

REAL Madrid's Champions League winner Toni Kroos has been named German footballer of the year for the first time, Kicker magazine said on Sunday.

Kroos, who won the Champions League with Real Madrid in May, stood out with 185 votes from sports journalists ahead of Freiburg striker Nils Petersen (39 votes) and Schalke's Brazilian defender Naldo (with 38). "Footballer of the year -- that's a prize you do not get so easily -- and most importantly not everyone can win it," Kroos said in a statement. Jupp Heynckes was voted coach of the year for leading Bayern Munich to the Bundesliga title in May before retiring.

De Minaur books final with Zverev

AUSTRALIAN 19-year-old Alex De Minaur saved four match points and advanced to ATP Washington Open final, where he will face third-ranked defending champion Alexander Zverev.

The Aussie teen outlasted 20-year-old Russian Andrey Rublev 5-7, 7-6 (8-6), 6-4 after two hours and 52 minutes while 21-year-old German Zverev ousted Greek teen Stefanos Tsitsipas 6-2, 6-4."It's one of the biggest wins of my career," De Minaur said. "Dug deep and never gave up. Couldn't be prouder of myself."

Peaty, Kolesnikov break world records at Euros

ADAM Peaty and Kliment Kolesnikov made it a landmark night at the inaugural multi-sport European Championships when the two swimming prodigies broke world records to strike gold in the space of just over an hour. Briton Peaty added more lustre to his reputation as perhaps the world's most dominant swimmer when he smashed his own 100 metres breaststroke mark in 57.00 seconds en route to his 17th major gold medal. Russian teenager Kolesnikov then followed up the home favourite's heroics by setting a new 50 metres backstroke mark while winning his first major individual title at senior level just a month after his 18th birthday.

Kuznetsova breezes into final

FORMER champion Svetlana Kuznetsova dropped just four games to reach her first WTA final in over a year as the Russian defeated Germany's Andrea Petkovic 6-2, 6-2 in the semi-finals of the Citi Open in Washington. Kuznetsova, the former world number two, said she was surprised how well she played as she continues to comeback from last November's wrist surgery. "I didn't expect such a good result so fast, because I haven't been playing so well after my injury, after my surgery, so it took me some time to get back," Kuznetsova, told WTATennis.com.

(Agencies)

Bhullar wins maiden European title

NATADOLA BAY (Fiji), Aug 5 (PTI)

INDIA'S Gaganjeet Bhullar grabbed his maiden European Tour title with a brilliant chip-in eagle on the 17th hole for a one-stroke win over a charging Anthony Quayle of Australia at the Fiji International.

Going into the final round, Bhullar withstood intense pressure as he holed a monstrous chip from outside the green for an eagle-three at the 17th to head into the last hole with a one-shot advantage over Quayle.

He calmly parred the last hole to turn in a six-under 66 for a four-day total of 14-under 274, which earned him a win over Quayle, who broke the course record with a nine-under 63 at the Natadola Bay Championship Golf Course.

It was Bhullar's first win on the European Tour, ninth Asian Tour title and 10th crown overall. He now becomes the most successful Indian player on Asian Tour, overtaking the tally of eight tour

Golfer Gaganjeet Bhullar poses with the trophy after winning his maiden European Tour title. (PTI)

wins by Arjun Atwal and Jyoti Randhawa.

He is the first Indian to win on Australasia Tour and also became the fifth from the country to win on European Tour after Atwal, Jeev Milkha Singh (4), SSP Chawrasia (4) and Anirban Lahiri (2).

He now has an exemption on European Tour, Australian Tour and Asian Tour till the end of 2019, 2020 and 2021 respectively.

"I've been playing really well. It was just a matter of time and I'm glad it happened on this stage," said Bhullar, who found the winning touch after 20 starts following his last title at the Macao Open last year.

"This kind of good form was definitely building up from last, I would say, two months, I had two good finishes. In fact, more than two, but two runner up finishes on the Asian Tour."

Besides the eagle, Bhullar also sank five birdies against a lone bogey. The key for Bhullar was the start. He started superbly with three birdies in the first four holes and kept his foot on the pedal. He dropped a shot on Par-4 seventh but got the back on Par-5 ninth to turn in 3-under 36. He made a crucial par save on 10th with a putt from more than 20 feet and then birdied Par-3 13th.

SETBACKS ARE THE MOST EFFECTIVE TEACHERS: THAPA

NEW DELHI, Aug 5 (PTI)

SUCCESS propels but setbacks teach life lessons like none can, feels seasoned Indian boxer Shiva Thapa, who cannot wait to turn his "growth" story of a rollercoaster year into a maiden Asian Games medal this month.

The first and only Indian boxer with three consecutive Asian Championships medals, a gold (2013), silver (2017) and a bronze (2015), Shiva would be competing in his second Asian Games, scheduled from August 18 in Jakarta and Palembang.

The last time around, he lost in the quarter-finals and speaking to PTI, the Assam boxer offered a rather philosophical take on success and setbacks, careful to specify that by setbacks, he did not mean failures.

"I think setbacks are a better teacher. They make you stronger and when you bounce back, it's the most amazing feeling," says the 25-year-old, one of only four Indian boxers to have a world championship medal in his cabinet.

"Success definitely propels you and makes you confident, but setbacks, they are like a tightly pulled bowstring; the farther it is pulled, the faster you go ahead. Success also teaches you things but a lot of times, you can get carried away too. But setbacks pump you up like nothing else," he adds. "Asian Games mean a lot to me. By a lot, I mean, I can't even tell you how much. It is a massive challenge first and foremost but a challenge that I am ready for," he says.

Real topple Juventus 3-1

LOS ANGELES, Aug 5 (AFP)

SUBSTITUTE Marco Asensio made an immediate impact by scoring two early second-half goals as Real Madrid rallied to beat Juventus 3-1 in a pre-season exhibition contest on Saturday.

Asensio entered the game at the start of the second half and scored less than two minutes in before adding another in the 56th minute.

It was the first defeat of the pre-season and the final match of the International Champions Cup campaign for Italy's Juventus. The Serie A champions now open up their title defense at Chievo on August 18.

They were without new signing Cristiano Ronaldo, who did not make his debut against his former team. The Portuguese superstar skipped the club's US tour because he was recovering from his World Cup performance.

Gareth Bale also scored for the European champions as the Welshman served notice that he is going to produce despite the loss of Ronaldo.

Bale hit a stunning shot from 20 yards out in the 39th minute to level the score at 1-1 in the front of the crowd of 60,000 at FedEx Field in Landover, Maryland.

Bale finished with 16 La Liga goals last season and is in his fifth campaign with Real Madrid.

Asensio subbed in after half-time and wasted no time getting on the board. He finished off a drive by side-footing a shot home in the 47th minute on a rush with Vinicius Jr., who also entered the game at half-time.

Asensio scored just nine minutes later to make it 3-1 for Real Madrid on another unselfish pass, this time from Lucas Vazquez. Asensio's shot deflected off the right arm of Juventus goalkeeper Wojciech Szczesny and trickled into the net.

Juventus' lone score came in the 12th minute on an own goal by Real Madrid defender Dani Carvajal.

Carvajal was trying to corral Joao Cancelo's left side cross when he deflected the ball into his own net.

Man City lift Community Shield

LONDON, Aug 5 (AFP)

SERGIO Aguero spoiled Chelsea manager Maurizio Sarri's first taste of English football as the Argentine's double gave Manchester City a stylish 2-0 victory in the Community Shield on Sunday.

Blues boss Sarri, hired to replace the sacked Antonio Conte last month, endured a miserable debut in the prestigious friendly at Wembley as lacklustre Chelsea were swept aside by Premier League champions City.

Picking up where they left off in their record-breaking campaign last term, Pep Guardiola's team took an early lead through Aguero, who rewarded City's dominance with a second goal after the break.

The last side to win the Community Shield and then go on to clinch the Premier League title were Manchester United in 2010-11.

On this evidence, City could follow in their arch rivals' footsteps at the end of the season.

City's German winger Leroy

Manchester City players celebrate their win over Chelsea at Wembley Stadium in north London. (AFP)

Sane was forced off injured at half-time, giving Guardiola a scare ahead of their Premier League opener at Arsenal on August 12.

But that was the only sour note for City as they got back in the groove in impressive style.

While the Community Shield serves as the curtain raiser to the new season, City and FA Cup holders Chelsea have very different ambitions for the Premier League campaign, which kicks off on Friday.

City are favourites to defend the title and among the top Champions League contenders after becoming the first English top-flight team to secure 100 points last season.

In contrast, Chelsea are starting from scratch after chain-smoking former banker Sarri was hired from Napoli as an antidote to his antagonistic predecessor Conte.

Root not as good batsman as Kohli: Brearley

BIRMINGHAM, Aug 5 (PTI)

ENGLAND'S revered captain Mike Brearley feels that Joe Root is "not quite as good as Virat Kohli" but is still a "thoughtful bloke", who needs to rev up his conversion rate like his Indian counterpart.

"Root has a poorer conversion rate in comparison to Kohli. But I think Root is a fine batsman too and I like seeing him do well. He is different – a brilliant batsman and quite intelligent. He is not quite as good as Kohli but is still a thoughtful bloke," Brearley told PTI on Sunday.

> *I think Kohli is best in the world and anyone who averages 50-plus in all three formats must be a very, very fine player. He can play in every mode and so can Joe Root. But there is something ruthless about Kohli and he converts all those fifties into hundreds.*
> ***—Mike Brearley***

Brearley rated Kohli as the best batsman in world cricket and his success is largely due to his "ruthless streak".

Kohli scored 149 and 51 but India lost a closely contested first Test against England by 31 runs.

However Brearley was all praise for the Indian skipper, who on Sunday perched on top of ICC rankings for Test batsmen.

Kohli scored 149 and 51 but India lost a closely contested first Test against England. (AFP)

"I think Kohli is best in the world and anyone who averages 50-plus in all three formats must be a very, very fine player. He can play in every mode and so can Joe Root. But there is something ruthless about Kohli and he converts all those fifties into hundreds," Brearley told PTI.

While every defeat hurts, Brearley feels that this loss will be a "learning experience" for Kohli.

"This Test (loss) will be a learning experience for Kohli. It will make things a lot easier (in terms of expectations from him and the Indian team). There is intensity about this Indian team, about their bowling attack, and I think some of that comes from Kohli too. On occasion, it can make people nervous I dare say, but on the whole, it animates them," he added.

Every player, who is a leader has his own style and Kohli is no different, feels Brearley.

"I like what I see in Kohli and quite like it. Everyone has their own style and he is very good in his own style. He is keen, and hawk-eyed. I think it is good for Test cricket," said Brearley, the author of widely acclaimed book 'The Art of Captaincy'.

Hailed as an astute captain of his generation, Brearley had a word of caution that Indian dressing room shouldn't be overawed by his persona.

"The one thing you wonder about Kohli is if he is going to become too dominant a figure in Indian cricket. He is shown great respect, as was shown to great Indian cricketers. He is like a deity, like others before him, the 3000th Indian deity. But it is becoming something greater for Kohli at the moment as well. Will that be good for him and Indian cricket in the longer run," Brearley questioned.

"I don't know whether it rubs off wrongly on some other players because for that you have to know the dressing room and how people react. It is possible that others are intimidated by Kohli's aggressive personality."

Brearley found some similarities between Kohli and former Australian captain Ian Chappell.

"It was said similarly about Ian Chappell because he was very aggressive and not short of a word or two in the batsman's ear. I think it is possible that some teammates might not enjoy it, and like in Chappell's case, feel a bit on the outside," he added.

Brearley is of the opinion that Cheteshwar Pujara should replace KL Rahul a No 3.

"I am not sure about India's chopping and changing (in the batting line-up). I would have gone with Pujara at number three rather than Rahul. Pujara is someone who averages 50-plus in Test cricket and has played county cricket in England this year.

"I know he (Pujara) has struggled but I would have liked him to come in at number three, especially since he is likely to play a steady innings, blunt James Anderson and Stuart broad, and enable Kohli to come a bit later when it is not moving a lot," he observed.

The Edgbaston Test was England men's 1000th match and crowds weren't as keen on the first two days, while the third day almost saw a full house.

Brearley hoped for greater crowds in the remaining Tests, but at the same time professed the acceptance of day-night cricket to help preserve the longer format of the game.

"Day-Night Test cricket should be tried whenever possible. You will get people watching it. I think we will have terrific crowds this summer because India have a good following and English supporters usually come as well. Sometimes in Australia you get as good crowds for Test cricket as well.

"But in India, numbers for Test cricket are shocking. They are the number one side in Test cricket and nobody goes to watch. It is a disaster and it is the failure of the BCCI to not be able to grow Test cricket and take a chance with day-night Test cricket," said Brearley.

Young Pope called up for Lord's Test

BIRMINGHAM, Aug 5 (PTI)

ENGLAND have made two changes to their squad for the second Test against India, bringing in uncapped batsman Oliver Pope and pacer Chris Woakes.

Oliver Pope

The second Test starts at the Lord's on August 9. 20-year-old Surrey batsman Oliver Pope has been given his maiden Test call-up as Dawid Malan has been dropped. The latter scored only 8 and 20 in the first Test here and also dropped crucial catches at slip.

Pope has had a stellar domestic season as he scored 684 runs at average 85.50 and is the second-highest run-scorer in the County championship this summer.

Additionally, he is also right-handed which is seen as a tactic to contend with Indian off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin who picked up seven wickets at Edgbaston.

Woakes replaced all-rounder Ben Stokes as well. The latter will be in Bristol starting on Monday, where his trial for affray charges begins. If the case is adjourned for a later date, Stokes will be added to the Test squad.

"Ollie Pope has made an exceptional start to his first class career. He has reached 1000 first-class runs in just 15 matches and is the first division's stand-out batsman this season with 684 runs at 85," said England national selector Ed Smith.

"The selection panel believe that Ollie's performances and character suggest he is well suited to international cricket."

Hosts England lead the five-match series 1-0 after their 31-run victory in the opener.

Can't take five days off before Test series: Gavaskar

NEW DELHI, Aug 5 (PTI)

CRITICAL of the way India prepared for the Test series against England, Sunil Gavaskar says lack of serious practice ahead of the Birmingham game hurt India dearly as batsmen's poor technique against moving deliveries was thoroughly exposed.

Gavaskar is livid with the fact that India played only eight days of competitive cricket (3 ODIs and T20Is against England and 2 vs Ireland) and that too limited overs before the Test series.

After the ODI series defeat, Indian team was given a five-day break and the players spent time in Europe.

"It was no preparation at all," Gavaskar told 'India Today' channel, referring to the three-day warm-up game.

"I can understand that you need to switch off after a series but that can't be five days at a stretch. It can be three plus three day breaks between matches but not five days," Gavaskar said.

Gavaskar was also critical of Indian team for changing an official First-Class game into a glorified practice session in the name of warm-up game with all 18 players taking part.

"They should have played at least two three-day games and proper first-class games. Not 18 players but 11 players. They should have prepared in such a manner to give themselves a chance in the Test match. They cancelled a warm-up game in South Africa and were thrashed in the first two Tests," he said.

You can have as many match simulations, take throw-downs but in match situations, it is different. While taking throw-downs, you can get out or in nets you can bowl no balls," said the legendary opener.

Virat tops ICC Test ranking

DUBAI, Aug 5 (PTI)

INDIA skipper Virat Kohli on Sunday topped the ICC Player Rankings for Test Batsmen, riding on his brilliant century against England in the opening Test at Edgbaston.

Kohli thus became the seventh India batsman and first since Sachin Tendulkar (in June 2011) to be ranked the number one Test batsman in the latest ICC ranking released on Sunday.

Kohli scored 149 and 51 in India's 31-run defeat and has gone up by 31 points, which have helped him to end Steve Smith's 32-month reign as the top-ranked batsman and reach the top of the summit for the first time in his 67-Test career.

Kohli now leads Smith (who had held the top spot since December 2015) by five points, but will have to maintain the form in the remaining four Tests to finish the series as the world's highest-ranked batsman.

Tendulkar had joined South Africa's Jacques Kallis in number-one position in January 2011, but had dropped to second spot following the Jamaica Test in June 2011 after he had missed the three-Test series against the West Indies.

Apart from Kohli and Tendulkar, Rahul Dravid, Gautam Gambhir, Sunil Gavaskar, Virender Sehwag and Dilip Vengsarkar are the other India batsmen to have achieved number-one rankings during their careers. However, at 934 points, Kohli has become India's highest-ranked batsman, 14th overall, on the all-time tally of points.

Kohli had entered the Edgbaston Test on 903 points, 13 points behind Gavaskar, and is now ahead of the ICC Cricket Hall of Famer by 18 points.

If Kohli can deliver another strong performance in the second Test at Lord's, then he can break into the top-10 by leapfrogging Matthew Hayden, Kallis and AB de Villiers, whose highest points tally was 935 each.

Donald Bradman (961) and Steve Smith (947) are the two batsmen sitting on top of this exclusive list. Kohli is the 76th player to top the Test batting rankings.

He is also the number-one ranked ODI batsman, but is ranked 12th in T20Is, 220 points behind number-one ranked Aaron Finch of Australia.

INDIAN BATSMEN AS WORLD NO 1 IN TESTS

Batsman	No 1 Ranking	Highest Rating
Virat Kohli	04-08-2018	934 (04-08-2018)
Virender Sehwag	18-02-2010	866 (22-07-2010)
Gautam Gambhir	16-07-2009	886 (28-11-2009)
Rahul Dravid	06-01-1999	892 (20-03-2005)
Sachin Tendulkar	22-11-1994	898 (25-02-2002)
Dilip Vengsarkar	30-12-1987	837 (16-11-1988)
Sunil Gavaskar	05-12-1978	916 (03-09-1979)

—S Pervez Qaiser

Mayank hits double ton, Prithvi century

India A score 411/2 on Day 2

BENGALURU, Aug 5 (PTI)

MAYANK Agarwal continued his dream run smashing a double hundred in company of centurion Prithvi Shaw as India A flayed the South African bowling attack to reach 411 for two on the second day of the 'four day' Test.

Agarwal sent the bowlers on a leather hunt with an unbeaten 220 off 250 balls while Shaw punished them with a well-made 136 off 196 balls during a 277-run opening stand. India A now enjoy a 165-run lead after Mohammed Siraj took five for 56 to bowl out South Africa A for 246.

It was a day when India A openers scored runs at an average of 4.72 with an astounding 58 boundaries and five sixes.

Agarwal alone hit 31 fours and four maximums. Shaw had 20 boundaries and a six in his seventh First-Class hundred.

The hero of the day certainly was local boy Agarwal, who hit his eighth First-Class century.

After a tremendous last season in domestic cricket where he scored well over 1000 runs, Agarwal continued his good form during the India A tri-series in England with three hundreds.

"I think, I have seen the best knock from the blade of Mayank. He batted really well and I expect him to get more runs under the belt," Shaw told reporters after the second day's play.

On his knock, Shaw said: "I played according to the merit of the ball. When I saw ball to be it, I did simply that. I have been an aggressive batsman since my school days and I play my game as such," he said. Both Shaw and Mayank played the morning session out and took the score to 122 for no loss after they had cracked a superb half centuries.

"The first session is very crucial for us. If you play that period in the morning, it is easier for the batsman afterwards because the ball comes nicely on to the bat. After that you can see our score kept moving," Shaw said.

BRIEFS

Reeza's ton on debut inspires SA to win

BATSMAN Reeza Hendricks smashed a century on his One-Day International debut to set up South Africa's series-clinching 78-run victory over Sri Lanka in the third match in Pallekele on Sunday. Hendricks made 102 off 89 deliveries to help SA post 363-7 and then bowl out the hosts for 285 in 45.2 overs. They took 3-0 lead in the five-match series.

Bangladesh level T20 series

A FINE all-round performance by Shakib al Hasan lifted Bangladesh to a series-levelling 12-run win over the West Indies in the second fixture of a three-match T20 International series at the Central Broward Stadium in Florida on Saturday. Shakib belted 60 and senior opener Tamim Iqbal top-scored with 74 as the Bangladeshis posted a challenging 171 for five after they were put in to bat.

Hardik should learn from Stokes: Ian Chappell

HE MIGHT still be a "work in progress" but Hardik Pandya could take a cue from Ben Stokes' bowling during the ongoing series, which could prove to be a "defining one" in the all-rounder's career, feels Ian Chappell.

He also feels that Pandya should be batting at No 6. "India's search for a seam-bowling allrounder is still a work in progress but Hardik Pandya displayed determination and discipline to go with his undoubted skills in an important partnership with Kohli," said Chappell. *(Agencies)*

GANGULY WARNS AGAINST CHANGING AND CHOPPING

BIRMINGHAM, Aug 5 (PTI)

FORMER captain Sourav Ganguly has urged Indian batsmen Murali Vijay and Ajinkya Rahane to bat with more determination and advised skipper Virat Kohli to not chop and change the playing XI after defeat in the first Test against England.

India lost the series-opener by 31 runs as the Indian batsmen, with the exception of Kohli, failed to tackle the English attack.

Opener Vijay (20, 6) and middle-order batsman Rahane (15, 2) contributed 43 runs together in their two innings at Edgbaston.

Ganguly, in his instagram post, wrote, "If you've to win a Test then everyone has to score runs."

He said, "This was the first Test in a 5 match series & I think this team has the capability to come back & play well. #AjinkyaRahane & #MuraliVijay will have to show some determination since they have scored runs in these conditions before.

"I don't think the captain is responsible for the loss. If you're the captain then you'll be criticised for a loss the same way as you're congratulated for a win."

The former India captain also warned against making wholesale changes in the wake of the defeat.

"One criticism for @Virat.Kohli is that he should give a consistent run to his batters & more time before dropping them. The failure against swing in English conditions can't be used as an excuse any more as everyone knows that it's what you get when you come to England. "You can't be excused all the time & we have lost before in 2011 & 2014. You've to bat well. It's a very well known fact that the ball will swing in England the same way as Australia is known for its pacy wickets. So if previously you've scored runs there is no reason you can't now."

Kohli shone with his maiden century on English soil and followed that with a valiant fifty in the second innings.

"The captain should give confidence to his players. It's his team & only he can change their mindset. He will have to sit with them & tell them that if he can do it so can they. He should give them time & tell them to go out & play without any fear. "It is true that after continuous chopping & changing of the playing XI, players can get afraid that after all these years they've failed to garner the faith of the team management."

Ganguly also said it was important for players to play all formats and cited the example of past Indian teams, which he said won overseas series because players stuck together.

"The good thing about the great teams of the past - whether it be #Australia, #SouthAfrica or our very own team which won the Test series here in 2007 - was that the boys used to play both formats of the game - #SachinTendulkar, #RahulDravid, #VirenderSehwag, including myself.

SL U-19 beat India U-19 by 7 runs to lead series 2-1

Nagpur's Rathod scores 37 runs

COLOMBO, Aug 5 (PTI)

INDIA U-19 team suffered a batting collapse towards the end of their run chase to lose the third Youth ODI against Sri Lanka U-19 by seven runs here on Sunday.

Chasing 221 for a win, the Indian team was placed at 181 for 5 at the end of 45 overs but they could not score the required 40 runs from the remaining five overs as they were all out for 213 in 49.3 overs. The last four wickets fell for six runs. Sri Lanka U-19 team leads the five-match series 2-1. India U-19 had won the first match on July 30 while Sri Lanka U-19 had won the second game on August 2.

The India were 207 for 4 at 48.2 needing 14 runs 10 balls but lost the last four wickets in the next seven deliveries for the addition of just six runs. Mohit Jangra (13) and Harsh Tyagi (0) was out in consecutive deliveries but there was still hope for India as number four batsman Pawan Shah (77 from 94 balls) was still there.

But Shah, who came into bat in the 17th over, failed to finish the job as he became the ninth batsman to be out in the second ball of the final over. Siddharth Desai (0) was run out the next delivery as the team folded their innings at 213 in 49.3 overs.

Besides Shah, the other Indian batsmen who made notable contributions were Yash Rathod (37) and Anuj Rawat (26). Rawat however consumed 58 balls.

For Sri Lanka U-19, Shashika Dulshan was the most successful bowler with 3/37 while Sandun Mendis and Navod Paranavithana returned with figures of 2/46 and 2/42.

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Rajnath recalls Vajpayee's role in Lucknow's growth

LUCKNOW, Aug 5 (PTI)

UNION Home Minister Rajnath Singh on Sunday hailed Atal Behari Vajpayee's contribution to the development of the Uttar Pradesh capital, saying the former Prime Minister initiated 'vikaas ki Ganga' in the city.

Singh, who was here on a two-day visit, was speaking after the inauguration and foundation stone-laying ceremony of 438 projects worth Rs 938 crore for Lucknow and neighbourhood.

"No one can deny the fact that the 'vikaas ki Ganga' in Lucknow was initiated by former Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee and was further taken up by former MP Lalji Tandon. Shaheed Path in Lucknow was started by Atalji when he was the Prime Minister and I was the Union Surface Transport Minister," he said.

Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh, UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya during the inauguration and foundation stone laying ceremony of some infrastructure projects, in Lucknow, on Sunday. (PTI)

Vajpayee has represented Lucknow in the Lok Sabha five times, the last time being in 2004.

The Home Minister, who is also the MP from Lucknow, said, "In the 2014 Lok Sabha polls, I had said that I do not make promises, but I seek the blessings of the people of Lucknow, so that God may give me the strength to fulfil the developmental aspirations of the people of Lucknow."

Lauding UP Chief Minister Yogi Adiatyanth, he said, "Today is a historic moment for Lucknow. The UP Chief Minister is committed to developing UP. His commitment for development and hard work makes me feel confident that no one can stop Uttar Pradesh from becoming the number one State in the country."

"The day is not very far when Lucknow will become a world class city," he added.

On July 28, while addressing a programme here on 'Transforming Urban Landscape', Prime Minister Narendra Modi had said, "There is a very close relationship between our mission (Atal Mission for Rejuvenation of Urban Transformation - AMRUT) and Lucknow city. Lucknow has been the 'karmabhoomi' of 'mahapurush' Atal Bihari Vajpayee. Vajpayee made Lucknow the laboratory to improve urban life in the country."

Tamil Nadu Governor Banwarilal Purohit receives President Ram Nath Kovind upon his arrival at airport in Chennai, on Sunday. Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami, Deputy Chief Minister O Panneerselvam are also seen.

Goyal proposes higher rank, pay for Rly GMs

NEW DELHI, Aug 5 (PTI)

UNION Minister Piyush Goyal has proposed a higher rank and pay scale for Railway General Managers, making them equivalent to Secretaries in the Central Government and at par with the State Chief Secretaries, a source in the Ministry said.

This is a second time in three years that a Railway Minister has made such a proposal for zonal GMs, the last being a letter from the then Minister Suresh Prabhu who had suggested the same in a letter to the pay commission in 2015.

Goyal has readied a proposal in which he has suggested a string of administrative changes one of which is the introduction of a post in the Railway Board to exclusively focus on safety issues of the national transporter, along with the upgradation of the post of the zonal GMs, sources said. Goyal has proposed that GMs, who are each responsible for one of the 16 zones of the Indian Railways, should now have the rank of State Chief Secretaries and Director General of Police.

Currently, they are ex-officio special secretary rank officers.

"This would ensure better coordination between Departments -- States and Zonal Railways as the top officials in State and the Zonal Railways (the GMs) would be of the same rank as the rank of Secretaries to the Union Government.

"Often the GMs whose jurisdiction spreads across States have to deal with the Chief Secretaries and we believe that they should be at par for them to work out issues," said the source, explaining the need for the change in rank. The source also pointed out that currently with the GMs at a lower rank than the Chief Secretaries, a lot of issues which should have been resolved at the Zonal level gets bumped to the Board level for resolution. With the GMs at par with the States' topmost bureaucrat, he said, operational issues would be resolved in the field itself.

Lanka Govt reworking MoU on airport deal with India

COLOMBO, Aug 5 (PTI)

THE Sri Lankan Government is reworking on the draft of a memorandum of understanding to hand over the management of Mattala Rajapaksha International Airport at Hambantota to an Indian airport operator, according to a media report on Sunday.

Built with high interest commercial loans from China by the Mahinda Rajapaksha Government, the MRIA is dubbed as the "world's emptiest airport" due to lack of flights.

It was officially opened in March 2013 and the only international flight operating from there was halted in May.

The Sri Lanka Government had announced that it will go ahead with the deal with India to jointly operate the USD 210 million MRIA at Humbantota, about 241 km south-east of Colombo, through a joint venture with the Airports Authority of India (AAI).

The Government had last month asked the Indian airport operator to submit its business plan for operating the loss-making airport.

A draft MoU on handing over of the MRIA to the Airports Authority of India (AAI) was recently presented before the Sri Lankan Cabinet and is now being reworked at the Indian Government's request, the 'Sunday Times' reported.

The talks for management control of the MRIA are continuing between India and Sri Lanka, at no point during the negotiations with India was the proposal withdrawn or denied despite what the media reported, it said, quoting an unnamed official.

"The Sri Lankan Government's terms only allow for management control of the commercial activities of the airport while ownership and statutory functions including air traffic control and air traffic rights will be under the control of Sri Lankan authorities," said another official.

Mattala airport, named after former president Mahinda Rajapaksa, was one of the major infrastructure projects of Rajapaksa's nearly a decade-long rule. The airport has the capacity to handle one million passengers a year and is expected to handle five million passengers, 50,000 tonnes of cargo and 6,250 air traffic operations per annum by 2028.

The Government in 2017 invited investors to turn the airport into a profit-sharing joint venture. However, no proposals were received to operate, manage and maintain it.

Sri Lankan Civil Aviation Minister Nimal Siripala de Silva had said that only India had offered to help, now discussion were on with the Indians for the joint venture. The AAI is to enter a deal with Sri Lanka Civil Aviation Authority to run the MRIA. The AAI is to have a 70 per cent stake while Sri Lanka's CAA will invest 30 per cent, de Silva had said in the parliament.

20 killed in WWII vintage plane crash in Switzerland

GENEVA, Aug 5 (AFP)

TWENTY people died after a vintage World War II aircraft crashed into a Swiss mountainside at the weekend, police said on Sunday.

"The police have the sad certainty that the 20 people aboard perished," police spokeswoman Anita Senti told a news conference. There were 11 men and nine women aboard, including an Austrian couple and their son, she said.

The Junker JU52 HB-HOT aircraft, built in Germany in 1939 and now a collectors' item, crashed into Piz Segnas, a 3,000-metre (10,000-foot) peak in the east of the country on Saturday.

The crash occurred at 2,540 metres on the mountain's western flank, Senti said.

According to German-language newspaper Blick, the flight had taken off from Ticino in the south of the country and had been due to land at the Duebendorf military airfield near Zurich on Saturday afternoon.

Accident investigators and rescue personnel gather around the wreckage of a Junkers JU52 aircraft at Flims, on Sunday, after the aeroplane crashed into Piz Segnas, a 3,000-metre (10,000-foot) peak in eastern Switzerland on Saturday. (AFP)

The 20 Minutes newspaper quoted a witness who was on the mountainside at the time of the crash. "The plane turned 180 degrees to the south and fell to the ground like a stone," the witness said, adding that the debris was scattered over "a very small area," indicating an explosion was unlikely to have been the cause of the crash.

Police said earlier that five helicopters were involved in a search and rescue mission and the airspace over the crash site was to remain closed until late Sunday.

The aircraft belongs to JU-Air, a company with links to the Swiss air force, the ATS news agency reported. JU-Air said on its website that it was 'deeply saddened' and its 'thoughts were with the passengers, the crew and families and friends of the victims'.

The company's flight operations were suspended, it said.

JU-Air says it runs a small fleet of four Junker planes, all built in 1939, which are for hire. Its pilots are ex-military and professional pilots, all of them volunteers.

On its website, JU-Air mentions one past accident, in 1987, at the Koblenz airport in Germany in which no one was hurt.

In another Swiss plane crash on Saturday, a tourist plane carrying a couple and two young children crashed in a forest in the Nidwald canton and immediately burst into flames. No survivors have been found.

200 Indian pilgrims stranded in Nepal

KATHMANDU, Aug 5 (IANS)

NEARLY 200 Indians on way back home from Mansarovar pilgrimage are stranded in Humla district in Nepal due to bad weather, official sources said on Sunday.

However, the numbers are not alarming and it will take just a day of good weather and normal operation of flights to evacuate all the stranded persons, the Indian Embassy here said.

It confirmed that these persons were stranded in Simikot, the district headquarters of Humla, and Hilsa on the Nepal-China border.

A headcount on Saturday evening in both places revealed that 124 pilgrims were stuck in Simikot and 50 in Hilsa or on way to Hilsa, the embassy said.

Due to bad weather, it was impossible to airlift these Indians from Hilsa to Simikot and Simikot to Nepalgunj, a border city which is only a four-hour drive from Lucknow in Uttar Pradesh.

In July, over 2,000 Indian pilgrims were stranded but were airlifted to safety.

Nepal is a popular destination for Indian pilgrims to visit Mansarovar due to the distance and comfort factors involved.

Simikot has basic board and lodging facilities for 500 pilgrims, the embassy said, along with medical and first-aid facilities.

The pilgrims stranded in Humla since Saturday have not complained about board and lodging and medical services, it added.

Embassy's representatives in Simikot, Hilsa, Nepalganj are on alert and monitoring the situation.

The embassy will ensure timely evacuation of stranded pilgrims in case of emergency, the statement said.

PTI to announce Imran Khan as PM candidate today: Spokesperson

ISLAMABAD, Aug 5 (PTI)

IMRAN Khan will be named on Monday as the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party's candidate for the next Prime Minister of Pakistan and he is set to initially form a Cabinet of 15 to 20, according to media reports on Sunday.

The party of the 65-year-old cricketer-turned-politician emerged as the single largest side in the National Assembly in the July 25 general elections. While the exact date of the swearing-in of Pakistan's new Prime Minister has not been announced, reports say it could take place on August 14, the Independence Day of the country.

"A parliamentary meeting of the party will take place tomorrow at a private hotel in Islamabad," PTI spokesperson Fawad Chaudhry was quoted as saying by the Geo News.

"Imran Khan will be formally announced as the party's nominee for premier during the meeting," Chaudhry said.

Claiming that the PTI now has the clear support to form the Government in the Centre, Chaudhry said, "PTI's seat tally in the National Assembly currently stands at 125 after the inclusion of independents."

Allies and reserved seats will take the PTI tally to 174 seats in the National Assembly, he added.

Further after the support of Balochistan National Party-Mengal (BNP-M), the party will have 177 seats, Chaudhry said.

Pakistan's National Assembly comprises a total of 342 members, of which 272 members are directly elected.

A party can only form the Government if it manages to clinch 172 seats in total. PTI had emerged in the lead with 116 NA seats in the polls.

All PTI candidates elected to the National Assembly have been directed to be present at today's meeting, Chaudhry said.

The PTI has also decided to form a 15-20 member federal Cabinet in the first phase of Government formation, 'Geo News' reported, after a high-level party meeting held on Saturday.

Sources said the party has decided to induct Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan in the Cabinet. The MQM-P will have one Minister in the Federal Cabinet, while an adviser would be inducted later, the report said.

Meanwhile, Khan has decided to not give any Federal Ministry to the members of Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid (PML-Q). However, its leader Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi would be nominated for Punjab Assembly speaker, the sources said.

Women drivers in Allahabad turn e-rickshaw owners

■ By Trisha Mukherjee
NEW DELHI, Aug 5 (PTI)

FROM walking 10 km each day to pick up the rickshaw she rented for the day to driving her own, it has been a happy 7-month ride to independence and empowerment for Allahabad girl Maria.

The 23-year-old final year history honours student doubles up as an e-rickshaw driver in Allahabad, dropping off not just neighbours to their destination as she leaves her home in Ramapur, about 10 km from the city, in the morning but ferrying other passengers as well.

"Now that I own the rickshaw, I don't have to worry about returning it to the owner without having made enough money for the day. Also, I can ride it at hours convenient to me, where I can manage both my studies and household works," Maria told PTI. The turnaround started in December when she was recruited by SMV Green Solutions to be part of Project Vahini.

Maria (23), an e-rickshaw driver poses for a photograph, in Allahabad, on Friday. (PTI)

The Allahabad based start-up, working with the rickshaw community to provide affordable, clean and safe mobility, has brought on board six women e-rickshaw drivers since its launch in December last year.

The Vahini fleet that operates in areas like Ramapur, Sarai Iniayat, Rajapur and Civil Lines in Allahabad aims at providing safe, affordable and green-last mile transportation.

"The project seeks to allay the perils of women from Indian families, especially in places like Eastern UP and Bihar, who have limited options for mobility," said Naveen Krishna of SMV Green Solutions. The most noticeable achievement of the project, however, has been to successfully facilitate the ownership of the rickshaws for these women.

A 'vahini' can purchase an e-rickshaw, which costs about Rs 1,86,000, with a down payment of Rs 15,000, enabled by SMV.

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