



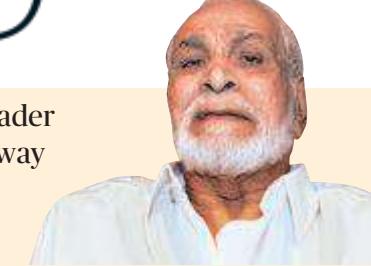
Prakash Raj announces decision to contest Lok Sabha election page 5



Smriti says Sonia, Rahul tried to "frame" Shah in Sohrabuddin case page 10



Kim says he is ready to meet Trump but warns of change of tack page 12



Actor-writer Kader Khan passes away in Canada page 18

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NEARBY



Crowds force Delhi Metro to shut exit gates

NEW DELHI Following heavy footfall in the central Delhi area on Tuesday owing to New Year celebrations, the Delhi police issued an advisory leading to the closure of exit gates of four major metro stations. Police and metro officials said the gates were closed as a crowd control measure.

DEHLI METRO ▶ PAGE 1

10-year-old killed in celebratory firing

NEW DELHI A 10-year-old boy died when a bullet hit him during a celebratory firing in north-east Delhi's New Usmanpur on New Year's Eve, police said on Tuesday. Rihan Malik, a student of Class III of a private school, was attending a birthday party-cum-New Year celebration when the incident happened.

DEHLI METRO ▶ PAGE 1

PRELIMS 2019
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OPPORTUNITIES ▶ PAGE 2
DELHI METRO ▶ 6 PAGES

Modi rules out ordinance on Ram temple for now

We'll take a call after the judicial process is completed, says Prime Minister

ASIAN NEWS INTERNATIONAL
NEW DELHI Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday made it clear that any decision on bringing an ordinance on the construction of a Ram temple in Ayodhya could be considered only after the judicial process got over.

In an interview to ANI, Mr. Modi also suggested that the judicial process was being slowed down because Congress lawyers were creating "obstacles" in the Supreme Court. "We have said in our BJP manifesto that a solution would be found to this issue under the ambit of the Constitution," he said, asked whether the Mandir issue had been put on the back burner.

Recently, there has been a renewed pitch within the party as well as by its sister organisations in the Sangh Parivar for expediting the process of construction.

The Sangh Parivar organisations are unhappy over the delay in resolving the matter and there are demands for an ordinance, similar to the one issued on triple talaq, to facilitate construction. The demand has been made even by the BJP's ally, Shiv Sena.

C We have said in our BJP manifesto that a solution would be found to this issue under the ambit of the Constitution

Nobody can deny that those sitting in the governments in the last 70 years have tried their best to stall a solution

The Congress should not create obstacles and should let the judicial process take its own course

NARENDRA MODI, Prime Minister



Asked whether the government could consider issuing an ordinance, the Prime Minister pointed out that the matter was before the Supreme Court and possibly in the final stages. "Let the judicial process be over. After it is over, whatever will be our responsibility as the government, we are ready to make all efforts," he said.

Hearing on January 4

The matter will be heard by the Supreme Court on January 4. Petitions have been filed in the court for day-to-day hearing.

The Prime Minister was asked why the government could not take the ordinance route for the temple when a similar step was taken to ban triple talaq. Mr. Modi said, "The triple talaq ordinance

A REPORT CARD ▶ PAGE 11

It will be public vs coalition'

The 2019 Lok Sabha poll will be a "public versus coalition" contest, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said, ridiculing the alliance proposed by anti-BJP parties. He dismissed claims by some pundits that the BJP might not get more than 180 seats, saying there were a similar "set of persons" who made such a prediction in 2014. He was sure that the people would vote the BJP to power again. ▶ PAGE 11

'Come back before sunrise'

"Come back before sunrise, irrespective of the success or failure of the mission." This was the message of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to the Army Special Forces' commandos who went across the Line of Control on September 28, 2016, to carry out surgical strikes at terrorist camps in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. The date was changed twice for the safety and security of the troops, he said. ▶ PAGE 11

Seeking a change



Widespread participation: Thousands of women assembled under the aegis of the Left Democratic Front on Tuesday to create a human wall that stretched 620 km from Kasaragod to Thiruvananthapuram. A scene in Ernakulam. • H. VIBHU (REPORT ON PAGE 5)

India, Pak. move towards release of civilian prisoners

Exchange lists of convicts who have completed terms

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

In a peace overture, India has asked Islamabad to take back dozens of Pakistani nationals who have completed jail terms here. The Indian request came in the context of the exchange of the lists of prisoners in both countries on the first day of the new year.

"India has also asked Pakistan to expedite response in the cases of 80 Pakistani prisoners who have completed their sentences and await repatriation for want of nationality confirmation by Pakistan," the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said

External Affairs (MEA) said it was after Kalua attacked the officer with an axe on his head that the mob had set upon him.

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OPPORTUNITIES

WEDNESDAY • JANUARY 2, 2019

HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT • JOBS • TECHNOLOGY

The super six

These are features of the modern workplace that will evolve further in 2019

ZAIRUS MASTER

With cutting-edge technologies like Artificial Intelligence (AI) and machine learning becoming more and more integral to business operations in the IT/ITES sector, the demand for professionals with evolved, tech-led skillsets will only increase in 2019.

Expertise in areas such as data compliance and cybersecurity will also be much sought-after, given how critical data privacy and information security have become in the global business discourse.

I also foresee organisations collaborating with reputed online learning platforms to undertake large-scale upskilling and reskilling of their in-house talent.

This skills-centric approach will benefit both employers and employees; while recruiters will be able to seamlessly address the growing demand for skills within their organisations, professionals can access significantly better career opportunities by upgrading their existing skillsets. With rapid technological advancement paving the way for a high-growth, high-value jobs ecosystem, we can expect continuous learning, unlearning, and relearning to become the motto of the new-age workforce.

The rise of AI

It's official – Artificial Intelligence is here to stay. AI is soon to make its place in the HR industry.

The use of smart systems is already beginning to drastically cut down on the time-to-hire.

The use of algorithms and data-driven insights also helps reduce biased hires by solely focusing on candidates' skills.

Offsite working stations

As organisations look for talent beyond their home-owns, the need to have re-

mote working options is surfacing. A secure technological solution is imperative. The rise of a culturally diverse workforce has also propelled the need for telecommuting options.

Thankfully, the use of Augmented Reality and video-interviewing tools provides seamless solutions to realise remote working options.

Candidate experience

While the number of graduates and qualified individuals is on the rise, it has become equally difficult to find applicants who identify with an organisation's culture and brand values.

According to survey by KPMG, more than one-third of the applicants were 'put-off' by the exhausting recruitment process.

But not for long! Companies are now opting for a more interactive hiring process with personalised recruitment strategies to ensure that their choice of

C The use of AI and predictive analysis can further simplify the hiring process, by picking candidates with skill-sets and achievements that match the given requirement

talent chooses them back, and not their competitor.

Hiring accuracy

2019 will witness the development of quality-based talent pipelines which will further improve hiring accuracy.

The use of AI and predictive analysis can further simplify the hiring process, by picking candidates with skill-sets and achievements that match the given requirement.

Atypical working

Atypical working seems to

be a trend that is set to continue in 2019.

In 2018, we saw a massive rise of atypical working practices. On the employment front, most strikingly, is the number of individuals looking to break free from the regular office '9 to 5' routine and engage in more flexible working patterns that better support their lifestyle. Smaller professional services organisations, such as IT start-ups already embrace this trend.

Redeployment

The integration of people development, productivity increase, and learning is going to rule in 2019 as well; closely linked to this is 'redeployment', which means continuously developing the skillsets of people, so that they have competencies that not only meet the future needs of one's own company, but also of the market as a whole.

(Zairus Master is chief executive officer of shine.com)

The changing contours of the job market

ZAIRUS MASTER

As per a report titled 'The Future of Jobs 2018' by the World Economic Forum (WEF), technologies such as AI and machine learning will displace around 75 million jobs by 2022 – and create around 133 million new jobs within the same time frame. More importantly, these newer jobs will pay more and offer better growth than the low-value ones being eliminated. That being said, blue-collar jobs will continue to grow, as technology has not yet evolved to a level where it can replace the last mile connectivity in delivery jobs.

New-age skillsets

In order to benefit from the lucrative career opportunities that this tech-

led shift will inevitably usher in, the Indian workforce will have to significantly expand its existing capabilities and equip itself with new-age skillsets demanded by the jobs of tomorrow. Employers need to undertake large-scale upskilling and reskilling of their existing talent pools in order to meet the current skills demands of the modern business landscape.

Professionals, on the other hand, will have to equip themselves with newer, in-demand skills on a regular basis. Constant learning, unlearning, and relearning – that will be the only mantra which can ensure success in the digital-led, tech-driven world of tomorrow.

At present, the biggest challenge facing Indian

jobseekers is the disparity between the demand and supply of skills. Most new professionals joining the workforce are armed with generic skills. The industry demand, however, is for specific skillsets and specialisations.

Professionals equipped with advanced communication and cross-functional skills are also much sought-after, but such talent too is in short supply.

This mismatch is adding to the growing problem that jobseekers are facing. The business landscape in India is evolving at a pace that the academia is not able to match.

As a result, graduates miss out on crucial contemporary skills that are vital to the tech-centric jobs of today. Overcoming this massive skills-gap will be no mean feat, but it is not impossible.

The time is right for making those corporate resolutions

Here is a list of things you can do to build your organisation's human resource

LIFFY THOMAS

The modern Gregorian calendar has been a unifying factor for humanity, especially in the area of business. And, when this calendar is refreshed every year, the sense of a new beginning is felt globally. So, given its reach, particularly in business, this is as much a time for corporate resolutions (for both localised and globally-distributed teams) as it is for personal resolutions. Besides, can there be a New Year celebration without gifting?

Build your network

So, corporates will do well now to offer their employees gifts that will help them reinvent themselves through the year.

In the New Year list below, we are spelling out not only what corporates can do for their employees, but also what the employed can do for themselves.

An 'upskilling' gift

Today, it's often a choice between staying relevant and becoming redundant. Staying relevant entails upskilling or reskilling. Upskilling is as much the responsibility of a corporate as it is of the employee concerned. So, as an employer, why don't you gift them an online course from any of the reputed certification providers. A majority of these service providers are offering discounts or running special offers for those enrolling in the New Year.

Udacity is offering a year-end 30% discount on its "nanodegree programs". A brief note about these programmes that has been posted on its website says that they help participants acquire "in-demand skills".

Edureka is offering a discount of 20% for those enrolling for certification training programmes, most of which run for the duration of a month.

Courses in Artificial Intelligence, Cloud, Python, DevOps, BigData and Robotic Process Automation are



ILLUSTRATION: SREEJITH RAVIKUMAR

CIf your company does not have a formal volunteering programme, encourage your employees to volunteer, either individually or as a team

panies on how to carry out a POSH audit. "ePOSH", a techno-legal cloud platform by Itolhelp, an employee assistance programme provider, helps organisation address issues related to sexual harassment at workplace.

Let them volunteer

About 66% of millennials in 2017 believed that companies were more focused on their own agenda rather than on well-being of the larger society. In 2018, this statistic, as per the Deloitte Millennial Survey 2018, grew by another 12%.

Another study by Goodera, a start-up that helps companies manage their CSR programmes, found that only 26% of corporates have a formal volunteering policy. Employee-volunteering can be a great source of employee engagement. Millennials want their business leaders to make a positive impact in society. If your company does not have a formal volunteering programme, encourage employees to volunteer, either individually or as a team. Give them a paid time off from work, to volunteer.

ployees in POSH (Prevention of Sexual Harassment at the Workplace) and to set up an Internal Complaints Committee (ICC). This training should be a continual exercise. Now, the digital world makes continual learning possible.

A number of online tools have come up to help organisations in creating an ethical workplace. These e-learning tools can be used any time of the day by employees, once their employer has signed up for it.

Rainmaker (rainmaker.co.in), for instance, promotes learning through short videos followed by some exercises. Each "short film" is 30 to 45 minutes long with different modules for associates as well as the manager. They also train com-

FROM THE BOOKSHELF

Crash

Lessons from the entry and exit of CEOs

Author: R. Gopalakrishnan

Publisher: Penguin

Great leaders excel not just because of their skills and intelligence but also through emotional competence, including empathy and self-awareness, which enables them to connect with others. The author explains this through anecdotes and situation-based analyses. Crash also offers insights the author has gained while working with a variety of companies.

Author: Kumar Mangalam Birla: 10 Success Secrets

Author: Drimi Chaudhuri

Publisher: Jaico

The biography traces the rise of Kumar Mangalam, starting with the day he took over the reins of the Aditya Birla Group, and weaves an account of how he managed to re-engineer its culture.

GENERAL

AAI CARGO LOGISTICS & ALLIED SERVICES COMPANY LTD. (An AAI Subsidiary), CIN : U74990DL2016G01304348

CORRIGENDUM (Recruitment Advt.)
Reference Advertisement of AAI Cargo Logistics & Allied Services Company Limited published in this newspaper on 05.12.2018 for the post of Executives in Finance, HR and Commercial / Marketing. The last date of receipt of application for Executive (Finance) is extended upto 15.01.2019 and the revised Age and Qualifications w.r.t. engagement of Executive (Finance) is under:

Post	Existing	Revised
Sr. Executive (Finance)	Age as on 01.12.2018: between 35-45 years Experience: 10-15 years post qualification experience	Age : between 30-45 years as on date of Advt. Experience: 05-15 years post qualification experience
Manager (Finance)	Age as on 01.12.2018: between 35-45 years Experience: 10-15 years post qualification experience with at least one year's experience of Public Sector Undertaking would be added advantage	Age : between 30-45 years as on date of Advt. Experience: 05-15 years post qualification experience with at least one year's experience of Public Sector Undertaking would be added advantage

For details, candidates may see the AAICLAS website: www.aaiclas-ecom.org under "CAREER" section.

N-176/2018-19

भारतीय प्रबंध संस्थान कोषिकपोद
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IIM Kozhikode Campus P.O. Kozhikode-673 570, Kerala

(Adv No. R-02/2018)

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3. ASSISTANT (UR-01 & ST-01)
4. TECHNICAL ASSISTANT(OBC-01)
5. JUNIOR ENGINEER (CIVIL) (SC-01)
6. ACCOUNTANT (UR-01)

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QUALITY CONTROLLER	3+	DCE/BE - CIVIL
MECH.ENGR-MACHINERY	3+	DME/BE-MECH/AUTO
ELECTRICAL ENGINEER	3+	DEEE / BE-ELEC
STORE SUPERVISOR	3+	ANY DEGREE
DATA ENTRY- EXCEL / TALLY	3+	ANY DEGREE
FIELD PURCHASER	3+	ANY DEGREE

Walk-in - 06-01-2019

projectoffice.pandc@gmail.com 96000 48300 / 90870 23000

GAIL (India) Limited (A Govt. of India Undertaking)

RECRUITMENT ADVERTISEMENT CORRIGENDUM

Reference Detailed Advertisement No. GAIL/OPEN/MISC/ 6/2018 published in The Hindu dated 12.12.2018 and also in other National dailies thereafter inviting applications from eligible candidates for filling 176 posts in E-1 & E-2 grades in various disciplines.

Clause 2.14 of the advertisement with respect to consideration of apprenticeship training has been modified. Revised detailed advertisement pertaining to aforesaid 176 vacancies is available on "careers" section on GAIL website www.gailonline.com.

The Last date for filling up online application form has been further extended up to 18.01.2019.

Other terms and conditions specified in the advertisement No. GAIL/OPEN/MISC/6/2018 remain unaltered.

Regd. Office GAIL Bhawan, 16, Bhikaji Cama Place, New Delhi - 110 066.

Corporate Identification Number:L40200DL1984G010876, Ph:011-2617250

E-Mail : career@gail.co.in Website : www.gailonline.com Follow us [Facebook](#) [Twitter](#)

National Dairy Development Board Anand 388001, Gujarat

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DELHI Timings	
WEDNESDAY, JAN. 02	
RISE 07:14 SET 17:36	
RISE 03:41 SET 14:54	
THURSDAY, JAN. 03	
RISE 07:14 SET 17:37	
RISE 04:38 SET 15:36	
FRIDAY, JAN. 04	
RISE 07:15 SET 17:38	
RISE 05:33 SET 16:20	

Delhi Weather

max min

Delhi City 22 04

Safdarjung 22 04

Palam 22 06

Delhi Palam Today

21°C Party cloudy sky and pleasant day is likely. Marginal decrease in pollution level is expected.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow

20°C Drop in morning temperatures is expected. A mainly clear sky and pleasant day lies ahead.

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Debt burden went up by ₹1.7 lakh crore during Raje regime: Gehlot

Rajasthan CM demands NDA government waive farm loans across the country

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

JAIPUR

Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot on Tuesday accused the previous Vasundhara Raje government of increasing the debt burden on the State and asked how it increased by over ₹1.7 lakh crore in just five years. The debt burden on the State was ₹1.29 lakh crore when the BJP came to power in 2013, but it increased to ₹3 lakh crore in by 2018, he said.

"Our former [Congress] government had left a debt of ₹1.29 lakh crore [in 2013]. It was a debt of the last 30-40



CM Ashok Gehlot.

years, but it increased to ₹3 lakh crore in the last five years. The debt increased by close to ₹1.75 lakh crore. How did this happen," asked Mr. Gehlot.

The Chief Minister was responding to a question on

the financial challenges before his government after it announced farm loan waiver, which will add a burden of ₹18,000 crore on the State exchequer.

Mr. Gehlot also demanded that the NDA government at the Centre waive farm loans across the country like the Congress had done after coming to power recently in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh.

Farmers' rally
He also said a big rally of farmers will be organised in the State soon to put pres-

sure on the Narendra Modi government to waive loans.

He alleged that the BJP-led NDA government at the Centre had waived bad loans worth ₹3.5 lakh crore of select industrialists when loans of farmers should have been the priority.

"The former UPA government [at the Centre] had waived farmers' loans worth ₹22,000 crore and the Congress [governments] in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh has also announced to waive loans," Mr. Gehlot told reporters here.

Cong. claims victory in panchayat polls

Triumph of democracy: Amarinder

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

CHANDIGARH

Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh on Tuesday hailed the victory of Congress-backed candidates in the recently concluded panchayat polls in the State as a triumph of democracy and a clear vindication of his government's policies.

He also congratulated the people of Punjab for ensuring a largely peaceful poll, in which 80.38% of the total 12,787,395 eligible voters exercised their franchise.

Security forces hailed

Of the 13,276 booths in which polling was held, repeat has been ordered in 14. Mr. Singh said in a statement here, lauding the security forces for maintaining law and order during the elections "despite attempts by the Opposition to trigger trouble".

"Undeterred by the false propaganda unleashed by the Opposition parties, including the Shiromani Akali Dal, against the Congress go-



Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh.

vernment, the voters came out in large numbers without fear to cast their votes in favour of my party's candidates," he said.

"This shows that the disillusionment of the electorate with the SAD and other parties, including the BJP and AAP, is complete," the Chief Minister said, adding the people of Punjab were no longer willing to be misled by "canards" being spread by these parties.

"The victory of Congress-backed candidates is a triumph of democracy and a vindication of my government's policies," he said.

Yogi govt. to set up shelters for stray cattle

Decision taken at Cabinet meeting

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

LUCKNOW

The Uttar Pradesh Cabinet on Tuesday empowered the urban and rural civic bodies to run temporary shelters to take care of stray cattle.

A policy decision to this effect was taken in a Cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, a government spokesperson said.

He said with the machines having taken over from the traditional methods of agriculture, the cattle owners often abandon their livestock, leading to problems like damage to crops, traffic disruptions and road accidents.

The new policy will enable departments concerned to work in coordination with each other and achieve better results, he said.



U.P. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath.

The State's Animal Husbandry Department too will help the civic bodies in their endeavour, he said, adding the government will strive to make these "gaumans ashram asthal" self-sustaining.

Earlier last week, the Chief Minister had directed officials to make immediate arrangements for proper care of stray cows.

Seven killed as truck rams hutment in U.P.

Four children among dead in mishap

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

CHANDAULI

Four minors, aged between 3 to 8, were among seven persons who died when a truck carrying cattle rammed into a hutment in Uttar Pradesh's Chandauli district on New Year's Day, police said.

The incident occurred around 5.30 a.m. at Malda village in Chakia area - around 20 km from the district headquarters of Chandauli town, Superintendent of Police Santosh Kumar Singh said.

Seven persons have died and one girl was injured.

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PUBLIC NOTICE

(1) Notice is hereby given to all that the Andhra Pradesh Power Generation Corporation Limited (APGENCO), has on 28-12-2018, filed before the Andhra Pradesh Electricity Regulatory Commission (APERC), the Tariff application for its power stations for 4th Control Period (FY2019-20 to FY2023-24). This tariff application has been taken on record by the Honble Commission on O.P.No.26 of 2018. (2) Copies of the tariff application are available in the Office of the Chief Engineer (Commercial) APGENCO, Visyad Soukha, Gunadala/Vijayawada, the Chief Engineer DINTPPS/DMV, Venkateswara Krishna(O), the Chief Engineer SRBPH/Grealam Project/Kurnool(O), Interested persons may inspect/ensure the said Tariff application and take note thereof during office hours at the said office at free of charge. This tariff application is also available on www.apgenco.gov.in and the same may also be accessed at www.aperc.gov.in. A copy of the tariff application, can be obtained from the above offices from the date of publication on payment of Rs. 10/- in the form of Demand Draft from any Nationalized/Scheduled bank drawn in favor of "The Pay Officer, APGENCO, Visyad Soukha, Vijayawada" payable at Vijayawada. Also a summary of tariff application of APGENCO stations in English and Telugu can be separately obtained on payment of Rs. 10/- in the form of Demand Draft from any Nationalized/Scheduled bank drawn in favor of "The Pay Officer, APGENCO, Visyad Soukha, Vijayawada" payable at Vijayawada. (3) Views/objections/suggestions if any, on the tariff applications of APGENCO stations for 4th Control Period, together with supporting material may be sent to the Chief Engineer (Commercial), APGENCO, Visyad Soukha, Gunadala, Vijayawada in person or through Registered Post so as to reach on or before 21-01-2019 by 5 PM. A copy of the same must also be filed with the Commission Secretary, APERC at the address mentioned above. The views/objections/suggestions should be duly signed and should carry full name and postal address of the person(s) sending the views/objections/suggestions. If the views/objections/suggestions are filed on behalf of any organization or any category of consumers, it should be so mentioned. If the objector also wants to be heard in person, it may also be specifically mentioned accordingly. The views/objections/suggestion should accompany the following statements as an overt.

Name & full address of the Objector with contact Number	Brief details of View(s)/Object(s)/Suggestion(s)	Whether copy of objection & proof of delivery at APGENCO's office enclosed (Yes/No)	Whether Objector wants to be heard in person (Yes/No)	
4. The tariff schedule of APGENCO power stations for 4th Control Period (FY2019-20 to FY2023-24) as filed is given below:				
SCHEDULE*				
No.	Station	Capacity in MW	Variable cost (Rs/kWh)	Fixed charges (Rs in Crs)
1	Siluru Complex	725	-	227.39 236.82 247.04 258.90 270.91
2	Nagajuna Sagar RCPH	90	-	27.26 28.16 29.12 30.28 31.43
3	Brisailam Right bank	770	-	217.81 223.89 230.62 238.91 247.15
4	PABR	20	-	12.90 13.25 13.64 14.09 14.56
5	Chitradipala	1	-	1.56 1.64 1.72 1.80 1.89
6	Dr.NITTPS	1260	3.67	815.16 851.32 890.21 890.97 940.96
7	RTPP-I	420	3.87	294.95 306.99 319.95 334.34 349.34
8	RTPP-II	420	3.87	284.04 296.68 310.22 324.73 340.25
9	Dr.NITTPS IV	930	3.15	449.60 303.21 311.92 321.41 331.71
10	RTPP III	210	3.87	271.49 267.46 284.79 291.00 297.74
11	NSTP HES	50	-	49.64 52.06 51.44 50.84 50.28
12	RTPP V	600	3.64	1128.44 1101.73 1065.57 1029.69 995.02
13	Dr.NITTPS V	800	2.92	477.73 1432.50 1367.30 1342.88 1298.27
14	Polyvaranam HES	980	-	119.17 812.39 899.25
Interstate Power (AP share)		141.6	-	57.33 61.14 65.20 69.52 74.14
Interest on Pension bonds (Over and above schedule)			-	991.24 1057.06 1127.25 1362.41 1474.21
Prior period O&M expenses due to pay revision for Fy 2018-19			-	223.75
RTPP IV/2018-19			-	353.00
Total		8967.6	-	5880.60 6233.92 6355.16 7094.36 7509.12

5. Honble Commission will conduct Public hearings on said tariff application of APGENCO stations for 4th Control Period (FY2018-20 to FY2023-24) along with ARR and FPT proposals on Retail Supply Business and MYT proposals of DISCOMs and MYT proposals of APTresco. But, Public Hearing on 01-02-2019 at Hyderabad is exclusively meant for tariff application of APGENCO stations. The schedule is as follows: Venue/place of Public Hearing: (1) Conference Hall, ATC Building, Corporate Office, APSPDC, P&T Colony, Seethammadhara, Vizakhapatnam - 530 013. Date of Public Hearing: 07-01-2019 (Monday). (2) C/o SE/O/Opco/Vijayawada, APSPDC, Opp. PWD Ground, Beside CM camp office, Vijayawada. Date of Public Hearing: 08-01-2019 (Tuesday). (3) Conference Hall, Corporate Office, (Myluthi Niyamam), APSPDC, Behind Srinivasa Kalyanmandapam, Sreenivasapuram, Tiruchanoor Road, Tirupati. Date of Public Hearing: 09-01-2019 (Wednesday). (4) C/o APERC, 11-4-680, 4th Floor, Sagarini Bhavan, Red Hills, Hyderabad - 500 004. Date of Public Hearing: 18-01-2019 (Friday). (5) C/o APERC, 11-4-680, 4th Floor, Sagarini Bhavan, Red Hills, Hyderabad - 500 004. Date of Public Hearing: 25-01-2019 (Friday). (6) C/o APERC, 11-4-680, 4th Floor, Sagarini Bhavan, Red Hills, Hyderabad - 500 004. Date of Public Hearing: 01-02-2019 (Friday). (7) Timing for public hearings - 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM and from 2:00 PM to till all of the interested persons / associations / stakeholders / objectors who want to be heard in person or through authorized representatives may appear before the Honble Commission on the above mentioned dates and submit their views / objections / suggestions in respect of the said Tariff application submitted by APGENCO for its power stations for 4th Control Period (FY2018-20 to FY2023-24). The views / objections/suggestions submitted to the Honble Commission up to 5PM on 01-02-2019 beyond the stipulated date 21-01-2019, the date of the last public hearing exclusively for tariff application of APGENCO, will also be taken into consideration while determining tariff of APGENCO stations for 4th Control Period. 6. The Honble Commission will also conduct the 13th Joint Meeting of State Advisory Committee (SAC) and 8th State Coordination Forum on 10-01-2019 (Thursday) at Conference Hall, Corporate Office, APSPDC, Tirupati on tariff application of APGENCO stations along with ARR and FPT proposals on Retail Supply Business and MYT proposals of DISCOMs and MYT proposals of APTresco for 4th Control Period.

Date: 01-01-2019
Place:Vijayawada

MANAGING DIRECTOR
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IN BRIEF



Kidnapped boy back with parents in Tirupati

TIRUPATI
Sixteen-month-old Veeresh, who was kidnapped from Tirumala and taken to Nanded in Maharashtra, was restored to his parents by Superintendent of Police (Tirupati Urban) K.K.N. Anburajan on Tuesday. The abductor, 43-year-old I. Vishwanar Goud, admitted to having abducted the boy with the intention of adopting him, frustrated at not getting married.

Kerala Cabinet panel to resolve Church dispute

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM
A Kerala Cabinet committee, headed by Industries Minister E.P. Jayarajan, has been constituted for resolving the difference of opinion between the Orthodox and Jacobite factions in the Malankara Church, an official release said here on Tuesday. There is an ongoing conflict between the groups over the administration of a few parishes in the State.

Acting Chief Justice takes oath in A.P.

STAFF REPORTER
VIJAYAWADA

A new chapter began in the history of sunrise State Andhra Pradesh with the inauguration of the temporary campus for the High Court at the CM's camp office here on Tuesday. Justice Chagari Praveen Kumar, senior-most Judge of the High Court of Andhra Pradesh, took charge as the acting Chief Justice.

The court had been established here consequent to the bifurcation of the High

Lok Sabha poll: Deve Gowda hints at seeking 10 or 11 seats

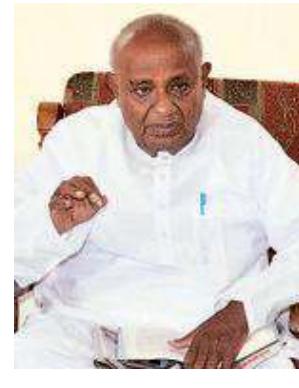
Janata Dal (Secular) chief says seat-sharing may be finalised by January-end

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Congress-Janata Dal (Secular) seat-sharing for the Lok Sabha polls may be finalised as early as January-end, with former Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda, who is also the JD(S) chief, hinting that his party wants 10 or 11 seats out of the 28 in Karnataka, or roughly one-third of the Lok Sabha seats.

Speaking at a press conference in New Delhi, he said at the time of government formation in Karnataka in the face of a hung Assembly, the Congress had promised unconditional support.

"Since then they have got two-third of the portfolios, which is different from when (Chief Minister) H.D. Kumaraswamy was in government with the BJP, which had 79 MLAs (with the Janata Dal-Secular – at 58 seats) but the ministerial berths were almost equal. But since this one-third formula is being

H.D. DEVE GOWDA
JD (S) supremo

adopted, then it should be taken forward," Mr. Gowda argued.

His statement is significant in that sources had been indicating that the Congress was willing to offer only 6 or 7 seats to the JD(S) and Mr. Gowda's party was asking for more.

Attacks Modi

He also said that he hoped that the arrangement would be finalised by the end of January.

Cong. had promised unconditional support during govt. formation. Since then they have got two-third of the portfolios, which is different from when H. D. Kumaraswamy was in government with the BJP.

callousness," Mr. Gowda said.

Stating that no government had survived by neglecting farmers, Mr. Gowda said: "If political parties neglect the farming community, farmers will teach them a lesson."

₹350 cr. paid to farmers'

Hitting back at Mr. Modi on his comment on poor implementation of Karnataka's farm loan waiver, Mr. Gowda said: "He made a sarcastic remark, making fun of the Karnataka government. Not less than 60,000 farmers have benefited so far. About ₹350 crore has already been paid to them electronically into their bank accounts."

All eligible farmers would be benefited under the scheme, he said, and added that the JD(S)-Congress coalition government was implementing the loan waiver scheme in a "transparent" manner.

A.P. temple says 'no' to Western outfits

To preserve traditions of Hindu religion: Executive Officer

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA

Following in the footsteps of the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams, the governing board of the Kanaka Durga temple atop Indrakeeladri imposed a strict dress code for devotees from January 1.

Executive Officer Koteswaramma said the move was aimed at preserving the culture and traditions of Hindu religion.

Members of the Indian women's cricket team visited the temple recently in western dress and sparked a

controversy. Many people felt it went against traditions.

For those unaware of the rule, a special counter selling 'amma' saris at a nominal price of ₹100 has been set up.

"All they need to do is drape the sari over their clothes and go for darshan," Ms. Koteswaramma said.

The authorities also arranged a changing room adjacent to the sari counter.

Women are allowed to wear saris and Punjabi suits while men have to wear only pant and shirt, kurta-pyjama, lungi or a traditional dhoti.

Jeans, short skirts, trousers or bermudas are not allowed.

Going beyond the call of duty

K S Kandasamy IAS is slowly reshaping the society while disrespecting a woman on the street isn't right!" he adds.

"A person who has come to serve the people must have a third eye, notice the problem areas proactively and provide solutions accordingly!" begins K S Kandasamy IAS, the District Collector of Tiruvannamalai. Having served 19



years in different governmental departments, he is a true change-maker.

He is known for his socially oriented endeavours, such as when he rescued 50 sexually abused girls from a shelter home, arranged education expenses for an aspiring dentist, caught a criminal who was performing illegal abortions and stopped a child marriage.

"I take part in school and college activities that break gender norms where men cook and clean and women watch sports and ride bikes. This conditioning needs to start very young. Getting bless-

I started prioritizing Grievance Day and respecting the per-

itioners, so did my team. One person's change can indeed start a movement."

This is a public nomination profile

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Prakash Raj to contest LS election

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU

Actor and activist Prakash Raj has announced his decision to enter electoral politics, saying that he would contest the 2019 Lok Sabha election as an Independent candidate and that he would announce his constituency subsequently.

Taking to Twitter just after midnight, he wrote: "HAPPY NEW YEAR TO EVERYONE... a new beginning... more responsibility... with UR support I will be contesting in the coming parliament elections as an INDEPENDENT CANDIDATE. Details of the constituency soon. Ab ki Baar Janatha ki SARKAR #citizensvoice #justasking in parliament too".

May choose Telangana
It is being speculated that he might choose Telangana rather than Karnataka.

In the past, he had supported the Telangana Rashtra Samithi of K. Chandrasekhar Rao.



Political counter: Women forming a wall at Kulappulli, near Palakkad, on Tuesday. ■ K. MUSTAFAH

Women line up for gender equality

Form wall across 620-km stretch

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Lakhs of women assembled under the aegis of the Left Democratic Front (LDF) on Tuesday to create an almost unbroken human wall that stretched for 620 km from Kasaragod in north Kerala to Thiruvananthapuram in the south.

They stood shoulder to shoulder for 15 minutes after 4 p.m. to form a human wall with few apparent cracks in the line.

The programme ended with a joint pledge to harness the power of enlightenment principles to insulate society against revanchist forces that sought to push Kerala back to the dark ages of casteism and discriminatory religious practices.

NSS general secretary G. Sukumaran Nair, said the wall would transform Kerala into a "devil's own" country riven by social strife. The NSS had opposed the wall.

SNP general secretary Vellappally Natesan said the wall was a riposte to those who sought to turn Kerala into a "madhouse" of caste-based discrimination.

In Kasaragod district, police opened fire in the air to disperse a violent crowd, allegedly of Sangh Parivar workers, who hurled stones at police personnel at Chettukundu under the Bekal police station limits.

Telangana CJ, judges sworn in

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD

Four years and seven months after it was carved out as a separate State, Telangana got a High Court for itself with the swearing-in of its first Chief Justice Thottathil B. Radhakrishnan and 12 other judges here on Tuesday. The CJ was sworn in by Governor E.S.L. Narasimhan at the Raj Bhavan in the presence of Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao.

Justice Ramana said the High Court had been established after a long time in Vijayawada. The problems of petitioners would be reduced as a result of the move. More than the establishment of the High Court, it was necessary to protect the values it stood for.

The sari store on the Kankadurga temple premises. ■ CH. VIJAYA BHASKAR

The sari store on the Kankadurga temple premises. ■ CH. VIJAYA BHASKAR

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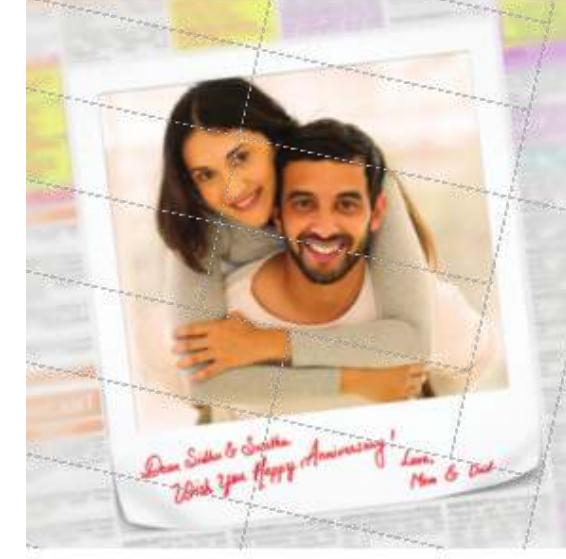


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IN BRIEF



Rawat lays foundation stone of govt. hospital

DEHRADUN
Uttarakhand Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat on Tuesday laid the foundation stone of a 136-bed government hospital here, an official statement said. PTI

CRPF Asst. Commandant dies in Khunti district

RANCHI
An Assistant Commandant of the CRPF has died in Khunti district, police said on Tuesday. "CRPF Assistant Commandant J. Jilani died of unknown reasons on Monday. We have sent the body for post-mortem," Deputy IGP A.V. Homkar said. PTI

Four killed in 4-vehicle collision in Jaisalmer

JAIPUR
Four persons were killed and six others injured in a four-vehicle collision in Rajasthan's Jaisalmer district, police said on Tuesday. The victims have been identified as Rahul Sharma, Rakesh Binawara, Umesh Binawara and Sharukh Ali. PTI

Body of Dalit woman found near her house

BALLIA
The body of a 34-year-old Dalit woman, with her throat slit, was found near her home in Kharuan village on Tuesday morning, police said. The deceased has been identified as Kusum Kali Kaushal, SP Shriparna Ganguly said. PTI

Man arrested for marrying minor

RISHIKESH
A 21-year-old man was arrested for allegedly eloping with a minor girl and marrying her on the basis of forged documents. The man produced a fake certificate of the girl's age and married her on Monday, Rishikesh Kotwali police station in-charge Ritesh Shah said. PTI

TMC projects Mamata as PM candidate

On 21st foundation day, party resolves to play vital role in New Delhi in a 'year of change'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
KOLKATA

The ruling Trinamool Congress in West Bengal turned 21 on Tuesday and used the occasion to project party chief and Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee as a possible prime ministerial candidate of any grand Opposition alliance for the upcoming Lok Sabha polls.

The party also vowed to work to ensure a secular and progressive India under the leadership of 63-year-old Ms. Banerjee.

Describing 2019 as the "year of change," senior TMC MP Abhishek Banerjee said the party is "standing at a historic juncture where it

"Our party has turned 21 today. The number 21 as-



West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee • FILE PHOTO PTI

wants to play a vital role in New Delhi in favour of the working class".

Good days

Mr. Banerjee, the nephew of the TMC chief, said the year will bring good days (*ache din*) in the country.

"The year of 2019 is a year of change and struggle. We should fight hard in order to ensure that we are able to gift the people of this country a secular and progressive India in New Delhi under the leadership of Mamata Banerjee," he said in a video message on the TMC's 21st Foundation Day.

TMC was founded on January 1, 1998, by Mamata Banerjee, who was herself baptised into politics by the Congress. At present, the TMC has 34 of the 42 Lok Sabha seats from West Bengal.

Sabha seats from West Bengal.

Ms. Banerjee congratulated party workers on the occasion.

"The journey which began on January 1, 1998, has been full of struggles, but we have been steadfast in our re-

solve to fight for the people #Trinamool21 ...We are thankful to Maa-Mati-Mamun for their constant support. And the workers who work hard 365 days a year for the people. A big salute to you," she said.

Anti-BJP front

The TMC, which has been eyeing a wider political space for the last few years,

has been at the forefront of forming an anti-BJP Opposition alliance and convened a rally of Opposition parties in Kolkata on January 19.

Ms. Banerjee has been touring the country and has met leaders of several parties in a bid to forge opposition unity to take on the BJP.

The TMC observed the day in the State in every block and subdivision and also at the panchayat level. The party flag was hoisted at the Trinamool Bhavan by party general secretary Subrata Bakshi.

Blood donation camps, blanket distribution and cultural events were also held across the State.

WEATHER WATCH

RAINFALL, TEMPERATURE & AIR QUALITY IN SELECT METROS YESTERDAY



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

Forecast for Wednesday: Cold wave conditions likely at isolated pockets over Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, east Madhya Pradesh, Vidarbha, central Maharashtra and Telangana. Dense fog likely at many/isolated places over Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh, Delhi, west Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	—	27.4...	11.0	Kozhikode	—	33.4...	22.8
Ahmedabad	—	30.6...	9.4	Kurnool	—	31.8...	14.0
Aizawl	—	—	—	Lucknow	—	22.7...	5.3
Allahabad	—	24.2...	5.8	Madurai	—	31.0...	21.0
Bengaluru	—	28.1...	14.0	Mangaluru	—	35.4...	19.4
Bhopal	—	28.4...	7.0	Mumbai	—	32.7...	14.8
Bhubaneswar	—	27.9...	9.5	Mysuru	—	28.2...	14.4
Chandigarh	—	20.8...	4.2	New Delhi	—	23.0...	4.0
Chennai	—	28.1...	19.7	Patna	—	22.6...	7.7
Coimbatore	—	30.0...	18.8	Port Blair	—	29.7...	23.2
Dehradun	—	21.5...	5.0	Puducherry	—	28.5...	16.0
Gangtok	—	13.8...	3.9	Pune	—	30.1...	7.6
Goa	—	33.3...	19.0	Raipur	—	27.2...	9.9
Guwahati	—	25.1...	7.5	Ranchi	—	21.3...	7.4
Hubballi	—	28.0...	14.0	Shillong	—	16.0...	5.8
Hyderabad	—	28.8...	9.3	Shimla	—	12.3...	5.2
Imphal	—	21.8...	0.2	Srinagar	—	5.2...	-4.2
Jaipur	—	24.5...	6.1	Tiravandrum	—	33.2...	22.8
Kochi	—	32.0...	23.2	Tiruchi	—	30.1...	20.0
Kohima	—	15.2...	3.6	Vijayawada	—	28.5...	13.6
Kolkata	—	24.8...	12.5	Visakhapatnam	—	27.0...	16.0

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

Yesterday

CITIES	SO ₂	NO _x	CO	PM _{2.5}	PM ₁₀	CODE
Ahmedabad	94	129	24	.242	—	■
Bengaluru	.5	42	.80	.143	.150	■
Chennai	26	.15	.58	.257	—	■
Delhi	30	113	.87	.446	.431	■
Hyderabad	.7	106	.47	.151	.146	■
Kolkata	21	124	.12	.399	.318	■
Lucknow	49	.92	.15	.428	—	■
Mumbai	26	.84	.92	.166	.191	■
Pune	—	—	—	161	—	■
Vishakhapatnam	39	130	.36	.250	.255	■

In observation made at 4.00 AM. Pollution index score of 4.00 or less is recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 454 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Vijayawada recorded a healthy AQI score of 77

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

SO₂: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

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

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

PM_{2.5} & PM₁₀: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease.

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Name of Work-	1. Renovation of Old & New Sales Tax Bldg. @ Mazgaon, Mumbai. (Renovation of Flooring, False Ceiling & Modular furniture, Reconstruction of Compound Wall & Fire retarding Paint) Rs, 3,07,57,685/- 2. Structural Strengthening to Left Wing and Right Wing of Sawali Building at Worli, Mumbai. Rs.3,88,17,158/-
Tender Issue Date	Date.01/01/2019 at 10.30 hrs to 25/01/2019 at 15.00 hrs
Pri-Bid Meeting	Date. 16/01/2019 at 15.00 Hrs at (Office of The Chief Engineer, Mumbai P.W. Region,Mumbai, Bandhkaam Bhawan,4 th floor, Fort, Mumbai.)
Opening Date (If possible)	Date.28/01/2019 at 15.00 hrs at (Office of the Superintending Engineer, Mumbai (P.W.) Circle,5th Floor Bandhkaam Bhawan, Fort ,Mumbai - 400 001)

All detail information is available on following websites.

Visit Web Site for details:

1. <http://mahapwd.com>

2. <http://mahatenders.gov.in>

No. /EE/CMD/Tender/9475

Date:- 20/12/2018

DGIPR/2018/2019/5379

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Short Tender e- Procurement

IN BRIEF

**₹1.49 crore grant for Pondicherry varsity**

PUDUCHERRY
The Department of Biochemistry & Molecular Biology of the School of Life Sciences, Pondicherry University has been sanctioned ₹1.49 crore as grant by the Department of Science and Technology. The DST-FIST support is given to internationally competitive institutions into teaching and research.

First duty towards my caste: Rajasthan minister

ALWAR
Rajasthan Minister Mamta Bhupesh has landed in a row by saying her 'first duty will be to work for development of people of my caste and then towards the society.' The Women and Child Development Minister was addressing a rally in Alwar. ANI

Controversial diktat for students in Gujarat

AHMEDABAD
The BJP government in Gujarat has asked schools to ensure that students respond with 'Jai Hind' or 'Jai Bharat' during roll call instead of the customary 'Yes Sir', which it feels will instill a 'feeling of patriotism'. The move has drawn flak from the Opposition, which said the government should work towards improving the 'quality of education.' PTI

'India to welcome 69,944 babies on New Year's day

NEW DELHI
India would welcome as many as 69,944 babies on New Year's Day, the highest in the world, the UNICEF said on Tuesday. India would be followed by China which would welcome 44,940 babies, the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund said in a report. In Nigeria, 25,685 babies will be born, it added. PTI

Railway Ministry seeks action against officer

NEW DELHI
The Railway Ministry has decided to take disciplinary action against Union Minister Jitendra Singh's Officer on Special Duty for casting aspersions against Minister Piyush Goyal in an article. The Railway Board has asked the Department of Personnel and Training for the immediate repatriation of Sanjiv Kumar, a 2005 batch officer of the Indian Railway Personnel Service, for 'misconduct'. PTI

Global advertising meet in Kochi on February 20-22

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

CHENNAI
The International Advertising Association (IAA) will host the IAA World Congress at Kochi from February 20-22. The event, covering marketing, advertising and media, would be held at the Grand Hyatt Lulu International Convention Centre in that city.

Pradeep Guha, chairman, steering committee, IAA World Congress, said: "This is being planned as the most significant event with talks by 35 speakers on marketing, advertising, communications, media and related technology areas across the globe. We have also planned three evenings of great entertainment. And we have special rates for academics and students so that they learn from this great line-up of speakers."

Srinivasan Swamy, chairman and world president, IAA, said: "The world congress is held every alternate year. We are expecting about 2,000 delegates from India and around the world to attend."

Reliance Industries Ltd. CMD Mukesh Ambani, Unilever CEO Paul Polman, Qualcomm CEO Steven Mollenkopf, non-executive Chairman of Infosys and former Chairman of UIDAI Nandan Nilekani, CEO of Softbank Investment Advisors Rajeev Misra and Sri Sri

Tirtha, were available for students to address the summit. Bollywood legend Amitabh Bachchan will also speak, as will social influencer Deepika Padukone.

Some of the other speakers include tennis greats Andre Agassi, Vijay Amritraj, Alibaba Group chief marketing officer Chris Tung, Facebook vice-president of global marketing solutions Carolyn Everson. Co-founder of Skype Jonas Kjellberg, president and chief executive officer of BBDO Worldwide Andrew Robertson and chief creative officer of Ogilvy Worldwide Piyush Pandey are expected to participate. For details, log on to www.iaaworldcongress.org

NHRC seeks report on student suicides in Navodaya Vidyalayas

'Half of the 49 students belonged to tribal communities'

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) on Tuesday served notice on the Ministry for Human Resource Development on the reported suicides of 49 students of the residential Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas (JNVs) over five years.

Taking *suo motu* cognizance of a media report that 49 students had committed

7 killed, 150 injured during New Year's Eve celebrations in Chennai

Police made elaborate arrangements; over 500 cases booked for traffic violations

R. SIVARAMAN
CHENNAI

Despite restrictions placed by the city police, seven persons were killed and more than 150 persons reportedly injured during New Year's Eve celebrations.

Huge crowds at the Marina and Elliot's beach welcomed the New Year, exchanging high-decibel greetings and bursting crackers. The police had made elaborate arrangements, including diversions, to regulate traffic and ensure smooth movement of public vehicles, but the spillover of people to the streets led to jams across the city.

Personnel deployed

Security was beefed up from 8 p.m. on Monday in the city, with the deployment of over



Pedestrians cross a jam-packed Kamarajar Salai near Marina on New Year's Eve. ■ B. JOTHI RAMALINGAM ■ B. JOTHI RAMALINGAM

15,000 police personnel. Vehicle check points were set up at 368 places in the ci-

ting the rules.

But restrictions imposed by the police were not effective to prevent the revellers from indulging in excesses on the pretext of celebrations. Streets had unruly bikers zooming and wheeling unchecked.

S. Sriram, a resident of

Nanganallur, said, "It was past 11 p.m., and people on two-wheelers created a ruckus on the road, relentlessly sounding the horns and boisterously wishing everybody a happy New Year."

"Though there were barricades along the road, bikers drove dangerously between the barricades," said Rama-lakshmi, a resident of Velachery.

Following celebrations

near the Marina beach at midnight, Kamarajar road and adjacent areas were jam-packed with vehicles for nearly two hours.

"Several youths were seen on motorcycles, triple-riding without helmets and were warned by the policemen on duty. In smaller lanes of Tri-

plicane, long lines of vehicles were moving slowly,"

said Ramachandran, a resident of Triplicane.

Cases booked

According to the traffic police, as many as 263 cases were booked for drunk driving and over 233 cases booked for triple-riding on two-wheelers. Thirty-three cases were booked against persons who indulged in rash driving on New Year's Eve.

On New Year's day in 2017,

10 fatal accidents and 31 non-fatal accidents were reported. On New Year's day in 2018, eight fatal accidents and 16 non-fatal accidents were reported.

On the first day of 2019, the traffic police said 18 accidents were reported; of them, six were fatal accidents and 12 were non-fatal.



Mark Scialla

On Sunday, Mr. Scialla, who has contributed to *The Guardian* and *Al Jazeera English*, among other news outlets, was grilled by the police for several hours after he was found visiting villages around the Sterlite plant, where heavy security has been deployed following the anti-Sterlite agitation.

His original plan was to stay in Thoothukudi till January 3, while his visa is valid until January 21.

U.S. scribe covering Sterlite issue deported

Scialla was given 48 hours to leave

STAFF REPORTER

THOOTUKUDI

Mark Scialla, a U.S.-based freelance journalist, who was covering the Sterlite issue in Thoothukudi after coming to India on a tourist visa, was deported on Tuesday.

Superintendent of Police Murali Rambha said he issued a 'Leave India Notice' in his capacity as the Foreigner Registration Officer of the district.

Leaves for Madurai

According to police, the foreigner left for Madurai by road around 7 p.m. He would be taking a flight via Hyderabad and Doha to the U.S.

Mr. Scialla was given 48 hours to leave the country. He checked out of the hotel situated on the V.E. Road, which was under surveillance for the last two days.

Water being pumped out of Meghalaya mine

Dewatering to continue today

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI

Rescue personnel on Tuesday began pumping out water from the flooded rat-hole coal mine in Meghalaya's East Jaintia Hills district, where many miners are feared dead after remaining trapped since December 13.

The day saw the district authorities release an official list of 15 trapped miners, though one of the five who survived claimed that there were 17 inside the 350 ft deep mine.

R. Susngi, spokesperson for the district administration, said the Odisha Fire Service personnel pumped out water from an old shaft near the main one that the trapped miners had used to descend.

"After three hours of pumping, the water level in the old shaft was found to have gone down by up to six inches," he said.

The Odisha Fire Service will continue dewatering on Wednesday.

The multiple rescue agencies expect to determine the water level after eight hours of pumping.

Midway through Tues-



Navy personnel setting up equipment at the site in Ksan, Meghalaya. ■ REUTERS

day's operation, the East Jaintia Hills district authorities released the names of 15 trapped miners.

Officials said they took time to verify the number, earlier believed to be 13.

Names identified

They are Omor Ali, Mezamur Islam, Mominul Islam, Shirapat Ali, Moizid S.K., Raizul Islam, Abdul Kalam (all from West Garo Hills of Meghalaya), Shalabas Dikhar, Long Dikhar, Nilam Dikhar (all from East Jaintia Hills), Amir Hussain, Monirul Islam, Chaher Islam, Md. Samsul Haque, and Assh Bahadur Limbu (all from Assam).

IN MEMORIAM**K.D. PARAKH, M.A. B.Sc.,**

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Died : 02.01.2006

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No.KWB/CE(B)/MBBR-KGF/2469/2018-19 Date: 31.12.2018

CORRIGENDUM

(Through Electronic Procurement portal only)

The Revised calendar of events for following short term tender notification which was published in Daily Newspapers "Hindu" English Daily, South India Edition and in "Vijaya Karnataka" Kannada Edition on 13.12.2018 is as follows:

1) Indent No. KUWSDB/2018-19/WS/WORK_INDENT2321, Date: 10.12.2018.

Name of Work: Design, Construction, Supply, Installation, Testing and successful commissioning of Civil, Mechanical, Electrical and Instrumentation works of 5.00 MLD Capacity Sewage Treatment Plant of Moving Bed Bio-reactor (MBBR) Technology with allied works in Robertsopeet city including 5 years operation and maintenance of the components built under this contract under Providing UGD scheme to Robertsopeet city under AMPUT.

REVISED CALENDAR OF EVENTS:

(1) Last date and time for submission / uploading of the tender in the e-procurement portal. 10.01.2019 upto 17.30 Hours. (2) Date & Time of Opening of Technical Bid : 14.01.2019 after 11.30 Hours. (3) Date and time for Opening of Financial bids : 18.01.2019 after 11.30 Hours. For further details, the Office of the Chief Engineer, KUWS & D Board, Bengaluru, may please be contacted or log on to website https://proc.karnataka.gov.in or e-Procurement helpdesk 080-22371090, 22373788, e-mail support: hphelpdesk.blr@intarvo.com

Sd/- Chief Engineer (B),
KUWS&D Board, Bengaluru

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NIT Campus Post, Calicut, Kerala - 673601

Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, Government of India

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- Industrial Automation System Design
- Cloud Computing

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- Artificial Intelligence
- Information System Security – Level I
- PLC/SCADA/DCS Engineer
- VLSI Physical Engineer

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Signs of a turnaround

Regulatory vigil should not ease after the half-yearly decline in banks' gross NPA ratio

The fog of bad loans shrouding the banking sector appears to be lifting after a long period of sustained stress. The Reserve Bank of India's Financial Stability Report reveals the first half-yearly decline in the ratio of gross non-performing assets (GNPA) to advances since September 2015. The ratio across all scheduled commercial banks has eased to 10.8% as of end-September 2018, from 11.5% in March, with both public sector and private sector lenders posting drops in the key indicator of bad loans. A stress test for credit risk at banks that models varying levels of macro-economic performance shows that for the baseline assumption, the GNPA ratio would narrow to 10.3% by March 2019. This prompted RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das to prognosticate that the sector "appears to be on course to recovery". Still, state-owned banks continue to have higher levels of bad loans than their private sector peers and are projected to show slower improvements over the second half of the fiscal. The GNPA ratio for public sector banks (PSBs) is poised to only inch lower to 14.6% by March, from 14.8% in September. One reason is that PSBs have a disproportionately higher share of bad loans from among large borrowers, who accounted for almost 55% of loans advanced by all banks as of September. The GNPA ratio for this category at PSBs was 21.6%, compared with just 7% at private banks.

Interestingly, the RBI's Prompt Corrective Action (PCA) framework, which attracted criticism including from a government appointee on the central bank's board, has significantly helped lower contagion risk to the banking system. A contagion analysis that assumes there would be no sovereign guarantee provided for the 11 PSBs placed under the PCA curbs, in the event of a simultaneous failure, projects that solvency losses due to such failure have more than halved over the four quarters ended September: to ₹34,200 crore (3.1% of total Tier-1 capital) from ₹73,500 crore (6.8% of total Tier-1 capital). Data on banking frauds are also a cause for concern. Close to 95% of the frauds reported in the six months ended September were credit-related, with PSBs again bearing the brunt of *mala fide* intent on the part of borrowers. The RBI's report has justifiably spotlighted the urgent need to tighten the oversight framework for financial conglomerates in the wake of the IL&FS meltdown, which continues to ripple across the financial system, including at mutual funds and non-banking financial companies. As Mr. Das said in his foreword, "...the recent developments in NBFCs have underscored the need for greater prudence in risk-taking." Regulators and policymakers need to work together to insulate the economy from the risks of similar fiascos.

A Democratic hope?

Elizabeth Warren makes the first move towards a U.S. presidential bid

Elizabeth Warren, Democratic Senator of Massachusetts, has announced her likely candidacy for the 2020 U.S. presidential race. In her statement she put racial and gender-based inequality front and centre in her campaign agenda, as much as income inequality faced by the middle class. For these ills of the American economy, she blamed the excesses of under-regulated Wall Street corporations and billionaires with the money muscle to bend political rules. Although Ms. Warren, who won a second six-year Senate term in November, had declined to enter the 2016 general election and challenge Hillary Clinton in the Democratic primary, she made a name for herself as a top-tier Democrat by taking on President Donald Trump, describing him as a "thin-skinned racist bully". However, she attracted criticism for an unnecessary controversy over taking a DNA test to establish her Native American heritage, after Mr. Trump used racist epithets to provoke and smear her ethnic antecedents. Notwithstanding that blip, the former Harvard law professor, who hails from a blue-collar background in Oklahoma, has repeatedly underscored her credentials as a champion of multiracial populism. Over the past year she has sharpened her attack on Mr. Trump's politics, arguing that he deflects attention from the impact of his divisive policies on ordinary American families and instead blames "other working people, people who are black, or brown, people born somewhere else."

Despite the considerable achievements of Ms. Warren, who had not held public office before 2013, the obstacles ahead for her proposed presidential run are formidable. First, the general expectation is that the field for the Democratic nomination will widen considerably over through 2019, given that more than three dozen Democratic candidates-in-the-making are said to be considering joining the race, several of them for the first time. Some, such as Kamala Harris of California or Cory Booker of New Jersey, could hold stronger appeal with millennial voters and people of colour. Second, it is hard to predict how Ms. Warren will fare against self-proclaimed Democratic socialist candidate Bernie Sanders, or Senator Sherrod Brown of Ohio, both economic populists who could hypothetically cut into her share of voters of a similar ideological persuasion. Finally, the risk of pursuing a populist theme from the centre-left of the political spectrum is that she would be an easy target for Mr. Trump and conservatives, who are likely to deride her as an out-of-touch liberal academic and a threat to free enterprise. Nevertheless, as a candidate for the nation's highest office, Ms. Warren's ideological moorings are set. It is not inconceivable that, given how bitterly polarised the electorate is today, Ms. Warren's bold liberalism could offer hope to millions of voters dismayed at what Mr. Trump has done to their nation.

The bilateral transformation

India and Bangladesh must seize the opportunity to further enhance connectivity and trade ties



PINAK RANJAN CHAKRAVARTY

The spectacular victory of the Grand Alliance led by the Awami League (AL), headed by incumbent Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, in Bangladesh's 11th general election, has delighted her supporters. This election is also a milestone for the coming of age of a new generation which is avowedly aspirational and is tired of the old political discourse that had deeply divided politics in Bangladesh. They have voted for economic progress and a secular polity.

The margin of victory has shocked and dismayed the Opposition parties that had coalesced into the National Unity Front (NUF), a coalition at whose core is the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), the AL's bitter political rival. Former AL stalwart and famous jurist Kamal Hossain provided the leadership glue for the Opposition coalition. Nominally led by its Chairperson, former Prime Minister Khaleda Zia, currently in jail for corruption, the BNP's guiding force is U.K.-based acting-Chairman Tarique Rahman, her controversial son who fled from the country in 2008 and lives in exile. He is convicted of money laundering and conspiracy to murder.

Brute majority
The AL has obtained a brute majority of 288 seats in a unicameral Parliament which has 300 directly-elected seats and 50 seats reserved for women. The latter are elected by the electoral college of directly-elected MPs, with proportional representation to parties elected to the Parliament.

Mr. Hossain's monumental failure to deliver has left him and oth-

er Opposition leaders hurling allegations that the elections were "farcical" and asking that new elections be held under a non-partisan caretaker administration. The NUF managed to win just seven seats. The Election Commission, while taking note of some electoral malpractices and promising investigation, has declared the results valid and rejected the demand for new elections.

The margin of victory has lent some traction to persistent allegations of electoral malpractices, bouding of the Opposition, large-scale arrests of Opposition workers and intimidation of voters. Election-related violence on polling day claimed 17 lives. Several Opposition candidates withdrew from the fray, citing violent obstruction by AL workers, kidnapping of their election agents and voters being obstructed from casting their votes. Yet international observers have concluded that the elections were largely peaceful, fair and credible.

Though dogged by two consecutive controversial elections and increasing perceptions of authoritarian behaviour, Ms. Hasina is set for another five-year term in office. She has an enviable record of delivering record economic growth. Bangladesh's GDP grew at a rate of 7.6% in the last quarter, making it one of the fastest growing economies in the world.

A bipartisan consensus

During the last decade of Ms. Hasina's tenure as Prime Minister, high-level Bangladesh-India engagement has intensified. There is an irrevocable and irreversible bipartisan political consensus in India for upgrading relations across a comprehensive interface of ties. India's "neighbourhood policy" has focussed on Bangladesh, which has emerged as a key interlocutor in India's "Act East Policy" and sub-regional groupings like BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and



AFP

Economic Cooperation) and the BBIN (Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal) Initiative. In Bangladesh too, a growing domestic political consensus, overriding fractious politics, has emerged in favour of close ties with India. Denial of support to Indian insurgent groups, with insurgent leaders handed over to India, has progressively built trust and confidence between the two countries. Bangladesh is India's largest trading partner in South Asia with an annual turnover of around \$9 billion plus an estimated informal trade of around \$8.9 billion, across the 4,100-km-long porous border. Cooperation in connectivity, energy, security and intelligence matters has intensified. The Padma multipurpose bridge and the Akhaura-Agartala rail link will dramatically change connectivity within Bangladesh and with India. Waterways are also being revised to reduce the cost of trade.

Improvement in bilateral ties has led to newer areas of cooperation such as cyberspace. Bangladesh has provided cyber connectivity between the international gateway at Cox's Bazar to Agartala for faster Internet connectivity in India's northeastern States. India has also become a partner in Bangladesh's nuclear power programme, with the beginning of construction at the Rooppur nu-

clear power plant. India is poised to export around 1100 MW of power to meet the energy deficit in Bangladesh. Power projects totalling more than 3600 MW are under implementation by Indian companies.

The adverse balance of trade has been a bilateral issue. The asymmetry in the economies of India and Bangladesh is the major factor. To enable more Bangladeshi exports to flow into India, duty free entry was granted in 2011 under the South Asian Free Trade Area. This has led to an increase in exports from Bangladesh from around \$350 million to the current level of around \$900 million. Bangladeshi exports have plateaued because of demand constraints in India and also because of limited items in the Bangladeshi export basket. An SEZ in Bangladesh for Indian manufacturing companies has been mooted and notified. When operational it will encourage Indian companies to manufacture there and export to India. Indian investment in Bangladesh has reached \$3 billion. In 2017, 13 agreements worth around \$10 billion were signed in the power and energy sectors.

To offset the economic asymmetry, India has granted Bangladesh generous lines of credit (LOCs) and grants, with commitments reaching \$8 billion. While LOCs mainly cover infrastructure and connectivity projects, grants flow into social sector development. Capacity building under the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation programme is an important strand in bilateral ties and people-to-people interaction. Bangladeshis are among the largest groups of tourists into India. The visa regime has been liberalised and over a million visas are issued to Bangladeshi citizens annually.

With the rise of religious radicalism and terrorism, defence and security issues will require greater cooperation. Bangladesh has taken strong and effective steps

against those who have been inspired by the Islamic State and involved in terrorist strikes. Islamist organisations have been breeding grounds for religious radicals and extremist views. These forces will pose a considerable challenge for governance in Bangladesh in the future. With the massive loss, the NUF is likely to boycott the Parliament and take to street agitation, sullying Bangladesh's reputation as a democracy.

Challenges ahead

There will be setbacks in India-Bangladesh ties, like the current Rohingya issue, which has imposed a huge economic and security burden on Bangladesh. Bilaterally, the issue of the illegal migration has already acquired a high profile in India with the publication of the draft National Register of Citizens in Assam. This will require deft handling of bilateral ties. Sharing of river waters will remain a challenge, but not an insurmountable one.

China's security and economic footprint has grown in South Asia and managing this will remain a challenge for both countries. While Bangladesh is overwhelmingly dependent on military hardware from China, India has provided a \$500 million LOC for procurement of defence-related goods from India. This momentum must be maintained and intensified.

India has welcomed the election results and Prime Minister Narendra Modi was the first leader to telephone and congratulate Ms. Hasina. Bangladesh-India relations have reached a stage of maturity and with further upgrading and integration of infrastructure, bilateral ties can be expected to grow stronger in the future.

Pinak Ranjan Chakravarty, a Distinguished Fellow at the Observer Research Foundation, is a former diplomat. He has served as High Commissioner of India to Bangladesh

Strange bedfellows in West Asia

Tel Aviv believes that improved relations with Riyadh will serve many major strategic goals



MOHAMMED AYOOB

Increasing intimacy between Saudi Arabia, the so-called bastion of Islamic orthodoxy, and Israel, the Jewish state carved out by the colonial powers in Arab Palestine, appears astonishing at first sight. The growing relationship, even if surreptitious, between the two states can be explained in large part with reference to the old adage, "my enemy's enemy is my friend".

Complex reasons
The enemy is Iran, which both countries perceive as the primary threat to their strategic interests in West Asia. Saudi Arabia is engaged in a fierce competition with Iran for influence in the Persian Gulf and wider West Asia. Riyadh seems to be losing this competition as demonstrated by recent events in Syria, Lebanon and Iraq as well as tiny Qatar's defiant attitude.

The reasons for Israel's overtures towards Saudi Arabia are more complex. A common front against Iran is, of course, a major factor determining Israeli policy. Iran is a potential challenger to Israel's nuclear monopoly in West

Asia and uses its influence in the Levant to impede Israeli dominance of the region. But equally important, the Israeli government believes that improved relations with Riyadh will serve other major goals.

First, Saudi Arabia's lead in establishing relations with Israel, even if covert, is likely to induce other Arab states, especially the oil rich monarchies of the Gulf, to open their economies to Israeli investment and technical expertise, thus bringing Israel substantial economic benefits. Israel's success in achieving this objective is critically dependent upon developing a significant, even if unacknowledged, relationship with Saudi Arabia.

Second, the Israeli government estimates that improved relations with the Saudi regime, the "guardian" of Islam's two holiest sites, will help resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to Tel Aviv's satisfaction. This means Israel continuing to control the entire territory between the River Jordan and the Mediterranean Sea without giving the Palestinians any civil or political rights. Israel feels that with Saudi help, the status quo could be made acceptable to other Arab and Muslim countries as well since several of them, such as Egypt and Pakistan, are heavily dependent upon Saudi largesse.

Furthermore, Israel and Saudi Arabia have a common interest in preventing the democratisation of



CETTY IMAGES/STOCKPHOTO

Arab countries. Authoritarian governments in the Arab world allow Israel to paraise itself as the only democracy in West Asia. Saudi Arabia is mortally afraid of a democratic wave in the Arab world since it would further highlight the despotic nature of its regime. This apprehension drove its opposition to the democracy movements, especially in Egypt and Bahrain, during the short-lived Arab Spring.

U.S. nod

The Saudi-Israeli rapprochement has been actively supported by the Trump administration. The United States is extremely interested in the formation of a joint front between Saudi Arabia and Israel against Iran, America's principal adversary in West Asia. Jared Kushner, the U.S. President's son-in-law and the administration's point man on West Asia, has developed a special relationship with Saudi Crown Prince Muhammad Bin Salman (MBS) in order to achieve this and other ends. He had used his leverage with MBS to prod the latter to accept Israel's point of view on the Palestine issue before the Jamal Khashoggi murder stalled the expansion of the Saudi-Israeli relationship.

The rapprochement between Riyadh and Tel Aviv was moving apace until October 2, 2018, when Khashoggi, a Saudi dissident journalist, was murdered at the behest of the Saudi regime in the Saudi Consulate in Istanbul, Turkey. Senior officials of the two governments, including Mossad head Yossi Cohen, had clandestinely met several times. On the Saudi side, former senior aide to the Crown Prince, Saud al-Qahtani, and former deputy intelligence chief, Major General Ahmed al-Assiri, had played important roles in the secret negotiations with Israel.

Khashoggi murder

However, the Khashoggi murder has thrown a spanner in the works for several reasons. First, the two principal Saudi interlocutors have been dismissed from their crucial positions in order to demonstrate to the international community that the Saudi regime is genuinely interested in bringing Khashoggi's murderers to justice.

Second, MBS, who many believe ordered the killing, has been the focus of intense criticism, including by leading Senators and Congressmen in the U.S., following the brutal murder and dismemberment of Khashoggi's body. He is also held responsible for

the Yemeni misadventure, which has left thousands of civilians dead and millions on the verge of starvation. He cannot, therefore, afford to take greater political risks at this moment by continuing the parleys with Israel.

This does not mean that the Saudi-Israeli relationship will return to the level of hostility that had once existed between the two states. Rapprochement has been an ongoing process for close to two decades. It was dramatically expedited with the appointment of MBS as Crown Prince and the de facto ruler of Saudi Arabia.

One can, therefore, conclude that their common hostility towards Iran and their close security relationship with the U.S. will eventually prompt Saudi Arabia and Israel to resume their covert relationship and eventually make it public. However, their contacts are likely to remain frozen for some time until the Khashoggi murder recedes from public memory. Yet the Saudi-Israeli rapprochement could be accelerated if MBS, who has been the driving force behind the Saudi policy of engagement with Israel, ascends to the Saudi throne in the near future.

Mohammed Ayoob is University Distinguished Professor Emeritus of International Relations, Michigan State University and Non-Resident Senior Fellow, Center for Global Policy, Washington DC

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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

India and Hasina's win

The landslide victory, in Bangladesh, for the Awami League augurs well for sustained growth in India-Bangladesh relations (Editorial, "Hasina's triumph", January 1). One cannot forget the historic accord signed between India and Bangladesh with regard to the exchange of enclaves. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has displayed no hatred toward Rohingya refugees while, at the same time, her zero tolerance towards terrorism on her country's soil cannot be missed. One hopes that our friendship is marked by more warmth, goodwill and abiding respect.

N. VISVESWARAN,
Chennai

■ For India, Ms. Hasina's resounding victory could be another opportunity to accomplish more infrastructure projects in Bangladesh. In 1971, India had a key role in the liberation of Bangladesh. Now it is India's crucial partner in making a mark in economic and political terms in the South Asian region. One hopes that the Awami League will only strengthen the bond between the two nations.

ROHIT R.,
Belagutti, Davanagere, Karnataka

benevolent set of selfless rulers who are true to themselves and who are able to make this country truly 'Sare jahan se accha'.

A climate of hate and intolerance prevails all over the country. The only thing that seems to matter for the ruling party is to grab power.

Propelled by lurking megalomania, the leadership is out to do this by using even the most despicable means. Look at what is happening in Karnataka ("Ramesh Jarkiholi may soon quit Cong," and "2 ex-Karnataka CMs continue Twitter war", both January 1).

A couple of days ago, the Vice-Chancellor of a university in Uttar Pradesh is alleged to have publicly

exhorted students to use violence against their adversaries. Peddlers of hate, rabble rousers and demagogues appear to rule the roost in contemporary India, with the state readily capitulating to them. Is there still hope for 'Sare jahan se accha'?

M. JAMEEL AHMED,
Mysuru

polymathy appears to be a defensive response of so-called specialists and academics with a narrow vision who fear challenges to their received scientific wisdom once the winds of cross-disciplinary research sweep across their scientific citadels.

It is significant that most Nobel Prize winners had deep as well as broad knowledge of specific and different disciplines. In fact, many of them had interests in the arts as well. The challenges of the 21st century demand interdisciplinary cooperation because many solutions exist at the intersections of different branches of knowledge.

Universities, the reservoirs of talent and expertise, should

take the lead in breaking the chains of specialisation that have shackled the cross-disciplinary orientation of research.

V.N. MUKUNDARAJAN,
Thiruvananthapuram

'Ache din'

The "silent" cartoon (OpEd page, "Cartoonscape", January 1), spoke volumes about realities that cannot be explained even with a thousand words. The swipe at the failure of all the tall promises made by the BJP government to usher in 'Ache din' under its rule of five years was unmistakeable and thought-provoking.

D. SETHURAMAN,
Chennai

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

A ND-NDE

THE WEDNESDAY INTERVIEW | RAM VILAS PASWAN

'We need a long-term strategy to address agricultural distress'

The Lok Janshakti Party leader on the story behind the NDA's Bihar pact and the chances of a non-BJP, non-Congress federal front

SOBHANA K. NAIR

Days after finalising the seat-sharing arrangement in Bihar for the 2019 general election with allies Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and Janata Dal (United), Union Minister of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution and Lok Janshakti Party president Ram Vilas Paswan takes stock of the electoral prospects of the National Democratic Alliance and of the proposed Opposition front to take on the NDA, and talks about his impending retirement. Excerpts:

■ You reached an understanding for the 2019 Lok Sabha polls with the BJP and the JD(U) after a tussle, forcing your party to deliver an ultimatum. What was the sticking point?

Each party wants to fight on more seats but that does not mean that we had any differences with the BJP or the JD (U). The word "ultimatum" was used by the media to refer to our talks, but we have always maintained that it is an internal matter of the alliance. It has been effectively settled and well ahead of the elections. We will fight the 2019 elections under the leadership of Narendra Modi. I had said it in 2013 and let me repeat it again, there is no vacancy at the top.

■ There's an assumption that the number of seats the BJP has conceded in Bihar is because of its waning popularity.

That is not true. We never believe or indulge in bargaining. All we asked for was seven seats [of the 40 Lok Sabha seats in Bihar], the same number we contested in 2014. What created confusion were media reports of a four-plus-one formula [four Lok Sabha seats and one Rajya Sabha seat for the LJP]. These reports were not contradicted by the BJP. This was creating unrest among our cadres, which is why my son Chirag said the issue needed to be settled at the earliest.

■ Many say that Bihar and Uttar Pradesh hold the key

to the 2019 polls. So doesn't the Bahujan Samaj Party-Samajwadi Party in U.P. and the Congress-Rashtriya Janata Dal alliance in Bihar worry you?

The BSP-SP alliance will have no impact on the NDA's electoral prospects. I can give you in writing that Mayawati and Akhilesh Yadav together will get only five seats. My declaration is based on my analysis of the 2009 Lok Sabha elections, when I lost the Hajipur constituency for only the second time in my career. [The LJP had snatched ties with the Congress just before the elections to join hands with Lalu Prasad's RJD.] What was the reason for this loss? The Muslim vote. The Congress is always the first choice for a Muslim voter. They vote for anyone else only if Congress is not in the race, now as reports indicate the Congress is unlikely to be part of the Mahagathbandhan, then the decisive vote of the Muslim minority will be divided. The SP-BSP alliance is banking on three vote blocs – Muslims, Yadav and Dalits. Muslim votes will be divided between them and the Congress, Yadavs alone can't get them through. There are two strands among Dalits too. One is Jatavs who blindly follow Mayawati and the other is Paswan, Pasis and so on, who are with us. Also, both parties will fight on 40 seats each, so what about other 40 wannabe candidates from their respective parties? Were they here for a charity show? They will have to deal



R.V. MOORTHY

with rebellion too. To top it, the Congress will fight all the 80 seats [in U.P.]. Even if the Congress cuts 1 lakh to 50,000 votes in each constituency, then how will the BSP-SP alliance stand?

In Bihar, there is no threat to the NDA. The Opposition alliance keeps spreading rumours that they are talking to Ram Vilas Paswan. I have never spoken to Lalu Yadav. Three diseased people together can't make a healthy individual. There are already murmurs within Manjhi's party (Jitan Ram Manjhi's Hindustani Awami Morcha); Upendra Kushwaha (Rashtriya Lok Samata Party) is waiting with bated breath for power; Sharad Yadav exited the JD(U) with much fanfare, now we don't hear much from him, do we? We will win more than 35 seats in Bihar.

■ The Congress seems to be cashing in on the Modi government's failure to address growing agricultural distress by offering loan waivers. Will this have an electoral impact?

You can form any front right now, but once the question of leadership arises, everyone will run away

If a person is in pain, a painkiller can give him temporary relief, but the germs do not die. For the short term, loan waivers work well. But we need a long-term strategy. In Madhya Pradesh, for example, there is no doubt that Shivraj Singh Chouhan came up with pro-poor policies. He started the practice of bonus per quintal of produce. There was a view that businessmen benefitted more from this policy because they were bringing in produce from other States to sell in Madhya Pradesh. I was against the move and eventually the Central government decided to stop the bonus. It is obvious that the farmer was disappointed.

■ Who do you blame for this disappointment?

It is not a question of blaming anyone. Decisions are

made by experts, IAS officers, intellectuals, they have their way of doing the arithmetic. A politician who comes from a village or a farmer's home will have a different outlook. When we calculate the minimum support price (MSP), we consider the input costs alone and never take into account the cost of the land. The Prime Minister, BJP president Amit Shah, and the Agriculture Minister have to deliberate on the crisis. The politicians think through their heart and the bureaucracy works through its head. It is a systemic failure, and we should think how to change this system.

■ Do you think tall promises like 2 crore jobs each year made by Mr. Modi and Mr. Shah will be their undoing?

Why blame Prime Minister Modi or Amit Shah, this Pandora's box was opened in 1991. Who was the Finance Minister then? Mammohan Singh. Before liberalisation, there was a mixed economy. There were enough jobs in the government sector. You opened the floodgates, and

now that the waters have entered, how will you stop that? For 24 years, you did not bother which way the country was going. Now in 2014, when the Modi government took over, you are asking, where are the jobs? There were more government jobs earlier and thus more security, now everything is privatised.

■ But Manmohan Singh did not promise 2 crore jobs.

No, every government makes promises. Didn't Indira Gandhi say "garibi hatao"? Did Congress implement it? If anyone is to be blamed, it is the Congress government which is to be blamed the most.

■ From being seen as anti-farmer, the Modi government is also battling the perception of being anti-Dalit.

This is a wrong claim. The biggest example is the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989, which was passed during the Rajiv Gandhi government and that too after relentless protests by many of us in Parliament. Thirty years later someone went to the Supreme Court and got the law diluted. Even then no political leader really took a lead to protest against it, neither me nor Mayawati.

A purely organic and voluntary wave of protests started on its own spurred by social media. And one must remember that for the first time 10 to 12 Dalit protesters were killed in such a protest, more than the casualties during the Mandal agitations. So obviously, there was pressure on all political parties to act.

We also took a tough stand, Chirag served an ultimatum to the BJP. The Modi government acting swiftly,

amended the Act to maintain the status quo.

Now the people who called the Modi government anti-Dalit started accusing him of being anti-forward. In Madhya Pradesh, they [BJP] paid for it. It is easy to assign labels, but my question is, which government has done anything for Dalits and backwards?

■ As an astute observer of Indian politics, which election in the past will you compare the 2019 election to, 1977 or 1996?

Whatever may be the results in 2019, one must remember that people have learnt lessons from the past. The question is, what kind of government do you want? Do you want a three-month government? The Dev Gowda and I.K. Gujral governments were in power for less than a year each; V.P. Singh was Prime Minister for 11 months; and Chandra Shekhar was in power for seven months.

■ Will you contest the 2019 Lok Sabha polls?

Wherever there is a direct fight between the BJP and the Congress, the Congress manages to win. The recent Assembly elections in three States are examples, there may have been factors such as anti-incumbency which worked against the BJP. Though vote share between the two was almost same, still the Congress managed to pull through.

The prime difference is that in 1977 all the parties had come together to fight under one umbrella and the symbol of the Janata Party. That situation does not exist today. Now each party wants to fight on its own. Look at Mayawati. She had demanded a high number of seats in Madhya Pradesh from the Congress and then went to fight on her own. Then she joined hands with the Congress even without being

The Telangana Chief Minister and Telangana Rashtra Samithi chief, K. Chandrashekhar Rao has been talking of a non-BJP, non-Congress Federal Front. Would you ever consider joining that?

I will be where I have been. If you ask me to play an astrologer, then I would say that the NDA will form the government. Once the elections are over, who will consider Rao as a leader? Will Mamata Banerjee or Chandrababu Naidu work under him? You can form any front right now, but once the question of leadership arises, then everyone will run away. Janata Party, that was born from the very womb of the Emergency, could not sustain itself in the face of personal ambitions and egos. Do you think any other front will survive?

■ Will you contest the 2019 Lok Sabha polls?

No, I will not fight the 2019 polls. I have been contesting from Hajipur since 1977 and I have done a lot for the constituency. I had always thought that once I complete 50 years in politics I will take a step back. Now I have a son who is also in politics. If I continue to stand around him, overshadowing him like a banyan tree, how will he grow? I have seen other leaders who can't help but compete with their sons too. I am not like that.

Look at Lalu Yadav, he is remote-controlling his party from behind bars. I do not believe in that. There has been a demand from the constituency that my wife should contest from the seat but she too has refused the offer. We will have to take a call on who will replace me in Hajipur.

FROM The Hindu ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO JANUARY 2, 1969

Israel rejects UN Council censure motion

Israel last night [January 1] virtually rejected the Security Council's unanimous resolution censuring it for last Saturday's [December 28] attack on Beirut airport. It described the resolution as a reflection of the 'moral, political and juridical bankruptcy of the world body'. The Israeli delegate's response was also seen as an indication that Israel would defy the recommendation that reparations be paid to Lebanon for the damage done to planes and installations at Beirut airport. The Security Council earlier condemned Israel for its pre-meditated action in violation of its obligation under the Charter and the cease-fire resolution and considered that such acts of violence endangered the maintenance of peace. Issuing a 'solemn warning' to Israel that if such acts were repeated the Council would have to consider further steps to give effect to its decisions, the Council also considered that Lebanon was entitled to appropriate redress for the destruction suffered, the responsibility for which has been acknowledged by Israel.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO JANUARY 2, 1919.

Park Fair Fire. Loss of Life and Property.

The Madras Park Fair, opened much against popular wishes and in the teeth of united opposition of the City Fathers and a section of the Press, came to an unhappy termination last night (January 1). Fireworks were widely advertised all through the City. People assembled in large numbers at 8 P.M. His Excellency the Governor was also present to witness the tamasha. At about 11 O'clock when the display of fireworks was about to close, one of the pots burst, scattering thick sparks all round. The fire engine shed was the first to catch. The petrol kept there for the use of the engine also caught fire. As the fire engine could not be easily brought out, the task of extinguishing the fire was rendered difficult. A few buckets of water could not suffice. Fire engines were telephoned for. But before their arrival the fire spread from stall to stall to the south. Nine booths including the engine-shed were ablaze, the metal-ware stall, the Amrutanjan Depot, the Temperance booth, the confectioner's shop, the Trash Bazaar, the lottery booth and the fruit and flower bazaars.

CONCEPTUAL Inflation targeting

ECONOMICS

This refers to an approach to monetary policy where the primary mandate of a central bank is to manage the rate of price inflation in the wider economy. Economists who support inflation targeting believe that a stable inflation rate is essential to keep the economy fully employed while protecting the value of the currency at the same time. Central banks with an explicit inflation targeting mandate usually have a target range of inflation. They try to keep inflation within the target range by adjusting the economy's money supply. The policy of inflation targeting, which was first introduced in some European countries in the 1970s, became a popular approach in the 1990s.

MORE ON THE WEB

After banter, Pant turns Paine's 'babysitter'

<http://bit.ly/PainePanbanter>

SINGLE FILE

Boost to plain packaging

More countries are adopting the tough measure in order to curb tobacco consumption

R. PRASAD

 This year, Thailand and Saudi Arabia will join a growing club of nations introducing plain packaging of tobacco products. They are the first in the Asian and Arab regions, respectively, to adopt the tough measure in order to curb tobacco consumption – from September in Thailand, and May 1 in Saudi Arabia's case

In December 2012, Australia became the first country to introduce plain packaging following the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) guidelines. It has also been implemented in France and the United Kingdom (both 2016), Norway and Ireland (both 2017) and New Zealand and Hungary (both 2018). It will be implemented in Uruguay (2019) and Slovenia (2020). The move is under process or being considered in 14 more countries.

Plain packaging standardises the appearance of tobacco products. Other than brand and product names displayed in a standard colour and font style, it prohibits the use of logos, colours, brand images or promotional information. Besides increasing the effectiveness of health warnings, the idea is to reduce the attractiveness of tobacco products, with no scope for using packaging to advertise and promote consumption.

Understandably, the tobacco industry was opposed to Australia's plain packaging initiative. But the ruling by the World Trade Organisation (WTO), in June 2018, favouring plain packaging, has struck a blow against the tobacco industry. The WTO panel, while rejecting the notion that Australia had unjustifiably infringed tobacco trademarks and violated intellectual property rights, said the plain packaging law led to "improving public health by reducing use of and exposure to tobacco products".

With the legal hurdle to tobacco control being cleared, one is optimistic that countries, including India, which were undecided, can take steps to introduce similar legislation. In India, tobacco is the cause of about one million deaths annually.

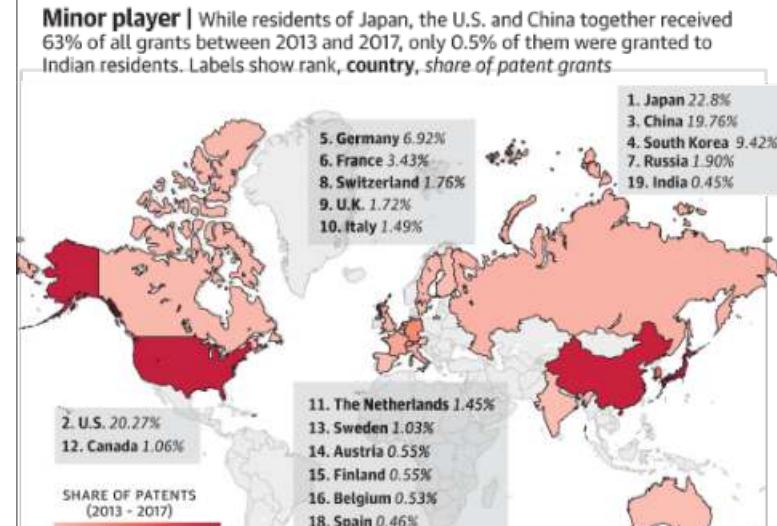
In April 2016, India increased the size of graphic pictorial warnings, by 85%, on the packaging of tobacco products (both front and back). The percentage of users in India who thought of quitting because of such warning labels increased sharply to 62% (cigarette), 54% (bidi) and 46% (smokeless tobacco users), according to the Global Adult Tobacco Survey 2016-2017, when compared with the survey results of 2009-2010. Likewise, tobacco use among those aged 15-24 years showed a six-percentage point reduction (18.4% in 2009-10 to 12.4% in 2016-17). The number of tobacco users dropped by eight million.

Along with higher taxes and large pictorial warnings, plain packaging can serve as a tool to deter new users and prompt existing users to quit. Here is the proof: plain packaging along with other measures led to 0.55 percentage point reduction in smoking prevalence in Australia, translating into at least 1,18,000 fewer smokers.

DATA POINT

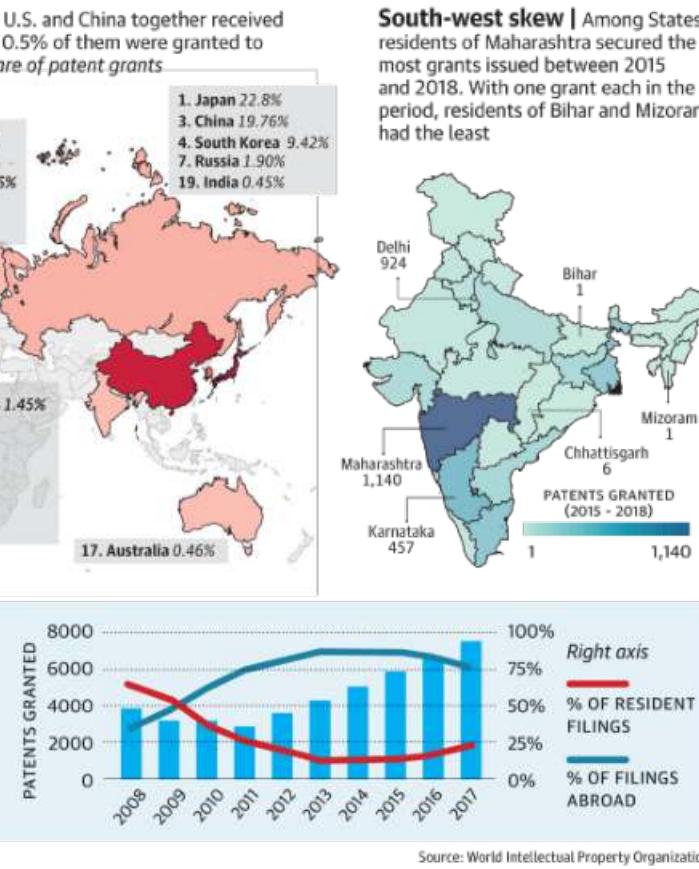
Patently inadequate

Minor player | While residents of Japan, the U.S. and China together received 63% of all grants between 2013 and 2017, only 0.5% of them were granted to Indian residents. Labels show rank, country, share of patent grants



Trending outwards

In 2017, close to 80% patents secured by Indians were filed in foreign offices. But, in 2008, only 35% of patents were filed outside India. The graph captures this change. A "resident filing" refers to an application filed in India by its own resident. A "filing abroad" refers to an application filed at a foreign office by an Indian resident



Source: World Intellectual Property Organization

FROM PAGE ONE



Shrey Kumar Singh, centre, son of the slain officer, at a press conference held in New Delhi on December 30. • HIMANSHU VATS

Man who attacked U.P. inspector arrested

Mr. Srivastava said that Kala attacked the officer when he was trying to prevent the accused from cutting a tree with his axe to create a blockade on the road.

While the police are still looking for others accused in the murder case, some of the main accused in instigating the violence, Bajrang Dal activist Yogesh Raj and the BJP youth wing's Shikhar Agarwal, are still absconding.

30 arrested so far
About 30 persons have been arrested so far. The police had named 27 persons in the FIR, while more than 70 were unnamed. "There is

regular progress in the case," said Mr. Srivastava.

Mr. Singh was shot dead when a mob went on a rampage in Bulandshahr's Syana area on December 3 after right-wing groups alleged that some cows had been slaughtered, and brought carcasses to the police outpost in a tractor trolley.

He was shot near his left eyebrow by a .32 bore weapon, the police had earlier said on the basis of the autopsy report.

Mr. Singh had overseen the investigation into the lynching of Mohammad Akhlaq in Dadri as the investigating officer probing the case from September 28, 2015, to November 9, 2015.

India, Pak. move ahead on prisoners' release

Activists have welcomed the bilateral move, saying this will help long suffering prisoners in each other's custody. Peace activist Jatin Desai of Pakistan-India Peoples's Forum for Peace and Democracy reiterated that both countries in fact claim that the exact number of prisoners in each other's custody is "a bit higher" than the official numbers shared.

Mr. Desai said the cases of prisoners who have served jail terms should be taken up at the earliest. "The process of nationality confirmation should be completed before the completion of the

jail term and the persons should be immediately released as the jail term ends," Mr. Desai said, urging both countries to grant consular access to prisoners.

The exchange of lists comes despite continued military tension, which has, however, not dampened humanitarian moves by both sides. In December 2018, Pakistan sent back Indian prisoner Hamid Nehal Ansari who had completed both regular and irregular prison terms. India subsequently released Pakistani Imran Warsi, who was awaiting repatriation after serving a jail term.

As election year dawns, Modi gives a report card

In an interview with the news agency ANI, Prime Minister delves into his government's initiatives and the controversies and criticisms

'Pak. won't mend its ways soon'

ASIAN NEWS INTERNATIONAL

NEW DELHI

Two days after the Army foiled a fresh attempt by Pakistan's Border Action Team to push infiltrators through the Line of Control, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Tuesday that India would make efforts to keep up the pressure on Pakistan, but it would be a mistake to expect that country to mend its ways anytime soon.

Mr. Modi said that whether through surgical strikes or action at other levels, the government was working out various strategies to force Pakistan to check terrorism.

He said that while India favoured a dialogue and good friendly relations with its neighbour, it was also wary of the fact that Pakistan was not going to stop promoting cross-border terrorism soon.

Asked why cross-border attacks had not stopped despite the surgical strikes, he said, "Whatever strategy is to be adopted, how to do it, is ongoing at appropriate levels, has been happening ... It will be a huge mistake to believe that Pakistan will mend its ways after a war. It will take a lot of time for Pakistan to mend its ways."

"India, whether under UPA or NDA government, has never opposed dialogue. It is our consistent policy that we are in favour of dialogue. It is the consistent policy of the country, not Modi government or Manmohan Singh government," he said.

On his government's China policy, he said India should be judged on the basis of what it did in Doklam. He said nothing had happened with India since then that could be considered deceit.

Responding to the criticism of his foreign tours as being too many and offering more photo opportunities rather than yielding anything substantial, Mr. Modi said his travel schedule had been more or less similar to that of his predecessors but his visits were noticed more because he interacted with people, took decisions and made India's voice heard.

Surgical strikes

"Come back before sunrise, irrespective of the success or failure of the mission." This was the Prime Minister's message to the Army commandos who crossed the LoC on September 28, 2016 to carry out surgical strikes.

He said the date of the attack was changed twice for the safety and security of the troops.

Narendra Modi: A rare interview of the Prime Minister as his term heads to a close. • AP

'It's going to be a public versus coalition contest'

PM says people will decide whether or not to ally with the forces of corruption

ASIAN NEWS INTERNATIONAL

NEW DELHI

The Lok Sabha election will be a "public versus coalition" contest, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Tuesday, while ridiculing the alliance proposed to be formed by anti-BJP parties.

Mr. Modi dismissed claims by some political pundits that the BJP might not get more than 180 of the 543 seats, saying there were a similar "set of persons" who echoed a similar narrative even in 2014.

"I believe this election is going to be a contest between those who fulfil and take forward the aspirations of the people and those who stop these aspirations. There is experience of 70 years. The public is the decider," the Prime Minister said,

when asked if the 2019 election was heading towards a U.S. presidential-style campaign between Mr. Modi and Congress president Rahul Gandhi.

Asked if the election would be an "anybody but Modi" contest as projected by the Opposition parties, he said, "It is going to be *janta* [public] versus *gathbandhan* [coalition]. Modi is just a manifestation of public love and blessings," he said.

"The public knows that earlier it was decentralised corruption, those who sat in the States, looted the States, those who were in the Centre, looted at the Centre... The people will decide whether or not they should ally with these forces of corruption who are coming together," he said.



Narendra Modi says the public is the decider. • AFP

Attacking the anti-BJP parties, he said there was no unity among them in any way, nor any joint articulation about what they would do for the country.

On the allegation by Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister and TDP leader N. Chandrababu Naidu that the efforts being made by Telangana Chief Minister and TRS su-

premo K. Chandrashekhar Rao to form an alliance had his blessings, he said: "I am not aware that some coalition is being made by KCR."

Asked about Shiv Sena chief Uddhav Thackeray's attack on him when he echoed Congress president Rahul Gandhi in saying *Chowkidar chor hai* (guard is the thief), he said that "sometimes,

some expectations are not met" and some allies feel that they "could benefit by putting pressure" on the BJP.

Asked if there was any move to make film stars-turned-politicians Rajinikanth and Kamal Hassan to join the NDA and improve its footprint in South India, he said, "We are ready to take everyone along, those who want to come with us, those with whom we can walk. It is linked to our strengthening the regional aspirations."

Rafale deal

On the Rafale deal, he said those levelling allegations against him were actually weakening the security forces.

He would continue to expedite the defence procurement process.

Asked why he was silent on the Congress accusation of favouring Anil Ambani, Mr. Modi replied, "This is not

an allegation against me personally, but an allegation against my government. If there is any allegation when and where and to whom."

Taking aim on the "first family" of the Congress, he said that those who ran the country for four generations were today facing charges of financial irregularities and were out on bail. Tongue firmly in cheek, he responded to the remark that those accused in the scams were taking walks in Lodhi Garden, saying that those on bail had freedom given by courts to walk in the park.

Dubbing the loan waivers announced by the Congress governments as a "political stunt", he said a majority of farmers do not benefit from these "misleading" announcements as only a few of them take loans from banks.

'Urjit was not made to leave'

Modi says institutions are important to the government

ASIAN NEWS INTERNATIONAL

NEW DELHI

"I am revealing for the first time. He [RBI Governor Urjit Patel] was telling me about it for six or seven months before his resignation. He gave it even in writing. He wrote to me personally," Prime Minister Narendra Modi said.

Stressing that institutions such as the

CBI and the judiciary were paramount to his government, the Prime Minister said the Congress had no right to criticise the Centre on this score.

"The Congress has no right to speak on this issue. Against the PM and PMO, the NAC [National Advisory Council] was formed. What kind of empowerment of the PMO was this? Cabinet takes such a big decision and a big leader tears [into] that Cabinet decision at a press conference. What kind of respect is [this] for an institution," he said.

Changes in CBI

"When the CBI's internal personal matter came to light, they [CBI Director] Alokin Verma and his deputy Rakesh Asthana were both asked to go on leave legally. Because the institution is paramount for us," the PM said.

"Recently, the Sohra-



Urjit Patel

buddin judgment came. Just read that judgment. See how institutions were misused. The accusation on us is that Modi is not taking action against these people. And you are saying this is vendetta. ED is doing its job professionally. From a foreign country, a *razzaq* [confidant] has been brought into custody of India. Should not every Indian be proud of it?"

said the Prime Minister, referring to Christian Michel, the alleged middleman in the ₹3,600-crore AgustaWestland VVIP chopper deal.



The PM said most Islamic nations had banned it.

'Triple talaq an issue of gender equality'

'Sabarimala is a matter of tradition'

ASIAN NEWS INTERNATIONAL

NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday said that while triple talaq was a matter of gender equality, entry of women in Sabarimala was related to tradition.

The Prime Minister said the ordinance against triple talaq was brought keeping in mind gender equality and social justice and it should not be seen as interference in religious issues.

However, on the entry of women of menstrual age in the Sabarimala temple and protests by Hindu groups, he said the issue related to tradition.

"There are some temples, which have their own traditions, where men can't go. And men don't go... In this, Sabarimala [issue], a woman judge in the Supreme Court has made certain observations. There is no need to attribute those to any political party. As a woman, she has made some suggestions. There should be a debate on that as well sometimes," the Prime Minister said.

keep the two separate," he said.

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Full of 'I's and lies: Congress

'PM's interview had nothing on promises made by him to the people in 2014'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The Congress on Tuesday described Prime Minister Narendra Modi's interview to the news agency ANI as that of a 'defeatist' Prime Minister that was full of rhetoric and did not mention the promises made by him to the people before the 2014 election.

Congress communication chief Randeep Surjewala said the Prime Minister should have spoken about the suffering caused by demonetisation, GST, bank frauds, failure to get back black money, fragile security



Randeep Singh Surjewala
situation and farmers' woes.

"Summary of Modiji's 'monologue' interview – 'I', 'Me', 'Mine', 'Myself'. The country is suffering your 'I's

and 'lies,'" Mr. Surjewala said at a press conference.

"The Prime Minister is so helpless that he can't even answer from where he is going to contest the next parliamentary election or whether he will contest at all. This shows a defeatist Prime Minister," he added.

Fixed interview
Congress Deputy Leader in the Rajya Sabha Anand Sharma said the people of the country could not be 'fooled' through a 'fixed interview', and dared him to face Parliament and hold a press conference.

"People cannot be fooled through a fixed interview. Have the courage to face us in Parliament or address a press conference. Having betrayed the people, do not beg Lord Ram to save you. He did not ask you to lie in the first place," Mr. Sharma tweeted.

"PM Modi did not spare our people of his penchant for false promises, hollow claims and propaganda even on New Year's day. The habitual peddler of untruths and lies has signalled a nasty narrative for the 2019 election campaign," Mr. Sharma said in a series of tweets.

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"Once the claims have been heard and the final NRC has been decided, only the eligible applicants will be given the Aadhaar card. The authorities will have the biometrics of all the applicants," said the official.

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This is too big a victory, say Awami League supporters

Analysts say an Opposition-less Parliament is not conducive for democracy

SUVIJIT BAGCHI
DHAKA

Eta ekta barabari hoye gesse [this is a bit too much] – this is how Awami League supporters reacted a day after the party swept 97% of seats in the national Parliament in Sunday's general election.

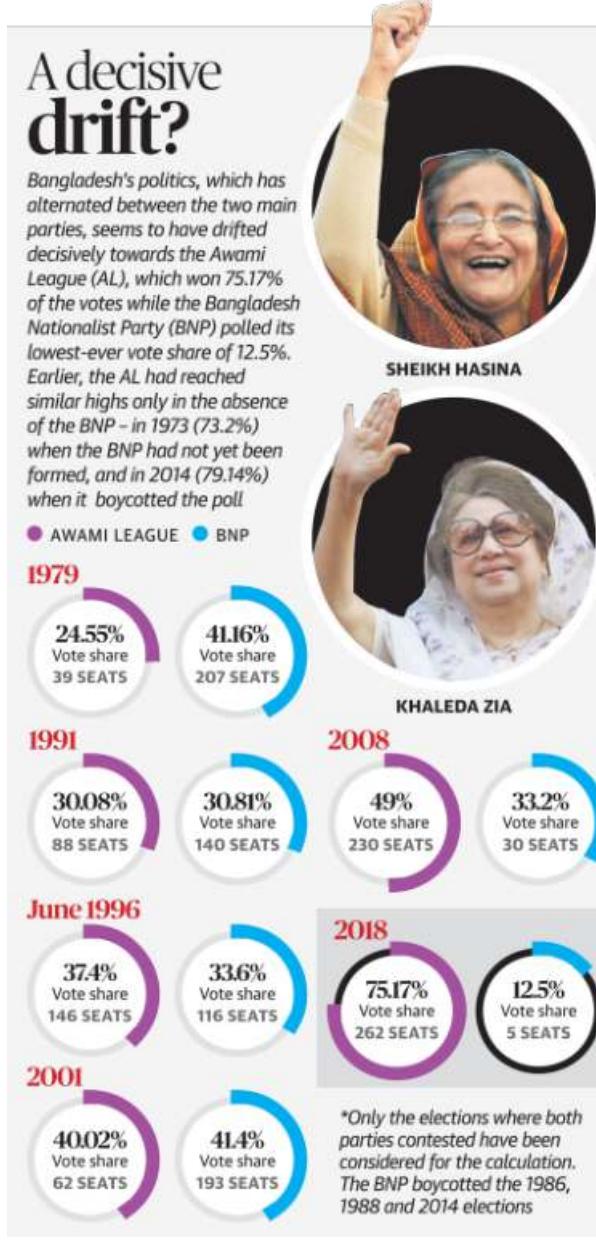
Perhaps the Opposition should "have been given" 50-60 seats to make the election look credible, said some of them, declining to be named.

The Awami League and its allies won 288 of the 299 seats contested, securing a third consecutive term in power. Jatiya Oikya Front, the Opposition coalition led by the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), got nine seats.

The Awami League chief, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, blamed the Opposition for its debacle. She said the election was free and fair and that the Opposition failed to put up a strong fight against the ruling party. She also said the people rejected them for their violent politics.

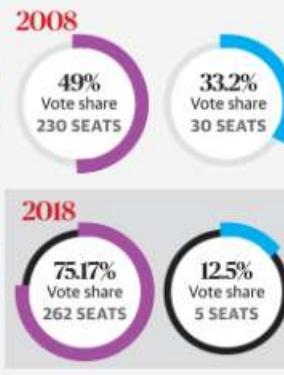
One-sided victory
"At least 20-30 seats, if not 60-70, would have been better for democracy, this is too one-sided. God knows what lies ahead," said Smriti S. Pattanaik, a research fellow at the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, a New Delhi-based autonomous think tank funded by the Government of India. An Opposition-less Parliament may not be conducive for democracy, said Ms. Pattanaik, a Bangladesh expert.

"Look at the Pakistan results. Even if it is managed by the Army, there is an Opposition in Parliament and Prime



Minister Imran Khan will have to address the checks and the balances in the system," she said.

There is concern within the Awami League camp regarding the nature of the results. From ordinary activists to high-profile



professors who publicly support their favourite party, people privately acknowledged that they are "embarrassed" to talk to their friends within the BNP.

A senior journalist, who is an Awami League supporter, said the victory "could be

the beginning of a complete one-party rule in Bangladesh", which may not be very exciting".

Professor Intiaz Ahmed of the International Relations department in Dhaka University said that the Awami League's activists "may have panicked" after the early polling. "The massive turnout in the first three or four hours probably have panicked them. Bangladesh has about 60-65% block votes, divided between two political alliances. The rest 30-35% matters as it may go in any way... now the large turnout may have panicked the Awami Leaguers and candidates went for an overkill," said Mr. Ahmed. He feels the party "this time" was committed to a fair election.

"But even without the overkill, they would have won it in any way" said Mr. Ahmed.

Worked hard
Saidul Islam, a staff of the elite Dhaka Club in the capital city, feels the same. "After all, the Awami League government worked hard this time," said Mr. Islam, a BNP supporter. His mother, Manowara Begum, paralysed waist down, told him so, he claimed. "She said that the Awami League got electricity in their area in Lokkhipur district and invested in roads, which has pleased her," said Mr. Islam.

He echoed Mr. Ahmed's claim that the Awami League would have won the contest any way. On Monday, in the presence of 11 international journalists and a host of foreign observers, Prime Minister Hasina explained the same – why the party would have won in any case.

Probe initiated after Manchester attack

3 injured in stabbing at railway station

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
MANCHESTER

A British police probe into a triple stabbing at a Manchester railway station on New Year's Eve which injured three people, is now being treated as "a terrorist investigation" the city's top officer said on Tuesday.

Counterterrorism officials have arrested a man who remains in police custody, and are searching an address where he recently lived in the northwestern English city, Chief Constable Ian Hopkins said.

The suspect reportedly shouted "Allah" during what Mr. Hopkins called a "horrible

attack" on three people, including a police officer, at Manchester Victoria station on Monday evening.

'Serious injuries'

A man and a woman, both in their 50s, are still being treated in hospital after sustaining "serious" injuries, while the officer was also stabbed in the shoulder, he added.

No group has claimed responsibility for the attack, which happened around 8.50 p.m. (0050 GMT) when many revellers in the city would have been enjoying New Year's Eve celebrations.

Baby pulled alive in Russia from ruins of apartment block

'10-month-old boy is in an extremely grave condition'

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
MOSCOW

Russian rescuers on Tuesday pulled a baby boy alive from the ruins of an apartment block that collapsed in a gas explosion more than a day earlier, killing at least seven people and leaving dozens missing.

"The rescuers heard crying. The baby was saved by being in a cradle and warmly wrapped up," Chelyabinsk regional Governor Boris Dubrovsky wrote on his Telegram channel.

The Emergencies Ministry said the child is a 10-month-old boy.

Mother also survives
The mother of the boy, named as Vanya, also survived the blast, RIA Novosti news agency reported, citing the emergency services.

The child is in an extremely grave condition with serious frostbite of his limbs, a head injury and multiple leg fractures and he

will be evacuated for treatment in Moscow, a Health Ministry statement said.

Part of the 10-storey apartment building collapsed following a gas explosion on Monday morning in the industrial city of Magnitogorsk, nearly 1,700 km east of Moscow in the Ural mountains.

The baby was found after rescuers were forced to temporarily halt the search for dozens of missing people in



New Year tragedy: A rescuer with the child found in the rubble of a collapsed apartment block in Russia. ■ REUTERS

the rubble for fear that the rest of the block could come down. The child survived temperatures that fell overnight to around -27°C, TASS reported. The incident has claimed at least seven lives and only six survivors have been found.

The Soviet-era apartment block was home to around 1,100 people. The blast completely destroyed 35 flats while 10 more were damaged.

The baby was found after rescuers were forced to temporarily halt the search for dozens of missing people in

N. Korea's Kim warns of 'new path'

Says he's ready to meet Trump; asks U.S. to speed up stalled diplomatic process

REUTERS
SEOUL

North Korean leader Kim Jong-un said on Tuesday he is ready to meet U.S. President Donald Trump any time to achieve their common goal of denuclearising the Korean Peninsula, but warned he may have to take an alternative path if U.S. sanctions and pressure against the country continued.

In his New Year address, Mr. Kim said denuclearisation is his "firm will" and suggested for the first time that North Korea would no longer produce nuclear weapons, but also urged Washington to take unspecified corresponding action to speed up the stalled diplomatic process.

North Korea might be compelled to explore a new path" to defend its sovereignty if the U.S. "seeks to force something upon us un-



Friendly warning: North Korean leader Kim Jong-un delivering a speech, in an undated image. ■ AP

ilaterally... and remains unchanged in its sanctions and pressure," Mr. Kim said in his nationally televised address.

The comments are likely to fuel growing scepticism over whether Pyongyang intends to give up the nuclear weapons programme.

There was no immediate reaction from the U.S. State Department, but South Korea's presidential office welcomed Mr. Kim's speech,

saying it carried his "firm will" to advance relations with Seoul and Washington.

U.S. officials say those initial steps were not confirmed and can be easily reversed, and have called for strict sanctions enforcement on the impoverished country until full, verifiable disarmament. Washington halted some large-scale military exercises with Seoul to aid nuclear negotiations, but smaller drills continued.

Pyongyang has demanded Washington lift sanctions

U.S., China vow to boost 'cooperation'

Trump hails 'solid friendship' with Xi

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
BEIJING

The Presidents of China and the U.S. have exchanged messages vowing to boost cooperation despite a bruising trade war, on the 40th anniversary of the countries' diplomatic relations, state media reported.

In the messages sent on Tuesday, President Xi Jinping underlined the importance of working with the U.S. "to advance China-U.S. relations featuring coordination, cooperation and stability", Xinhua reported.

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In the messages sent on

the last four decades of diplomacy between China and the U.S., hailing his "solid friendship" with Mr. Xi.

Washington and Beijing imposed tit-for-tat tariffs on more than \$300 billion worth of goods in total two-way trade last year. However, since the two leaders agreed on a truce on the sidelines of the G20 summit meeting in Buenos Aires, there have been small signs of progress. The two nations established diplomatic relations on January 1, 1979, with the U.S. pledging to have only non-official ties with Taiwan.

The remarks come after Iran confirmed on Monday that the Taliban had visited Tehran for a second round of talks in just a few days.

The Taliban delegation discussed with Iran "the post-occupation situation, restoration of peace and security in Afghanistan and the region", the militants said in a statement posted on social media and emailed to journalists.

Likely U.S. pullout

It signals a growing confidence among the Taliban for U.S. troops to pull out of Afghanistan, after U.S. officials last month told various media outlets that President Donald Trump had decided to slash the number of boots on the ground.

There have been reports in the past of talks between Iran and the Taliban, but they have typically been denied by Tehran.

Tehran's peace push will be viewed with concern by hawks in Washington, who fear that Mr. Trump's planned withdrawal of troops from Syria and Afghanistan will cede regional influence to Iran.

The Taliban also met with



Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi is to visit Afghanistan. ■ AP

the U.S., Pakistan and Saudi Arabia in the UAE earlier in December. But, the militants refused to meet a delegation from Afghanistan.

The group said on Saturday that its representatives would not meet "with those of the Kabul administration" at the next meeting expected to be held in Saudi Arabia later this month.

Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi will travel to Afghanistan in the next two weeks, the Foreign Ministry said.

Meanwhile, Taliban fighters killed more than 20 Afghan security forces in simultaneous raids on a provincial capital and district in northern Afghanistan, an official said on Tuesday, as the city braced for further violence.

Hundreds of militants were outside Sar-e-Pul city, which provincial Governor Zabihullah Amani said was at risk of falling to the Taliban if reinforcements were not sent.

Labour Party not to partner with Tzipi Livni's Hatnuah

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
JERUSALEM

Israel's centre-left opposition dramatically split on Tuesday ahead of an April 9 election, with leader Avi Gabbay announcing that he would no longer partner with veteran politician Tzipi Livni as she sat stone-faced next to him.

The announcement means the end of their Zionist Union alliance, which finished with the second most seats in the last general election in 2015 but which has since tumbled in opinion polls. The Zionist Union included Mr. Gabbay's Labour

party and Ms. Livni's Hatnuah. It won 24 out of 120 seats in 2015, behind Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's right-wing Likud, which won 30.

Since Mr. Gabbay took over as head of Labour in 2017, his partnership with Ms. Livni had been uneasy and it

was unclear if the alliance would continue for the election.

'Doubts cleared'

In a statement shortly after Mr. Gabbay's announcement, Ms. Livni said it was "good that the doubts had been cleared", vowing to focus on winning the upcoming poll. Mr. Gabbay's decision is the latest realignment ahead of the election and more are expected.

Polls show that Mr. Netanyahu is likely to remain prime minister after the elections despite corruption allegations against him.

The Talibans also met with

Labour Party not to partner with Tzipi Livni's Hatnuah

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
PARIS

The U.S. and Israel officially quit the UN's educational, scientific and cultural agency (UNESCO) at the stroke of midnight, the culmination of a process triggered more than a year ago amid concerns that the organisation fosters anti-Israel bias.

The withdrawal is mainly procedural, yet serves a new blow to UNESCO, co-founded by the U.S. after the Second World War to foster peace.

The Donald Trump administration filed its notice to withdraw in October 2017 and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu followed suit.

The withdrawals will greatly impact UNESCO financially, since it has been dealing with a funding slash ever since 2011 when both Israel and the United States stopped paying dues after Palestine was voted in as a member state of the organisation.

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MARKET WATCH

	01-01-2019	% CHANGE
Sensex	36,255	0.52
US Dollar	69.43	0.49
Gold	32,470	0.62

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	389.00	1.30
Asian Paints	1371.55	-1.50
Axis Bank	627.30	7.40
Bajaj Auto	2726.65	6.50
Bajaj Finserv	6521.95	45.00
Bajaj Finance	2656.85	11.70
Bharti Airtel	319.50	7.00
BPCL	367.20	4.45
Cipla	523.05	3.55
Coal India	241.50	0.75
Dr Reddy's Lab	2607.05	-9.45
Eicher Motors	23195.10	36.75
GAIL (India)	362.15	1.85
Grasim Ind	833.50	7.90
HCL Tech	959.85	-4.50
HDFC	2009.00	40.65
HDFC Bank	2148.10	26.40
Hero MotoCorp	3127.60	23.35
Hindalco	222.75	-3.45
HPLC	256.70	-3.45
Hind Unilever	1801.10	-18.55
Indiabulls HFL	844.75	-9.10
ICICI Bank	363.75	3.60
IndusInd Bank	1595.60	-3.70
Bharti Infratech	262.25	3.25
Infosys	665.05	6.10
Indian Oil Corp	137.70	0.65
ITC	282.70	1.05
JSW Steel	303.95	-2.80
Kotak Bank	1250.45	-6.05
L&T	1441.90	4.35
M&M	773.35	-30.50
Maurti Suzuki	7476.80	11.30
NTPC	148.70	-0.35
ONGC	148.50	-1.40
PowerGrid Corp	200.00	1.35
Reliance Ind	1121.00	-0.25
State Bank	299.60	3.70
Sun Pharma	433.55	3.05
Tata Motors	173.45	0.75
Tata Steel	515.75	-5.30
TCS	1902.80	9.75
Titan	928.00	-3.00
UltraTech Cement	4009.20	18.25
UPL	753.50	-4.75
Vedanta	202.10	-0.10
Wipro	326.65	-4.20
YES Bank	184.25	2.45
Zee Entertainment	480.25	3.80

EXCHANGE RATES

CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	69.25	69.57
Euro	79.54	79.94
British Pound	88.21	88.64
Japanese Yen (100)	63.14	63.45
Chinese Yuan	10.07	10.12
Swiss Franc	70.42	70.77
Singapore Dollar	50.79	51.05
Canadian Dollar	50.96	51.22
Malaysian Ringgit	16.75	16.84

Source: Indian Bank

BULLION RATES CHENNAI

January 01 rates in rupees with previous rates in parentheses	
Retail Silver (1g)	41.5.....(41.5)
22 ct gold (1g)	3021.....(3017)



LIC MD to officiate as chairman

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI

Life Insurance Corporation of India MD Hemant Bhargava has been given the additional charge of the chairman after V.K. Sharma retired on Monday. Mr. Bhargava took charge as MD in February 2017.

The Banks Board Bureau has shortlisted eight candidates for the chairman's post, and MD's post. The interviews will be held on January 4. Those called for interviews include Vipin Anand, K. Ganesh, Mukesh Kumar Gupta, M.R. Kumar, H. S. Shashi Kumar, Raj Kumar, T.C. Susheel Kumar and S. Nallakkutalam.

'NBFC sector more fragile than a year ago'

Liquidity concerns led to stress: Kotak

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA MUMBAI
Kotak Mahindra Bank MD Uday Kotak on Tuesday said even though non-bank lenders have received a breather since the crisis late last year, the sector is more "fragile" than it was a year ago.

"We need to carefully watch the space going forward," he added. Mr. Kotak has been tasked to lead the efforts of saving the debt-ridden infra lender IL&FS.

"Hopefully, the NBFC sector which saw significant pressure in October-November last year is beginning to breathe a little better now."

GST collections down for second month in a row

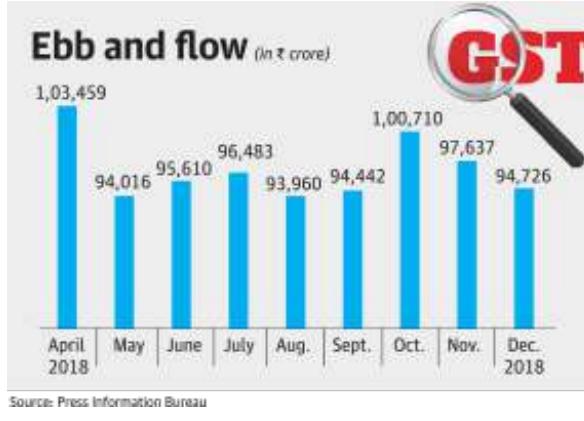
At ₹94,726 cr. in December, it is lower than the ₹97,637 cr. collected in November

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

The government's collections from the Goods and Services Tax (GST) declined for the second month in a row to ₹94,726 crore in December, official data released on Tuesday showed.

Collections declined from the ₹97,637 crore in November, which was itself lower than the ₹1,00,710 crore collected in October.

"The total gross GST revenue collected in the month of December 2018 is ₹94,726 crore of which CGST is ₹16,442 crore, SGST is ₹22,459 crore, IGST is ₹47,936 crore... and cess is ₹7,888 crore," the government said in a statement. "The total number of GSTR 3B Returns filed for the month of November up to



December 31, 2018 is 72.44 lakh."

'A bit discouraging'

"The slight dip in GST revenue collections as compared to the last two months is a bit discouraging," Abhishek Jain, tax partner at EY, said.

"This may deter the go-

vernment from rationalising the rate of goods left in the 28% category like cement, auto parts, etc. in the short term," Mr. Jain added.

The GST Council had in its 31st meeting in December cut rates on 17 items and six types of services, leaving just one common use item – ce-

ment – in the 28% tax bracket. The new rates took effect from January 1, 2019.

"While the December collections are lesser than October (where it exceeded ₹1 lakh crore) and November, overall average collection for 2018-19 has shown marked improvement over 2017-18," Pratik Jain, partner and leader, indirect tax, PwC India, said.

"This, coupled with decent growth in income tax collections, gives a clear indication that the tax base is expanding."

Mr. Jain said the next couple of months may also see similar collections, which means that the central government might want to come up with a "more realistic" estimate of GST collections for next year.

Aviation fuel prices slashed by 14.7%

It is now cheaper than petrol, diesel

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

Aviation turbine fuel (ATF) prices have been cut for the second month in a row by a record 14.7% for the month of January 2019, according to a notification issued by Indian Oil Corporation and other State-owned oil marketing companies.

Jet fuel will now cost ₹58,060.97 per kilolitre in Delhi, the benchmark market for the country, effective January 1. This represents a ₹9,990 per kilolitre price cut from the ₹68,050.97 per kilolitre in December 2018. Jet fuel prices had been revised on a monthly basis since March 2018. This is the second consecutive reduction in rates and the biggest single cut ever, the data showed. In December, prices were cut by ₹8,327.83 per



kilolitre, or 10.9%.

With the two successive cuts, jet fuel rates are now lower than petrol and diesel prices on a per litre basis.

While ATF now costs ₹58.06 per litre, petrol costs ₹68.65 per litre and diesel ₹62.66 per litre in Delhi. The two consecutive price reductions have brought ATF rates to their lowest levels in a year and will provide much-needed relief to cash-strapped airlines.

(With PTI inputs)

Hemant Bhargava

Panel questions rationale behind move; says banks stretched to help Centre post note ban

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI

The Committee on Government Assurances has questioned the rationale behind banks being asked to bear the cost of soiled and counterfeit notes, particularly during the demonetisation exercise of 2016.

In its report tabled in the Rajya Sabha on Monday, the committee said it did not understand the rationale behind the policy wherein the banks had been asked to bear the losses arising out from mutilated and counterfeit notes, when they had no role in mutilating or circulating counterfeit notes, particularly just after demonetisation when they had the onerous task of handling huge cash flow.

Doubling in number

The number of soiled notes more than doubled in 2017-18 compared to the previous financial



year. According to RBI data, 27,678 million pieces of soiled notes were disposed of by banks in 2017-18 compared to 12,503 million pieces in 2016-17. Over 99% of the notes that were rendered invalid by demonetisation had returned from circulation.

However, the number of counterfeit notes detected in 2017-18 was lower at 5,22,738 pieces as against 7,62,072 in the previous year. The committee also felt that it was improper to penalise the banks especially at a time when they had stretched their li-

mits to support the government during demonetisation process and has recommended that the Department of Economic Affairs should consider relaxing note refund rules in this regard.

A Navaneeth Krishnan, Chairman, Committee on Government Assurances, presented the 72nd Report of the Committee to the Rajya Sabha.

The panel discussed the issue with some public sector banks and representatives of the RBI, NABARD and Department of Economic Affairs and Ministry of Finance on its study visits to Kolkata, Chennai and Bengaluru.

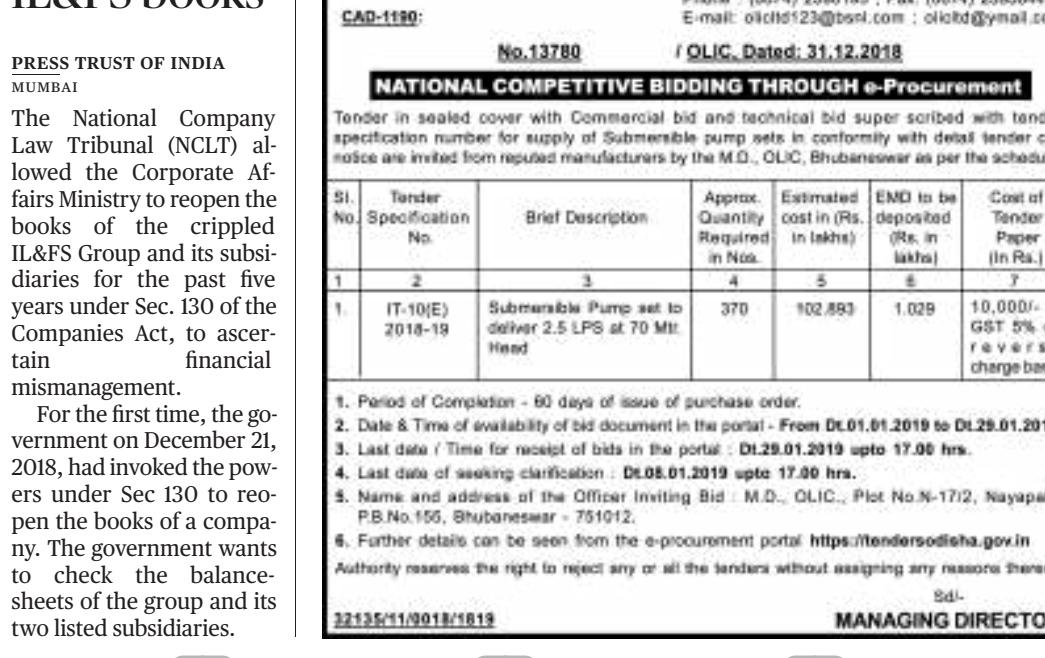
The committee deals with the culling of assurances, examination of implementation of assurances, and dropping of assurances given by Ministers while replying to questions raised by Members during the proceedings of the Rajya Sabha.

'Govt. can reopen IL&FS books'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA MUMBAI

The National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) allowed the Corporate Affairs Ministry to reopen the books of the crippled IL&FS Group and its subsidiaries for the past five years under Sec. 130 of the Companies Act, to ascertain financial mismanagement.

For the first time, the government on December 21, 2018, had invoked the powers under Sec 130 to reopen the books of a company. The government wants to check the balance-sheets of the group and its two listed subsidiaries.



IN BRIEF



Aurobindo recalls 80 lots of BP drug from U.S.

NEW DELHI Aurobindo Pharma USA Inc. is recalling 80 lots of tablets, used for treatment of high blood pressure and heart failure from the U.S., due to presence of impurity that may cause cancer in humans, the firm said. The voluntary recall of Amlodipine Valsartan tablets USP, Valsartan HCTZ tablets USP and Valsartan tablets USP is due to the detection of trace amounts of impurity found in the finished product. PTI

Shilpa Medicare gets nod for cancer injection

NEW DELHI Shilpa Medicare said it had received a USFDA approval for Irinotecan HCL injection, used for treating certain kinds of cancers. It has received approval for its ANDA Irinotecan HCL injection USP in the strengths 40 mg/2mL and 100 mg/5mL (20mg/mL) single dose vials, the firm said in a BSE filing. Irinotecan injection is used in the treatment of patients with metastatic carcinoma of the colon or rectum, it added. PTI

Investor Clinic arm to build luxury homes

NEW DELHI Property brokerage Investor Clinic's group firm Home and Soul has bought a land parcel in Jaypee's township in Greater Noida to develop a luxury project with an investment of over ₹200 crore. "We have taken around 5,000 metres of land in Jaypee group's golf-centric township. We will develop an ultra luxury project, PAGE 3, comprising 46 apartments, villas and penthouses," said Home and Soul CEO Sakshi Katyal. PTI

Tyre industry may invest ₹20,000 cr.

Capacity addition over the next 5 years will help manufacturers meet growing demand, says ICRA

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI

Tyre companies in India are likely to invest ₹20,000 crore in the next five years in capacity addition to meet the growing demand, according to credit rating agency ICRA.

"The tyre industry in India has witnessed large capacity additions in the last decade with a cumulative spend of ₹27,800 crore; of which 70% was spent in the last six years.

"With tyre demand remaining favourable, supply addition in the industry is expected to remain high going forward," ICRA said in a report.

It said based on the announcements, tyre industry was likely to see a capacity addition of ₹20,000 crore over the next five years.



On a roll: A favourable outlook for domestic automotive industry is expected to drive demand for tyres.

Stating that the outlook for the Indian tyre industry would remain stable, ICRA said tyre demand would grow by 7.9% over the next five years supported by favourable outlook for the domestic automotive industry.

"In FY2019, the domestic tyre industry benefited from strong growth in both original equipment (OE) and replacement segments.

Robust sales

While there have been some headwinds such as the floods

in Kerala, tightened financing, insurance-related regulatory changes impacting two-wheeler demand, rising fuel and interest costs, the year-to-date sales growth across most segments have been robust leading to healthy OE tyre demand growth," ICRA said.

It said the replacement tyre demand, too, had recovered sharply in the last one year supported by post-effect of Goods and Service tax (GST), pick-up in infrastructure activities and a healthy consumption-driven demand. "Specifically, there was a strong demand rebound in truck and bus segment (where replacement share is high at 70%)," it said.

ICRA said tyre exports from India have been steadily increasing in the last one year with recovery in demand from overseas markets and rising competitiveness of Indian makers, both in terms of quality and pricing.

Imports dwindle

On the other hand, tyre imports had dwindled in the last one year following the re-imposition of anti-dumping duty (ADD) on import of new Chinese truck and bus radial (TBR) tyres for a period of five years effective from September 18, 2017 and increase in customs duty by 500 bps to 15%, effective April 1, 2018.

"This has supported the domestic TBR (truck and bus radial) players as the large capacities added in recent years are now being effectively utilised," the rating agency said.



Reaching out: Small growers' share in Indian tea crop now constitutes 47% of total production. ■ K.MURALI KUMAR

Small growers may get tea estates' support

'Project Trinitea to create better value'

INDRANI DUTTA
KOLKATA

Recognising the rising importance of small tea growers (STG) in the supply chain, tea estates in North India are testing a project called 'Trinitea,' which aims at providing support to the STG at the farm and market level.

A MoU was signed between the Indian Tea Association (ITA) the apex body of North Indian tea producers and Solidaridad for jointly implementing this project, which aims at providing support to STGs in the form of customised farm management as well as access to real time information on climate, soil and markets, a senior ITA official said.

Solidaridad is a network which works to promote sustainable production of 13 commodities across nine regions globally.

"Although it is early to comment on the Trinitea initiative, we are welcoming this move," Bijoy Chakraborty, president, Confederation of Indian Small Tea Growers Association, told The Hindu.

The project would help monitor green leaf quality, establish traceability mechanisms and set up vendor development for supply of farm inputs.



'Six firms went live at Sri City'

In 2018, new customers committed ₹3,826 crore, says MD

N. ANAND
CHENNAI

As many as six companies went on stream and seven others commenced civil works in Sri City in 2018, according to a top official.

"We call it eventful, as it witnessed an array of important events and developments such as ground-breaking ceremonies, plant inaugurations, visits of foreign diplomats, dignitaries, tours of business delegations, meetings and seminars," said Ravindra Sannareddy, founder-managing director, Sri City.

Expanding capacity

During 2018, more than 20 new customers entered into memoranda of understanding with the Andhra Pradesh government to invest about

₹3,074 crore in equity by way of preferential allotment on Monday, the bank said in a regulatory filing.

Besides, Bank of Maharashtra got ₹4,498 crore, Syndicate Bank (₹1,632 crore) and Central Bank of India (₹1,678 crore).

Buying was also seen in other bank stocks, with Bank of Baroda surging 3.74%. So did United Bank of India (3.61%), Bank Of India (2.21%), Punjab National Bank (2.11%) and State Bank of India (1.25%). Analysts attributed the rise in banking stocks to Reserve Bank of India Governor Shaktikanta Das's statement that the sector is on "course to recovery" as the afflicting non-performing assets recede.

Ravindra Sannareddy

₹3,826 crore. Of these, seven firms commenced civil works, six went on stream and a few others ramped up production capacity, he said.

Sri City, which is a 'smart, integrated business city', is located about 70 km from Chennai. It has been attracting significant fresh investments.

Separately, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry has nominated Mr. Sannareddy as a member of the committee constituted for reviewing the Special Economic Zone policy in the country.



Reaching out: Small growers' share in Indian tea crop now constitutes 47% of total production. ■ K.MURALI KUMAR

4 PSB stocks surge after govt. infuses ₹10,882 cr.

Shares of UCO Bank soar 12.1%

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI

Bank stocks were in demand on Tuesday after the government infused ₹10,882 crore in four public sector lenders.

Shares of UCO Bank soared 12.1% to close at ₹22.70 apiece on the BSE. Bank of Maharashtra gained 3.83%, as did Central Bank of India (1.36%) and Syndicate Bank (1.27%).

The government on Monday infused ₹10,882 crore in four public sector banks, including UCO Bank and Syndicate Bank, as part of the ₹28,615-crore capital infusion to be done in about half a dozen public sector lenders.

UCO Bank received

₹3,074 crore in equity by way of preferential allotment on Monday, the bank said in a regulatory filing.

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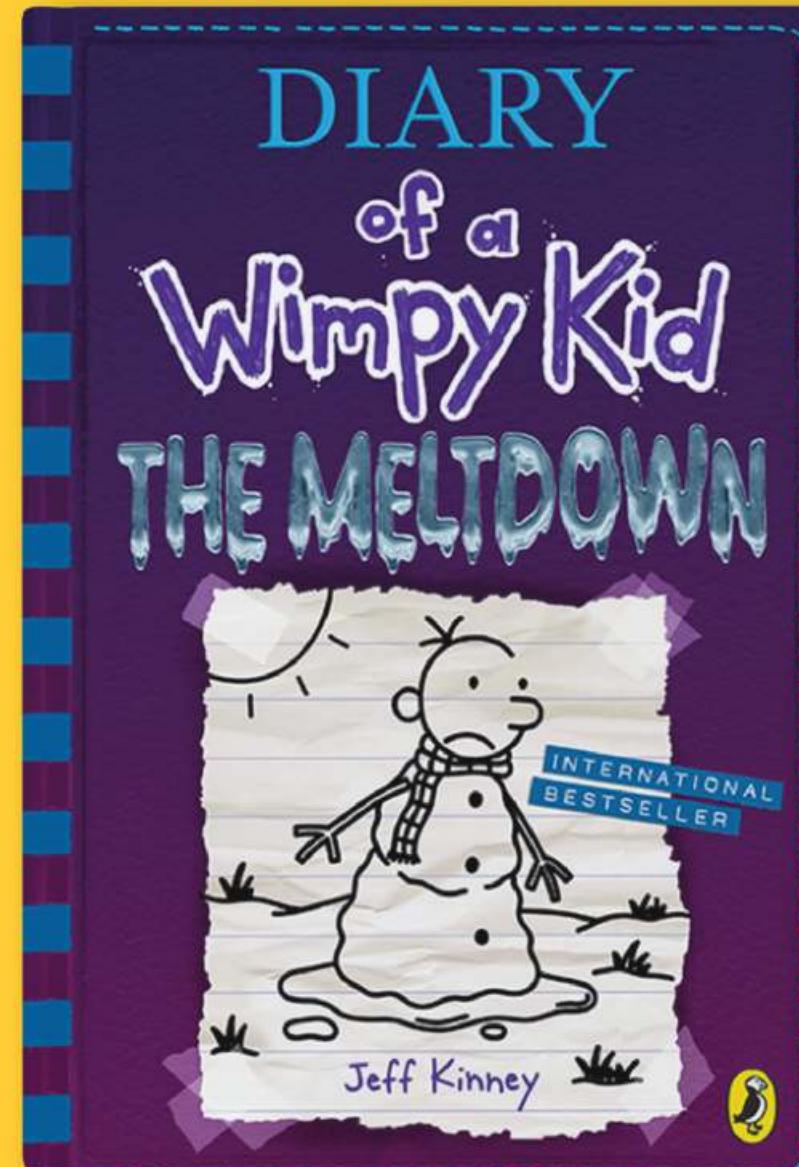
Ravindra Sannareddy

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YOUNG WORLD CLUB.COM

from THE HINDU GROUP

Cheteshwar Pujara – the man for all reasons and seasons

His composure and solidity have been huge factors in India retaining the Border-Gavaskar Trophy; Kohli will seek another influential performance from him at SCG

OZ CHALLENGE

S. DINAKAR
SYDNEY

He has steel in his bones. Does not get flustered by situations or the opposition. And scores with substance over style.

Cheteshwar Pujara's composure and solidity have been massive factors in India retaining the Border-Gavaskar Trophy.

Virat Kohli and his men now eye a historic series triumph in the fourth Test at the SCG.

The skipper will be seeking another influential performance from Pujara.

His two hundreds in the series so far – 123 in Adelaide and 106 at the MCG – have been match-winning efforts. Pujara has blunted and subdued a very good Aussie attack.

Change in mindset

The patient Pujara has even managed to alter Kohli's mindset in the ongoing series. How things change!

In the 2014-15 series, Kohli, who had taken over captaincy after M.S. Dhoni announced a shock retirement from Tests in Melbourne, did not include Pujara in the final Test at the SCG.

The reasoning was that Pujara, unable to force the pace at No. 3, was slowing down the Indian innings. Kohli was keen on momentum, on keeping the scoreboard ticking along briskly.

After the Melbourne Test last Sunday, Kohli said: "Now we have the bowling attack that we can rely on to get us 20 wickets and his [Pujara's] role becomes even more crucial."

Kohli added, "If he can bat

time and hold one end, and all the other batsmen can bat positively around him, we get 350, touching 400, in conditions in Australia, which puts us in a great position to get a result."

To his credit, Pujara has worked on his batting. Last time around down under, he was troubled by the extra

bounce since he was crouch-



Striding tall: India has gained immensely, thanks to the technical adjustments Pujara has made. ■ MICHAEL DODGE/GETTY IMAGES

ing too much in his stance. When the ball climbed, he was unable to get on top of the ball and keep it down.

Now, Pujara is more upright and relaxed in his

stance, in a much better position to play the lifting deliveries.

He is also able to essay the back-footed strokes through point or covers, so crucial on

the Australian pitches.

This has been a series where Pujara has batted intelligently, showing judgement around off, defending the good deliveries, rotating

the strike and waiting for the bowler to err in length.

When the ball was over-pitched, he has driven the sphere firmly off the front foot between cover, mid-off

or down the ground. Anything on his legs, he can whip. And Pujara has picked runs off the pull shot.

Pujara employs his feet against spinners, but has also used pad-play tactfully against the world class off-spinner Nathan Lyon in this series.

The 30-year-old has 328 runs at 54.66 from the three Tests of the series so far. And in 67 Tests overall, he has 5233 runs at 49.73.

If fit, Ashwin could come in for Rohit Sharma, who has flown back to India for personal reasons.

Ashwin, along with physio Patrick Farhat and strength and conditioning coach Shankar Basu, came to the SCG on Tuesday and bowled.

This was not an official fitness test but Ashwin was the lone Indian cricketer at the ground.

The fact that both spinners, Ashwin and Ravindra Jadeja, who bowled capably in Melbourne, can bat will ensure that the batting is not weakened.

Gunning for glory at the SCG, India will need all its bowling resources.

Pant babysits Paine's kids!

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

SYDNEY
Rishabh Pant might be the "baby" of the Indian cricket team but on New Year's Day, the wicket-keeper showed that he is good with babies, something that got an instant thumbs up from none other than Australian skipper Tim Paine's wife.

On Tuesday, Paine's wife Bonnie put up a picture on her Instagram account which had the 21-year-old Pant holding her son during an event at the Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison's residence.

Bonnie, who herself posed in the picture, captioned it 'Best Babysitter' with a smiling Pant by her side.

The reference came after Paine and Pant had a go at each other during the Melbourne Test and the stump



Safe pair of hands: Rishabh Pant with Tim Paine's wife and children. ■ COURTESY: BON PAINES INSTAGRAM ACCOUNT

microphone recorded their enjoyable sledging.

While the Indian 'keeper was batting, Paine referred

to his omission from the ODI side.

"Big MS (Dhoni) is back in the one-day squad too, we

might get him (Pant) down to the (Hobart) Hurricanes we need a batter. Fancy that, Pantsy?

Extend your little Aussie holiday. Beautiful town Hobart too, I'll get you a nice apartment on the waterfront. (I'll) have him over for dinner. Can you babysit? I'll take the wife to the movies one night and you'll look after the kids," the Australian captain was heard saying on the stump mic.

On the very next day, Pant was heard speaking to Mayank Agarwal when Paine came to the crease. "We got a special guest today. Have you ever heard of a temporary captain, ever, Mayank?" Pant said.

However, the picture of Pant with Paine's family is an indicator that the series has so far been played in good spirits.

Australia not getting priorities right

Scheduling the Big Bash during a Test series hurting the side's preparation

S. DINAKAR
SYDNEY

The Australians do not seem to be getting their priorities right. In other words, is enough importance being given to Test-match preparation? Or, are commercial interests hurting Australia's cricket at its very core?

Just consider this: Peter Handscomb was dropped from the team for the third Test at the MCG since the team-management felt all-rounder Mitchell Marsh's seam bowling could take some load off the pacemen.

Handscomb, though, has been retained in the squad for the fourth Test in Sydney. And how does he prepare for the Test? By blasting 70 of 35 deliveries for Melbourne Stars against Sydney Sixers in the Big Bash League (BBL)! Not quite the ideal way to focus on a Test, particularly

MCG pitch 'average'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MELBOURNE

The International Cricket Council (ICC) has rated the MCG pitch used for the third India-Australia Test match as "average", a very similar rating to the Perth track.

when you are still part of the squad.

Actually, Handscomb is not to be blamed. It is the system that has been put in place by Cricket Australia. These are days when Australia's domestic First Class competition Sheffield Shield clashes with the BBL. And

this is not helping the side's Test preparation.

Batting in Tests is a lot about getting your mind tuned in to the demands of the longer format. When batsmen lose concentration and get out to forgettable strokes after settling down, as the Aussies did at the MCG, it shows a lack of mental discipline.

Indeed, some of the stroke selection by leading Australian batsmen in the ongoing series has been disappointing. Application, that ability to focus for long periods, has been absent for most part.

In the past, Australian batsmen would hold their ground, play out spells and win sessions. At the MCG in the second innings, it took Pat Cummins to show the more accomplished batsmen what pride in the bag-

gy green cap meant. It's easy to blame the batting capitulations on the absence of Steve Smith and David Warner. But then, the Australians are not playing India in the sub-continent. They are meeting Kohli's men in familiar conditions, at home.

The influence of limited-overs cricket has increasingly affected Australia's batting depth in Tests and Cricket Australia is not helping the side's cause by allowing the Big Bash (T20) to interrupt the Sheffield Shield, Australia's domestic four-day tournament.

The BCCI does not mix the IPL or Syed Mushtaq Ali (T20) competition with the Ranji Trophy.

Truth to tell, if the Aussies are indeed missing Smith and Warner even at home, then the side's batting resources are very thin indeed.

The transition from romance to pragmatism is complete

India is prepared to win looking "ugly", by grinding it out



BETWEEN WICKETS

SURESH MENON

The change has been gathering pace, and now it is clear: India are prepared to win looking "ugly", by grinding it out.

It is the triumph of pragmatism over romance, placing winning above the dictates of looking pretty. Attractive, wristy (often risky) batsmanship and flattered, tantalising spin – the clichés about Indian cricket – have made way for practical run-making and sustained fast bowling. It is a cultural revolution, no less.

It was an attitude anathema to Indians through generations of "going down fighting attractively", of showing flair and flash that contributed little to the result. But the oohs and aahs as a batsman played a beautiful cover drive usually spared him the condemnations when he threw it away in his 20s or 30s.

Those were the days when a fighting draw was all that mattered. The Indian team transited from perennial Test match losers to one capable of drawing matches to one expected to win as the No. 1 side in the world. But through it all, one theme dominated: it was important to look good. Flair and flash, flamboyance, even a bit of ostentation was rewarded with greater public acclaim.

Class and charm mattered

Sunil Gavaskar and Rahul Dravid might have been the bedrock of the batting in their respective eras, but even these masters of defensive batsmanship were stylish, they had what the public called "class".

Class was important. So was charm. A batsman like Dilip Vengsarkar, No. 1

player in the world, gutsy, hard-hitting and with a wonderful record against the great Windies fast bowlers, was never taken to heart by the Indians. He seemed too focused on his job, too intent on the essential task of scoring runs.

Years ago, I wrote that if Vengsarkar had been born in England and David Gower in India, they might have been properly recognised for their batsmanship. Vengsarkar was a "professional", a besetting sin in Indian eyes, while Gower's class and vulnerability made him unbearably charming. An Indian example was the great Gundappa Viswanath – poetry came with intimations of death.

It was the same with bowling. The visual attraction and legends built around the great spinners – Bhagwat Chandrasekhar, Bishan Bedi, Erappalli Prasanna and S. Venkatraghavan – were milestones around the necks of generations that followed.

Every succeeding left arm spinner was compared to Bedi and lost out in the comparison. For years Indians never forgave Anil Kumble for lacking the poetic vulnerability of Chandrasekhar, for not being an extravagant turner of the ball. World class did not automatically mean India class!

The Melbourne Test – the wonder is not how India won in Adelaide and Melbourne but how they lost in Perth – seems to have completed the transition. A generation more intent on the "what" and less focused on the "how" describes both the players and the majority of their audience back home.

Reflection of society

Cricket and society reflect each other. Flamboyance as a by-product is acceptable, but as the main event will not be forgiven easily if it doesn't lead to victory. K.L. Rahul's struggle is both technical and historical.

Here's an attractive batsman who is out of step with team philosophy.

Whether Cheteshwar Pujara is a product of the new culture or the one who is driving it, he is certainly its finest exemplar.

He made centuries in both the Tests India won, supremely unconcerned about such mundane matters as strike rates and putting bowlers in their place with dismissive, even arrogant batmanship.

His role is clear – that it has taken Indian cricket so long to realise probably due to the inevitable confusion that transition gives rise to. The matter was not psychologically settled till Pujara emerged as the hero of both the connoisseur as well as the one-dimensional fan who abhors complexity.

Pujara has been the unexpected star of the new India – but unexpected only in the eyes of those who haven't been following the trend away from romanticism.

When Virat Kohli first led in Australia four years ago, romance was still king. He led with flair, making two centuries in a Test and throwing everything into a chase that nearly won India the match. "So near and yet so far" – the staple of headlines on the sports pages not so long ago. Kohli became a hero to the generation espousing romance, but a villain to the pragmatists.

The captain had learnt his lesson. In Ravi Shastri he has a manager whose cricket is at the other end of the scale from romantic. India should have won more than one Test in South Africa and England. They lacked the clarity of mind they have displayed in Australia.

There must have been moments during the washed out pre-lunch session on the final day when all the arguments for not enforcing the follow on might have mocked Kohli. But in the end, it needed only two wickets, and India could not be denied.

India need only a draw in Sydney now. Kohli has said he will go for a win. But the shutters will come down quickly this time. It is the new culture.

Ramkumar fights to down Granollers

Rohan Bopanna & Divij Sharan get past Radu Albot & Malek Jaziri

TATA OPEN

N. SUDARSHAN

2019 began memorably for Ramkumar Ramanathan, as he turned in a rousing performance to defeat Spain's Marcel Granollers 4-6, 6-4, 6-4 to enter the second round of the Tata Open Maharashtra at the Balewadi Stadium here on Tuesday.

It was perhaps the right tonic the sparse but enthusiastic crowd needed after Saketh Myneni pulled out of the day's first match against Benoit Paire with a foot injury. Ramkumar ensured fans would go home happy.

The beginning of the match was capricious, with three breaks of serve in the first three games. It finally settled when Granollers held for 3-1. Ramkumar, who of late has increasingly favoured a net-rushing game, served as well as he could,

but couldn't back it up with some smart volleying to make it a winning tactic. Granollers had the set 6-4.

Change of fortunes

The Indian took a break, perhaps to clear his thoughts, and came out for the second set sporting a new T-shirt. With that changed his fortunes too. "I took the break to slow things down," he said later.

"I was broken very early and things were going too fast. So I sort of wanted to slow it down, regroup and tell myself to put in a lot of first serves."

The results were immediate. He won 15 of 18 first serve points and some of them with hitherto weaker aspects of his game, like the backhand cross-court.

Granollers, who is predominantly a baseliner, sought to present Ramkumar with newer problems to solve by

the chair umpire's intervention. It, however, did nothing to break the 24-year-old's concentration as he romped home.

In doubles, the top seeds Rohan Bopanna and Divij Sharan were off to the best possible start, taking down Radu Albot and Malek Jaziri 6-1, 6-2.

Singles: Ramkumar Ramanathan bt Marcel Granollers (Esp) 4-6, 6-4, 6-3; Simone Bolelli (Ita) bt Denis Istomin (Uzb) 6-4, 6-2, 6-3; Ivo Karlovic (Cro) bt Felix Auger-Aliassime 6-4, 7-5; Jiri Vesely (Cze) bt Antoine Hoang (Fra) 4-6, 6-4, 6-4; Benoit Paire (Fra) bt Thiago Monteiro (Bra) 7-6 (5), 6-3; Laslo Djere (Srb) bt Arjun Kadhe 7-5, 7-6(6).

Doubles: Rohan Bopanna & Divij Sharan bt Radu Albot (Mda) & Malek Jaziri (Tun) 6-1, 6-2; Leander Paes & Miguel Angel Reyes-Varela (Mex

Adventurous Bhati bolsters Delhi

Bengal, set a target of 322 for victory, finishes the day on 18 for no loss

Y.B. SARANGI KOLKATA

Delhi found an unlikely hero in No. 9 batsman Subodh Bhati, whose maiden half-century, a breezy 53-ball 62, facilitated his team to set Bengal a stiff target in the Ranji Trophy Group B match at the Eden Gardens here on Tuesday.

Resuming on 41 for two, Delhi benefited from Bhati and Himmat Singh's useful knocks to post 301 in its second innings and set the host a target of 322 for a victory.

Bengal was 18 for no loss at close on the penultimate day.

When Delhi lost its ninth wicket at 221, thanks to another big-hearted five-wicket haul by Bengal trump card Ashoke Dinda, the match looked evenly-poised in the final session.

However, Bhati (62 off 53, 5x4, 6x6) and Kulwant Khejroliya (21 off 18, 3x4, 1x6) swung their arms fearlessly to whip the Bengal bowlers at will and switch the momentum in Delhi's favour in 10 overs.

Earlier, overnight batsmen Kunal Chandela and Nitish Rana added 24 runs before being separated.

Himmat Singh (51 off 92, 7x4) and Jonty Sidhu (42 off 90, 5x4, 1x6) batted sensibly to gather 85 runs for the fifth wicket. Himmat cut and drove, while Sidhu played with a straight bat to gather most of their runs.

Poor shot
Himmat fell to a poor shot outside the off-stump. Sidhu stepped out and was stumped before tea.

Mukesh had Shivank Vashisth caught in the slips with the new ball to end the latter's 32-run stand with Shiva Sharma (27).

Dinda, who hit the right line and length to pick up the wickets of Hiten Dalal and Anuj Rawat overnight and Rana in the morning, shouldered the maximum workload. He had Shivam lbw and Akash Sudan caught behind to complete his 26th five-for and return match figures of nine for 150.

Bhati, known for his batting exploits in club cricket and his 57-ball 200 in Goan league, upset the host's plans by plundering runs at will off bouncers. Bhati not only entertained the holiday crowd

by hammering six sixes between long-on and long-off but also protected Khejroliya to stretch Delhi's lead before being run out.

The scores:

Delhi – 1st innings: 240.

Delhi – 1st innings: 220.

Delhi – 2nd innings: Kunal Chandela c Tiwary b Pramanik 25, Hiten Dalal lbw b Dinda 11, Anuj Rawat c Tiwary b Dinda 10, Nitish Rana lbw b Dinda 17, Himmat Singh c Pan b Mukesh 51, Jonty Sidhu st Pan b Pramanik 42, Shivam Sharma lbw b Dinda 27, Shivank Vashisth c Majumder b Mukesh 9, Subodh Bhati run out 62, Akash Sudan c Pan b

Dinda 8, Kulwant Khejroliya (not out) 21; Extras (b-1, lb-12, nb-2, w-3): 18; Total (in 96.4 overs): 301.

Fall of wickets: 1-19, 2-31, 3-65, 4-72, 5-157, 6-169, 7-201, 8-201, 9-221.

Bengal bowling: Dinda 30-7-88-5, Mukesh 23-4-8-71-2, Pramanik 18-5-45-2, Gani 11-1-38-0, Tiwary 1-0-7-0, Writtick 12-3-31-0, Majumder 1-0-8-0.

Bengal – 2nd innings: Abhishek Raman (batting) 8, Abhimanyu Easwaran (batting) 6; Extras (b-4): 4; Total (for no loss in three overs): 18.

Delhi bowling: Khejroliya 2-0-11-0, Bhati 1-0-3-0.

RANJI TROPHY SCORES, DAY THREE

Elite Group A

At Bengaluru: Karnataka 418 & 113 for four in 34 overs (Manish Pandey 57 batting) vs Chhattisgarh 283 in 89 overs (Amandeep Khare 45, Harpreet Singh Bhatia 120, Ajay Mandal 41, Abhimanyu Mithun four for 64, Rohit More five for 48).



At Pune: Maharashtra 230 & 137 for six in 47 overs (Naushad Shaikh 40) vs Gujarat 545 for eight decl. in 130 overs (Kathan Patel 107, Chintan Gaja 53, Priyank Panchal 141, Manpreet Juneja 87, Piyush Chawla 50 n.o.).

At Delhi: Baroda 313 & 157 in 55 overs (Krupal Pandya 104, Amit Mishra seven for 50) bt Railways 200 & 106 in 39.4 overs (Bharat Bhatt five for 43).

Points: Baroda 6 (20), Railways 0 (7).

At Nagpur: Vidarbha 511 bt Mumbai 252 in 78.5 overs (Jay Bista 64, Shubham Ranjane 52, Dhrumil Matkar 62 n.o., Akshay Wakhare five for 85) & 114 in 34.4 overs (Aditya Sarwate six for 48).

Points: Vidarbha 7 (28), Mumbai 0 (11).

Group B

At Vizianagaram: Hyderabad 271 & 33 for no loss in 10 overs

vs Andhra 502 for seven decl. in 154 overs (C.R. Gnaneshwar 65, Ricky Bhui 129, K.S. Bharat 178 n.o.).

At Kolkata: Delhi 240 & 301 in 96.4 overs (Himmat Singh 51, Jonty Sidhu 42, Subodh Bhati 62, Ashoke Dinda five for 88) vs Bengal 220 & 18 for no loss in three overs.

At Indore: Madhya Pradesh 265 & 193 in 58.5 overs (Rajat Patidar 54, Gurvinder Singh six for 63) bt Himachal Pradesh 127 & 191 in 44.4 overs (Pankaj Jaiswal 44).

Points: MP 6 (24), HP 0 (22).

At Mohali: Kerala 121 & 223 in 73.1 overs (Mohammed Azharuddin 112, Mayank Markande four for 56) lost to Punjab 217 & 131 for no loss in 27.4 overs (Jiwanjot Singh 48 n.o., Shubman Gill 69 n.o.).

Points: Punjab 7 (20), Kerala 0 (20).

At Guwahati: Assam 128 & 245 lost to Jammu & Kashmir 144 & 231 for six in 69.3 overs (Shubham Khajuria 67, Parvez Rasool 67).

Points: J&K 6 (19), Assam 0 (20).

At Porvorim: Goa 244 & 199 for five in 49.3 overs (Sagun Kamat 271 & 33 for no loss in 10 overs

vs Andhra 84 batting) vs Rajasthan 513 for eight decl. in 138 overs (Chetan Bist 63, Mahipal Lomror 89, Robin Bist 169 n.o., Ashok Menaria 76, Tajinder Singh 40).

At Ranchi: Tripura 253 for nine & 146 for two in 52 overs (Bishal Ghosh 61, Udiyan Bose 73 batting) vs Jharkhand 409 in 111.4 overs (Kumar Deobrat 150, Md. Nazim 134, Neelambuj Vats five for 50).

At Delhi: Odisha 177 & 65 for one in 28 overs vs Services 417 for eight decl. in 141 overs (N.K. Singh 64, Ravi Chauhan 48, Rajat Paliwal 62, Vikas Rathwala 115 n.o.).

Plate

At Jorhat: Bihar 440 for nine decl. bt Mizoram 77 & 147 in 62.2 overs (Taruwar Kohli 76, Samar Quadri four for 50, Ashutosh Aman five for 28).

Points: Bihar 7 (34), Mizoram 0 (1).

At Dimapur: Arunachal Pradesh 135 & 122 in 53.5 overs (Abrar Kazi six for 22) lost to Nagaland 377 for nine decl.

Points: Nagaland 7 (15), Arunachal Pradesh 0 (3).

At Bhubaneswar: Sikkim 219 & 72 for two in 33 overs vs Meghalaya 826 for seven decl. in 171.4 overs (R.R. Biswa 175, Punit Bisht 343, Yogesh Nagar 148, Gurinder Singh 101 n.o.).



Bold is gold: No. 9 Subodh Bhati played fearless cricket to help himself to a half-century. ■ PTI

Selection headaches for SA and Pakistan

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA CAPE TOWN

South Africa and Pakistan must resolve selection headaches ahead of the second Test starting at Newlands on Thursday.

South Africa's six-wicket win in the first Test at Centurion was set up by the bowling of Duanne Olivier, who had match figures of 11 for 96.

Olivier got his chance because of an injury to Vernon Philander, who is fit again and will "definitely come back" to play at his home ground, according to captain Faf du Plessis.

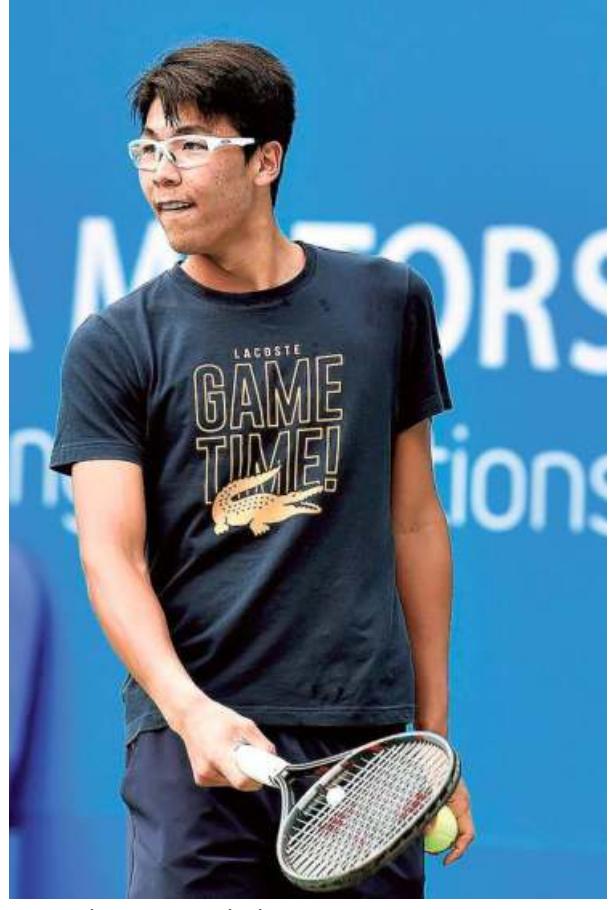
Philander has taken 49 wickets in nine Tests at Newlands at an average of 16.55.

Despite his performance at Centurion, Olivier is unlikely to be picked ahead of Kagiso Rabada, who finished 2018 as the world's top-ranked Test bowler, or Dale Steyn, South Africa's all-time leading wicket-taker.

Nor is South Africa likely to risk going into a Test at Newlands without spinner Keshav Maharaj. Which means Olivier will only play at the expense of a specialist batsman, with Theunis de Bruyn the most likely to make way.

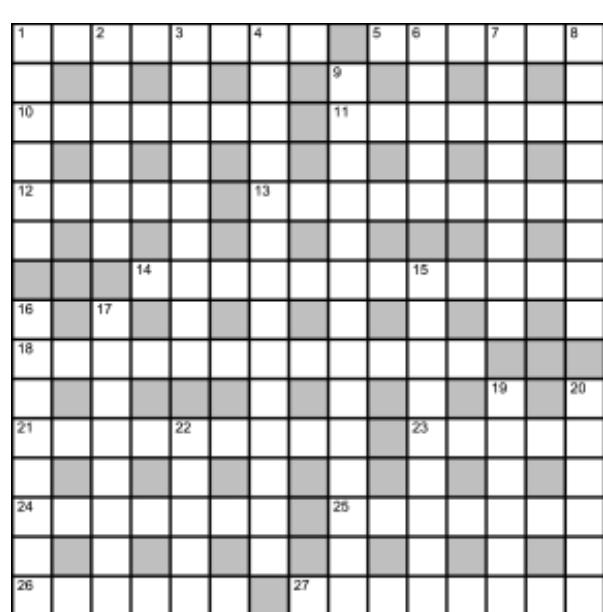
Pakistan will also be welcoming back a first-choice fast bowler in Mohammad Abbas, with captain Sarfraz Ahmed saying after Centurion that Abbas had fully recovered from a shoulder injury.

Also fit after missing the first Test is batsman Haris Sohail, who seems certain to return.



Hyeon Chung...aiming high. ■ R. RAGU

THE HINDU CROSSWORD 12513



ACROSS

- 1 Southern head to call for strike (8)
- 5 Jerk about to operate device (6)
- 10 Trump's latest drivel set off demonstration (7)
- 11 Crow tackled by flightless bird around shade provided by trees (7)

12 Flings are ultimately disgraceful for married characters (5)

13 Lights up harmful explosive in America (9)

14 Walk slowly and wearily to stall (4,4,4)

18 Painkillers cured nastiest ache (12)

21 One in recreation room playing darts mostly! Boring guy (4,5)

23 Endless innuendo destroyed marriage (5)

24 Grand old lady activist holds sway (7)

25 Swimmer going west to check reverse type of current (3,4)

26 Serious debates about Britain exiting (6)

27 Braggarts caught in indecent sites (8)

DOWN

- 1 Food and drink on ferry (6)
- 2 Very upset about sour smells (6)

(set by Dr. X)

3 Reporters tackling undeniable adversities (9)

4 Being dismissed for what one might be doing on Thanksgiving Day? (7,3,4)

6 Release gangster and loafer (5)

7 One besieged by frightfully earnest pupils (8)

8 Scooter working after injection of a little engine oil (8)

9 Calling a halt to emptying the bath? (7,3,4)

15 Lush to imbibe endless feni heartily in party (9)

16 Rushes from scoundrel involved in affairs (8)

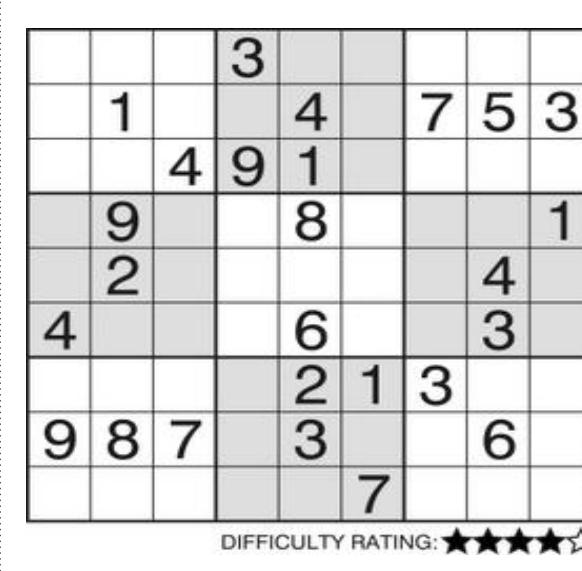
17 Harassed husband roared angrily to stifle wife (8)

19 Restrains drunk son crossing motorway (6)

20 Ridicules nationalist interrupting wise men (6)

22 Girl going in to beat up a little troublesome drunk (5)

SUDOKU



DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★☆

Solution to puzzle 12512 Solution to yesterday's Sudoku



RELIGION UGLIER OIODE TABOO INNOVATES AEFGOEE THRIFTIER SHRED ETTE DISESHOPEDIN ONE TEE BREATHSPHERE SEDOTERUR EVADEWHINGEING SMPLFHNA STONEDDAFORGAN EUNERESD DERIDECRITERIA

FAITH

Chera king's devotion

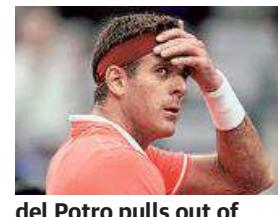
Those who are immersed in bhakti will see God in everything around them, said Sarala Rajagopal, in a discourse. Perumakkodai was born in the Chera royal family. But, he was not interested in the luxurious life of a king. He went to the temple in Thiruvanjikkalam, and served the deity there. He would bathe the early in the morning, apply sacred ash on his forehead and then begin his service in the temple. If Perumakkodai chanced to see someone with sacred ash on his forehead, he would see that person as Lord Siva Himself.

Chengoporaiyan was the king of Kodunkulam. He wanted to become a sanyasin. So, the ministers asked Perumakkodai to assume kingship. Perumakkodai was reluctant, because he was afraid that if he ascended the throne, he would be unable to serve the Lord. But Lord Siva asked him to accept the position, and to serve his people. The Lord gave him weapons, chariots and other things a king would need. Lord Siva also conferred on him the ability to know the thoughts of others. Because Perumakkodai ruled the Chera kingdom, he came to be called Cheraman Perumal Nayanan. Because he was able to understand the needs of all living things, he was able to relieve them of suffering. One day, Cheraman Perumal Nayanan prayed at Thiruvanjikkalam, and then went around the streets of the town on his royal elephant. He saw a washerman, his body covered with lime, walking on the streets. To the king, whose mind was filled with thoughts of Lord Siva, it seemed as if the washerman's body was covered with sacred ash. Taking him to be a devotee of Lord Siva, the king alighted from the elephant. He offered his respects to the washerman. The latter said, "I am a washerman." And the king replied, "And I am your servant." Such was Cheraman Perumal Nayanan's bhakti.

TV PICKS

PBL: Star Sports 1 (SD & HD), 6.45 p.m.
Ranji Trophy: Star Sports 2 (SD & HD), 9 a.m.
Tata Open Maharashtra: SS Select 2 (SD & HD), 2.40 p.m.
NBA: Sony Ten 1 ESPN (SD & HD), 9 a.m.
Hopman Cup: Sony Ten 2 (SD & HD), 7.10 a.m. & 2.40 p.m.

IN BRIEF



del Potro pulls out of Australian Open

MELBOURNE

Argentina's Juan Martin del Potro said that he was still recovering from a knee injury and would not be able to play at the Australian Open, the first Grand Slam event of the 2019 tennis season. "I hope you have a great 2019. Recovery is going great and I will tell you later where I will be making my comeback. Unfortunately, it won't happen in Australia, I'll miss you @AustralianOpen, but I'm happy with my progress!" the World No. 5 tweeted on Monday. "Happy New Year! Enjoy!" IANS

No direct qualification for Lanka, Bangladesh

DUBAI

Sri Lanka and Bangladesh failed to get direct qualification for T20 World Cup's Super 12s owing to their low rankings. The ICC on Tuesday stated that Pakistan, India, England, Australia, South Africa, New Zealand, West Indies and Afghanistan will start their campaign directly in the Super 12s. Sri Lanka and Bangladesh will have to contend with the other six qualifiers in the group stage of the tournament, which will be held from October 18 to November 15, 2020. PTI



Body first, ranking later, says Nadal

BRISBANE

Rafael Nadal insisted on Tuesday that he is not chasing the top ranking as he prepares to make a comeback from ankle surgery, with taking care of his body a key priority. "My goal is just to be happy doing what I am doing and be competitive all the weeks that I am playing," he said. "I want to feel myself competitive every week that I am on court. So I will not (chase) the No.1 because it's not my main goal." AFP

Legion of Honour for French WC champions

PARIS

The players in France's football team which last year won the World Cup, on Tuesday were awarded the Legion of Honour in the new year's honours list. The 23 players each received France's top medal. The French team that won the 1998 World Cup also received the Legion of Honour. AFP

RWITC's clarification

RACING CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI

In order to clarify rumours that the RWITC has cancelled several Mumbai race days and so on, the stewards of the club have said in a press release that the RWITC Ltd has decided to cancel only one race day i.e. Thursday (January 3).

Moreover, in view of the present financial crisis which the Club is passing through, the committee of the Club, at its meeting held on December 30, took the decision not to cancel any further race day and to continue racing throughout the season 2018-19, pay 75% of the advertised stakes for the races to be held in January 2019 and make no reduction in advertised stake-money of sweepstake and graded races.

The decisions would be reviewed at the end of January.

Sindhu outlasts Saina in marathon

The former bounces back from a first-game loss, spearheads Hunters to victory

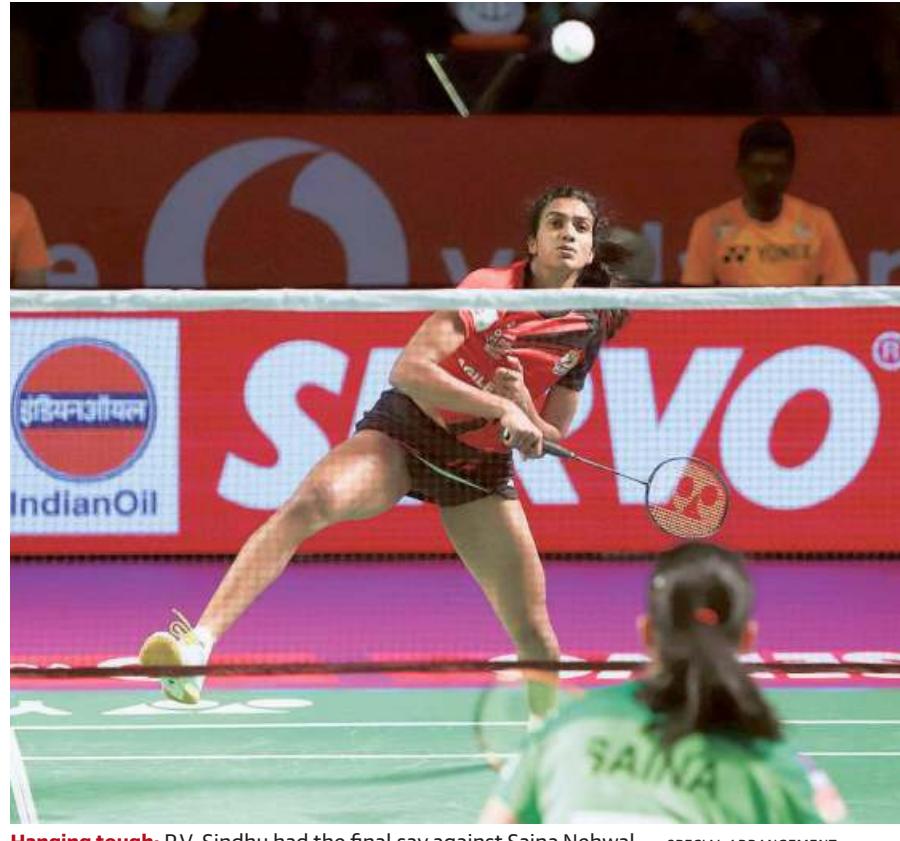
PBL

NANDAKUMAR MARAR PUNE

Saina Nehwal got the loudest cheers on her first appearance in Season 4 of the Premier Badminton League while P.V. Sindhu earned the maximum points and hammered out a 11-15, 15-9, 15-5 win in women's singles in the most entertaining contest of the night. The latter was the inspiration in a resounding victory for Hyderabad Hunters against North Eastern Warriors.

Hunters' men's singles specialists Lee Hyun Il and Mark Caljouw produced powerhouse performances to snuff out the Warriors' resistance. Lee won a Trump Match against Tanongsak Saensomboonsuk; so did Mark against Tian Houwei, putting the tie beyond Warriors' reach.

Sindhu and Saina are considered the trumpcards of Indian badminton from different generations. Though not engaged in a Trump Match, it did not matter to the fans at the Balewadi stadium whose rousing welcome set the stage for an in-



Hanging tough: P.V. Sindhu had the final say against Saina Nehwal. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

teresting battle between form and experience and current World No. 3 against No. 9. Sharp on court and switching seamlessly be-

tween defence and offence, Saina broke into a clenched fist celebration after winning the opening game.

Playing true to her reputa-

clever use of angles to pile on the pressure and clinch the second game. Though Saina had regained momentum, she had to play catch up in the face of ruthless smashes from across the net as Sindhu cruised home. Hunters led 3-1 at this stage.

Lee prevails

South Korea's Lee faced off against Thai Tanongsak in a match between two left-handers, finding their own angles to send the bird gliding across the net. Both attempted to deceive the other using wristy, deceptive shots. The former accumulated points with a hint of authority, only to face a hard time against the latter's retrieving skills. The tie went to the decider, serving up a thrill for the fans watching the Korean turning on the aggression when it mattered most.

The results: Hyderabad Hunters bt North Eastern Warriors

(Kim Sa Rang & Eom Hye Won lost to Kim Ha Na & Lao Min Chun 8-15, 14-15; Lee Hyun Il-(T) bt Tanongsak Saensomboonsuk 10-15, 15-13, 15-9; P.V. Sindhu bt Saina Nehwal 11-15, 15-9, 15-5; Mark Caljouw bt Tian Houwei-(T) 15-11, 15-14).

Federer wins Serena showdown

American calls it match of her career



Clash of the titans: Federer said he was thrilled to play against Serena, who has more Grand Slam titles than him. The American has 23 to the Swiss maestro's 20. ■ AP

HOPMAN CUP

AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE PERTH

Roger Federer took the honours in the much-anticipated mixed doubles clash with fellow great Serena Williams in what the latter described as the "match of her career" at the Hopman Cup here on Tuesday.

In the biggest mixed doubles drawcard in the 31-year history of the tournament, in what is expected to be its final edition, Federer teamed with Belinda Bencic to win 4-2, 4-3(5-3) under the Fast4 format over Serena and Francis Tiafoe and the Group B tie for Switzerland.

However, even a rare defeat couldn't take the gloss off the experience of facing Federer for the first, and almost certainly the only, time. "I was so excited and literally it was the match of my career," she said.

Federer said he was thrilled to play against one of the few players with more Grand Slam titles.

If Switzerland beats Greece on Thursday, it will be through to the final.

The results: Group B: Switzerland bt USA 2-1 (Roger Federer bt Frances Tiafoe 6-4, 6-1; Bencic & Federer bt Serena & Tiafoe 4-2, 4-3(5-3)).

Vardy scores Leicester winner

Arsenal bounces back with thrashing of Fulham

PREMIER LEAGUE

ASSOCIATED PRESS LIVERPOOL

Jamie Vardy scored the Premier League's first goal of 2019 to earn Leicester a 1-0 win at Everton in a low-quality match to begin the new year on Tuesday.

In the second match of the day, Arsenal put behind its hammering at the hands of Liverpool with a authoritative 4-1 dismantling of relegation threatened Fulham.

Granit Xhaka, Alexandre Lacazette, Aaron Ramsey and Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang scored for the Gunners.

In a goal that summed up the home side's sloppy display, Everton winger Theo Walcott misdirected a header from a clearance and teammate Michael Keane then mis-controlled the ball to allow Ricardo Pereira to play in Vardy.



Cartwheeling hero: Jamie Vardy scored 2019's first Premier League goal in Leicester's win over Everton. ■ REUTERS

The former England striker slotted a low finish past goalkeeper Jordan Pickford and celebrated his 58th-minute goal with a somersault.

This was Leicester's third win in four games over the festive period – the other victories over Chelsea and Manchester City were mixed in with a surprise home loss to Cardiff – and the team is now firmly in the top half of the standings.

The results: Everton 0 lost to Leicester 1 (Vardy 58); Arsenal 4 (Xhaka 25, Lacazette 55, Ramsey 79, Aubameyang 83) bt Fulham 1 (Kamara 69).



WHO WAS THE BEST TRACK & FIELD ATHLETE OF THE YEAR? YOU DECIDE.

THE NOMINEES ARE:

Male: A. Jinson Johnson B. Neeraj Chopra C. Arpinder Singh
Female: D. Hima Das E. Swapna Barman F. Dutee Chand

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Riya calls the shots

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA BALLARI

Dominating performance by Delhi's Riya Tokas in the 54kg category marked the second day of the third women's National boxing championships here on Tuesday.

Riya landed a flurry of punches in the first round against her opponent V. Vinodini from Tamil Nadu. She continued her attacking approach in the next two rounds to register a unanimous 5-0 victory.

Sohini from Chandigarh was in sublime form getting

the better of Sai Sree Reddy from Telangana in the 69 kg category.

The closest bout of the day was fought between Babita Bisht of Uttarakhand and Suman Khoda of Rajasthan in the 69kg category.

Other results (first round):

69kg: Sohini (Cd) bt Sai Sree Reddy (Ts); Babita Bisht (Utk) bt Suman Khoda (Raj).

60kg: Karnataka Bhavya (Kar) Som Maya Subba (Skm).

Bantamweight: Riya Chouhan (Pun) Pouloki Sarkar (Ben).

64kg: Sandhya (HP) bt Sonal Rasal; Gagandeep Kaur (Pun) bt Simran Mendon (Mah) 5-0.

As it turned out, the tie



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IN BRIEF



Drink and drive: free milk for New Year's eve

JAIPUR
Several social welfare organisations came together to offer free milk to the residents of Jaipur on New Year's eve. A poster with the message *Daar peekar nahn, dooh peekar karo navvarsh ka swagat* (Welcome the New Year by sipping milk, not liquor) announced the initiative at prominent junctions. IANS



NASA spacecraft New Horizons on Tuesday flew past the most distant world ever studied by humankind, Ultima Thule, a frozen relic of the early solar system that could reveal how planets formed. Scientists are waiting for the images collected by the spacecraft. AFP



Spacey's request to skip court appearance denied

BOSTON
Actor Kevin Spacey must appear in a Massachusetts court on accusations that he groped a young man in 2016, a judge ruled on Monday. The actor had requested to be excused from attending an arraignment because his presence would "amplify the negative publicity already generated in connection with this case." AP

Kader Khan – the actor who wrote the best lines

Prolific across genres, he transformed experience into unforgettable dialogue

NAMRATA JOSHI
MUMBAI

Kader Khan's career in Hindi cinema seemed split into two – the screenwriter and the actor; further when it came to acting, there were the villains he played as against the comedians; and, in terms of the star eras, there was the Amitabh Bachchan phase that led later into the Govinda years. Through all the years, encompassing hundreds of films, Khan remained at the top of his game, specially as a writer.

He died on Monday at the age of 81.

Khan would be best remembered as the influential writer who defined entertainment in the 70s and the 80s and guided film-making of the time in his own way. So Amitabh Bachchan may have been the face of Prakash Mehra's *Sharaabi* (1984) but look closely and the film is sustained on the streetwise lingo and dialogue that Khan wrote.

Khan was prolific in his output which traversed many genres – family, social, political, action, comedy, romance.

Rough childhood

Born and raised in the midst of poverty in Kamathipura, a lot of his early struggles, the deprivation and pain, also made its way into the scenarios of films like *Laawaris* (1981) and *Mugaddar Ka Sikandar* (1978).

The graveyard scene in the latter draws from his own childhood when he used to run away to the cemetery to sit between the graves and enact scenes from what he saw and experienced during the day and declaim random lines.

It was there that he was



Kader Khan in a photo dated March 17, 2012. • AFP

spotted by theatreperson Ashraf Khan and steered towards the stage.

An engineer by training, who became a professor of civil engineering, Khan often claimed that his first love had always been theatre. "I used to teach the theory of structure, hydraulics, strength of material, RCC steel, but my subjects which I used to like were theatre, Stanislavsky, Maxim Gorky, Chekhov, Dostoevsky – these are my other teachers. So my life was split into two," he said in an interview to Connie Haham, author of the biography *Enchantment of the Mind: Manmohan Desai's Films*.

Producer Ramesh Behl of Rose Movies approached Khan to write a film and so Narendra Bedi's *Jawani Diwani* (1972) marked his debut as a writer. He claimed to have written the film in four hours flat and the shooting for it started within three days of him having wrapped it up, a re-

cord of sorts. He got ₹1500 for the film, a royal sum considering he hadn't earned more than ₹500 before that.

A few years later, the dialogue for *Khel Khel Mein* (1975) earned him ₹10,000, he recollects in the Haham interview.

Master of patois

Khan's words were witty, satirical, dramatic. His signature style was all about the use of colloquial idiom, street patois and everyday language and speech. All stitched perfectly to the character. It was what endeared him to filmmaker Manmohan Desai.

According to the Haham interview, Desai gifted him a Panasonic TV, a gold bracelet and ₹25,000 on hearing the narration of *Roti* (1974) and increased his writing fee from ₹25,000 to ₹1 lakh.

Like Salim-Javed, Khan was a star-writer of the times. He was also a rare one to have balanced himself between the two big Bolly-

wood camps – that of Desai and Prakash Mehra. The list of hits for both includes *Amar Akbar Anthony* (1977), *Dharam Veer* (1977) and *Coolie* (1983) on the one hand and *Mugaddar Ka Sikandar* (1978), *Laawaris* (1981) and *Sharaabi* (1984) on the other.

Transcending geography
He wasn't just divided between the two. There was also a third force that came to work later.

He was much sought after by the southern production houses such as Padmalaya – and filmmakers like K. Raghavendra Rao, K. Bapaiah, Dasi Narayan Rao, D. Rama Naidu – to do the script and dialogue for the Hindi remakes of their films. These included *Himmatwala* (1983), *Justice Choudhury* (1983), *Mawaali* (1983), *Tohfa* (1984), *Haisiyat* (1984), *Naya Kadam* (1984), and *Singhasan* (1986).

He didn't just translate the original films into Hindi but transposed them into a new north Indian setting, culture, context and language.

Khan's innings in acting kicked off with Rajesh Khanna's romantic court-room drama on bigamy *Daag* (1973), where he played an attorney.

A lot of the strength of his performances emanated from the timbre of his voice, the easily identifiable baritone.

In fact one of his films *Be-naam* (1974) is all about the voice. He is the title character but not present in the film, only heard. In his later years he formed a formidable comic pair with Govinda – be it the many 'No.1' films, especially *Hero No. 1* (1997) or *Dulhe Raja* (1998).

A man of many parts

A flashback of some of Kader Khan's best roles, dialogues

DIPTAKIRITI CHAUDHURI

Bachchan, Jeetendra, Govinda – action, emotion, comedy. Kader Khan wrote the entire spectrum of 'filmi' emotions in an extremely durable writing career of about 30 years. A look at some of his films:

Amar Akbar Anthony:
"Aise toh aadmi life mein doich time bhaagta hai, Olympic ka race ho ya police ka case ho!" drawled Anthony-bhai in typical Mumbai tapori lingo. Manmohan Desai's favourite dialogue-writer, Khan endeared himself to the director by using everyday language, coming up with punchlines and doing so at a speed that matched the maker's scorching pace.

Mugaddar Ka Sikandar: "Zinda hai who log jo maut se takrate hain. Murdo se badtar hai woh log jo maut se ghabrate hain..." With these lines, Kader Khan made it big with Prakash Mehra as well, writing dialogues that would transport Amitabh Bachchan from a superstar to a megastar.

Himmatwala: "Tumhari loot maar ko khatham karke, tumhari zabardasti ki hukumat ko ujaadna wala, himmatwala," screamed the hero. A misunderstanding with Bachchan saw Khan move to the south for a slew of films (many starring Jeetendra). Some of his scripts were criticised for their crass humour but Khan clearly knew the audience's pulse as all of them were wildly popular with the masses.

Agneepath: "Yeh chhe foot ka body ludkane ke liye chaar inch ka goli kam pad gaya, maloom?" Probably his best script, Khan revealed in an interview that he had recorded all the lines on a tape and given it to Bachchan to help him un-



Tribute in colour: Students of Gurukul Art School paint Kader Khan portraits in Mumbai on Tuesday. • EMMANUEL YOGIN

derstand the voice modulation and delivery. The lines became cult classics and Bachchan's performance won a National Award.

Coolie No. 1: "Duniya mera ghar hai, bus stand mera adda hai, jab mann kare aa jaana, Raju mera naam hai aur pyar se log mujhe bulaate hain Coolie number one". Khan handled the Bachchan-Govinda transition with aplomb. By now, his original hero was a pale shadow of himself but he was still writing whistle-inducing dialogues for the Hero No. 1.

Comedy, villainy, conscience-keeping. Probably due to Khan's super-prolific output, his landmark roles tend to get lost and he doesn't get enough credit for the wide range of roles – many of which he wrote the lines for!

Inquilaab: Kader Khan's stellar career as a menacing, conniving villain is epitomised by this character – an unscrupulous political leader who manipulates Amitabh Bachchan's character. His measured movements and deliberate dialogue delivery were an asset for this 'mastermind' kind of roles.

Baap Numbrui Beta Dus Numbri: Kader Khan

stopped being a villain quite emotionally when he saw his sons getting ridiculed and even beaten up for his negative roles. He started doing comic roles in the mid-1980s and soon formed a partnership with Shakti Kapoor (who often called Kader Khan his guru). This film is one of their more hilarious outings, where the comic duo called the shots!

Hum: In a double role, Kader Khan played an Army General and a *nautanki* actor. The former was a 'ka-dak' soldier and had quite a few sharp lines about patriotism while the latter was bit of a flake with silly lines by the dozen. In the film, the latter was called on to replace the former and Khan uncorked mayhem!

Angaar: An under-discussed but complex role, where he played Jahangir Khan, a benevolent don ruling over Mumbai. His ego was intertwined with his benevolence, his benevolence at odds with his love for his sons and the love for his sons overshadowed by his ego. It was neither a villainous nor heroic character and Khan brought interesting dimensions to it.

(The writer has authored five books, four of which are on Hindi cinema)

Parallel Lit Fest to begin on Jan. 27

It is dedicated to Urdu writer Razia

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
JAIPUR
The second edition of the Parallel Literature Festival (PLF), which started last year as an answer to the Jaipur Literature Festival, will be organised here from January 27 to 29 to provide a forum to distinguished personalities from the fields of literature, art, culture and cinema. Speakers have been invited from 20 States as well as from Sri Lanka and Nepal.

Creativity will be showcased on the lush green lawns, art galleries, studio theatre and open air theatre of Jaipur's cultural centre, Ravindra Manch, where the three-day event will be held. The six stages to be set up at the venue will be named after the writers and books of the Progressive Writers' Movement.

He said the PLF was opposed to the nexus among the tourism, hotel and publication industries for holding big literary events.

Against corporatisation

Mr. Talwar, general secretary of the Rajasthan Progressive Writers' Association, said the growing "lit fest merchandise culture", which aimed at corporatisation of literature and arts, was anathema to initiatives like the PLF.

He said the PLF was opposed to the nexus among the tourism, hotel and publication industries for holding big literary events.

New Year splash



Daring dive: Some of Italy's braver souls continued a seven-decade-old New Year's tradition on Tuesday, leaping off a bridge in Rome into the chilly waters of the river Tiber in Rome. • AP

Sydney gets the year wrong at celebration

Picture with typo goes viral on Twitter

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
SYDNEY

The spectacular fireworks show on Sydney's harbour that rang in 2019 and dazzled spectators around the world was picture perfect, except for one element – it got the year wrong.

More than 1.5 million people packed the harbour front of Australia's largest city to watch the extravaganza, and noticed signage beamed onto one of the Sydney Harbour Bridge's pylons had the words "Happy New Year 2018!"

Photos of the typo were shared on social media sites.

"According to Sydney, it's still 2018, so I'm going back to bed," one Twitter user quipped. Another wrote: "Oh will this horrible year never end."

Organisers the City of Sydney, who invested huge



The display with a typo, as shared on social media. • REUTERS

resources and time into planning one of the world's first New Year's parties, saw the funny side of the mistake.

"We just laughed about it, you know these things happen as we said, it takes 15 months to organise an event of this size and scale," the fireworks' executive producer Anna McInerney said.

Makers of 'Pooey Puitton' file lawsuit against Louis Vuitton

Toy purse makers say it does not infringe on trademark

REUTERS
A California toy company has sued Louis Vuitton to stop the French luxury goods maker from interfering with its sales of 'Pooey Puitton', a slime-filled, poop-shaped toy purse for children.

In a complaint filed on Friday in Los Angeles federal court, MGA Entertainment Inc said no reasonable consumer would mistake Pooey Puitton, which retails for \$59.99, for costlier Louis Vuitton handbags.

MGA called Pooey Puitton a protected parody "designed to mock, criticise, and make fun of that wealth and celebrity" associated with Louis Vuitton products and rejected what it called

Pooey Puitton purse

Louis Vuitton's claim of trademark infringement to an MGA customer.

Only a 'parody'

"The use of the Pooey name and Pooey product in association with a product line of 'magical unicorn poop' is intended to criticise or

Can algorithms show the path to happiness?

Start-up uses artificial intelligence to identify behavioural changes to improve employee satisfaction

DAISUKE WAKABAYASHI
MOUNTAIN VIEW

Technology companies like to promote artificial intelligence's potential for solving some of the world's toughest problems, like reducing automobile deaths and helping doctors diagnose diseases. A company started by three former Google employees is pitching AI as the answer to a more common problem: being happier at work.

The startup, Humu, is based in Google's hometown, and it builds on some of the people-analytics programs pioneered by the Internet giant, which has studied things like the traits that define great managers and how to foster better teamwork. Humu wants to bring similar data-driven insights to other companies. It digs through employee surveys using artificial intelligence to identify one or two behavioural changes that are likely to make the biggest impact on elevating a work force's happiness.

Timely nudges

Then it uses emails and text messages to "nudge" individual employees into small actions that advance the larger goal. At a company where workers feel that the way decisions are made is opaque, Humu might nudge a manager before a meeting to ask the members of her team for input and to be prepared to change her mind.

At the heart of Humu's efforts is the company's "nudge engine" (yes, it's trademarked). It is based on economist Richard Thaler's Nobel Prize-winning research into how people often make decisions because of what is easier rather than what is in their best interest, and how a well-timed nudge can prompt them to make



Always learning: Laszlo Bock, who led many of Google's human-resources analytics efforts. • NY TIMES / PETER DASILVA

we hope we can be. But we need to be reminded. A nudge can have a powerful impact if correctly deployed on how people behave and on human performance."

Sanjiv Razdan, the chief operating officer at Sweetgreen, a salad chain and one of Humu's customers, said that if nudges did not have a track record at Google, he would probably consider the concept a bunch of "hocus-pocus happiness nonsense."

But after receiving nudges for a few months himself in emails, Mr. Razdan said the bite-size reminders made it easy to take action right away. In one instance, he said, he was prompted to ask members of his team for their opinions on decisions he was facing. NY TIMES



Pooey Puitton purse

Louis Vuitton's claim of trademark infringement to an MGA customer.

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