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Year of Exam	Cut-off Marks for General Category	Data from UPSC website	MARKS DELIVERED FROM OUR 10 RED BOOKLETS
2018	99 (Expected)	154	
2017	105.34	154	
2016	116	152	
2015	107.34	168	
2014	205 (incl. CSAT Marks)	162 (GS) + 140 (CSAT)	
2013	248 (incl. CSAT Marks)	168 (GS) + 148 (CSAT)	

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NEARBY



HC pulls up lower court in Soumya murder case

NEW DELHI
 The Delhi High Court on Thursday asked a trial court here to give reasons for not concluding trial in the 2008 sensational murder case of TV journalist Soumya Viswanathan. "The trial court will also send the latest report on why despite almost nine and a half years having passed since the chargesheet was filed, the trial has not concluded," the court said.

DELHI METRO ▶ PAGE 1

Talwar & Saxena sent to ED's custody

NEW DELHI
 The Enforcement Directorate on Thursday got custody of lobbyist Deepak Talwar and AgustaWestland VVIP chopper deal case accused Rajiv Saxena, hours after they were brought from Dubai. The agency suspects the role of senior public servants and political leaders in the cases under investigation. While Mr. Talwar has been sent to seven-day ED custody, the agency has got four-day remand of Mr. Saxena.

NATION ▶ PAGE 7

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DELHI METRO ▶ 6 PAGES
 FRIDAY REVIEW ▶ 12 PAGES
 (TABLOID)

'Unemployment data based on draft report'

NITI Aayog officials debunk media report of 6.1% joblessness

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
 NEW DELHI



GThe Führer promised us 2 crore jobs a year. 5 years later, his leaked job-creation report card reveals a national disaster. Unemployment is at its highest in 45 years: 6.5 crore youth are jobless in 2017-18 alone

— RAHUL GANDHI, Congress president

GThe report that was cited is not finalised. It is a draft report. How can a country grow at an average of 7% without employment?

— RAJIV KUMAR, NITI Aayog Vice-Chairman (left)

GIndia is creating adequate number of jobs for new entrants, but probably we are not creating high quality jobs

— AMITABH KANT, NITI Aayog CEO

"This is a draft report," NITI Aayog Vice-Chairman Rajiv Kumar said at a press conference. "We need to publish data on a quarterly basis. The July 2017-December 2018 data has just been received. Therefore, we don't know the data or the veracity of the data. Citing this data or comparing it with the 2011-12 data will not be correct."

MIRRORS 1972

A report in the *Business Standard* on Thursday, which cited the NSSO's periodic labour force survey — that is yet to be released — said the unemployment rate was 6.1% in 2017-18. The only year of comparable data when the unemployment rate was higher was in 1972-73. It was at 2.2% in 2011-12.

The NSSO report is a matter of much controversy, with the two external members of the National Statistical Commission citing the delay in its release as a major reason for their resignations on Monday.

The data reportedly showed that joblessness was higher in urban India (7.8%)

Congress, BJP spar over data

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
 NEW DELHI

The Congress and the BJP invoked Hitler and Mussolini as they sparred over data withheld by the government which show that the unemployment rate rose to a 45-year high. The reactions were spurred by a news report of a yet unpublished Periodic Labour Force Survey of the National Sample Survey Office. The report said the rate is higher than in 1972-73. Congress president Rahul Gandhi said it was time for Prime Minister Narendra Modi to go.

'LOW QUALITY JOBS' ▶ PAGE 11
 REPORT CONFIRMS CRISIS,
 SAY EXPERTS ▶ PAGE 11

'SHARP INCREASE' ▶ PAGE 11

ED conducts searches in Uttar Pradesh 'memorial' scam



The searches were carried out at seven places.

ducting the money laundering probe on the basis of an FIR registered by the Uttar Pradesh State Vigilance Department in 2014, alleging a loss of more than ₹11 crore to the government exchequer

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 10

and unlawful gain to the accused public servants and private individuals.

Lokayukta report

It is alleged that there were financial irregularities in the procurement of material for the construction of memorials in Noida and Lucknow between 2007 and 2012, which resulted in the losses.

The State government then headed by Ms. Mayawati had built the memorials, statues and parks at a cost of over ₹2,600 crore.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 10

Properties of Rabri Devi, daughter seized in Patna

AMARNATH TEWARI

PATNA

The Income Tax Department on Thursday seized three properties belonging to former Bihar Chief Minister Rabri Devi and her daughter Hemai Yadav after the duo failed to convincingly explain their source.

According to I-T sources, the three plots are located on the outskirts of Patna — one near Saguna Mor and two others at Dhanaut near Phulwari Sharif.

All three plots were gifted to the mother-daughter duo by Hridyanand Chaudhury and Lallan Chaudhury in

2008 when they were working as their domestic helps.

The I-T officials found the men too poor to acquire the plots and gift them to the duo. "They had not even filed their I-T returns... the money to buy the plots were paid by someone else," said an official.

Earlier, I-T officials had quizzed Rabri Devi for several hours in Patna over benami properties.

In June last year, the Enforcement Directorate had attached the properties of Lalu Prasad's family in connection with the IRCTC hotel money laundering case.

to build a temple where the anthill used to be. The villagers then requested police officials for permission to build a temple.

"However, they stopped doing so after the gram panchayat allotted the land to the police station and the station's compound wall came up, cutting off public access to the anthill," he said.

Over the years, decreased rain, business failures and even an increase in accidents began to be attributed to the neglect of the sacred anthill. VGB treasurer K.R. Prakash said the villagers invited a tantrik from Kerala, who advised them

an anthill at the very spot where the temple stands now, and locals used to worship it.

"A.V. Krushik, a native of Sringeri, said the premises of a secular place such as a police station could not be used for a temple."

Harish Pandey, Chikkamagaluru SP, said it was not a new structure and locals had been offering prayers there for long.

As for the sub-inspector attending the ceremony, he said: "Since he was present at the station, he also went."

SAD skips NDA meet citing interference in SGPC

NISTULA HEBBAR

NEW DELHI

The Shiromani Akali Dal, one of the oldest allies of the BJP and part of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), skipped the custom-

ary meeting of alliance partners before the Budget Session of Parliament on Thursday.

According to SAD MLA Manjinder Singh Sirsa, the party was upset over the

NDA's interference in the religious affairs of Sikhs, especially in the Hazoor Sahib Gurdwara in Nanded in Maharashtra and Patna Sahib Gurdwara.

DETAILS ON ▶ PAGE 10

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A temple in a police station, to stay 'safe'

Tantrik's advice to ward off drought, accidents prompts villagers to build shrine

G.T. SATHISH
 CHIKKAMAGALURU

People visiting the police station at Gonibeedu village in Mudigere taluk of Karnataka's Chikkamagaluru district are not necessarily interested in seeing a policeman. Many come to a new resident at the station: Lord Ganesh.

The new Ganesh temple on the station premises, funded by the 8,500-odd residents of Gonibeedu and built with the approval of the local police, has raised questions about propriety, with some pointing out that a police station is a secular space that ought not to host a religious structure.



The Ganesh temple was opened on Wednesday.

SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

The villagers organised the idol installation ceremony on Wednesday. Police officials from

an anthill at the very spot where the temple stands now, and locals used to worship it.

"However, they stopped doing so after the gram panchayat allotted the land to the police station and the station's compound wall came up, cutting off public access to the anthill," he said.

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Smoke disrupts metro service

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

KOLKATA

Three metro passengers complained of suffocation on Thursday morning as smoke emanated from under a train at Dum Dum station and entered a few compartments, a fire brigade official said.

One of the passengers had to be admitted to State-run R.G. Kar College and Hospital here, he said.

Two fire tenders arrived at the station to take note of the situation, but the metro railway personnel had detected and doused the source of the smoke by then, he added.

कार्यालय कार्यपालन यंत्री, लोक निर्माण विभाग संभाग भिंड (म.प्र.)

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क्रमांक 219 / व.ले.लि. / 2018-19

भिंड / दिनांक 24 / 01 / 2019

निविदा विज्ञप्ति सूचना क्रमांक 01/2018-19

मध्य प्रदेश लोक निर्माण विभाग में केंद्रीयकृत पंजीयन प्रणाली के अन्तर्गत पंजीकृत ठेकेडारों से म.प्र. के राज्यपाल की ओर से निम्नलिखित कार्यों हेतु सँझक कार्यों की दर अनुसूची प्राप्ताशील दिनांक 29 / 08 / 2017 निविदा आवंश्यक सूचना जारी होने के दिनांक तक समस्त संबोधनों सहित ई-टेंडरिंग पद्धति द्वारा ऑनलाइन निविदा में अपेंडिक्स 2.10 में निहित शर्तों के अनुरूप आमंत्रित की जाती है, जिसकी विस्तृत निविदा सूचना एवं कार्यों का विवरण बेबाइट <http://mpntenders.gov.in> पर देखी जा सकती है। बेबाइट पर होने वाली तकनीकी समस्याओं हेतु विभाग जिमेदार नहीं होता।

सं. क्र.	टेंडर क्र.	कार्य का नाम	अनुमानित लागत (रुपये में)	अधिक धरोहर राशि (रुपये में)	निविदा प्रति का मूल्य(₹.)	कार्य पूर्ण करने की अवधि	आमंत्रित छापेमान	भौतिक दस्तावेज़ जमा करने का शर्तानुसार
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1	2019_PWD&RB_7185	निर्माण मार्गों पर निर्माण कार्यों - 1. अमायन से अडोखर द्वारा कामपूरा पुरुष तुर्च मार्ग लम्बाई 5.30 कि.मी. 2. दक्ष करोना से चक टेटोन मार्ग लम्बाई 1.00 कि.मी.	41615000.00 (चार करोड़ लाख हजार)	416150.00	15000.00	12 माह वर्षाकाल सहित।	द्वितीय प्रति	मुख्य अभियंता(उ) परिषेक ला. नि.वि.या.
2	2019_PWD&RB_7197	निर्माण कार्य बाराहेड से प्राप्ति का पुरा मार्ग लम्बाई 2.10 कि.मी.	8834000.00 (अठारी लाख चौहास हजार)	88340.00	10000.00	06 माह वर्षाकाल सहित।	प्रथम	मुख्य अभियंता(उ) परिषेक ला. नि.वि.या.
3	2019_PWD&RB_7200	निर्माण कार्य शीतला माता मीरी से बांधपुरा मार्ग लम्बाई 2.20 कि.मी.	8806000.00 (अठारी लाख चौहास हजार)	88060.00	10000.00	06 माह वर्षाकाल सहित।	प्रथम	मुख्य अभियंता(उ) परिषेक ला. नि.वि.या.
4	2019_PWD&RB_7203	निर्माण कार्य चौकी का पुरा से जिमलेदार का पुरा लम्बाई 2.10 कि.मी.	8834000.00 (अठारी लाख चौहास हजार)	88340.00	10000.00	06 माह वर्षाकाल सहित।	प्रथम	मुख्य अभियंता(उ) परिषेक ला. नि.वि.या.
5	2019_PWD&RB_7213	निर्माण कार्य कठवाहाजी मार्ग से चौकी का पुरा मार्ग लम्बाई 1.90 कि.मी.	8099000.00 (अठारी लाख नियानर्वे हजार)	80990.00	10000.00	06 माह वर्षाकाल सहित।	प्रथम	मुख्य अभियंता(उ) परिषेक ला. नि.वि.या.

योग:- 05 कार्य- 76188000.00 (सात करोड़ इक्सठ लाख अठारी हजार)

1. ऑनलाइन टेंडर परिवर्तन दिनांक 28.01.2019 समय 10:30 बजे
2. निविदा प्रति डाउनलोड / विक्रय प्रारंभ दिनांक 29.01.2019 समय 10:30 बजे
3. निविदा प्रति अंतिम दिनांक 12.02.2019 समय 17:30 बजे
4. ऑनलाइन बिड सभामिशन का प्रारंभ दिनांक 29.01.2019 समय 10:30 बजे
5. ऑनलाइन बिड सभामिशन का अंतिम दिनांक 12.02.2019 समय 17:30 बजे
6. फिजीकल डॉक्यूमेंट सभामिशन का अंतिम दिनांक 13.02.2019 समय 17:30 बजे
7. बिड ऑफिन दिनांक 14.02.2019 समय 11:30 बजे

- a. अनुबंध के पूर्ण एवं अनुबंध अवधि में लेवर पंजीयन करना अनिवार्य होगा, निविदा की वैधता अवधि 120 दिवान होगी।
- b. निविदा संबंधी संशोधन उसी टेंडर में ऑनलाइन देखे जा सकेंगे, अतिरिक्त प्रेस नोट नहीं निकाला जायेगा।
- c. समस्त अधिकारी की निविदा को बिना कारण बताये निररक्त करने का अधिकार सुरक्षित होगा।
- d. उपरोक्त कार्यों हेतु संबंधी मद में आवंतन उपचाव होने पर ही मुद्रान हो सकेंगा।
- e. समस्त संसाधन व्यवसंचय तर्फ से पंजीकृत डाक / स्पेशल पोस्ट द्वारा नियत दिनांक एवं समय तक कार्यालय में प्राप्त होना अनिवार्य है, अन्यथा को रिखित में ठेकेदार रखने जिम्मेदार होंगे।
- f. शासन द्वारा समय-समय पर जारी समस्त नियम एवं संशोधन प्रभावशील होंगे।

उपरोक्त बेबाइट ऑनलाइन युगतान करने के उपरांत निविदा प्रति (टेंडर डॉक्यूमेंट) बेबाइट के उपरांत से प्राप्त हो सकेंगे। विस्तृत एन.आई.टी. एवं अन्य जानकारी उपरांत बेबाइट में देखी जा सकती है।

आर. के. गुप्ता
कार्यपालन यंत्री
लो.नि.वि. संसाग भिंड

G-22640/2019

IN THE HIGH COURT OF DELHI AT NEW DELHI PROCLAMATION OF SALE

Execution Petition No. 19 of 2015
(Arising out of Judgment/Order dated 30.05.2014)

Indian Overseas Bank Vs. SVIL Agro Pte Ltd. & Ors.

Decree Holder

Judgment Debtors

To, The General Public
Whereas the above noted execution petition has been filed by the aforesaid Decree Holder for realising the amount \$S 19,288,678.00 (INR 91,28,73,503.28) alongwith interest, as per Execution Petition and whereas this Court has ordered to sell the two Immovable Properties i.e. No. 55, Block H-4/5, Suvidha Kunj, Pitampura, Delhi-110034 (hereinafter referred to as Property-A) and Property No. D-259, Block-D, Ashok Vihar, Phase-I, Delhi-110052 (hereinafter referred to as Property-B) of Judgment Debtors by Public Auction by Court Auctioneer on 12.03.2019 between 11.30 am to 4.00 pm and 15.03.2019 between 11.30 am to 4.00 pm, respectively at the aforesaid respective properties. The detail of the properties mentioned below for realization of the amount shown herein above are as under:-

SCHEDULE OF PROPERTIES	DATE OF AUCTION	Venu of the Auction
Property No. 55, Block H-4/5, Suvidha Kunj, Pitampura, Delhi-110034 (Property A)	12.03.2019 between 11.30 am to 4.00 pm	The Venue of the auction of Properties A and B will be at their respective sites.
Property No. D-259, Block-D, Ashok Vihar, Phase-I, Delhi-110052 (Property B).	15.03.2019 between 11.30 am to 4.00 pm	

Date & time of inspection of the suit properties by the prospective buyers.

18.02.2019 to 22.02.2019 between 10.00 am to 1.00 pm

Dates for deposit of Earnest Money

26.02.2019 to 28.02.2019

CONDITIONS AND TERMS OF AUCTIONS

- The interested bidders shall submit their bids in the form as prescribed by the Hon'ble High Court of Delhi along with deposit of earnest money by ay of DD of 10% value (property A is Rs. 1,12,00,000/-) and (property B is Rs. 17,10,000/-) of the reserved price, in favour of Registrar General, Delhi High Co't to be eligible to participate in the Auction.
- The unsuccessful bidders will be returned their DDs after the conclusion of the Auction(s).
- The two properties are being sold on 'AS IS WHERE IS' and 'AS IS WHAT IS' basis. The Decree Holder has disclosed only the known encumbrances, statutory liabilities, if any, and it is for the purchaser to make their own independent enquiries at their own costs before participating in the auction(s).
- The amount by which the biddings are to be increased shall be determined by the Court Auctioneer conducting the sale. In the event of any dispute arising as to the amount of bid, or as to the bidder, the property shall once again be put up to auction.
- The property shall be sold to the successful bidder as declared by the Court Auctioneer. At the fall of the hammer, the successful bidder shall immediately pay 25% of the successful bid amount to the Court Auctioneer conducting the Auction by way of DD, in favour of the Registrar General, Delhi High Court', without adjusting the earnest money already paid and in default thereof, the property shall again be put up for auction and sold. The Decision of the Court Auctioneer shall be final in the matter.
- The Sale of Property shall be subject to its confirmation by the Hon'ble High Court of Delhi.
- The successful bidder shall pay the remaining 75% sale consideration within two weeks from the date of the auction(s) positively. In default of the payment of the balance of the purchase money/sale consideration within the period allowed i.e. two weeks from the date of auction(s), the property shall be resold after issue of a fresh notification of sale.
- The deposit, after defraying the expenses of the sale, may, if the Court thinks fit, be forfeited to Government and the defaulting purchaser shall forfeit all claims to the property or to any part of the sum for which it may be subsequently sold.
- The purchaser shall bear the charges/fee payable for conveyance such as registration fee, stamp duty etc. as applicable as per law.
- The sale certificate shall be issued in the name of the Purchaser only, after the payment of entire sale price amount and other taxes/charges, if any.
- All DDs in the process shall be made in the name of 'Registrar General, Delhi High Court'. All persons interested in the purchase of above mentioned immovable properties are invited to bid at the auction as specified in the proclamation of sale.

Given under my hand and the Seal of this Court, in terms order dated 07.01.2019

ASSISTANT REGISTRAR (O)
for REGISTRAR GENERAL

PRDH-75136

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Kejriwal calls for change in Odisha

'BJD govt. corrupt, funded by mining mafia'

STAFF REPORTER

BHUBANESWAR

Aam Aadmi Party national convenor and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Thursday called for a change in Odisha accusing the ruling Biju Janata Dal, the Congress and the BJP of running a corrupt "alliance" government funded by the mining mafia.

"The BJD government is under direct control of the mining mafia. It is said that the BJD is in the BJP's pocket and the Congress in the BJD's pocket. In Odisha, there is no BJD government, but an alliance government of the BJD, the BJP and the Congress. All of them have ganged up to loot money. Every five years, they announce an election and deal on seats with tacit understanding," said Mr. Kejriwal while addressing a public meeting here.

People's choice
"The people of Odisha have to decide whether they want to change the government or not. People of Delhi had ousted the BJP and the Congress and brought in AAP. Nobody had known AAP before that. AAP was a new party that had emerged from the Anna [Hazare] movement. Many had to go to jail for protesting against corruption," he said.

The Delhi Chief Minister said, "People can only decide the future of Odisha. We do not have enough funds to fight election. It depends on the people what they want. If they are happy with the corrupt al-



AAP supporters attending a public meeting addressed by Arvind Kejriwal in Bhubaneswar on Thursday. ■ BISWARANJAN ROUT

liance, then it is fine. If they want to get rid of the present government, it can happen. As New Delhi witnessed a change, the same may happen in Odisha."

Eye on polls, Omar promises to repeal PSA

PEERZADA ASHIQ

SRINAGAR
Former Chief Minister and National Conference vice-president Omar Abdullah on Thursday promised to repeal the controversial Public Safety Act if his party comes to power in J&K. The Act allows detention of a person without trial for six months.

Speaking at a party convention at Pulwama in south Kashmir, Mr. Abdullah said: "My government in 2011 mellowed down the PSA by bringing some amendments. If the NC comes to power on its own with a strong mandate, we will

take no time to revoke the Act completely. I can't see the parents suffering due to the Act."

On the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, Mr. Abdullah said he will continue to pursue its revocation.

The controversial PSA, which witnessed a number of amendments in the past three decades, is the law widely used by the J&K police to round up separatists, their supporters and street protesters for a long period of detention. The Peoples Democratic Party and the People's Conference assailed Mr. Abdullah for his "soft-separatist" card.

After Priyanka, BJP MLA now targets Mayawati

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A day after his controversial remarks against Congress president Rahul Gandhi and his sister Priyanka, BJP MLA Surendra Singh on Wednesday night accused BSP president Mayawati of "murdering" a woman's dignity by joining hands with one-time arch-rival Samajwadi Party.

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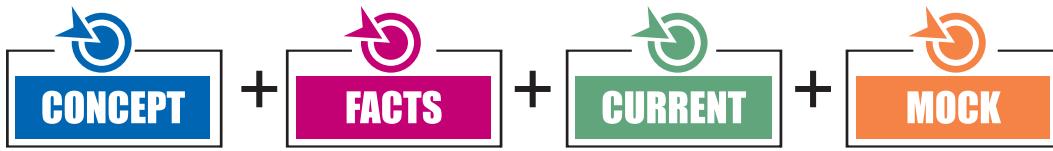
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being developed by the

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above for redressal of their

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(i) Direct the OP to deliver

legal possession of the

Flats, along with

Occupation Certificate and

registered conveyance in

favour of each member of

the CLASS

as compensation for

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practices; (ii) Direct OP to

pay a sum of Rs. 1,00,00/- to

each member of the CLASS

as compensation for

mental harassment and

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pay a sum of Rs. 50,000/- to

each member of the CLASS

as compensation for

common grievances, and

seeking the following

reliefs:-

(iv) Direct the OP to

compensate each member

of the CLASS as and when

legal possession is delivered

with registered conveyance

for any excess stamp duty or

registration or related

charges that they may be

required to pay, over and

above the amounts they

would have been liable to

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PUBLIC NOTICE

(v) Direct OP not to charge

any member of the CLASS

any amount towards

any increase in rate of any

existing charge levy or tax

(including service tax)

subsequent to the

promised date of

possession and also direct

OP not to charge any

amounts towards any new

charge, levy or tax by any

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Authority whatsoever,

subsequent to the

promised date of

possession; And further

direct the OP to refund all

amounts already paid by

any member of the class

towards GST as well as

towards any other new tax

tax or any other new

charge, levy or tax by any

Govt / Statutory / Municipal

Authority whatsoever,

subsequent to the

promised date of

possession; And further

IN BRIEF



Naidu lays foundation for Venkateswara temple

AMARAVATI
Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu on Thursday performed 'bhoomikarshana' and other rituals as a prelude to the construction of Sri Venkateswara Swamy temple at Venkatapalem village in Amaravati on Thursday. He tilled the land earmarked for the 'garbhagriha' (sanctum sanctorum) of the proposed temple. The temple is being constructed by the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams.

Andhra Pradesh girl, who was set on fire, is stable

KURNool
The 12-year-old girl, who was set on fire by a person who was allegedly harassing her, is said to be stable and out of danger. The accused, Mohiuddin, has been arrested and charge-sheet will be filed soon, according to officials. District Collector S. Satyanarayana visited the girl and her parents in Kurnool government general hospital and directed the hospital staff to extend the best possible care to the girl.

Bardhaman blast accused held in Malappuram

MALAPPURAM
Police arrested a man from Edavanna near Manjeri on Wednesday night in connection with a blast that took place at a house at Khagrachari in Purba Bardhaman district of West Bengal in October 2014. A joint team of West Bengal and Kerala police picked up Abdul Matheen, an Assam native, after a hunt that lasted over four years. Police said Matheen had links with Jamaat-ul Mujahideen Bangladesh, a known terror outfit. He was found living in the guise of an Imam at a local masjid.

SC to hear Sabarimala pleas on Feb. 6

The review petitions are against the court's verdict on the entry of women of all ages into the temple

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

A five-judge Constitution Bench, led by Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi, will hear the Sabarimala review petitions from February 6.

The court issued a notice in this regard on Thursday. But the indication first came from one of the judges on the Bench.

Justice Indu Malhotra revealed in open court, while hearing the Sree Padmanabha Swamy temple case, that the Sabarimala petitions may be listed for Wednesday next week.

Justice Malhotra is part of the Constitution Bench hearing the Sabarimala petitions against the September 28 judgment of the Supreme

Court revoking the bar on women of menstrual age from entering the Sabarimala temple for worship.

The Sabarimala review hearing, which was earlier scheduled for January 22, had to be postponed as Justice Malhotra was on medical leave. Responding to an oral mention by advocate Mathew Nedumpara to fix a date of hearing for the case, Justice Gogoi had conveyed the court's decision to wait for Justice Malhotra's return from leave.

Lone dissent

Justice Malhotra had delivered the lone dissent in the majority judgment of the five-judge Constitution Bench on September 28.



Ranjan Gogoi

The majority judgment had declared the exclusion, solely based on the menstrual status of women, to be a smear on individual dignity. It said the bar amounted to "treating women as the children of a lesser God".

Justice Malhotra, in her

dissent, had declared the prohibition on women aged between 10 and 50 years to be an "essential practice".

The judge had held that imposing the court's morality on a religion would negate the freedom to practise religion according to one's faith and beliefs.

Justice Malhotra's judgment has since then become a rallying point for the review petitioners.

Review petitions were filed by a range of persons, from the Sabarimala temple's chief priest to individuals and Ayyappa organisations, including women devotees' groups. They urged the court that 'reform' does not mean rendering a religious practice out of existence on the basis of a PIL petition filed by "third parties" who do not believe in the Sabarimala deity.

Justice Malhotra's rationale that courts should not allow "interlopers" to file PIL pleas challenging religious practices is a common thread in the review petitions. The review petitioners have argued that the right to move the Supreme Court for violation of fundamental rights must be reserved for those whose personal rights to worship have been violated.

Entertaining of PIL pleas on religious practices by third parties may invite "perils even graver for religious minorities," Justice Malhotra had opined in her dissent.

Andhra Pradesh govt. to adopt Bill on Kapu quota

To give legal sanctity for BC Sub Plan

STAFF REPORTER
VIJAYAWADA

tion projects, and 'yesterday, today and tomorrow' would be taken up, he said.

Taking a dig at the main Opposition, the Chief Minister said YSRC president Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy and his colleagues had not been attending Assembly sessions for the last two years, which could be a record. He neither turned up for a meeting on Information Commissioners' appointment nor for the all-party meeting. "Mr. Jagan is an embodiment of irresponsibility," he said.

"It is a blatant lie that Kia Motors established the manufacturing unit due to the efforts by PM Narendra Modi. The BJP leaders have made a laughing stock of themselves with their claims," Mr. Naidu said.

The government would bring in a bill to accord legal sanctity to the BC Sub Plan. An unanimous resolution on the injustice done to A.P. would be passed on February 1. It would be sent to the Centre. Discussion on irriga-

Budget seeks to rebuild Kerala

Finance Minister Isaac unveils a bouquet of 25 projects

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Finance Minister T.M. Thomas Isaac has unveiled a bouquet of 25 projects for rebuilding a modern Kerala from the ravages of the 2018 August floods and prescribed a regimen for fiscal consolidation and resource mobilisation by toning up tax administration in the budget for 2019-20 presented in the State Assembly on Thursday.

A 1% calamity cess has been proposed on goods and services for two years to fund the rebuilding initiative. The additional revenue being generated from this is estimated at ₹600 crore.

The Minister hoped that the 25 key projects, which bear the indelible imprint of the Kerala Infrastructure Investment Fund Board (KIIFB) on them, would set the

ground for the rebuilding drive.

The budget has a total outlay of ₹1.42 lakh crore. Even when the State is facing a grave resource crunch, the expected Plan outlay has been raised to ₹39,807 crore from ₹32,564 crore and provides for 1,200 schemes in all.

Industrial parks backed up by corporate invest-

ments, a new package for Kuttanad, rehabilitation and restoration of coasts to support fisherfolk, a universal health scheme, tapping conventional and non-conventional energy options, a switch over to electric vehicles, a north-south parallel rail track, a hunger free Kerala project, and a special thrust on housing are some of the budget's highlights.

Positive initiative: Finance Minister Thomas Isaac presenting the Budget in Thiruvananthapuram on Thursday. ■ S. MAHINSHA

Positive initiative: Finance Minister Thomas Isaac presenting the Budget in Thiruvananthapuram on Thursday. ■ S. MAHINSHA

BJP eyes to harness discontent in JD(U), Cong. in Karnataka

Govt. may fall any day: Yeddyurappa

STAFF REPORTER
BENGALURU

The Opposition Bharatiya Janata Party in Karnataka appears to be working hard, behind the scenes, hopeful of reaping the benefit of the wave of discontent between coalition partners Congress and Janata Dal (Secular).



Party president and chief ministerial aspirant B.S. Yeddyurappa is learnt to be continuing his efforts towards the end, undeterred by the recent failure to topple the government. He, however, has kept his cards close to his chest, leaving most within the party in the dark, sources said.

This, coupled with at least three failed attempts earlier, has left many within the BJP itself sceptical of its success.

Mr. Yeddyurappa has told his party workers: "This government may fall any day. Anything may happen any time and we must be prepared."

'BJP not responsible'
However, he was quick to add that it would collapse because of the differences between the coalition partners and that the BJP would "in no way be responsible for the fall of the government."

A senior party strategist said a group of Congress MLAs were "frustrated" on multiple accounts and were in touch with them.

"A crisis may be precipitated any time. The Congress first promised and has now retracted on promises of ministries and other posts for rebel MLAs," he claimed.

Waiting for the budget?

A senior party leader, coordinating the efforts to topple the government, said the upcoming budget to be presented on February 8 would likely provide a platform for the disgruntled MLAs.

"The budget Mr. Kumarswamy presented in July 2018 had left those from north Karnataka unhappy," he said. The BJP hopes that a similar thrust would work in their favour this time.

ADHOC HIRING OF CIVIL VEHICLES FOR THE PERIOD FROM 01 APRIL 2019 TO 30 SEP 2019 BY HQ 31 SUB AREA

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Vandna Duggud Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the girl but no clue has come to light so far. If any one having any information about this girl please inform undersigned.

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The Executive Engineer cum DPIU, RWD, Papum Poma Division, Yupia, Dist. Papum Pare on behalf of the Governor of Arunachal Pradesh invites item rate bids in electronic tendering system from approved and eligible Contractors registered with CPWD/PWD/BRO & Public Sector Enterprises for PMGSY road works in the District of Papum Pare for 13 Nos. Roads & 8 Nos. LSB packages. Name of work, package no., Estimated Cost, Earnest Money & other particulars can be viewed in the SBD available for download from www.pmgstendersarn.gov.in between 1st Feb 2019 (1100hrs) to 15th Feb'2019 (1600 hrs)

GOVERNMENT OF ARUNACHAL PRADESH RURAL WORK DEPARTMENT E-PROCUREMENT PRESS NOTICE PRADHAN MANTRI GRAM SADAK YOJANA
NIT No. EE/RWD/PYPA/PMGSY/PH-XII-B&II/2018-19 Dated 30/01/2019
E-E(M) II / RZ/TC/2018-19/22 Dated:- 29.01.2019 Last Date of Download of Tender Document: 19.02.2019 upto 12:00 PM. Opening of Financial Bid: 19.02.2019 at 12:15 PM. FOR ONLINE TENDERING TIME TABLE PLEASE REFER <http://modetenders.com> Sealed percentage rate/item rate for tenders are invited for execution of the following works by the North Delhi Municipal Corporation from eligible contractor and will be received as per time table and the same will be received in the room of the Executive Engineer (M-) II/Rohini Zone, F-2 Block Mangolpuri, Outer Ring Road, Delhi-110085 on 19.02.2019 at 12:15 pm prior on website www.tenderwizard.com/NORTHDMCETENDER by E- (M-) II/RZ in the presence of Contractors, if any.

S. No. 1, Name of Work /F.T.C. No.: Imp. Dev. of lane by pdg. RMC from F-2/288 to F-7/494 in Ward No. 48, Sultanpur, RZ 018/066/XL/VIII/S/MLC-032, EE-(M-) II/RZ/2018-19/21/01, Tender Amount (In Rs.): 371978/-, Earnest Money: 74400/-, Times of Completion: 3 Months, Rates hold goods for: 5 Months, Tender Cost: 500/-, Head of Account/Consent Date: XL-VII-S
S. No. 2, Name of Work /F.T.C. No.: Imp. Dev. of drain and culvert by pdg. Brick work, RCC, Plaster etc. from E-1 to E-7/493 in Ward No. 48, Sultanpur, RZ 018/066/XL/VIII/S/MLC-032, EE-(M-) II/RZ/2018-19/21/02, Tender Amount (In Rs.): 2539208/-, Earnest Money: 50800/-, Times of Completion: 3 Months, Rates hold goods for: 5 Months, Tender Cost: 500/-, Head of Account/Consent Date: XL-VII-S
S. No. 3, Name of Work /F.T.C. No.: Imp. Dev. of Road by pdg. RMC from Flood Drain to Sharma Clinic Near Mother Dairy in Sultanpur Majra Village in Ward No. 47, Sultanpur, RZ 018/066/XL/VIII/S/MLC-032, EE-(M-) II/RZ/2018-19/21/03, Tender Amount (In Rs.): 2914959/-, Earnest Money: 58300/-, Times of Completion: 3 Months, Rates hold goods for: 5 Months, Tender Cost: 500/-, Head of Account/Consent Date: XL-VII-S Other details can be seen/download from the website www.tenderwizard.com/NORTHDMCETENDER<

IN BRIEF

Gupteswar Pandey
new DGP of Bihar

PATNA
Senior IPS officer Gupteswar Pandey took over as the new Director General of Police of Bihar on Thursday. He succeeds K.S. Dwivedi, who retired on Thursday and had been holding the position since March 1, 2018. PTI

Odisha cops threaten stir over demands

CUTTACK
The Odisha Police Association on Thursday threatened to go on strike from February 6 if the government failed to meet their six-point charter of demands. OPA president Satyajit Mishra said all their demands were genuine and pending for a long time.

Minor girl allegedly raped in Jharkhand

RANCHI
A minor girl was allegedly raped by five youths in Ranchi district and the accused arrested, the police said on Thursday. The incident took place when the girl went to visit her uncle at Bundu, about 40 km from here, SP Ashutosh Shekhar said. PTI

One killed, nine hurt in U.P. bus-truck collision

SAMBHAL
One person was killed and nine injured in a collision between a roadways bus and a truck in Uttar Pradesh's Sambhal district, police said on Thursday. The truck driver died on the spot. PTI

Forest officer dies as car falls into gorge

SHIMLA
A forest officer was killed and two others sustained injuries when their car fell into a gorge in Narkanda tehsil of the district here, the police said on Thursday. The accident occurred near Bithal-Godhra link road. PTI

Oppn. demands Central forces for Lok Sabha polls in Bengal

BJP questions the role of State's CEO, seeks supervisor from elsewhere

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
KOLKATA

All major political parties in the Opposition in West Bengal met the full bench of the Election Commission in Kolkata on Thursday and demanded that Central Armed Police Forces be deployed in all polling stations and the villages or localities they serve," a letter submitted by senior BJP leaders including Mukul Roy said.

"The entire State [should] be declared critical and vulnerable and hence let CAPF be deployed in all polling stations and the villages or localities they serve," a letter submitted by senior BJP leaders including Mukul Roy said.

The State BJP delegation also raised questions on the role of the State's Chief Electoral Officer and demanded that the EC appoint a senior IAS officer from other State to supervise the functioning of the West Bengal CEO. The

ed deployment of the CAPF before the EC delegation led by Chief Election Commissioner Sunil Arora.

"The entire State [should]

be declared critical and vulnerable and hence let CAPF be deployed in all polling stations and the villages or localities they serve," a letter submitted by senior BJP leaders including Mukul Roy said.

A West Bengal Pradesh Congress Committee delegation that included vice president Maya Ghosh demanded that Central forces be mobilised a month before the elections so that voters can feel secure about attending campaigns of the Opposition parties.

CPI(M) leader Rabin Deb told the EC bench that only deployment of the CAPF is not enough. "We have seen in the last few elections that

Central forces are not being deployed properly and are confined to the barracks; therefore it is necessary that they be deployed during the polling process," Mr. Deb said.

From the ruling Trinamool Congress, party leader and West Bengal Education Minister Partha Chatterjee met the EC representatives. However, Mr. Chatterjee did not speak to journalists on what transpired in the meeting.

The ECI's full bench has been in West Bengal since Wednesday to assess preparedness for the Lok Sabha elections in the State.

3 murders that rocked M.P. solved, say police

ANUP DUTTA
BHOPAL

The Madhya Pradesh police have solved all the three recent murders in the State in which the opposition BJP workers have some connection.

These murders took place between January 17 and 23 in the Malwa region.

In a major breakthrough in the murder of BJP Balawala block president Manoj Thakre on January 20, the police have arrested seven persons.

"Seven persons have been arrested in connection with the murder of Manoj Thakre. They include BJP State executive member Tarachand Rathor and his son," Superintendent of Police Yangchen Dolkar Bhutia told reporters in Barwani district on Thursday.

RSS worker held

In another development, the Ratlam police on Thursday arrested a Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh worker, Himmat Patidar, from Pratapgarh district in Rajasthan.

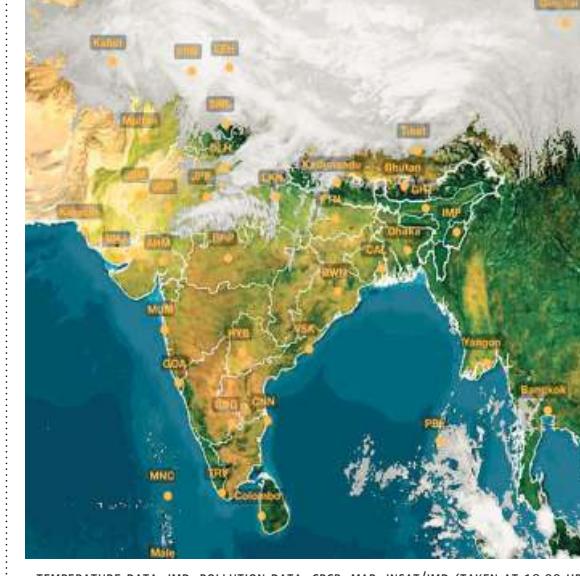
He had faked his own murder on January 23 to claim insurance money totalling ₹20 lakh in order to repay debts.

SP, Ratlam, Gaurav Tiwari said Patidar killed his farm labourer, Madan Malviya (32), to pass it off as his own murder. He later burnt the victim's face to conceal his identity.

In the case pertaining to the gunning down of Prahlad Bandhwar, senior BJP leader and chairman of Mandsaur municipality, on January 17, a BJP worker, Manish Bairagi, has been arrested.

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 Friday: Dense fog likely at isolated places over Punjab, Chandigarh, Delhi, north Rajasthan, northwest Madhya Pradesh and west Uttar Pradesh. Cold wave conditions likely in isolated pockets over Odisha and Gujarat

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	—	27.7	8.9	Kozhikode	—	35.2	23.4
Ahmedabad	—	28.2	10.0	Kurnool	—	31.0	16.1
Aizawl	—	28.3	13.4	Lucknow	—	32.5	10.7
Allahabad	—	24.8	7.7	Madurai	—	33.1	22.4
Bengaluru	—	28.2	16.4	Mangalur	—	33.9	21.4
Bhopal	—	27.3	8.2	Mumbai	—	30.7	15.4
Bhubaneswar	—	28.7	10.4	Mysuru	—	29.0	16.3
Chandigarh	—	20.8	8.4	New Delhi	—	21.5	8.2
Chennai	—	30.0	22.4	Patna	—	25.0	7.8
Coimbatore	—	30.6	20.7	Port Blair	—	29.9	23.8
Dehradun	—	20.0	8.8	Puducherry	—	30.2	20.8
Gangtok	—	15.6	5.0	Pune	—	29.6	10.1
Goa	—	32.9	19.4	Raipur	—	27.2	10.4
Guwahati	—	26.2	9.3	Ranchi	—	26.2	6.6
Hubballi	—	29.0	17.0	Shillong	—	18.4	5.0
Hyderabad	—	27.8	12.8	Shimla	—	7.4	3.8
Imphal	—	23.8	4.2	Srinagar	—	5.6	-0.3
Jaipur	—	21.0	11.8	Trivandrum	—	35.7	23.6
Kochi	—	32.2	23.4	Tiruchi	—	32.1	21.6
Kohima	—	17.4	5.8	Vijayawada	—	28.8	14.4
Kolkata	—	25.8	12.5	Visakhapatnam	—	28.0	21.0

(Rainfall in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES	SO ₂	NO _x	CO	PM _{2.5}	PM ₁₀	CODE
Ahmedabad	99	119	39	.167	—
Bengaluru	..4	.51	.72	.91	.107	—
Chennai	15	.16	.55	.246	—
Delhi	45	.80	.62	.400	.385	—
Hyderabad	.4	106	.36	.137	.128	—
Kolkata	20	.94	.12	.324	.220	—
Lucknow	15	.69	.52	.374	—
Mumbai	31	..91	.92	.151	—
Pune	56	.33	.30	.193	.132	—
Visakhapatnam	—	—	—	—	—	—

Yesterday

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Moradabad, Uttar Pradesh recorded an Air Quality Index (AQI) score of 392, indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Amritsar recorded a healthy AQI score of 64

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

AQI: 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

An emotional farewell to Fernandes

Former PM Manmohan Singh, Bihar CM Nitish Kumar attend cremation

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

itary truck.
Chants of 'George Sahab amar rahe' (long live George Sahab), 'Jab tak suraj chand rahega, Goerge tera naam rahega' (Your name will be as immortal as the sun and the moon) also rent the air at the crematorium as his body was placed at a platform there for people to pay last respects.

Besides family members, including wife Leila Kabir, son Sean and Fernandes's brothers, the leader's close associate Jaya Jaitly and former cricketer Ajay Jadeja also were present during the cremation.

An hour-long prayer service was held in the morning at Fernandes's residence at Panchsheel Park.

Fernandes died on Tuesday at the age of 88 after prolonged illness.



Former PM Manmohan Singh and Bihar CM Nitish Kumar at the cremation of George Fernandes in New Delhi on Thursday. ■ SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

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HIMACHAL PRADESH PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT KANGRA ZONE

BHARAT NIRMAN

Through Rural Roads

UNDER PRADHAN MANTRI GRAM SADAK YOJANA (PMGSY) e-Procurement Notice

The Government of India has received a loan/credit number "Ln 7995-IN/Cr/4848-IN/Cr.4849-IN" from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/International Development Association towards the cost of Rural Roads Project (Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana) and intends to apply a part of the funds to cover eligible payments under the contracts for construction of works as detailed in the Table below. Bidding is open to all bidders from eligible source countries as defined in the bidding document.

Sr. No.	Division	Package No.	Name of work	Period of completion	Estimated Cost (Rs)	Bid security (Rs)	
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
1	Bharmour	HP-02-193(1/2)	Construction of Thalla to Chobia Road (Section Mandot to Serkew) Km 8/0 to 10/750	265 Days	24,52,574/-	2,06,250/-	53,000/-
2	Bharmour	HP-02-193(2/2)	Construction of Thalla to Chobia Road (Section Mandot to Serkew) Km 10/750 to 13/500	265 Days	24,41,878/-	2,06,250/-	53,000/-

The Chief Engineer (Kangra Zone) HPPWD Dharamshala-176 215 on behalf of Governor Himachal Pradesh invites the item rate bids in electronic tendering system for construction of roads under Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana from the eligible contractors registered

IN BRIEF



IndiGo's repair facility to come up in Bengaluru

MUMBAI
InterGlobe Aviation Ltd., which owns and operates low cost-carrier IndiGo, has entered into a 20-year agreement with Bangalore International Airport Limited to sub-lease land at the Kempegowda airport to build a maintenance, repair and overhaul facility to take care of its requirement. It will be IndiGo's second MRO after the one in Delhi.

GSAT-31 to be launched from Kourou next week

BENGALURU
The Indian Space Research Organisation will get its new communication satellite GSAT-31 aloft in space on February 6 from French Guiana on a hired European rocket. GSAT-31, weighing roughly 2,500 kg, will replace the INSAT-4CR. The latter with 12 Ku-band transponders was put to orbit in September 2007 to drive what was then a new DTH industry. The launch of Ariane-5 V247 mission is slated for 2.31 a.m. IST on February 6.

Hindu Mahasabha leaders untraceable

LUCKNOW
The Akhil Bharat Hindu Mahasabha members who controversially recreated the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi and hailed his killer Nathuram Godse at an event in Aligarh are still absconding, the police said on Thursday. Two persons have been arrested in the case, but the main accused, ABHM secretary Puja Shakun Pandey and her husband and ABHM spokesperson Ashok Pandey, were untraceable.

5 workers fall to death at construction site

HYDERABAD
Five workers hailing from West Bengal and Jharkhand working at a construction site died after falling from the 10th floor of an under-construction housing project of the Telangana government at Rampally village in Keesara mandal, about 35 km from here on Thursday. Another labourer suffered severe injuries.

Health sector seeks tax breaks for middle class in Budget

BINDU SHAJAN PERAPPADAN NEW DELHI
The healthcare sector wants the government's interim Budget to include tax measures to help the middle class better mitigate health risks.

"Ayushman Bharat for the financially weaker section took centre stage in healthcare last year; however, the middle class is still at risk," said Suneeta Reddy, managing director, Apollo Hospitals Group. "A first step to universal health coverage would be to increase deduction for medical insurance premium under section 80D for self, family and dependent parents. An enhancement in the medical allowance for salaried employees in line with inflation and a separate deduction in respect of preventive health checks would be de-

Costly proposition

Investment in air power is expensive, according to the Air Force chief

Each Su-30MKI costs ₹417 crore

Each LCA MkI costs ₹191 crore

Budget expenses of IAF

Total salary bill ₹16,621 crore Capital expenditure ₹35,407 crore

Revenue expenditure for fuel and maintenance:

₹8,870 crore

High ownership costs

Su-30 MKI bought as a replacement to MiG-21

Manning cost of a Su-30 squadron is nearly twice as that of a MiG-21 squadron

Cost of per hour operation of Su-30MKI is 3.5 times higher than MiG-21

Per hour cost of operating a Su-30 MKI is 1.4 times that of a 4th generation aircraft like Mirage-2000



IAF chief flags delays in manufacture of equipment

'In combat, there is no silver medal. You win or you lose'

BEL chosen to fortify naval air stations

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The Indian Air Force (IAF) has not shifted any goal posts and is fully committed to indigenisation, Air Chief Marshal (ACM) B.S. Dhanoa said on Thursday, while flagging delays in domestic development and manufacture of defence equipment.

Air power, he said, was an expensive proposition.

"IAF has not shifted any goal posts as alleged. The development has taken such an incredibly long time that armament and technology has gone obsolete... I, as the service chief, can make concessions to Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL). Will the enemy make concessions to me when I go and meet the enemy?" said ACM Dhanoa at the 10th Jumbo Majumdar international lecture organised by the Centre for Air Power Studies. "In combat, there is no silver medal. Either you win or you lose."

His comments come in the backdrop of recent reports that the IAF has been changing parameters of the indigenous Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) Tejas, adding to the delay in development. The IAF has contracted for 40 LCA Mk-I jets, issued a Request For Proposal (RFP) for 83 LCA Mk-II variants and committed to procure 12 squadrons of LCA Mk-II and eventually the Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft (AMCA).

ACM Dhanoa said a crucial contribution to the suc-

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

To strengthen the perimeter security of its air stations, the Navy has finalised a ₹700 crore contract with Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) for establishing an upgraded Naval Airfield Integrated Security System.

After terrorists attacked the Pathankot Air Force Station, the system was formulated as a comprehensive project for upgrading the security of naval airfields, an official said. The request for information went out in March 2016 for the project to be implemented at six major air stations.

The measures forming part of the project include an anti-climbing fence, drain detection intrusion systems, a CCTV network and under-vehicle surveillance.

cess of indigenisation was also the sacrifice of IAF's pilots in testing these aircraft to battle worthy standards.

"We have lost 17 pilots and engineers in air accidents during testing and evaluation of the indigenous Marut, Kiran, Ajeet, Saras and early warning prototype aircraft," he said. Air power would remain a major player in future conflicts, he stated. Investment in air power was an expensive proposition. For instance, each Su-30 costs ₹417 crores. Even the LCA Mk I costs ₹191 crores.

There had to be a mix

of high, medium and low technology, ACM Dhanoa said. "It's the high end fighters and other equipment that help you shape the air battle for others to be able to carry out their task." The Rafale jets and the S-400 air defence systems fit in this, he observed.

ACM Dhanoa said that as on date, the backlog with HAL due to a long overhaul cycle and delays in upgradation was approximately of one squadron Jaguars, nearly two squadrons of Su-30MKI and one squadron of Mirage-2000 jets.

Arguing before a Bench of Justices Rohinton F. Nariman and Navin Sinha, senior advocate Guru Krishnakumar said the State could not have been expected to be a mute spectator to continued

environmental violations by the Sterlite plant.

A victim'

"Am I as a regulator supposed to let them keep on doing it?" Mr. Krishnakumar asked in court on Thursday.

"So you said enough is enough..." Justice Nariman asked with a smile.

Rebutting, senior advocate C.A. Sundaram, for Vedanta, said the company had been a victim of "harassment" from the State.

"The Tamil Nadu government gave me a bad name and hung me by it. Pollution reports shown now are dated six months after I shut down operations. They ignored my appeals for daily maintenance to prevent sulphuric acid leaks for fear of loss of face. It was all political for them," Mr. Sundaram countered.

Was harassed by State for political motives, counters firm

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL NEW DELHI

The Tamil Nadu government has accused Vedanta in the Supreme Court of indulging in "quick-fixes" every time an environmental violation regarding the operation of its Sterlite copper plant was pointed out. Vedanta countered that the State was bent on harassing the company for political motives.

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Not kosher

The Chanda Kochhar case raises issues of corporate governance that go well beyond her

The inquiry by former Supreme Court judge Justice B.N. Srikrishna into the allegations against former ICICI Bank CEO Chanda Kochhar has taken eight long months to confirm what seems apparent - that she did not conduct herself as she should have in relation to conflict-of-interest issues. It was only last week that the Central Bureau of Investigation filed an FIR against Ms. Kochhar, her husband Deepak Kochhar, head of the Videocon group Venugopal Dhoot and ICICI Bank executives for sanction of credit facilities in violation of rules, that caused a loss of ₹1,730 crore to the bank. The investigating agency has a long way to go before it establishes whether the loans were given in return for financial favours, a charge that is at the heart of booking them for criminal conspiracy, cheating and corruption. But clearly, Ms. Kochhar erred, and badly at that, in not disclosing to the bank's board her husband's business connections with the Videocon group, which was a client of the bank. Worse, she failed to display the correctness expected of her by sitting on committees that sanctioned credit facilities to Videocon when she ought to have recused herself. Just a day after a ₹300-crore loan was disbursed to Videocon International Electronics in 2009, Mr. Kochhar's NuPower Renewables received ₹64 crore from the Videocon group. Whether this was a *quid pro quo* for the loan, as the CBI suggests, needs to be proved. But there is no denying that it made for poor, even suspicious, optics.

The inquiry report holds her guilty of violation of the bank's "code of conduct, its framework for dealing with conflict of interest and fiduciary duties, and in terms of applicable Indian laws, rules and regulations." The bank's board has accepted the report and decided to treat her voluntary resignation from the bank in October as "termination for cause", also deciding to claw back all bonuses paid to her since April 2009, hold back unpaid amounts and divest her of her stock option entitlements. These are strong penalties, but the question is: how did the board give her a clean chit as recently as March last year? It had then reposed its full confidence and faith in Ms. Kochhar and commended her and the management team for their "hard work and dedication". It is impossible to believe the board was not aware of the allegations against the CEO given that a whistle-blower had made them public in October 2016. Was the board then influenced by Ms. Kochhar into giving her a good conduct certificate? These are uncomfortable questions that raise doubts over the standards of corporate governance at one of India's largest banks. The ICICI Bank episode is only one among several instances of governance lapses in corporate India in recent times. Clearly, regulators need to up their game.

On a cliff edge

Britain veers to a hard Brexit as Prime Minister May continues to placate Tory hardliners

The prospects for Britain's orderly withdrawal from the European Union on March 29 have receded further, even as MPs rallied to stop a no-deal scenario. An amendment to the draft bill on the termination of London's membership of the bloc obliges Prime Minister Theresa May to renegotiate her withdrawal agreement with Brussels. A Tory backbencher's proposal calls on the government to come up with alternatives to the Irish backstop, a central tenet of the deal Britain agreed with the rest of the EU. The arrangement is meant to guarantee continuation of the soft border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, even if London and Brussels fail to strike a concrete relationship after Brexit. The reservations that Conservative Eurosceptics have over the backstop was a crucial factor why Ms. May delayed a House of Commons vote on her withdrawal agreement. Her subsequent attempts to secure assurances from Brussels to set a time limit on the backstop, or for Britain to quit the mechanism unilaterally, yielded no tangible outcome. A strong Eurosceptic opposition on the issue was also the reason for Ms. May's overwhelming defeat in the House of Commons a fortnight ago. Ironically, this is the same deal Ms. May has all along insisted as being the one that could deliver the Brexit that people voted for, and to avoid Britain's crashing out of the EU. Soon after the passage of the amendment on Tuesday, the President of the European Council reiterated the bloc's unanimous position, ruling out a reopening of the withdrawal agreement. The Irish government has been equally categorical that as the basic guarantor of the 1998 Good Friday accord, the soft border was non-negotiable.

With less than 60 days to the deadline, the scope to overcome such fundamental differences in approach is rather narrow. Moreover, the Commons voted down a move, by Conservative and Labour proponents, to initiate legislation to defer the leave date. The latter had hoped the postponement plan would be a way to gain time, if the government failed to reach any agreement with Brussels or could not secure ratification at Westminster by late-February. Opponents, including Ms. May, dubbed the idea a remaine's ploy to delay Brexit, or worse still, to lay the groundwork for a second referendum. But Parliament has wrested control of the Brexit process, and the demand to defer the deadline could well resurface. In that event, the EU's favourable disposition to extend the Article 50 process could serve to influence the parliamentary balance. But Ms. May has seemed reluctant to confront the extreme stance of her Tory backbenchers and might remain hostage to a hard Brexit reality, notwithstanding the resulting chaos and upheaval. That outcome is surely not one that most leave voters would have even remotely imagined.

Heading towards strategic instability

India must be alert as there is a possibility of emerging disruptive technologies prompting inadvertent conflict



HAPPYMON JACOB

In late 2018, the government decided to set up three new agencies – the Defence Cyber Agency, the Defence Space Agency and the Special Operations Division – in order to address the new age challenges to national security. While this is indeed a useful step in the right direction, it is also important to note that the constitution of these agencies is a far cry from the crucial recommendations given by the Naresh Chandra Task Force and the Chiefs of Staff Committee, both of which had suggested the formation of three separate joint commands to deal with new challenges to India's national security in the cyber, space and special operations domains.

This rather lacklustre response to major 'futuristic' challenges to our national security raises a larger question: is India adequately prepared for the new age wars in general or is it still preparing for the last war it fought, and won?

High-tech innovations

There is a revolution in military affairs that seems to have attracted the attention of strategic analysts and policy planners across the world. The current focus in military thinking across the world is increasingly moving away from traditional heavy-duty military hardware to high-tech innovations such as artificial intelligence (AI), big data analytics, satellite jammers, hypersonic strike technolo-

gy, advanced cyber capabilities and spectrum denial and high-energy lasers. In the light of the unprecedented capabilities that these systems offer, there is also an increased focus on developing suitable command and control as well as doctrinal concepts to accommodate and calibrate them.

The arrival of these technologies might deeply frustrate strategic stability as we know it given their disruptive nature. Strategic stability in the contemporary international system, especially among the nuclear weapon states, depends on several age-old certainties, the most important being the issue of survivability of a state's nuclear arsenal and its ability to carry out a second strike after a first attack. Once accuracies get better, hypersonic glide vehicles replace conventional delivery systems, real time tracking and surveillance make major strides, and AI-enabled systems take over, survivability of nuclear arsenal, which lies at the heart of great power stability, could take a severe beating. There was, for instance, an assumption that the naval leg of a nuclear triad is the most survivable part since it is hidden away in the depths of the ocean away from the adversary's gaze. However, the potential ability of deep-sea drones to detect ballistic-missile armed nuclear submarines or SSBNs may make this assurance a thing of the past thereby frustrating traditional calculations.

Now add the arrival of these new technologies to the emerging strategic competition among great powers. The U.S.'s withdrawal from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces treaty is perhaps an indication of a potential arms race



in the offing. In a January 2018 article, the *Economist* put it succinctly: "Disruptive new technologies, worsening relations between Russia and America and a less cautious Russian leadership than in the cold war have raised fears that a new era of strategic instability may be approaching."

Fears of conflict

There is an inherent paradox vis-à-vis high technology-enabled military systems. While on the one hand, it is imperative for states to redesign their systems in the light of these new technologies, especially the digital and cyber components, this also makes the cyber- and digital-enabled systems vulnerable to covert cyberattacks. More so, given that such surreptitious attacks might take place in the early stages of a conflict, ensuing confusion and scare might lead to uncontrolled escalation with little time for assessment and judgement.

The biggest fear about these technologies, the implications of which we don't fully understand yet, is their potential to increase the risks of intentional and inadvertent nuclear use. Such scenarios may be unlikely but not improbable. Here's what the *Economist* had to say on precisely such a scenario: "Both China and Russia fear that new American

long-range non-nuclear strike capabilities could be used to deliver a disarming attack on a substantial part of their strategic forces or decapitate their nuclear command and control. Although they would still launch their surviving nuclear missiles, improved missile-defence systems of the U.S. would mop up most of the remainder before their warheads could do any damage."

The fear of a bolt-from-the-blue attack against one's command and control systems or a disabling strike against strategic arsenals using new technological solutions is likely to dominate the strategic mindspace of great powers in the days ahead, thereby further deepening mistrust and creating instability. Therefore, the possibility of emerging military technologies prompting inadvertent escalation and conflict cannot and should not be ruled out.

Chinese capabilities

China has emerged as a key actor in the field of emerging military technologies. This is something that will concern New Delhi in the days ahead. Some analysts believe that Beijing is in the lead position in emerging technologies with potential military applications such as quantum computing, 3D printing, hypersonic missiles and AI. If indeed, Beijing continues to develop hypersonic systems, for instance, it could potentially target a range of targets in the U.S. While the Chinese focus is evidently on U.S. capabilities, which China interprets as a potential threat, this is not without latent concerns for New Delhi. India might, in turn, consider developing some of these technologies which will create dilemmas for Islamabad. The cas-

cading strategic competition then looks unavoidable at this point, and that is worrisome. And yet, it might be difficult to avoid some of these developments given their dual use.

However, there is a need to ask how survivable India's naval platforms are given the feverish developments of advanced sensory capability in the neighbourhood. Is it sufficiently prepared to face the new age wars? Has the urgency associated with these technological developments dawned on the security planners in New Delhi?

It is in this context that we must revisit the government's decision to set up the agencies to address cyber and space challenges. Clearly, this is a timely effort from the government to have finally decided to set them up – though they are not yet in place. It is unfortunate that unlike what was envisioned earlier, these agencies will be reduced in their powers and their standing in the pecking order of defence planning in the country.

Moreover, reports indicate that the Space Command will be headed by the Air Force, the Army will head the Special Operations Command, and the Navy will be given the responsibility of the Cyber Command. If indeed that happens, their effectiveness in terms of tri-service synergy will be much less than anticipated. Even more so, given that the higher defence decision-making in the country is still civil services-dominated, despite the recent attempts to correct it, the effectiveness of these agencies will remain weak.

*Happymon Jacob teaches disarmament studies at JNU and is the author of *Line On Fire: Ceasefire Violations and India-Pakistan Escalation Dynamics**

In the Northeast, a David versus Goliath battle

With political protests erupting in the region against the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, the BJP has been put on notice



SANJOY HAZARIKA

The tiny States in India's east, the Davids, have put the Goliath of political parties, the Bharatiya Janata Party, on notice with a carefully aimed slingshot that may hurt the giant.

Why the opposition?

The Chief Ministers of Meghalaya and Mizoram, a representative of the Nagaland Chief Minister, and an ally of the BJP government in Tripura declared their unilateral, united and unhesitating opposition to the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill of 2016, which seeks to fast track citizenship to migrants of Hindu and five other non-Muslim groups from Bangladesh, Afghanistan and Pakistan. The carefully crafted North-East Democratic Alliance of non-Congress parties in the region has stumped.

Meghalaya's Conrad Sangma, who runs a coalition government which includes the BJP, convened the meeting in Guwahati, the region's political hub, challenging the BJP on its own turf. Interestingly, the Congress, which walked out

of the Lok Sabha when the Bill was being passed, was initially muted. Now, it has said it will ask its MPs to vote against the Citizenship Bill in the Rajya Sabha.

Amid the din of street protests across Assam and elsewhere, reference is made time and again to the Assam Accord of 1985, which laid down the criteria, strategy and structure for the deeply troubling 'foreigners' issue in the State. The Accord sought to calm a movement against illegal migration that had erupted in bloodshed and confrontation taking thousands of lives between 1979 and 1985. The key concerns that the Accord sought to address, through an agreement of the Centre, the State government and the All Assam Students' Union, involved not only illegal migration from Bangladesh but also constitutional safeguards for citizens and economic initiatives for the State's growth. Such growth would benefit the entire region since Assam, the largest of the eight States, drives the regional economy.

When the BJP came to power at the Centre and in the State, it sought to fast track a key demand of the Accord, the updating of the National Register of Citizens (NRC), to ostensibly clarify the existence of large numbers of non-Indians in the State. This had been stymied by earlier Congress-led governments. However, a July

2018 NRC draft, which left out four million people, was sharply denounced as prejudiced and flawed. A group of senior retired officials wrote a letter to the Prime Minister drawing attention to what they saw as a deeply problematic process.

The Supreme Court, which has been issuing a set of ad hoc directions for a project it is directly supervising, has given NRC organisers more time to fix the problems. This came after nearly 32 lakh persons filed challenges to their non-inclusion. The Citizenship Bill came plumb in the middle of this, with government officials in Delhi asserting that the Centre is committed to it and that the Bill is being misunderstood.

By excluding Muslims from its ambit, thus making citizenship contingent on religion, the provisions in the Bill appear to be contrary to Article 14, which guarantees "equality before the law or

equal protection of the law" in any part of India. The Joint Parliamentary Committee, which assessed the views of stakeholders, political and civil society groups across the country, asked the Intelligence Bureau (IB) for a figure of immediate beneficiaries of the Bill. The IB said there were just 31,313 members of these minority groups staying on long-term visas after claiming religious persecution in the three countries of focus in the Bill. But is it the Centre's case that this small figure is the sum total of persons that it wants to benefit? This does not appear to be so, according to statements of BJP leaders in Assam, where lakhs of illegal migrants are said to have settled since 1971. However, there are no hard figures, only estimates.

At the heart of the matter is a very simple issue. The 1985 Accord, by which everyone swears, is specific and unique. It is specific to a State (hence the Assam Accord) and an issue (illegal migration), and defines the effort to settle an issue which was swamped by discord. It cannot be undone by legislation that seeks to supersede it. The Accord was sanctioned by Parliament and has acceptance in the State across party lines.

Shifting goalposts

That is why arbitrary efforts and manufactured consent are meeting such resistance. The goalposts

are being changed without adequate dialogue. Lack of discussion and transparency are reasons why parts of this sensitive region erupt repeatedly. Delhi does not learn from the past. How could it expect the shifting of political goalposts to be accepted quietly? The Accord placed the cutoff year for deportation of illegal immigrants at 1971, when Bangladesh was created. The Bill changes that to 2014. Constitutional rights must be upheld. While the Bharat Ratna to Bhupen Hazarika is overdue and welcome, it cannot detract from the core questions that are being asked.

The words of Mahatma Gandhi to the emissaries of Gopinath Bordoloi, later Assam's first Chief Minister in Independent India, on December 15, 1946 ring true today. That was when the British Cabinet Mission, through constitutional trickery, sought to impose Bengal majority control over Assam. "If Assam keeps quiet, it is finished. No one can force Assam to do what it does not want to do. It must stand independently as an autonomous unit," he said.

Assam is speaking as are the peripheries. But is Delhi listening? The act of dialogue presupposes compromise by either side, especially the more powerful.

Sanjoy Hazarika is the International Director of the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative. Views are personal

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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

Coalition governments

Past experience shows that a majority government does more harm than good, so the nation needs a coalition government ("Modi warns against coalition regime," Jan. 31). The Emergency under Congress rule and the failures of this government such as demonetisation, weak implementation of the Goods and Services Tax, the breakdown of institutions, and a frayed social fabric show why "strong and big decisions" are a problem. While the Prime Minister and the BJP president are trying to convince the people that too many cooks spoil the broth, Indians must remember that absolute power corrupts absolutely.

KSHIRASAGARA BALAJI RAO,
Hyderabad

Sacking of Kochhar

First, CBI Director Alok Verma was removed in view of an adverse report by the Central Vigilance Commission against him and now Chanda Kochhar has been sacked ("ICICI Bank sacks Chanda Kochhar," Feb. 1). Whether in the public or private sector, it seems common for people to abuse their power for personal gains. However, in Ms. Kochhar's case, it is curious why she has been singled out and punished when the board failed to act initially and even jumped to her defence. And what about responsibility on the part of the bank's loan-sanctioning and credit committees?

N. VISVESWARAN,
Chennai

president Rahul Gandhi and Goa Chief Minister Manohar Parrikar over Rafale is needless ("Rahul, Parrikar engage in an all-out letter war over Rafale," Feb. 1). India's political discourse is all about

politicians making allegations and counter-allegations, which lack evidence. When the discussion between two leaders is not made public, any claim made misleads the people. In this case, it seems as though Mr. Gandhi's visit was political rather than personal given that the controversy erupted soon after his return and also because the Congress seems determined to keep the Rafale controversy alive.

N. SADHASIVA REDDY,
Bengaluru

that the Congress president has visited ailing leaders.

When Rahul Gandhi visited former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee and External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj, there was no controversy and no barbs were exchanged, so why is there suddenly a controversy now? This drama looks like it is going to continue till there is some clarity on the Rafale deal.

BIDYUT KUMAR CHATTERJEE,
Farrukhabad

TRHARCIUS S. FERNANDO,
Chennai

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

Paper in plastic

I have been buying *The Hindu Young World* for two years now. It comes wrapped in plastic. I'd like to know why *The Hindu*, which carries stories on the plastic ban and the dangers of plastic, wraps its own publications in plastic. I understand the cover has a label with my address but surely it can be replaced with some other material? PALLAVI, Chennai

CORRECTIONS & CLARIFICATIONS:
">>>"Speaker Sumitra Mahajan wants smooth Lok Sabha session" (some editions, Jan. 31, 2019) mistakenly said the Parliament session was scheduled to go on till January 13. It should have been February 13.

It is the policy of *The Hindu* to correct significant errors as soon as possible. Please specify the edition (place of publication), date and page. The Readers' Editor's office can be contacted by Telephone: +91-44-28418297/28576300 (11 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday to Friday); Fax: +91-44-28552663; E-mail: readerseditor@thehindu.co.in; Mail: Readers' Editor, *The Hindu*, Kasturi Buildings, 859 & 860 Anna Salai, Chennai 600 002, India. All communication must carry the full postal address and telephone number. No personal visits. The Terms of Reference for the Readers' Editor are on www.thehindu.com

YES, NO, IT'S COMPLICATED

Is there a case for reservation for the forward classes?

YES

MEENAKSHI LEKHI
is a BJP member and a lawyer

Social justice is not possible if we exclude the economically backward sections of our society

Social justice is inclusive in nature. It means ensuring that no marker of backwardness is left untouched. Poverty is one such marker of backwardness, and a very strong one, which denies certain basic rights and equality in society to individuals affected by it.

The Preamble, which is the soul of the Constitution, promises to all citizens social, economic and political justice. The economic status of citizens constitutes one of the three tests of backwardness. Hence, the ends of social justice cannot be truly met if we exclude the economi-

cally backward sections of society from availing the fruits of development in an equal manner.

A move to help the poor

Poverty denies equality of opportunity to individuals in education and employment. It denies them the opportunity of a decent and sustainable livelihood. Reservation, by the prevalent logic, ensures participation of the disadvantaged sections in employment through positive discrimination. Hence, there was a strong case for making a provision for reservation for the eco-

nomically backward in the general category in education and employment to ensure that they also get reasonable opportunities to advance in life.

The present provision of 10% reservation for the economically backward in the general category is being referred to as reservation for the 'savarnas', or upper castes. However, reservation under this category is not limited to upper caste Hindus; it is available to the poor in all general categories, who were not eligible for reservation under any other category hitherto. As for the upper caste Hindus, a significant proportion of the population

live in the villages and in remote areas with limited economic opportunities. They face disadvantages in the matter of getting access to education and employment. Hence, it was necessary to lend a helping hand to them as well.

The test of constitutionality

To those who point to the Supreme Court's capping of reservation at 50% in the famous *Indira Sawhney* case, I wish to mention that this ceiling is applicable only for reservation for the socially and educationally backward category, i.e. to the Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes (SCs/STs) and the Other

NO

MANOJ KUMAR JHA
is an academic and a Rajya Sabha MP

Nothing stopped the government from providing jobs or scholarships to the poor

The 124th Constitution Amendment Bill, proposed and promulgated in just a few days, is a gross and wilful subversion of the principle of social justice, which the Supreme Court has held to be the part of the basic structure of the Constitution. It is hard to understand how the government, which has all the legal resources and counsel at its disposal, chose to characterise reservations mandated by the Constitution as a job guarantee or a poverty alleviation programme. Reservations for students in public institutions of

higher education and jobs in the public sector were envisioned to bring about adequate representation to those sections of society that are oppressed by caste discrimination. Reservations along with legal protections against discrimination form the juridical structure for social upliftment of the backward classes of Indian society.

Constitutionally invalid

The Constituent Assembly amended Article 15 by inserting Clause (4), which states: "Nothing in this arti-

cle or in Clause (2) of Article 29 shall prevent the State from making any special provision for the advancement of any socially and educationally backward classes of citizens or for the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes." The use of income or economic criteria for providing reservation for those not included in the backward classes, or for those belonging to the general sections, is thus constitutionally invalid.

If indeed the Narendra Modi government wished to benefit the poorer sections of those not included in the backward classes, Sche-

duled Castes and Tribes, there was nothing that stopped it from creating jobs along the lines of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, which also created rural infrastructure. Nothing stopped it from instituting new universities and colleges and providing need-based scholarships for poor students. Granting 10% reservation in government jobs and education institutions to households in the general category with an income of less than ₹8 lakh per annum will make little difference to their poverty levels as corporate-led jobless growth

has increased income inequality exponentially.

A mere fig leaf

True to its 'jumla'-gimmick model of governance, the Modi government chose not to increase the size of the pie but to cut away another slice from the already shrinking pie of public sector institutions. The promise of existing reservations is nowhere near to being fully realised. Public spending for scholarships for students in the SC/ST/OBC categories (and minority students) has come to a near halt. Rohith Vemula's suicide is a direct result of such tactical obstacles propped by this government in the path of so-

Hence, it can stand the test of constitutionality in the Supreme Court.

Social justice is a dynamic concept which has evolved over time in accordance with the changing needs and circumstances of our society. The concept has not been defined in our Constitution. It has rightly been left to the wisdom of the lawmakers to increase its ambit from time to time, according to the needs of the time. A quota for poor citizens was a crying need of our times. The Modi government realised this and, under the true spirit of 'Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas', made the dream of 10% reservation a reality. For other political parties, this had been nothing more than an electoral gambit all along.

cial justice.

The move reverses the progress made in India over decades. It was perhaps put in place as the government was unable to provide any relief from the economic distress felt by small farmers, manufacturers, entrepreneurs, traders and the working class. In fact, this distress was worsened by the impact of the rash decision called demonetisation and the poor implementation of the Goods and Services Tax.

The 10% reservation is nothing but a fig leaf to cover the monumental failure of this government on all fronts. It is a ploy that will cost India dearly and push away further its hope for social harmony.

IT'S COMPLICATED

BHARTRUHARI MAHTAB
is an MP from the Biju Janata Dal

When you allow reservation for the advanced classes, it changes the meaning of reservation

During the Lok Sabha debate on the 124th Constitution Amendment Bill, to provide reservation in jobs and education for the economically weaker sections in the general category, an opinion was expressed that 50% of the States have to approve it. But that is not the case. Under Article 368(2), Parliament can amend the Constitution by passing the Bill in each House by a majority of the total membership of that House present and voting. Thereafter, the President shall give his assent to the Bill and the Constitution will stand amended.

But amendments which seek to

make a change in certain specific provisions, including Articles 54, 55, 73, Chapter IV of Part V, Chapter V of Part VI or Chapter I of Part XI, or any of the Lists in the Seventh Schedule, or the representation of States in Parliament, shall require to be ratified by the Legislatures of not less than one-half of the States.

Providing the context

Article 15 guarantees the fundamental right of prohibition of discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex, or place of birth. Article 15(1) and (2) broadly state that the "State" shall not discrimi-

nate against "any citizen" on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them. Article 15(3) onwards, the Constitution lays down provisions relating to protective discrimination – the policy of granting special privileges to underprivileged sections. Articles 15(3) and 15(4) are the foundations for reservations in education and employment in the country.

Article 15(5) was introduced by the Constitution (93rd Amendment) Act, 2005. It is an enabling clause that empowers the State to make such provision for the advancement of SCs, STs and socially and educationally backward classes of

citizens in relation to a specific subject, namely, admission to educational institutions including private educational institutions, whether aided or unaided by the state, notwithstanding the provisions of Article 19(1)(g). This was challenged in the court. In 2008, a five-judge Bench headed by the then Chief Justice of India, K.G. Balakrishnan, upheld the law providing 27% quota for OBCs in IITs, IIMs and other central educational institutions, but said it would not apply to the creamy layer. The Supreme Court upheld the validity of the Constitution (93rd Amendment) Act, 2005. It also held that the amendment does not violate the

basic structure of the Constitution.

It is in this context that the reservation for the economically weaker sections is to be considered. A nine-judge Bench of the Supreme Court had ruled that reservation is a remedy for historical discrimination and its continuing ill-effects. The court had also said that reservation is not aimed at economic uplift or poverty alleviation. Economic weakness is on account of social backwardness. The economic criteria will lead, in effect, to the virtual deletion of Article 16(4) from the Constitution.

Is this the new poverty line?
Since the new amendment talks of economic criteria and addresses the grievances of Brahmins, Bani-

yas, Patels, Marathas, Gujjars, Thakurs and even Muslims and Christians for the first time, many think it will be broad-based. It is the responsibility of the state to uplift the poor. Traditionally marginalised sections need affirmative action. But the current policy says those households earning less than ₹8 lakh annually or owning less than 5 acres of land can avail of the quota. That is a salary of ₹66,000 a month. If so, is this the new poverty line of India? And if so, why are those earning more than ₹25,000 a month being taxed? The moment you make reservation for the advanced classes, it changes the meaning of reservation altogether. Reservation is not an anti-poverty programme.

SINGLE FILE

Blending fact and fiction

To deal with the problem of propaganda films being taken as the truth, we need discerning viewers

KUNAL RAY



Bollywood biopics are one of my pet peeves. Yet I gathered the courage to see *Thackeray* because I was curious. I never thought I would say this, but I found *Thackeray* to be a rather well-made propaganda film. Nawazuddin Siddiqui delivered a most convincing performance as the eponymous central character. While in the same column some months ago, I had criticised his portrayal of Manto, his performance as Bal Thackeray made me sit up and take notice. Here was a good actor delivering a consummate performance.

I was at a loss. Should I applaud him for his performance or critique what he was choosing to portray on screen? *Manto* and *Thackeray* are worlds apart. The actor does his job. He moves on to his next role, but can a role be performed without convincing yourself about the character you are essaying on screen? Isn't acting fiction though? I had several questions but no easy answers.

The combination of Siddiqui's performance and the film's almost compelling storytelling readily pulls you into the narrative. It also occurred to me then that cinema as a mass medium can be used to transform fiction into fact. We often argue that there are numerous ways of writing and recording history beyond academic history books. Cinema has often reached where no book has been able to tread. Think about Ingmar Bergman's exposition of time and Michelangelo Antonioni's evocation of space. Through repeated viewing, images often attain a new power, a new historical truth. They can transform our understanding of events. Several war films fit into this bracket. Cinema can create or endorse new histories and this to me was the alarming aspect of the film.

This year several propaganda films were made in Bollywood: *The Accidental Prime Minister*, *Uri: The Surgical Strike*, *Manikarnika: The Queen of Jhansi*. While the timing of their release is anybody's guess, these films clearly serve a nationalist agenda benefiting a certain political ideology.

One also cannot dismiss the commercial aspect of such decision-making when there is enormous public interest in seeing the lives of well-known and much debated political personalities on screen and other events from the recent past such as the Uri surgical strike, which drew much attention.

For most filmgoers, it is their date with history, their chance to witness an event up-close to form an opinion based on the film's rendition. Films then become the new truth. To tackle this phenomenon we need a more discerning viewer.

The writer teaches literary and cultural studies at FLAME University, Pune

DATA POINT

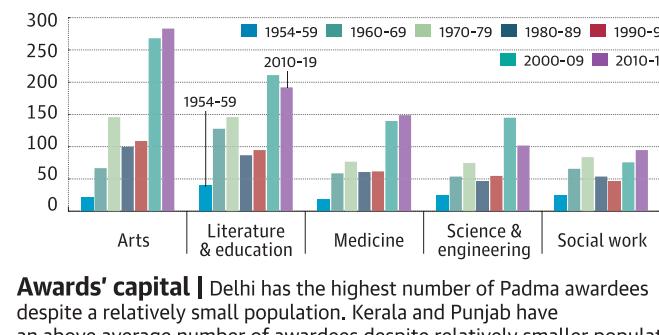
Honours roll



Nearly 40% of the Padma* awards, instituted in 1954, have honoured contributions to the arts, literature and education. Varun B. Krishnan also finds that the highest number of awardees are from Delhi, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu

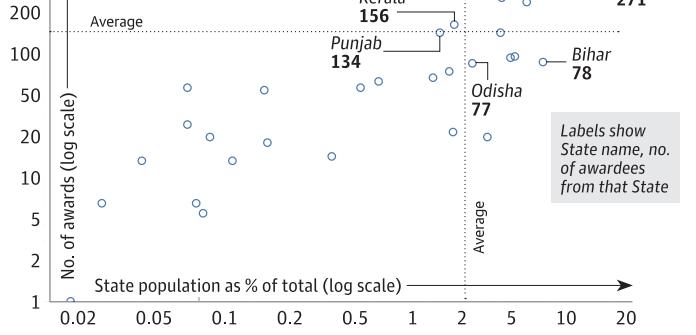
Changing composition

The number of awards in the fields of arts, medicine, and science & engineering have been increasing at the fastest pace over the decades



Awards' capital

Delhi has the highest number of Padma awardees despite a relatively small population. Kerala and Punjab have an above average number of awardees despite relatively smaller populations



FROM The Hindu ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO FEBRUARY 1, 1969

U.S. tops in West for civil strife

The United States suffers from more civil strife than 17 other Western democracies, according to an official report published here [Washington, January 31]. The National Commission on violence said about 11 out of every 1,000 Americans took part in various forms of civil strife in a five-year period ending last May, resulting in 220 deaths. Comparative studies suggested that since 1963, the U.S. has experienced strife of greater intensity and greater duration than all but few other western democracies, the Commission said. The 13-member study group, appointed to probe the causes of American violence after Senator Robert Kennedy's assassination last June, said the U.S. ranked sixth among 14 nations in the magnitude of public strife. The Commission's preliminary findings were submitted to the White House in a progress report on January 9, 11 days before President Johnson retired, but were released for publication only yesterday.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO FEBRUARY 1, 1919

Returning Soldiers.

Transport "Baroda" arrived in Karachi this morning [January 31] bringing one British and nine Indian officers and 446 ranks of Patiala Lancers and one British Officer and 37 Indian ranks of 21st Cavalry. After official reception on the wharf the men were entertained before proceeding to the rest camp. Addressing the troops in Urdu on behalf of the Army the Welcome Committee in Sind said: Colonel Pendington, Col. Achra Singh, Officers and men of Patiala Lancers and 21st Cavalry: On behalf of Hindustan we welcome you back on your safe return to your native country. The fame of Indian cavalry was well-known before the time of this great war, but its fame has been increased a hundred fold by the brave deeds of daring and of endurance which you have performed during this war.

CONCEPTUAL

Primitive reflex

BIOLOGY

This refers to reflex actions exhibited by newborn babies that involve no conscious thought. These reflex actions usually subside as the frontal lobe of the brain of the infant develops sufficiently during the first few months of its life. In some cases, however, certain primitive reflexes may persist beyond the first year of a child's life. The sucking reflex, the rooting reflex, and the grasping reflex are some of the primitive reflexes exhibited by newborn babies. It is believed that some primitive reflexes may simply be remnants of behaviour from the evolutionary past which may have helped infants to survive in tough conditions.

MORE ON THE WEB

Ilaiyaraaja 75: In conversation with the maestro

<http://bit.ly/Ilaiyaraaja75>

FROM PAGE ONE

Indians arrested in U.S.
on visa fraud charges

The Hindu has not been able to verify the number of people arrested. It has reached out to Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and is awaiting a response to confirm the numbers. At least 25 of those enrolled at Farmington have been confirmed as arrested, Rahul Reddy, a Houston-based lawyer at an immigration law firm, Reddy & Neumann, told *The Hindu*. Mr. Reddy had spoken to some of those detained or to their roommates or close relatives.

The indictments unsealed on Wednesday said the eight individuals at the centre of the racket were "a group of foreign citizens". It is highly likely that all eight are Indian citizens based on their names, their characterisation in the charge-sheet and discussions with sources.

The fraud is based on a sting operation involving Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) agents who had posed as owners and employees of the University of Farmington in Farmington Hills, Michigan, approximately between June 2017 and January 2019.

Students would pay to enrol in the University, giving the appearance that they were in approved educational programs and making normal progress towards getting a degree. However, the University had no faculty nor any classes, the indictment says, and the students were aware of this. The "pay to stay" scheme allowed them to maintain their student visa (F-1) status and obtain work permits as part of the Curricular Practical Training (CPT) option open to qualified F-1 visa students.

In 2016, officials busted a similar scheme, making arrests in a case that involved the University of Northern New Jersey.

The University of Far-

Government revises
GDP growth upwards

"For 2016-17, this hike of 1.1 percentage points in GDP growth comes as a surprise because it was the demonetisation year," D.K. Srivastava, chief policy adviser at EY India, said. "If you look at the demand side, the main factor for this is the increase in private final consumption expenditure, which has also increased 1 percentage point. That is inconsistent with the idea of people having less cash to make purchases."

He further said the main driver of the upward revision on the output side in 2016-17 was the construction sector, which has been revised upwards by 4.7 percentage points. "Construction is also a sector which has a large informal sector component and all earlier analyses had indicated that

demonetisation adversely affected the informal sectors," Mr. Srivastava said. "So that is also a surprise."

Looking at 2017-18, analysts say the government's explanation does not hold water because the two main drivers of the upward revision – the mining and quarrying sector and the public administration sector – both have data that is compiled by the government itself and so should not have undergone such a vast revision.

"It is not something we are able to explain," Madan Sabnavis, Chief Economist at CARE Ratings, said. "The revisions where the growth rates are going up by 1 percentage point and 0.5 percentage points are difficult to reconcile with the ground-level facts."

ED conducts searches in
U.P. 'memorial' scam

The Uttar Pradesh Lokayukta had earlier prepared a report which identified several irregularities in the execution of the project. More than 100 engineers and officials of the State Rajkiya Nirman Nigam, the Public Works Department and the New Okhla Industrial Development Authority had come under the scanner.

The Lokayukta had indicted two of Ms. Mayawati's Cabinet colleagues – Nasimud-

(With PTI inputs)

BJP wins high-stakes
Jind seat in Haryana

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IN BRIEF



PM to visit all 3 regions of J&K on February 3

Srinagar
Prime Minister Narendra Modi's one-day visit to all three regions of J&K — Kashmir, Jammu and Ladakh — on February 3 will see him focus on the BJP's core constituency in Jammu. The separatists in Kashmir have called for a shutdown while groups in Ladakh's Kargil have planned protests.

Patna HC quashes case against Mukul Wasnik

PATNA
The Patna High Court on Thursday quashed a case registered against senior Congress leader Mukul Wasnik in Bihar's Muzaffarpur nearly a decade ago. An advocate had filed a complaint claiming he had been "cheated" by the Congress leader and denied a ticket for the Assembly polls held in 2010. **PTI**

Navy's Project-751 approved under SP model

NEW DELHI
Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) on Thursday gave formal approval to execute the Navy's Project-751 for six advanced submarines worth ₹40,000 crore through the Strategic Partnership (SP) model of the Defence Procurement Procedure. Under the SP route, an Indian private strategic partner will tie up with a foreign manufacturer to manufacture submarines domestically through technology transfer.

Two arrested for making threat calls to BSP MLA

RANCHI
Two persons were arrested on Thursday in connection with the threat calls made to BSP MLA Kushwaha Shivpujan Mehta. Dipu Modanal, a resident of Chandoli in U.P., and Roshan Singh Parmar, belonging to Palamau district, were arrested from Ranchi. A mobile phone and the SIM on which they made the call were also recovered. **PTI**

C The BJP, which presented fake data on providing employment, stands exposed. The jobless youth will oust the Narendra Modi government in the Lok Sabha polls

AKHILESH YADAV
Samajwadi Party

C This suppression of data is a clear admission of the government that its policies have resulted in misery for our people. All the data must be released immediately

SITARAM YECHURI
CPI(M)

C Is this the reason why the NSSO survey has not been made public? Will the government answer or remain silent as has been the trend?

SUPRIYA SULE
NCP

C Unemployment rate is at a 45-year-high. This is why members of the National Statistical Commission resigned. India does not want a government that has left the future of its youth in jeopardy

R.S. SURJEWALA
Congress

It's clear that Rahul Gandhi has inherited Mussolini's short-sightedness and has myopic understanding of issues. EPFO's real data shows sharp increase in jobs, created in just the last 15 months

BJP'S OFFICIAL TWITTER HANDLE

Report confirms crisis: experts

'Government has created an atmosphere of confusion by trying to conceal data'



Waiting to be hired: According to the NSSO survey, the country's unemployment rate was at a 45-year-high in 2017-18. The picture shows daily wage labourers waiting for prospective employers, in Delhi. ■ V.V. KRISHNAN

**TCA SHARAD RAGHAVAN
PRISCILLA JEBARAJ**

NEW DELHI
The National Sample Survey Office's (NSSO) data showing a record spike in unemployment in 2017-18, which was published in a news report on Thursday, is a validation of trends seen on the ground, according to labour economists, job-seekers and workers' representatives. The government's failure to release the NSSO report was the latest sign of a complete lack of transparency regarding jobs data, they said.

"The NSSO findings are not surprising, but they are alarming. The trends of rising unemployment were already visible. Our analysis showed it was higher in 2015 than in 2011-12, and we expected demonetisation to have a harsh effect," said Amit Basole, head of the

Centre for Sustainable Employment at Azim Premji University in Bengaluru, and lead author of a report on the State of Working India, 2018. Ms. Basole noted that the government's decision to discontinue the NSSO's five year surveys, failure to regularly release Labour Bureau data and delay in releasing the NSSO's periodic labour force survey had led to "an atmosphere of uncertainty and confusion. Instead, the government kept citing job numbers based on EPFO's payroll data and the Mudra loans, which are not helpful," he said.

Post-demonetisation fall
"The data, as cited by the news report, shows that there has been a rise in unemployment and a decline in the labour force participation rate (LFPR) post demon-

etisation, which is in line with what we have also been saying," said Mahesh Vyas, chief executive and managing director of the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE), which has done its own unemployment surveys.

"The LFPR is a measure of people looking for jobs. So, if this is declining while unemployment is growing, it means that there is a serious crisis in jobs. The government has to make the data public," added Anamitra Roy Chowdhury, a labour economist with the Centre for Informal Sector & Labour Studies at Jawaharlal Nehru University.

The informal sector employs more than 90% of the country's workforce, and has witnessed a decline in available work and wages in the last two years, said Chandan Kumar, coordinator of the Working People's Charter, an alliance of informal workers' groups and unions. "Daily wage labourers say they used to get 20 days of work each month. After demonetisation, they get only 10 days."

ers. This comes as no surprise to Anupam, founder of Yuva Halla Bol, a movement of young job-seekers.

"In the last couple of years, the simmering anger among educated youth has been clear. After demonetisation, we have seen that the labour force itself has shrunk," he said, adding that urban women, who face an unemployment rate of 27% are worst hit.

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Abandon Citizenship Bill: northeast BJP units

VIJAYA SINGH
NEW DELHI

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) units in the northeast have conveyed to the party leadership, in an internal meeting, that they are opposed to the Citizenship Amendment Bill.

A senior BJP functionary from the northeast said on Thursday that the "adaman attitude of one man will take down the BJP in northeast."

BJP president Amit Shah has been vociferously supporting the Bill that seeks to provide citizenship to non-Muslims from Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh who entered India till December 31, 2014.

Widespread protests
Assam and other States, including Meghalaya, Nagaland, Tripura and Mizoram, have been protesting against the Bill that would make it possible for giving Indian citizenship, mostly to illegal Hindu migrants from Bangladesh in Assam, who came after March 1971, in violation of the 1985 Assam Accord.

Nearly 40 lakh people were excluded from Assam's final draft of the National Register of Citizens (NRC) published on July 30 last year. Nearly 30 lakh of those excluded from NRC have filed claims to be included in the list of citizens.

As the protests continue, the government aims to get the Citizenship Amendment Bill, 2019 passed in the Rajya Sabha next week.

The Centre will also introduce two other legislations pertaining to northeast in the ongoing interim budget session.

Stop MPs' meet on Kashmir, India tells U.K.

MEA warns Pak. against interference

SUHASINI HAIDAR

NEW DELHI
After summoning the Pakistan High Commissioner on Wednesday, India has registered its protest with the British government about an upcoming meet on Kashmir at the British Parliament, the Ministry of External Affairs said. The government also warned of "consequences" if Pakistan continued its actions on Kashmir, which it called a "direct interference in India's internal affairs".

"We have told the United Kingdom [government] quite strongly that their territory must not be used for anti-India activity conferences or rallies, and we hope they will take it seriously, and take action against this kind of conference," said MEA spokesperson Raveesh Kumar. He was briefing journalists about the measures taken against the meeting in the House of Commons on February 4 of the "All Party Parliamentary Group on Pakistan" (APPG-Pakistan) — a group that includes Conservative and Labour Party MPs.

Officials said they hoped that Pakistan Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi would not be given an official welcome during his visit to London, where he is expected to attend the conference, and that the British government would distance itself from the proceedings.

'Private visit'
The British High Commission said the visit by Mr. Qureshi was a "private" one. "There are no plans for meetings with the U.K. government during this visit. The U.K.'s long-standing position is that it is for India and Pakistan to find a lasting



Raveesh Kumar

political resolution to the situation in Kashmir, taking into account the Kashmiri people's wishes," the spokesperson for the High Commission in Delhi wrote in reply to a query from *The Hindu*.

Late on Wednesday, Foreign Secretary Vijay Gokhale had summoned Pakistan High Commissioner Sohail Mahmood, and issued a stern demarche on Mr. Qureshi's telephone call to Hurriyat leader Mirwais Umar Farooq, calling it proof that Pakistan "abets and encourages individuals associated with terrorism and anti-India activities".

The spokesperson clarified, however, that the statement was aimed at "anti-India forces" and did not pinpoint the individuals.

In a reciprocal action on Thursday morning, the Pakistan Foreign Ministry summoned Indian High Commissioner Ajay Bisaria to issue counter-protest, calling India's reaction "an indication of domestic politics being allowed to override India's international obligations."

India has raised the issue of "anti-India" groups within the U.K. often in the past few months. In August, the British government turned down an Indian request to cancel a pro-Khalistani rally in London.

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CENTRE FOR DNA FINGERPRINTING AND DIAGNOSTICS
(An autonomous Institute of the Department of Biotechnology, Ministry of Science & Technology, Govt. of India) Inner Ring Road, Uppal, HYDERABAD-500039, Tel. No.040-27160226, Email: purchase@cfdf.org.in

GLOBAL TENDER NOTICE
Sealed Tenders in TWO BID SYSTEM are invited on behalf of and by the Director, CFDF for procurement of the following equipment:

SI.No. **Brief Description of Material** **Quantity** **Earnest Money Deposit (EMD)**

1) Supply and Installation of Next Generation Massively Parallel Sequencing System 1 No. Rs. 4,00,000/-

Interested parties may visit CFDF website: www.cfdf.org.in and Central Public Procurement Portal www.eprocure.gov.in for full details of the Advertised Tender Document No: CFDF/PUR/APF/2018/19/NDL12346 due date for receipt of Tender is 22.02.2019 @ 2.30 pm Sd/- IC - Stores & Purchase

No: PDS/1/1/Sanitary/2018-19 Dated: 31.01.2019

TENDER NOTICE
EMPANELMENT AND APPOINTMENT OF SUPPLIERS FOR SUPPLY OF 6.2 CRORES OF SANITARY NAPKINS IN 100 PACKETS (EACH PACKET CONTAINS 7 OR 10 PADS) IN MASTER CARTON FOR SUPPLY TO SIC WOMEN AND 8" TO 10" CLASSES SCHOOL GIRL CHILDREN BY GOVERNMENT OF ANDHRA PRADESH FOR THREE MONTHS FROM APRIL 2019 TO MAY 2019 IN NCECE & MARSHALI INITIATIVES

All interested Manufacturers/s/Authorized Distributors/s in Andhra Pradesh are invited for registration as suppliers eligible to participate in the e-auction to be conducted by NCDEX e-Markets Ltd on behalf of APSCSC Ltd for supply of Sanitary Napkins to the MSL Points of (13) Districts in Andhra Pradesh State.

For Registration, interested Sanitary Napkins Manufacturer/s/Authorized Distributor/s may visit www.apscsc.gov.in & www.menm.in for application form and detailed terms & conditions.

Last date for registration and completion of formalities for the e-auction shall be up to 5.00pm of Last date for application form and detailed terms & conditions. Last date for application form and detailed terms & conditions to be applied in application form shall be extended to Customer Service Group, NCDEX e-Markets Limited, Achrol Corporate Park, 1st Floor, Near Garden, LBS Marg, Kanjurmarg(West), Mumbai - 400078 Tel: 9823232994/9932039599 or 022-49816555. Email: askus@menm.in

The tentative date of online e-auction through NCDEX e-Markets Ltd would be 12.02.2019 at 10.00 am onwards for 6.2 crores of Sanitary Napkins in 100 packets (each packet contains 7 or 10 pads) in master carton. Delivery should be completed within 15 working days at all MSL Points of (13) Districts in AP State. Auction will be held Zone-wise. The details are available on the website www.apscsc.gov.in.

Sd/- VC & Managing Director

KARNATAKA INDUSTRIAL AREAS DEVELOPMENT BOARD
(A Government of Karnataka Undertaking)
No. 49, 4th & 5th Floor, East Wing, Khanjali Bhavan,
Race Course Road, Bengaluru - 560 001,

Phone: 080-22265383/40931272 Fax: 080-22267901

Website: www.kiadb.in E-mail: ceoem@kiadb.in

No. IADB/ENGG/ETND-DPR-06/14478/2018-19 Date: 29.01.2019

SHORT-TERM NOTICE INVITING FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

(Through GOK e-Procurement Portal Only)

KIADB invites from reputed consultants/firms under two cover bid system having an office at Bengaluru with vast experience and proven record of similar nature of work for expression of interest for the project mentioned below.

Name of the work: Developing Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) plan and a public outreach programme and campaign to market reclaimed water from the Tertiary Treatment Plant located at Hi-Tech Defense and Aerospace Park, Near KIAL, Devanahalli, Bengaluru Rural District. **EMD:** (Rs in lakhs) Through e-payment: 1.00. Applicants May Download Bidding Documents from the E-Procurement Portal [https://eproc.karnataka.gov.in](http://eproc.karnataka.gov.in)

Scheduled dates are as follows:

- Last date to receive pre-bid Queries: 04.02.2019 Up to 5.00 pm
- Pre-bid meeting will be held on: 06.02.2019 at 12.00 noon
- Last date for submission of bids is: 21.02.2019 Up to 4.00 pm
- Time and date of opening Technical bids is on: 23.02.2019 at 11.30 am.

Sd/- Chief Development Officer & Chief Engineer

'People leaving low quality jobs'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

CEO of NITI Aayog and ex-officio member of the National Statistical Commission Amitabh Kant on Thursday said, "Nearly 7.8 million jobs have been created. We have to take into account people leaving the low quality jobs. We are creating adequate number of jobs for new entrants. The problem seems to be the quality of jobs."

"India needs about seven million jobs and enough jobs have been created for new entrants."

Mr Kant was speaking at a press conference in response to a news report in the *Business Standard* which cited data from the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) of unemployment being at a 45-year high.

Vice-Chairman of the NITI Aayog Rajiv Kumar said the government in fact had evidence of increasing job crea-

tion. Stating that the NSSO report was only a draft that had not been approved by the government, he said: "The government will approve the report which has not been finalised yet. The reason for the delay is it was felt that there were other quarters of data to be made available."

"This is a situation where the NITI Aayog is holding a

press conference on NSSO data, where the NSSO should have been holding it," Madan Sabnavis, Chief Economist at CARE Ratings said.

"Even with the release of the back series GDP data, it was NITI Aayog that did it. It is clear the government is not happy with the numbers the Central Statistics Office is putting out."

The rate of joblessness among the rural males in the age group of 15 to 29 years jumped more than three times to 17.4% in 2017-18, compared to 5% in 2011-12, it said in a statement.

The Unemployment rate of rural female youth stood at 13.6%.

RAJASTHAN POLICE STATE CRIME RECORDS BUREAU
No.S-15(9) SCR/General/CCPS/2012/311 Date: 23-01-2019

Notice Inviting Bid

Brexit may be delayed: Hunt

Foreign Secretary says government needs more time to pass exit legislation

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

London
Britain may need to delay Brexit to pass legislation to implement the split with the EU, Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt said on Thursday.

As the March 29 withdrawal date looms, the government is still trying to convince MPs to support a version of the divorce deal it has agreed with the bloc.

Even if it is passed, legislation putting the treaty into effect would then have to go through both the House of Commons and the House of Lords. "If we ended up approving a deal in the days before March 29 then we might need some extra time to pass critical legislation," Mr. Hunt told BBC radio.

"But if we are able to make progress sooner than that might not be necessary. We can't know at this stage exactly which of those scenarios would happen." There are eight laws needed to prepare for Brexit, not just on the deal but also covering issues such as trade, agriculture and immigration.

Andrea Leadsom, the leader of the House of Commons, had previously suggested Britain could probably secure "a couple of extra weeks" if needed. Any delay must be agreed by the other 27 EU countries.

Austrian Foreign Minister Karin Kneissl said it would be tough to extend the time frame. "It's very difficult to imagine that there can be a tremendous breakthrough –



Seeking common ground: British Prime Minister Theresa May and Opposition leader Jeremy Corbyn speaking in the House of Commons on Wednesday. • AFP

a magic solution – in the next few days in order also to have this ratified in due time," she told BBC radio.

Return to Brussels
Prime Minister Theresa May has promised to return to Brussels to try to secure changes to the deal that would enable MPs to support it, but the EU has warned it does not want to reopen the agreement. Without the deal, Britain runs the risk of severing ties with its closest trading partner on March 29 with no new arrangements in place.

Meanwhile, the government announced that it was scrapping MPs' February holiday in the rush to get ready for Brexit. In a rare move, MPs were warned to ditch their holiday plans in order to cram through vital legislation over the next two months.

British lawmakers have not had their holidays pulled since they were recalled

from their 2013 summer break to debate the escalating conflict in Syria.

"We are determined to have everything in place in order for us to leave on March 29 this year," Ms. May's spokesman told reporters. "The fact that recess won't be taking place and MPs will be sitting shows that we are taking all available steps to make sure that March 29 is our exit date." Parliament's lower House of Commons was expected to be off from February 15 to 24, inclusive of the two days.

Having thrown out the withdrawal agreement Ms. May negotiated with the EU, divided British lawmakers voted on Tuesday to send her back to Brussels to get an Irish border "backstop" clause removed. The backstop could see Britain tied to the bloc's trade rules to keep open the border with EU member Ireland. Emboldened by a mandate to seek to rewrite the rejected agree-

ment, Ms. May said it was a chance to prevent Britain crashing out of the EU on March 29 with no deal in place.

Under pressure

Ms. Leadsom, the leader of the House of Commons – the Minister responsible for arranging British government business – told the chamber on Thursday to prepare for working through February.

"Our constituents will expect that the house is able to continue to make progress at this important time," she said. Ms. Leadsom also suggested that all the necessary legislation could be brought through before exit day. "We are under pressure but it's all very much under control and we do expect to achieve what we need to do by March 29," she said.

Besides cancelling the parliamentary recess, the government is heading towards extending parliamentary sitting hours to allow more time to debate Brexit legislation.

Main Opposition Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn on Thursday reiterated his call for the government to resign and trigger a general election.

Opposition Liberal Democrat leader Vince Cable said the scrapped holiday showed the government was in a "desperate position as a result of their own chaotic planning". He said Ms. May must "accept reality" and seek to delay Brexit.

FB to bar 'foreign' ads for Thai poll

Election in March will be the first since the 2014 coup

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

BANGKOK
Facebook will bar foreign-based election advertisements in Thailand in the lead-up to March elections, the company said on Thursday, after being pilloried for not controlling election interference on the platform.

Thailand's poll, set for March 24, is the first since a 2014 coup. Facebook has come under fire in a wave of scandals, including the fuelling of hate speech in Myanmar and over the sharing of its users' data.

Facebook said in a newsroom post it would help "protect" the Thai vote by temporarily not allowing ads from "foreign entities which



Towards democracy: Graffiti in Bangkok ahead of the Thai general election in March. • REUTERS

are of an electoral nature".

The new rules, which cover paid-for content, will take effect from mid-February and will apply to external ads with references to "politicians, parties... and/or elec-

tion suppression," the post said. As in other countries in Southeast Asia, Facebook is wildly popular in Thailand where it has 52 million monthly users, according to the company.

U.S.-China trade talks going well, says Trump

President indicates he'll meet Xi soon

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

WASHINGTON
President Donald Trump on Wednesday touted the chances of success as U.S.-China negotiations entered a second day, saying Beijing was eager to make a deal.

In a morning series of tweets, he also said a final deal would leave "NOTHING" unresolved but such a bargain could only be struck after he met with his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping "in the near future".

Making a deal

The meetings are "going well," Mr. Trump said on Twitter. "China does not

want an increase in Tariffs and feels they will do much better if they make a deal. They are correct."

The two sides have just a month remaining in a 90-day truce declared in December. Should the talks fail, U.S. import duties on \$200 billion in Chinese imports are due to more than double on March 2.

But Washington's aggressive prosecution of the Chinese telecoms firm Huawei – which federal prosecutors accused this week of industrial espionage, sanctions violations and fraud – threatened to upset the talks, angering Beijing.

Hindu temple vandalised in Kentucky

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

WASHINGTON
A Hindu temple has been vandalised in the U.S. State of Kentucky by miscreants who sprayed black paint on the deity and left a knife stabbed into a chair in the main hall.

The incident happened between Sunday night and Tuesday morning at the Swaminarayan Temple in the Louisville city.

According to local media report, vandalism resulted in broken windows, walls spray-painted with inappropriate messages and graffiti. Authorities are investigating the incident as a hate crime.

No money for wall in bipartisan deal: Pelosi

But more border security is on the table

REUTERS

WASHINGTON
Mr. Trump said: "Without a wall, it doesn't work."

February 15 deadline

The committee of Republican and Democratic representatives and Senators met for the first time on Wednesday to begin negotiating a compromise on federal spending. The committee will likely have to wrap up its work around February 10 to meet a February 15 deadline.

Ms. Pelosi also rejected as a "nonstarter" Mr. Trump's offer of a temporary three-year protection for "Dreamer" immigrants in exchange for a permanent wall.

ELSEWHERE



God wants Trump to be President: Sarah Sanders

WASHINGTON
U.S. President Donald Trump has plenty of detractors, but for Press Secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders, he has support from above. "I think God calls all of us to fill different roles at different times and I think that he wanted Donald Trump to become President," she said in an interview. AFP

U.S.-educated workers to gain from new H-1B rule

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

WASHINGTON

The U.S. has announced a new H-1B visa filing rule from April under which priority would be given to foreign workers with advanced degrees from American universities.

The rule reverses the order by which the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) selects H-1B petitions under the regular cap and the advanced degree exemption.

Among other things, the rule introduces an electron-

ic registration requirement for petitioners seeking to file H-1B cap-subject petitions.

President Donald Trump has said that he wants to bring in changes in the H-1B visa systems so that holders of these visas can stay in the country.

Employers seeking to employ foreign workers with a U.S. Master's or higher degree will have a greater chance of selection in the H-1B lottery in years of excess demand for new H-1B visas, said USCIS Director Francis Cisneros.

Among other things, the rule introduces an electron-

Vote seeks EU recognition for Guaidó

European Parliament joins U.S., Canada in backing Opposition

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

BRUSSELS
The European Parliament voted on Thursday to recognise Venezuela's Juan Guaidó as acting President and urged the European Union (EU) and its member states to follow suit. The vote joins the growing international pressure on President Nicolás Maduro and his remaining backers to step aside and allow free elections.

It does not change EU policy, but adds to calls for the EU executive and its member states to join the United States, Canada and Brazil in backing Mr. Guaidó. Four major European member



A painting of Hugo Chávez in Caracas. • AFP

ties against 104 "no" votes and 88 abstentions.

The vote also came as EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini demanded that Venezuelan authorities loyal to Mr. Maduro release detained foreign journalists.

Meanwhile, in an interview to Spain's *El País* newspaper published on Thursday, Mr. Guaidó repeated an appeal to Venezuela's armed forces to take his side.

"The risk of a civil war in Venezuela does not exist, despite what certain people want to believe or want to let us believe. Why? Because 90% of the population wants a change," he said.

OFFICE OF THE ENGINEER-IN-CHIEF (CIVIL), ODISHA NIRMAN SOUDHA, UNIT-V, BHUBANESWAR INVITATIONS FOR BIDS (IFB)	
File No. B-III-SC&ST-01/2019 5031 / Bhubaneswar the 29 th Jan. 2019	
Invitation For Bids	
1195-B: Bid Identification No. CE (B) - 45 / 2018-19	
<p>1. The Chief Engineer (Buildings), Odisha, Bhubaneswar, on behalf of Governor of Odisha, invites percentage rate bids in double cover system in ONLINE MODE only, for Construction of Building works as detailed below :</p> <p>2. Nature of work : Building work (Composite work)</p> <p>3. No. of work : 01 no.</p> <p>4. Bid Cost : ₹. 10,000/-</p> <p>5. Class of Contractor : 'A' Class & Special Class</p> <p>6. Availability of Bid Documents in the website : From dt.05.02.2019 to 17:00 hours of dt.23.02.2019.</p> <p>7. Date of Opening of Bid : Dt. 25.02.2019 at 11:30 AM</p> <p>8. The Bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only. Further details can be seen from the website : https://tendersodisha.gov.in. Any addendum/corrigendum/cancellation of tender can also be seen in the said website.</p>	
34117/11/0193/1819 Sd/- Chief Engineer (Buildings), Odisha, Bhubaneswar	

GOVT. OF ODISHA OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, NORTH EASTERN RURAL WORKS CIRCLE, KEONJHAR "e" Procurement Notice for Bridge Works Identification No.: Bridge Online NCB No. 254 No. 451 / Date : 30.01.2019						
<p>1. Name of the Work : Construction of Bridge Works under OMBADC in the District of Keonjhar.</p> <p>2. Total No. of Work : 02 (Two) Nos.</p> <p>3. Estimated Cost : As per Annexure (Approximately)</p> <p>4. Eligible Class of Contractor : As per Annexure</p> <p>5. Period of Completion : 15 (Fifteen) Calendar months.</p> <p>6. Other details</p>						
Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of tender On-line for bidding	Last Date & Time of seeking Tender Clarification	Date & Time of Opening of Tender in O/D S.E., N.E.R.W.Circle,Keonjhar.		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Superintending Engineer, North Eastern Rural Works Circle, Keonjhar.	Bridge Online NCB No. 254	Dt.02.02.19 at 11.00 A.M.	Dt.18.02.19 up to 3.00 P.M.	Dt.17.02.19 up to 3.00 P.M.	Dt.19.02.19 at 11.00 A.M.	Dt.23.02.19 at 11.00 A.M.

• Further details can be seen from the website: www.tendersodisha.gov.in

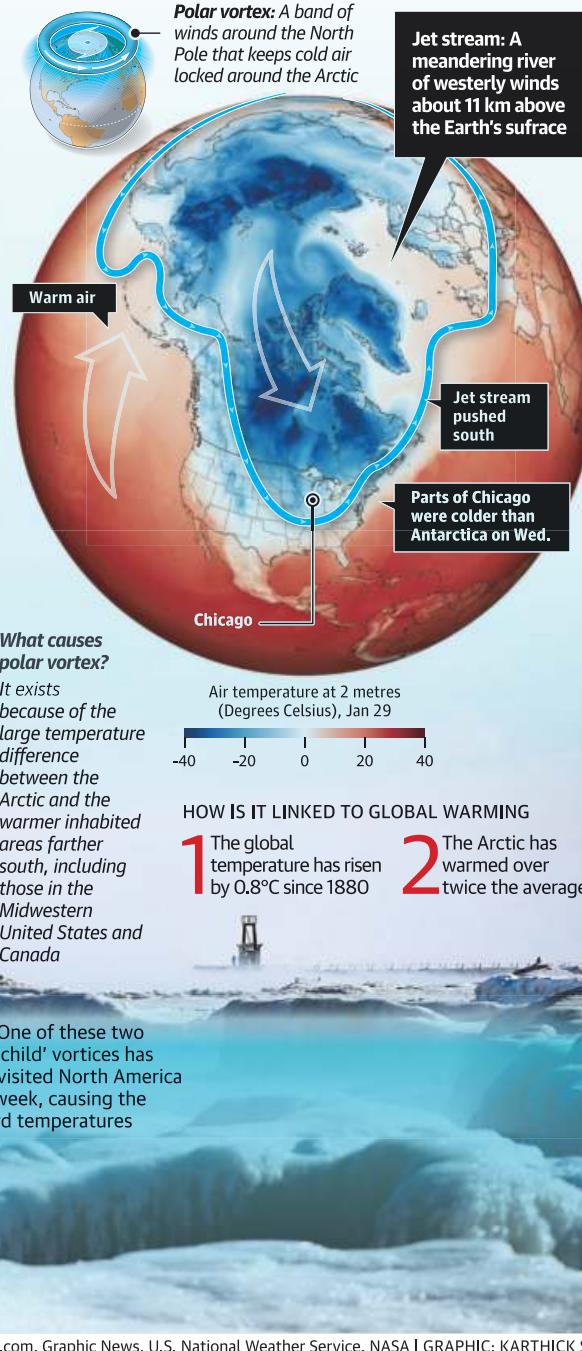
Sd/- Superintending Engineer, N.E.R.W.Circle, Keonjhar.

The new Arctic normal

Frozen Arctic winds brought record-low temperatures across much of the U.S. Midwest and parts of the country's Northeast on Wednesday, killing at least 12 people. Here is an explainer on the extreme-weather events hitting North America

EFFECT IN NUMBERS		
At least	90 MILLION	Americans experienced temperatures on or below 0°F (-18°C) on Wednesday and Thursday
At least	2,700 flights	flights were cancelled on Wednesday
Another	1,800 flights	scheduled for Thursday were called off

Cities/States affected
With temperatures 20-40°F below average, Wednesday/Thursday were the coldest days in the following places in 20 years:
▪ Chicago, Illinois, witnessed its coldest day since 1985 at -23°F (-30.5°C)
▪ In South Bend, Indiana, residents experienced a temperature of -13°F (-25°C)
▪ Minneapolis, Minnesota, saw a temperature of -28°F (-33.3°C)
▪ In Des Moines,



MARKET WATCH

	31-01-2019	% CHANGE
Sensex	36,257	-1.87
US Dollar	71.08	0.05
Gold	34,000	-0.21
Brent oil	62.12	-0.54

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	338.65	-0.50
Asian Paints	1412.60	22.20
Axis Bank	722.70	31.75
Bajaj Auto.	2554.55	54.85
Bajaj Finance	6091.90	-155.30
Bharti Airtel	306.40	2.70
BPCL	345.45	2.75
Cipla	517.30	11.50
Coal India	224.65	-0.55
Dr Reddys Lab	2720.80	55.40
Eicher Motors	19005.75	86.60
GAIL (India)	332.15	10.55
Grafix Ind	721.00	-4.00
HCL Tech	1005.20	-13.20
HDFC	1922.35	36.55
HDFC Bank	2079.95	45.25
Hero MotoCorp	2613.95	2.95
Hindalco	208.50	2.70
HPLC	233.50	2.35
Hind Unilever	1763.25	29.90
Indiabulls HFL	664.70	-8.20
ICICI Bank	364.45	-1.45
IndusInd Bank	1505.55	29.45
Bharti Infratel	292.25	1.95
Infosys	749.55	23.65
Indian Oil Corp	136.85	2.30
ITC	278.65	3.15
JSW Steel	274.60	5.70
Kotak Bank	1255.75	33.55
L&T	1314.30	19.85
M&M	680.05	1.40
Maurit Suzuki	6641.15	92.90
NTPC	139.70	1.00
ONGC	141.25	1.55
PowerGrid Corp	188.60	1.50
Reliance Ind	1227.15	31.45
State Bank	293.65	6.20
Sun Pharma	423.45	5.50
Tata Motors	181.20	6.60
Tata Steel	476.70	9.25
TCS	2014.10	32.70
Tech Mahindra	731.90	17.30
Titan	995.80	26.90
UltraTech Cement	3519.35	77.15
UPL	786.50	19.15
Vedanta	197.35	3.25
Wipro	369.20	5.95
YES Bank	194.10	-5.40
Zee Entertainment	380.20	-8.65

EXCHANGE RATES		
Indicative direct rates in rupees a unit except yen at 4 p.m. on January 31		
CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	70.88	71.20
Euro	81.46	81.83
British Pound	93.03	93.45
Japanese Yen (100)	65.24	65.56
Chinese Yuan	10.58	10.63
Swiss Franc	71.38	71.70
Singapore Dollar	52.68	52.92
Canadian Dollar	53.91	54.18
Malaysian Ringgit	17.30	17.39

Source: Indian Bank

BULLION RATES CHENNAI	
January 31 rates in rupees with previous rates in parentheses	
Retail Silver (1g)	43.9.....(43.8)
22 ct gold (1g)	3163.....(3161)

Source: Indian Bank

Centre firm on FDI rules deadline

New norms take effect today; Amazon to ensure minimal impact on consumers

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Hard bargain: Large e-commerce firms repeatedly sought dilution of rules or extension of deadline. ■ GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

The government on Thursday said it would not be extending the deadline for implementation of the new rules governing FDI in e-commerce. The new rules will come into effect on Friday as per plan.

"The department had received some representations to extend the deadline of February 1, 2019 to comply with the conditions contained in the Press Note 2 of 2018 series on FDI Policy in e-commerce issued by the Department," the Commerce Ministry's Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade said in a notification.

"After due consideration, it has been decided with the approval of the competent authority not to extend the

above deadline." Large e-commerce firms such as Amazon and Flipkart have repeatedly approached the Centre seeking either dilution of the rules or extension of the deadline. "While we remain committed to complying with all laws and regulations, we will continue to

look to engage with the government to seek clarifications that help us decide our future course of action as well as minimise the impact on our customers and sellers," an Amazon spokesperson said.

The new rules ban any firm that has any stake owned by an e-commerce

Insurers told to provide for IL&FS loans

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

MUMBAI

Insurance companies will have to make provisions for their exposure to the crippled infra lender IL&FS, industry regulator IRDAI said on Thursday.

The IL&FS group, with a debt of over ₹94,000 crore, has been defaulting on its financial obligations since August and has also borrowed from insurance companies, even though the exact exposure of the industry is not immediately known.

Exposure to IL&FS cannot be written off, they will have to make provisions, IRDAI chief Subhash Chandra Khuntia told reporters on the sidelines of an event, without offering any specifics.

GST collections cross ₹1 lakh crore in January

Last month, it stood at ₹94,725 crore

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

achieved despite various tax relief measures implemented by the GST Council to lower the tax burden on the consumers," the Ministry added. "Final figures and details of collections for the entire month will be intimated on 2nd February, 2019."

Closer to target

"Crossing the ₹1 trillion figure in GST collections a day ahead of the Union Budget would provide some confidence in being able to move closer to the revenue targets," M.S. Mani, senior director, Deloitte India, said. "If the same pace [of collection] is maintained, the revenue targets would be close to being achieved."

+ Bharti Airtel net slides 72% to ₹86.2 crore

Indian Gas enters fray, bids for Reid & Taylor

CFM Assets to pull out from race

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI

Indian Gas Ltd. has entered the fray to acquire Reid & Taylor through the insolvency resolution process. The NCLT's Mumbai bench on Thursday entertained the company's bid for the debt-ridden textile company after CFM Assets Reconstruction Pvt. Ltd. suddenly expressed its willingness to withdraw from the race.

The court has asked Indian Gas to pay a non-refundable amount of ₹2 crore on February 5. The bench of judges Bhaskar Pantul Mohan and V. Nallasevanapathy also ordered the new bidder to appear before the NCLAT on Friday to explain its bona fides and interest in investing in Reid & Taylor's resolution process.

Prior to this, he was acting as senior strategic advisor of the bank since 2014.

Ajai Kumar is interim CEO of Yes Bank

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI

Ajai Kumar, a board member of Yes Bank, will hold the charge of managing director and chief executive officer till the new CEO Ravneet Gill joins the lender.

Yes Bank said that the Reserve Bank of India had approved the interim appointment of Mr. Kumar. Mr. Gill is expected to take charge by March 1. The current MD and CEO Rana Kapoor's term in Yes Bank ends on Thursday.

Mr. Kumar, the former chairman and managing director of Corporation Bank, is the non-executive non-independent director of bank since 2016.

Prior to this, he was acting as senior strategic advisor of the bank since 2014.

Sensex snaps four-day losing streak, closes above 36,000

Buying in heavyweights like RIL, HDFC helps lift benchmark

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI

A firm trend in the global markets on account of a dovish stance by the U.S. Federal Reserve and short covering in the domestic market on the expiry of derivative contracts helped the 30-share benchmark Sensex snap its four-day losing streak and close above the psychological 36,000-mark.

The 30-share Sensex gained 665.44 points, or 1.87%, on Thursday to close at 36,256.69, as buying in index heavyweights like Reliance Industries, Infosys, HDFC Bank, Axis Bank and HDFC helped lift the benchmark. The broader Nifty rose 179.15 points, or 1.68%, to close at 10,830.95. Investor sentiment across economies, including India, re-



Sensex gained 665.44 points on Thursday.

ceived a boost after the U.S. Fed held interest rates steady while signalling an end to monetary policy tightening on account of macroeconomic global headwinds.

Fed stance

"The dovish stance of the U.S. Fed was unexpected and hence led to a rally

across emerging markets, including India," said a dealer with a domestic brokerage. "While buying in index heavyweights helped lift the benchmarks, there was selling witnessed in the broader markets. Short covering on the expiry of January contracts also lifted the markets," he added. Incidentally, the overall market breadth was marginally positive with 1,423 gainers as against 1,144 declines.

Among the Sensex constituents, ICICI Bank lost marginal ground on Thursday, a day after the bank said it had terminated the contract of former MD and CEO Chanda Kochhar. Coal India, Yes Bank, HCL Technologies and Bajaj Finance were the other Sensex constituents that ended in the red.

RBI lifts curbs on three PSBs

Banks exit PCA after capital infusion, fall in net NPA ratio

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has decided to allow three public sector banks – Bank of India, Bank of Maharashtra and Oriental Bank of Commerce – to exit the PCA framework following capital infusion by the government and a decline in net non-performing asset ratio.

The RBI, which conducted a review following a demand made by government to lift the restrictions in order to boost credit growth, said, "it was noted that a few banks are not in breach of the PCA (Prompt Corrective Action) parameters as per their published results for the quarter ending December 2018, except for return on assets (RoA)."

"Win for MSMEs" Sanjay Sethi, CEO & co-founder, ShopClues, said the move was a win for small enterprises, moving them a step closer to a level-playing field. "It also sends strong message to violators that legal jugglery, exploiting loopholes and in general disregard for the law will have to stop now." A Snapdeal spokesperson said adherence to rule of law would allow India to create a robust e-commerce sector, which will ensure lasting gains for both buyers and sellers.



from 12.17%. Both the banks reported heavy losses in the third quarter.

OCB, which had made ₹45 crore net profit in the third quarter, reported net NPA ratio of 7.15% at the end of the October-December quarter. RBI justified its action by saying "though the net NPA ratio was 7.15%, as per the published results of third quarter, the government has since infused sufficient capital and bank has brought the net NPA ratio to less than 6%." Earlier in the day, OBC had informed the exchanges about capital infusion of ₹1,186 crore by the government.

"Hence, it has been decided to remove the restrictions placed on Oriental Bank of Commerce under PCA framework.

"However, though the RoA continues to be negative, the same is reflected in

the capital adequacy indicator," it added.

The PCA framework is triggered when a bank breaches one of the three risk thresholds, and crossing 6% net NPAs is one of them.

"Higher provisioning" Bank of India had made significant higher provisioning during the third quarter which saw net NPA ratio declining to 5.87% from 10.29% a year ago. Similarly, Bank of Maharashtra brought down its net NPA ratio to 5.91%

Core sector grows slowest in 18 months

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI

Eight core sectors grew at their slowest pace in 18 months at 2.6% in December 2018 due

IN BRIEF



Federal Reserve holds interest rates steady

WASHINGTON The Federal Reserve has signalled its three-year-drive to tighten monetary policy may be at an end amid a cloudy outlook for the U.S. economy due to global headwinds and impasses over trade and government budget negotiations. As it held interest rates steady, the Fed said it would be 'patient' before making any moves. Fed chairman Jerome Powell said the case for rate increases had 'weakened' in recent weeks. **REUTERS**

Siemens GAMESA bags wind turbine orders

CHENNAI Siemens Gamesa Renewable Energy (SGRE) has secured two wind power projects from Reni Power in Gujarat and Karnataka. The scope includes supply of 270 units of the SG 2.1-122 wind turbines, with a total capacity of 567 MW. SGRE will supply, install and commission 127 SG 2.1-122 wind turbines for the project in Bhuj and 143 SG 2.1-122 wind turbines in Damanegere, Karnataka, respectively.

Shikha Sharma is DRL independent director

HYDERABAD Dr. Reddy's Laboratories on Thursday said Shikha Sanjaya Sharma, former managing director and CEO of Axis Bank, had been appointed as Independent Additional Director of the company for five years. Her appointment as an Additional Director, categorised as Independent, on the Board, effective January 31, 2019, is subject to approval of the shareholders. Dr. Reddy's said in a regulatory filing.

Central banks on gold-buying spree in 2018

At 651.5 tonnes, this was the highest since 1971, second-highest annual purchase ever recorded: WGC

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

High and volatile domestic prices of gold led to a marginal dip in the demand for the precious metal in India in 2018, even as central banks across the globe upped their buying to end the year at the highest level since 1971 and also the second-highest annual purchase ever recorded.

According to the latest report by World Gold Council (WGC), central banks bought 651.5 tonnes of gold in 2018, which was 74% higher than the previous year and also the second highest yearly total on record.

Incidentally, net purchases jumped to their highest level since the end of U.S. dollar convertibility into gold in 1971, as a greater pool of cen-



Metal mania: The buying surge was due to the slowdown in global growth and market volatility, says WGC. ■PAUL NORONHA

tral banks turned to gold as a diversifier.

Alistair Hewitt, Head of Market Intelligence, WGC, attributed the surge in central bank buying to concerns related to slowdown in global growth, heightened geopolitical tensions, and finan-

cial market volatility.

Meanwhile, global gold demand reached 4,345.1 tonnes in 2018, up 4%, when compared to 2017 and in line with the five-year average demand of 4,347.5 tonnes. "The annual increase was driven by a multi-decade

high in central bank buying and accelerated investment in bars and coins during the second half of the year," the WGC report said.

The year also saw the overall retail investment in gold bars and coins grow 4% to 1,090.2 tonnes, even as coin demand surged to reach a five-year high of 236.4 tonnes, the second-highest on record. Further, annual jewellery demand was steady at 2,200 tonnes, down just one tonne from the previous year.

Drop in demand

According to WGC, gains in China, the U.S. and Russia broadly offset sharp losses in the West Asia, where demand dropped 15% compared to the previous year.

The gold demand in India

was 760.4 tonnes in 2018, a marginal dip of 1.4% compared to the previous year's demand of 771.2 tonnes. Further, total jewellery demand fell by 1% to 598 tonnes as compared to 601.9 tonnes in 2017.

While the total investment demand in 2018 was down by 4% at 162.4 tonnes, total gold recycled in India was 87.1 tonnes in 2018, slightly lower than 88.4 tonnes in 2017.

"Currently, we have an installed capacity to produce 400 machines at Sri City, Andhra Pradesh over the next three years, said a top official.

"We propose to double it to 800 machines over the next three years. The second phase entails an investment of ₹100 crore."

Announcing the commencement of operations at Sri City, he said it is the ninth manufacturing plant

Thermax mulls capacity expansion at Sri City

Commences first phase of operations

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI

Thermax Ltd., a leading energy and environment solutions provider, is mulling doubling its production capacity at Sri City, Andhra Pradesh over the next three years, said a top official.

"The trial run was on since November 2018 and we began commercial operations today. So far, our plants in Pune and China were catering to the needs of Indian market. With the commencement of Sri City plant, we will stop procuring machines from China," he said.

During the current fiscal the new plant would produce about 350 machines, of which about two-thirds would be exported to about 80 countries.

DHFL says no info on probe, stock tanks

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

orders from time to time for the past two years, but to no end. This cannot go on.

"If you are not able to comply with the orders of this court, let law take its course. You are in violation of the court's orders. If you are unable to deposit, let whoever is responsible appear in person here," Chief Justice Gogoi addressed Sahara's counsel and senior advocate Vikas Singh.

This was in response to Mr. Singh's submission that "the real estate market is down...nothing is selling."

The last hearing in the case was in July 2018. "Nothing much has changed in the past six months," Chief Justice Gogoi observed.



THE HINDU GROUP

Sahara case: SC summons Subrata Roy in contempt case

Group yet to pay in investors the over ₹25,000-cr. it owes

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL
NEW DELHI

In a setback for the Sahara Group, the Supreme Court on Thursday ordered the personal appearance of its chief Subrata Roy on February 28 to face "appropriate orders" so that "law can take its course" against him in a contempt case.

A Bench comprising Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi, Justices A.K. Sikri and S.K. Kaul said the "meat of the matter" is Sahara is yet to pay the entirety of the over ₹25,000-odd crore in principal amount it owes its investors.

Chief Justice Gogoi cut short the submissions made by both the Sahara's and the



Subrata Roy

Securities and Exchange Board of India's (SEBI) lawyers saying, "we are not sitting here to sell their properties."

To no avail

The court said it had been hearing the case and passing

THE GOD OF CRICKET LIES IN THE DETAILS

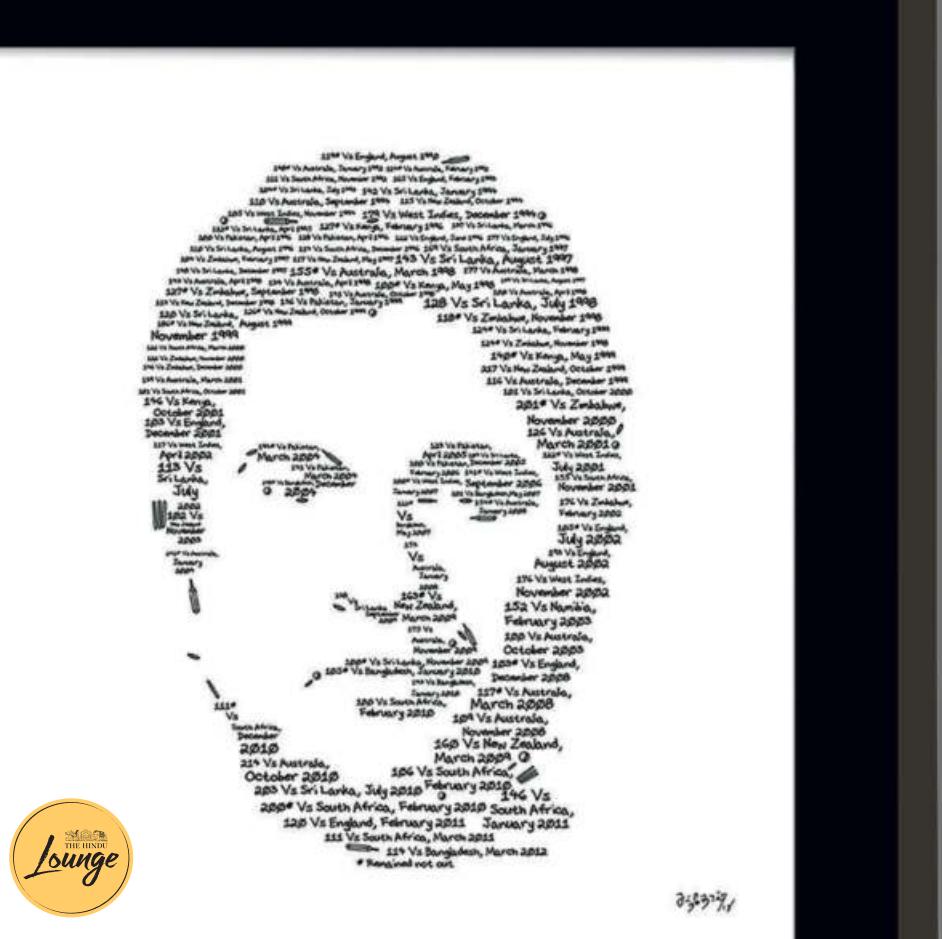
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A befitting tribute to the God of Cricket. And a must-have memorabilia for any Sachin Tendulkar fan.

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COLLECTOR'S CHOICE
LIMITED EDITION PRINTS

A Boult jolt for the Men in Blue at Hamilton

New Zealand registers a runaway eight-wicket win; India sans Kohli posts seventh-lowest ODI total



Man of the moment: Trent Boult, centre, broke India's back with a five-wicket haul. ■ PHIL WALTER/GETTY IMAGES

INDIA IN NZ

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA HAMILTON

India appeared shorn of its aura in the absence of talismanic skipper Virat Kohli as pacer Trent Boult's fiery five-wicket haul guided New Zealand to a stunning eight-wicket win in the fourth One-Day International on Thursday.

With run-machine Kohli rested after the side claimed an unbeatable 3-0 lead in the five-match series, India's much-vaunted batting was dismissed for its seventh-lowest ODI total – 92 in 30.5 overs here after Boult dished out a deadly opening spell.

It was also the lowest total at this venue, the previous lowest of 122 is also against India's name.

Boult wreaked havoc with the new ball and in Colin de

Grandhomme's (three for 26) company utilised the swinging conditions at the Seddon Park perfectly. "Never expected this to happen. We've got ourselves to blame for this," said India's stand-in captain Rohit Sharma.

In the absence of Kohli and an injured M.S. Dhoni, the Indian batting unit found the going tough against the Kiwi bowling attack.

India's lowest ODI total is 54 against Sri Lanka at Sharjah in 2000. It was also India's second lowest against New Zealand, having somehow managed to surpass the 88 scored at Dambulla.

"I don't think we expected this much. But the guys bowled well. It was nice to bowl them out for 90 odd," New Zealand skipper Kane Williamson said.

Boult troubled the

Indians with two-way movement to return with impressive figures of five for 21, while Grandhomme gave him perfect support.

Boult was adjudged Man-of-the-Match. While chasing, even though New Zealand lost Martin Guptill (14) and skipper Kane Williamson (11)

SCOREBOARD NZ VS INDIA, FOURTH ODI

India: Rohit c & b Boult 7 (23b), Shikhar Dhawan lbw b Boult 13 (20b, 1x4, 1x6), Shubman Gill c & b Boult 9 (21b, 1x4), Ambati Rayudu c Guptill b de Grandhomme 0 (4b), Dinesh Karthik c Latham b de Grandhomme 0 (3b), Kedar Jadhav lbw b Boult 1 (7b), Hardik Pandya c Latham b Boult 16 (20b, 4x4), Bhuvneshwar b de Grandhomme 1 (12b), Kuldeep c de Grandhomme b Astle 15 (33b, 7x4), Yuzvendra Chahal (not out) 18 (37b, 3x4), Khaled Ahmed b Neesham 5 (5b, 1x4); Extras (lb-1, w-6): 7. Total (in 30.5 overs): 92.

Fall of wickets: 1-21 (Dhawan, 5.5), 2-23 (Rohit, 7.6), 3-33 (Rayudu, 10.2), 4-33 (Karthik, 10.5), 5-33 (Shubman, 11.6), 6-35 (Kedar, 13.1), 7-40 (Bhuvneshwar, 16.4), 8-55 (Pandya, 19.4), 9-80 (Kuldeep, 29.1).

New Zealand bowling: Henry 8-2-30-0, Boult 10-4-21-5, de Grandhomme 10-2-26-3, Astle 2-0-9-1, Neesham 0.5-0-5-1.

New Zealand: Martin Guptill c Pandya b Bhuvneshwar 14 (4b, 2x4, 1x6), Henry Nicholls (not out) 30 (42b, 4x4, 1x6), Kane Williamson c Karthik b

Bhuvneshwar 11 (18b, 2x4), Ross Taylor (not out) 37 (25b, 2x4, 3x6); Extras (nb-1): 1. Total (for two wkts. in 14.4 overs): 93.

Fall of wickets: 1-14 (Guptill, 0.4), 2-39 (Williamson, 6.2).

India bowling: Bhuvneshwar 5-1-25-2, Khaleel 3-0-19-0, Pandya 3-0-15-0, Chahal 2.4-0-32-0, Kuldeep 1-0-2-0.

Toss: New Zealand.

Man-of-the-Match: Boult.

New Zealand won by eight wickets with 35.2 overs to spare.

Only four Indians – Shikhar Dhawan (13), Hardik Pandya (16), Kuldeep Yadav (15) and Yuzvendra Chahal (18 n.o.) – posted double digits.

Dhawan was caught plumb in front by Boult in the sixth over. Rohit didn't have a happy 200th ODI, and was caught and bowled by Boult.

Reeling at 33 for five, India

desperately needed the experience of Kohli or Dhoni to bail the team out, and, in the duo's absence, the onus was on Pandya and Kedar Jadhav to do the repair job.

But it was not to be as wickets kept tumbling with Boult ripping apart India's line-up, dismissing both Jadhav and Pandya in quick succession. From 55 for eight, Chahal and Kuldeep shared 25 runs to take India close to the 100-run mark before being shot out in 30.5 overs.

The last match is on Sunday in Wellington.

early to Bhuvneshwar Kumar, the host completed the formalities in 14.4 overs.

Miserable scorecard

Earlier, the pitch didn't seem unplayable but the Indian batsmen failed to apply themselves against Boult and Grandhomme's swing.

Boult. Grandhomme then joined the party, dismissing Ambati Rayudu and Dinesh Karthik for ducks in a span of four balls in the 11th over.

Pressure got the better of debutant Shubman Gill (9) as he got out, like Rohit, caught and bowled by Boult.

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</div

Will India's grass gamble pay off?

Ramkumar runs into Seppi, while Prajesh takes on Berrettini

DAVIS CUP

N. SUDARSHAN
KOLKATA

Grass is tennis royalty. It is perhaps why sites that house pristine grass courts are considered the most hallowed. The Calcutta South Club is one such venue.

These are the lawns on which, apart from Indian legends, the likes of Australian Roy Emerson, winner of 12 Majors, and Romanian Ilie Nastase, a former World No. 1, trod in their prime and even won the prestigious National Lawn Tennis Championships, held for more than five decades since 1946.

Centenary year

Now, in its centenary year, the Club will welcome Italy for the Davis Cup Qualifier starting on Friday. Should the seeping history inspire the Indians to climb out of the zonal level and get back among the elite, it will be a story befitting India's rich Davis Cup past.

The visiting Italians too are no strangers to such history. The last grass court tie they played was at this very venue, 34 years ago. The Indians lined up the brothers Amritraj, Ramesh Krishnan and Sashi Menon and beat them 3-2, the only success in five ties.



Battle ready: Ramkumar Ramanathan & Andreas Seppi will set the ball rolling on Friday. ■ DEBASISH BHADURI

Back then grass was India's strength. After beating Italy, it seeded the clay courts in Bengaluru to turn them into grass and better counter the Stefan Edberg and Mats Wilander-led Swedes, the defending champions.

Today, grass is a disruptive force, chosen by India captain Mahesh Bhupathi to

throw the clay-loving Italians off in the middle of a hard-court season.

Ramkumar Ramanathan, whose game comes closest to what's required, will open proceedings on day one against the seasoned Andreas Seppi, ranked 37 in the world.

Prajesh Gunneswaran's clash with the highly rated

Matteo Berrettini will follow. On paper Italy is the favourite and Seppi taking the court first would set things up.

Other than Simone Bolelli, who is more of a doubles player, each of its four members sits above Prajesh, the highest-ranked Indian at 102.

World No. 19 Marco Cecchinato, who famously beat

Novak Djokovic at the 2018 French Open, will feature alongside Bolelli in doubles against Rohan Bopanna and Divij Sharan, but remains an option for the reverse singles.

However, the collective Davis Cup experience of the trio of Cecchinato, Berrettini and Thomas Fabbiano, the fifth member, is one rubber

across surfaces. Ramkumar, on the other hand, debuted on grass and has beaten Dominic Thiem and reached an ATP Tour level final on the surface. Last year, Prajesh beat the then World No. 23 Denis Shapovalov at Stuttgart on grass.

Unique platform

Also, one of the thrills of the Davis Cup is its remarkable ability to provide a platform for the sport's non-stars to arrive on the stage.

One need not look beyond Prajesh, whose victory in only his first live rubber, and the tie locked at 2-2, felled China and set him on course for a career-best season.

As the tennis world gears up to embrace a new-look Davis Cup, a chance to relive a glorious tradition is no bad thing.



Naresh Kumar. ■ N. SUDARSHAN

early in the day, so I used to also wake up. We were not wonder boys to have achieved things. Those days things were different. Now a player has so many other commitments."

Like the Davis Cup which it is hosting, the club too is going through an inevitable transformation. From 18, the grass courts are down to six and even the old centre court, on which India beat Italy in 1985, no longer exists. Yet, Kumar, more than anybody, would hope that India can relive the glory achieved here more than three decades ago.

Azzurro expected to score in feature event

BENGALURU: Azzurro, who has been well prepared, is expected to score in the Stayers Trail Stakes (2,400m), the chief event of the races to be held here on Friday (Feb 1).

False rails (width about 5m from 1,600m to the winning post) will be in position.

FEBRUARY PLATE (1,400m), 1 maiden 3-y-o only, (Terms), 2.45 p.m.: 1. Alexander Burnes (6) T.S. Jodha 55, 2. Alexandre Dumas (8) Dhebe 55, 3. Debonair (7) Irvan 55, 4. Ozark (5) Sandesh 55, 5. Sir Supremo (4) Suraj 55, 6. War Hammer (1) Srinath 55, 7. Ideological (3) Chetan K 53.5 and 8. Scintilla (2) Darshan 53.5.

1. OZARK,
2. WAR HAMMER,
3. ALEXANDRE DUMAS

2 JOG FALLS PLATE (1,200m), rated 15 to 35, 5-y-o & over, 3.15: 1. Grecian Light (12) S. Shareef 60, 2. Kasauli (5) Anjar Alam 60, 3. Alvarez (11) Darshan 58, 4. Master Of War (9) Antony 58, 5. Reverberating (8) Chetan K 56, 6. Music Divine (4) T.S. Jodha 56.5, 7. Maybe Forever (2) P.S. Chouhan 55.5, 8. Odyssey (1) Dhebe 53.5, 9. Shining Star (6) Nazerul 53.5, 10. Indian Fury (7) Irvan 52.5, 11. Indian League (3) Md. Asif Khan 51.5 and 12. Magitude Queen (10) R. Manish 51.

1. MAYBE FOREVER,
2. MASTER OF WAR,
3. ODYSSEY

3 NARASIMHARAJA TROPHY (1,600m), rated 45 to 65, 5-y-o & over, 3.45: 1. Set To Win (2) Srinath 60, 2. Classical Dancer (4) Suraj 57, 3. Gusty Wind (9) T.S. Jodha 56.5, 4. Setaglow (6) Sandesh 56.5, 5. Australis (1) Arshad 53.5, 6. Lofty Thoughts (3) Antony 53.5, 7. Rare Rhythym (8) Darshan 53.5, 8. Masada (7) A. Ramu 53 and 9. Touch Of Class

(5) P.S. Chouhan 52.

1. SET TO WIN,
2. RARE RHYTHYM,
3. AUSTRALIS

4 STAYERS TRAIL STAKES (2,400m), rated 4-y-o & over, 4.15: 1. Azzurro (2) Suraj 59, 2. Booker Jones (4) Srinath 59, 3. Fabulous (3) Dhebe 59 and 4. Watchmyscript (1) Sandesh 57.5.

1. AZZURRO,
2. WATCHMYSRIPT

5 BULL TEMPLE PLATE (1,200m), rated 60 & above, 4.45: 1. Rafa (7) P.S. Chouhan 61.5, 2. Hot N Fire (3) Dhebe 58.5, 3. Life Awaits (1) T.S. Jodha 58, 4. Side Winder (1) Md. Asif Khan 56.5, 5. Lady Legend (2) Sandesh 54, 6. Super Success (8) Praveen Shinde 53.5, 7. China One (6) Irvan 53 and 8. Noahs Ark (4) Arshad 52.5.

1. LADY LEGEND,
2. LIFE AWAIT,
3. HOT N FIRE

6 FOREVER ELEGANCE PLATE (1,400m), rated 15 to 35, 5.15: 1. Turf Jaguar (3) S. Shareef 60, 2. Fierce Fighter (5) Darshan 57.3. She's Stylish (6) A. Ramu 56.5, 4. Tindarella (9) Md. Asif Khan 56.5, 5. Anakin (12) Tauseef 56, 6. Grey Channel (4) T.S. Jodha 55, 7. Singhisaab (8) N. Ganesh 55, 8. Le Marc (10) Nazerul 54, 9. Vail (1) Antony 54, 10. Chinese Princess (7) Sandesh 53.5, 11. Silent Ruler (II) R. Manish 53 and 12. Dreams United (2) Dhebe 52.5.

1. VAIL,
2. LE MARC,
3. ANAKIN

Day's best: **LADY LEGEND** Double; **OZARK - SET TO WIN**

Jkt: 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6; Tr (i): 1, 2 and 3; (ii): 4, 5 and 6.

THE HINDU CROSSWORD 12538

ACROSS

1 Longing to greet elders in Trinidad & Tobago (6)

4 Exemption obtained after I have been in combat (6)

9 Perhaps oxygen pressure is needed to breathe (4)

10 Is on dais after 45 minutes of a football match (6,4)

11 Without hesitation, dance together in slum (6)

12 App released by office as therapeutic remedy (8)

13 Apathy makes girl's diet go wrong, eating unwantedly to begin with (9)

15 Holding no Aadhaar in state borders? It's malicious (5)

16 Gum taken from engineer at post office by unknown followers (5)

18 Sent wandering, was in a fix yesterday, perhaps (4,5)

22 Idiomatically ends come at wet toilet (8)

23 Unit is managed without fresh aid (6)

25 Power, a popular detergent! Tide? Am misled by newspaper, maybe (5,5)

26 Shaft in spindle gets loose in a corner (4)

27 At the border, refugee gets a terrible itch to get new start and become native (6)

28 Cut down overweight to become a man (6)

DOWN

1 Truck overturns on acceleration, primarily heat on each tube, perhaps (7)

(set by Afterdark)

2 Information sources of investigator not persuasive under threat (5)

3 Keep an eye on new guesthouses stocking ghee (4,3)

5 Mortgaging without capital or cover (6)

6 Power held by superheroes comes after opposing evildoer first, getting forceful basically (9)

7 On line, directly in front, padded (7)

8 Mafia don's code decrypted by a card, maybe (3,2,8)

14 Organised next heist in golf club, antipenultimate perhaps (9)

17 Public relations broadcast, client essentially made on grasslands (7)

19 Caterer supplied at garden... (7)

20 ... in small room, round, wide and empty (7)

21 Old students are maudlin, losing heart, breaking down (6)

24 Speak slowly with child, extremely untutored student (5)

SUDOKU

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

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★☆

Solution to puzzle 12537 Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

A	P	O	S	T	A	T	E	A	S	L	E	P
T	B	I	U	E	T	N	A					
B	A	S	C	R	E	H	A	N	D	E		
E	E	K	N	I	N	U	D					
S	P	R	E	A	D	O	T					
C	A	L	L	U	S	A	N					
O	N	T										
T	V	L										
L	E	N										
N	O	A										
A												

No.55216 Date/Time: www.nigntfutures.com

FAITH

TV PICKS

Australia vs Sri Lanka: 2nd Test, Sony Six (SD & HD), 5 a.m.**New Zealand Women vs India Women:** 3rd ODI, Star Sports 1 (SD & HD), 6.30 a.m.**Davis Cup Qualifier:** India vs Italy, DD Sports, 11 a.m. onwards**AFC Asian Cup:** Star Sports 2 (SD & HD), 7.30 p.m.**ISL:** Star Sports 1 (SD & HD), 7.30 p.m.**West Indies vs England:** 2nd Test, Sony Ten 1 (SD & HD), 7.30 p.m.**South Africa vs Pakistan:** 1st T20I, Sony Six (SD & HD), 9.30 p.m.

IN BRIEF

**Brown steps up as Celtics crush Hornets**

LOS ANGELES

Jaylen Brown stepped in to fill some big shoes, finishing with 24 points and 10 rebounds as Boston Celtics crushed Charlotte Hornets 126-94 despite missing all-star Kyrie Irving. Jayson Tatum also chipped in scoring 20 points, and Terry Rozier finished with a career-high 10 assists. Kemba Walker led the Hornets with 21 points, well shy of the 43 points he delivered in a 117-112 home win over Celtics in November.

Other results: Chicago Bulls 105 bt Miami Heat 89; Dallas Mavericks 114 bt New York Knicks 90; Washington Wizards 107 bt Indiana Pacers 89; Minnesota Timberwolves 99 bt Memphis Grizzlies 97 (OT); Denver Nuggets 105 bt New Orleans Pelicans 99; Sacramento Kings 135 bt Atlanta Hawks 113; Portland Trailblazers 132 bt Utah Jazz 105. AFP**PSG president to represent ECA at UEFA**

LAUSANNE Paris Saint-Germain president Nasser Al-Khelaifi was elected to represent the European Clubs Association on UEFA's executive committee, the ECA said on Wednesday. Qatar Al-Khelaifi takes over the role from AC Milan's Ivan Gazidis, while Andrea Agnelli of Juventus leads the body of 232 member clubs. AFP

Inoue packs off Riya in pre-quarterfinals

JODHPUR Sixth seed Miyabi Inoue of Japan wiped out the Indian challenge as she beat Riya Bhaitia 7-5, 6-2 in the pre-quarterfinals of the \$25,000 ITF women's tennis tournament at the Sardar Club, Ratanada, on Thursday. In doubles, the only Indian players in the quarterfinals, Jennifer Luikham and Mihika Yadav, gave a walkover, as the latter had injured her shoulder.

The results: Singles (pre-quarterfinals): Miyabi Inoue (Jpn) bt Riya Bhaitia 7-5, 6-2. Doubles (quarterfinals): Sofia Shapavata (Geo) & Emily Webley-Smith w.o. Jennifer Luikham & Mihika Yadav.**Aryan Goveas bows out**

SPORTS BUREAU

MONASTIR (TUNISIA) Aryan Goveas lost 6-3, 6-2 to Felipe Meligeni Rodrigues Alves of Brazil in the pre-quarterfinals of the \$15,000 ITF men's Futures tennis tournament here on Thursday.

The results: \$15,000 ITF men, Monastir, Tunisia: Pre-quarterfinals: Felipe Meligeni Rodrigues Alves (Bra) bt Aryan Goveas 6-3, 6-2.**Doubles (quarterfinals):** Evan Hoyt (GBR) & Skander Mansouri (Tun) bt Robert Strombachs (Ger) & Aryan Goveas 6-3, 6-1.

Liverpool squanders golden opportunity

Fails to wrest control at the top after being held by Leicester; Bournemouth blanks Chelsea

**In the right place:** Leicester's Harry Maguire punished sloppy marking by Liverpool to slot in the equaliser. ■REUTERS

Top players give open events a miss

A total sham as organisers left with holding a handful of matches

PSPB BADMINTONSPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GREATER NOIDA

The open events of the PSPB inter-unit badminton tournament stand reduced to a sham.

Almost every noted player – Sameer Verma, Sai Praneeth, H.S. Prannoy, Ajay Jayaram, Saurabh Verma, Ashwini Ponnappa, N. Sikki Reddy – irrespective of the unit he or she represented in the team events, did not bother to enter the open events on Thursday.

As a result of the reduced number of entries,

the organiser was left with no choice but to finish the competition on Friday, a day earlier than scheduled.

As things stand, the men's semifinals are over while the women's singles, one of the semifinals, will be played early on Friday, followed by the final in the afternoon.

Neither the players nor the officials appeared concerned about the state of affairs of what was once considered a fiercely competitive competition.

Indian Oil's rising talent Priyanshu Rajawat, meanwhile, ousted fourth seed Swaranraj Bora 21-18, 21-16

■ Priyanshu meets Rahul Yadav in men's final
■ Uttejita awaits winner of Rituparna-Tanvi match-up

and second seed Orijit Chalisa 10-21, 21-16, 21-13 to reach the final. He will meet top seed Rahul Yadav who eased past third seed Hirak Jyoti Neog 21-12, 21-11.

No stopping Uttejita

In the women's section, top-seeded youngster Uttejita Rao raced past three rivals without breaking a sweat to make the title-round.

She now awaits the winner of the semifinal between defending champion and second seed Rituparna Das and Tanvi Lad.

Tanvi avenges defeat

Indian Oil's Tanvi, who lost the deciding singles in the team final to ONGC's P.C. Thulasi on Wednesday, avenged the defeat with a 21-18, 21-18 victory in the quarterfinals.

Having spoilt ONGC's clean sweep of team titles by winning the veterans' title, Indian Oil is now aiming for a better showing in the singles.

Having spoilt ONGC's clean sweep of team titles by winning the veterans' title, Indian Oil is now aiming for a better showing in the singles.

There was no match for passion, says Sports Minister Rathore

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Union Sports Minister, Col. Rajiv Arvind Rathore stressed that there was no match for passion and dedication to excel in sports, as he addressed the concluding session of the National Conference on anti-doping, jointly organised by the National Anti Doping Agency (NADA) and the Physical Education Foundation of India (PEFI) here on Thursday.

The Minister suggested that playing sports the right way would help the young athletes tackle life in the best possible way.

"Defeat makes you learn a lot in life. Right decision taken in adverse circumstances shapes your destiny," he said.

Presenting the example of Olympic medallist and six-time World Champion Mary Kom, the Minister said that the boxer was a great role

model for everyone.

There was a message from the Prime Minister Narendra Modi, delivered at the conference.

"Sorts bodies of various games in our country must make sportspersons increasingly aware of the ill-effects of doping.

"Technological innovations must be utilised to spread awareness about anti-doping," the message read.

Luisma replaces Gyetshen in BFC

SPORTS REPORTER
BENGALURU

Bengaluru FC (BFC) winger Chencho Gyetshen has completed a loan move to I-League club NEROCA FC, in a deal that runs until the end of the 2018-19 season.

The announcement comes a day after Gyetshen scored a match-winning goal in the ISL, against NorthEast United FC.

Fan favourite

In his short stint with BFC, the Bhutanese footballer had established himself as a fan favourite.

Spanish midfielder Luis Manuel Villa, commonly known as Luisma, has been signed as Gyetshen's replacement.

Villa's deal runs until the end of the 2018-19 campaign.

He is set to wear the No. 9 jersey, and will be available for selection for BFC's clash against Kerala Blasters on February 6.

Luisma is a product of the Racing Santander youth setup.

Before joining BFC, the 29-year-old last had a short stint with Segunda Division

Sanjana stuns Priyanshi

SPORTS BUREAU
INDORE

Sanjana Sirimalla knocked out top seed Priyanshi Bhandari 6-4, 6-1 in the girls' quarterfinals of the ITF grade-5 junior tennis tournament at the Indore Tennis Club courts on Thursday.

In the semifinals, Sanjana will clash with Archita Mahalwal who beat the Khelo India Youth Games under-17 champion Preerna Vichare in straight sets.

Shreya Gulia got past second seed Sarah Dev with ease to set up a semifinal against fourth seed Gargi Pawar.

In the boys' section, Udit Gogoi continued with his fine run and will play Ajay Malik in the semifinals. The other semifinal will feature Denim Yadav against Kabir Hans.

The results (quarterfinals):**Boys:** Udit Gogoi bt Kartik Saxena 6-0, 6-4; Ajay Malik bt Nikhil Nirajan (US) 0-6, 6-4, 6-4; Denim Yadav bt Nishant Dabas 6-4, 1-6, 6-4; Kabir Hans bt Ishan Sethi 6-2, 6-1.**Girls:** Sanjana Sirimalla bt Priyanshi Bhandari 6-4, 6-1; Archita Mahalwal bt Preerna Vichare 6-4, 7-5; Gargi Pawar bt Jagmeet Kaur Grewal 6-4, 6-3; Shreya Gulia bt Sarah Dev 6-2, 6-4.

Luis Manuel Villa



B (third level of the Spanish football league system) team SD Ponferradina.

"Luisma can also improve our numbers from set-pieces because of his ability to shoot and cross from dead ball situations," BFC head coach Carles Cuadrat said.

Cuadrat also praised Gyetshen for his fine work ethic, and wished him well.

"We will be keeping a note on his progress with NEROCA, because he is a young player who we are sure will improve with each performance," Cuadrat said.

Luisma is a product of the Racing Santander youth setup.

Before joining BFC, the 29-year-old last had a short stint with Segunda Division

PREMIER LEAGUEAGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
LONDON

Liverpool wasted a chance to take complete control of the Premier League title race as Leicester earned a 1-1 draw against the leader, while Chelsea's bid for a top-four finish was rocked by a humiliating 4-0 thrashing at Bournemouth on Wednesday.

After second-placed Manchester City lost at Newcastle on Tuesday, Jurgen Klopp's side would have moved seven points clear at the top with a win over Leicester.

But Liverpool, chasing a first English title since 1990, had to settle for a frustrating draw that left it five points ahead of champion City. "We put Leicester under pressure but we were unlucky with the goal in the last second before half-time. You have to take it how it is," Klopp said.

Liverpool was ahead in the third minute at snowy Anfield. Senegal winger Sa-

dio Mane wriggled through the Leicester defence and slotted a clinical finish into the far corner for his 11th goal of the season.

But Liverpool quickly lost its rhythm and Leicester defender Harry Maguire punished sloppy marking from Virgil van Dijk to meet Ben Chilwell's header with a close-range finish on the stroke of half-time.

Liverpool appealed in vain for what looked a clear penalty when Naby Keita went down under a challenge from Ricardo Pereira.

Chelsea suffered a second successive defeat that left its bid to qualify for the Champions League under severe threat.

The Blues, winners in just one of their last four league games, drop down to fifth place – below Arsenal on

goals scored – with Manchester United only two points behind in sixth.

Maurizio Sarri's team lacked a cutting edge, even with Gonzalo Higuain making his Premier League debut. Bournemouth made it pay in the 47th minute when Josh King converted a David Brooks pass.

Brooks added to Sarri's woes in the 63rd minute as the winger eased past the flat-footed David Luiz to lash in the second goal.

Chelsea conceded again in the 75th minute when King struck, before Charlie Daniels netted in stoppage-time to condemn the west Londoners to their heaviest league loss in over two decades.

The results: Premier League: Bournemouth 4 (King 47, 75, Brooks 63, Daniels 90+5) bt Chelsea 0; Liverpool 1 (Mane 3) drew with Leicester 1 (Maguire 45+2); Southampton 1 (Ward-Prowse 77) drew with Crystal Palace 1 (Zaha 41); Tottenham 2 (Son 80, Llorente 87) bt Watford 1 (Cathcart 38).

Haryana Hammers is champion

PWLSPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GREATER NOIDA

Moldovan World junior champion Anastasia Nicita stunned Olympian Mimi Hristova as four-time finalist Haryana Hammers defeated two-time defending champion Punjab Royals 6-3 to win its maiden Pro Wrestling League (PWL) title here on Thursday.

Hammers won the first five bouts to defeat Royals with four bouts to spare.

Ukrainian Aleksander Khotsianivski beat Korey Jarvis 3-0; **M86kg:** Ali Shabanov bt Dato Magarishvili 4-3; **W76kg:** Kiran bt Cynthia Vescan 3-1; **M57kg:** Ravi Kumar bt Nitin Rath 6-0; **W57kg:** Anastasia Nicita bt Mimi Hristova by fall; **M65kg:** Rajneesh Dalal lost to Bajrang Punia 0-11; **M74kg:** Parveen Rana lost to Amit Dhankar 2-5; **W53kg:** Seema lost to Anju 5-10; **W62kg:** Tatyana Omelchenko bt Anita 9-0.

sturdily in the second.

Ravi Kumar sailed through in his 57kg bout, while a clinical Nicita rallied to utilise an opening and pin Bulgarian Mimi in the opening period of the women's 57kg contest.

The result (final): HaryanaHammers bt Punjab Royals 6-3 (**M125kg:** Aleksander Khotsianivski bt Korey Jarvis 3-0;**M86kg:** Ali Shabanov bt Dato Magarishvili 4-3; **W76kg:** Kiran bt Cynthia Vescan 3-1; **M57kg:** Ravi Kumar bt Nitin Rath 6-0;**W57kg:** Anastasia Nicita bt Mimi Hristova by fall; **M65kg:** Rajneesh Dalal lost to Bajrang Punia 0-11; **M74kg:** Parveen Rana lost to Amit Dhankar 2-5; **W53kg:** Seema lost to Anju 5-10; **W62kg:** Tatyana Omelchenko bt Anita 9-0.



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IN BRIEF



Malaysia enthrones new king after abdication

KUALA LUMPUR

Malaysia on Thursday installed a new king, Sultan Abdullah Sultan Ahmad Shah, after the last monarch abdicated in a historic first following his reported marriage to a Russian ex-beauty queen. The 59-year-old, who is the ceremonial ruler of central Pahang state, was given a welcome in the Parliament. AFP



Barbie and National Geographic ink deal

NEW YORK

Mattel, the company that makes Barbie dolls, and National Geographic have announced a global licensing agreement. They will create a product line on the theme of exploration, science and conservation. The products will be available by the end of the year. REUTERS



Paltrow sued for alleged ski slope 'hit-and-run'

SALT LAKE CITY

A U.S. man has sued Oscar-winning actress Gwyneth Paltrow for \$3.1 million, claiming she slammed into him on a ski slope in 2016, breaking four of his ribs and knocking him unconscious before skiing off. Terry Sanderson, 72, has filed a lawsuit over the alleged "hit-and-run ski crash" at the Deer Valley Resort. REUTERS

Denisovans may have been jewellers: study

Bone tools, beads and bracelets found

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE PARIS

A rare species of primitive human roamed the forests of Eurasia 200,000 years ago and may have made tools and even jewellery, according to new research published Wednesday.

Denisovans – a cousin of Neanderthals – were discovered in 2010 when scientists working in a cave in southern Siberia obtained a finger bone of a girl belonging to a previously unidentified group of humans.

Because they have so far only been located at the Denisova Cave, far less is known about them than their more famous relatives Neanderthals, who executed sophisticated hunting strategies in groups, made fire, tools and clothing.

In dual papers published in the journal *Nature*, two

Ice instruments melt musical boundaries in Italian Alps

Orchestra plays a series of concerts at sub-zero temperatures in an igloo

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
PASSO DEL TONALE

When Tim Linhart started making instruments from ice they were more likely to explode with a bang than produce music, but things have come a long way since then.

Today, the U.S.-born artist is in charge of an ice orchestra of local musicians playing a series of concerts at sub-zero temperatures in a vast, custom-built igloo high in the Italian Alps.

"I made snow and ice sculptures in the ski resort where I'm from in New Mexico (for 16 years)... and then I decided it would be cool to make a sculpture of a violin," Mr. Linhart, 59, said.

"I heard the sound coming from inside and thought 'wow this is super exciting, if I just tighten up the strings a little bit more it would be louder,'" he recalled.

Overtightening the strings, however, caused the instrument to shatter into little pieces, he recounted.

"But I had heard enough, it was the beginning," said Mr. Linhart, his large frame treading nimbly among the delicate instruments on stage in the igloo.

In the Passo Paradiso winter sports station at an altitude of 2,600 metres, instruments still at times spontaneously implode due to the brittleness of the ice, but less frequently. And when they do, it's not altogether a lost cause. "Then you know you're as close to the edge of ice music as you can get," Mr. Linhart said.

Here, the artist has built a violin, viola, timpani drum set, xylophone, double bass, mandolin, cello and even his own invention, the giant Rolandophone, a huge percussion pipe instrument, all



Just chill: A musician performing with an ice double bass during a concert. ■ AFP

from ice. After moulding front and back plates, Mr. Linhart uses a white-ice mix of water and snow to build the instrument's walls, around a metal backbone, over which the strings are stretched and tightened.

Months of work

A mandolin takes five or six days to make, bigger instruments can take months.

"It's a great material because you can both grow it and cut it away, and it's free," said Mr. Linhart.

Because of their weight, some of the instruments are played while suspended from mountaineering carabiners attached to steel cables drilled into the ceiling of the 200-seater igloo.

For storage, many are kept in niches carved out of the igloo walls.

Cellist Nicola Segatta, who helped build his own instrument out of ice, says their sound is "more crystalline" than the classic wooden in-

struments. "They're incredibly fragile. When you're building them there's the constant risk that they'll disintegrate into a thousand pieces," said the musician, who had been part of the orchestra that day.

But the intensity of the music produced by the ice instruments brings out a strong emotional reaction in the audience, in counterpoint to their fragility, he added.

The ice instruments require amplification, and technicians battle constantly to keep the sound coming in the adverse conditions.

As the audience enters the igloo, where temperatures average minus 12°C, it begins to warm up, and so do the instruments, forcing the musicians constantly to retune.

If they're old and worn we'll just hit them with a hammer or leave them out in the sun and let them die," he said. His current project is teaching people like Segatta how to make the instruments, and the concert hall, themselves.

sounding little thing, and the more you play them, the bigger the sound gets," Mr. Linhart said.

Sweeter with time

"Within the first couple of hours, the sound will be twice as big as it was just before and much nicer, sweeter sounding, because the ice is responding to this vibration passing through it and getting warmed up like it's getting a massage."

Mr. Linhart spends the summer with his Swedish wife and their young son in northern Sweden, gardening and creating non-ice art, while some of the better instruments are kept in a freezer for the next winter.

"If they're old and worn we'll just hit them with a hammer or leave them out in the sun and let them die," he said. His current project is teaching people like Segatta how to make the instruments, and the concert hall, themselves.

Celestial billboards spark debate on who owns the sky

Astronomers angry about a start-up's plans for space

REUTERS
LONDON

Some day soon, stargazers searching for answers in the night sky might see the logo of a soft drink company blaring past the Milky Way, or a promotional message from a fast food restaurant.

That at least is the hope of StartRocket, a Russian start-up aiming to put billboards in space.

The firm plans to turn hundreds of tiny satellites into a massive display visible from the earth – something its CEO, Vlad Sitnikov, said would make him the first man to draw in space since the ancient Greeks grouped stars into constellations.

"New ages demand new gods," the advertising expert said, adding that the world is no longer ruled by Greek deities but by brands and events.

From space hotels to asteroid mining, the ambitious project is the latest in a series of ventures, often backed by capital and technology from Silicon Valley, looking at outer space as a new business frontier.

Need for regulation

But since it was announced in January, the initiative has angered astronomers and raised questions about the need to better regulate who owns the skies – and what is in them.

"It might be a good starting point to re-examine the whole nature of regulation of space activity," said Christopher Newman, a professor of space law at Northumbria University in Britain.

Mr. Sitnikov said he came up with the space billboard idea last year after U.S.-New Zealand rocket propulsion company Rocket Lab launched a shiny disco ball



Futuristic marketing: A mock-up of what a space billboard might look like. ■ STARROCKET/VLAD SITNIKOV/REUTERS

called Humanity Star into orbit, where it remained visible to the human eye for months.

"It was the first time somebody made entertainment in space ... and advertising is part of entertainment," he said via Skype from Moscow.

To work out technical details he teamed up with experts from Skoltech, a Moscow private university, he said. The team aims to put 200 tiny satellites, known as CubeSats, at an altitude of about 500 kilometres in the lower orbit by 2021.

The satellites, each

equipped with a sun-reflecting sail, would fly close together to comprise the pixels of a giant screen that could be switched on and off to display short words or logos.

The project is technically

challenging but feasible – provided the company finds investors to foot the bill, Mr. Sitnikov said.

Production costs alone

are expected to be more

than \$150 million, he said.

The firm plans to charge

about \$200,000 for every

eight hours of advertising.

Since the initiative was ad-

vertised with a promotional

video in January, Mr. Sitni-

kov said he had received thousands of calls from all over the world, including about a dozen from potential customers.

Disgruntled calls

Yet most messages came from disgruntled citizens, he said. "People hate me because they think in two years the whole sky will be covered in advertising," he said, explaining he does not plan for the technology to be intrusive.

The display would look roughly the size of a half moon and be visible for six minutes at a time, potentially from anywhere.

But to make ads worth

while the firm intends to target mostly big cities – where light pollution is already high – at dusk or dawn, when people are out in the streets, Mr. Sitnikov said.

Among those unhappy

with the idea are astronomers, worried that space billboards could impede

research.

"Advertising in space seems to be simply a waste-

ful and expensive way of

ruining the view of the night sky," said Robert Masse, deputy executive director of Britain's Royal Astronomical Society.

Marks & Spencer under fire over 'biryani wrap'

Indian-origin chefs say it is inauthentic

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
LONDON

dian Cooking for Modern Living.

The row was triggered when another Indian-origin chef in the U.K., Maunika Gowardhan, took to Twitter to slam the new wrap.

"Thanks but I like my biryani with rice in a bowl not a wrap. Seriously M&S?," tweeted Ms. Gowardhan, author of *Indian Kitchen*.

The company was ac-

cused of using popular ter-

minology to suit its mar-

eting without proper

research, with Indian food

experts taking to social me-

dia to point out that biryani

comes in a bowl and not in a

wrap.

"I started the row last

year with the ridicul-

ous Bengali Turmeric Kit by

M&S so it's good to see more

food writers and chefs get-

ting involved in this debate,"

said Mallika Basu, U.K.-

based author of *Masala: In-*

flesh off must begin. The sight of her dead husband was too much for Ms. Thua to bear, and she fainted as his skull, ribs, tiny hands and feet were washed by bone cleaners in a pot of herbal water. "Did the man have all his teeth when he was alive?" a bone cleaner asked the family. "Yes," replied a daughter, knowing the importance of reburying her father with all his parts in place.

The final and most important step is re-wrapping the bones and placing them in a new "fieu" – a small, carved stone casket that is buried in a new resting place, this time forever.

Adherents to the ancient custom believe the souls of the dead are stuck in a spiritual limbo until they are reburied.

Lasting legacy



Lacquer and lace: Gowns on display at the 'Christian Dior: Designer of Dreams' exhibition at the Victoria & Albert Museum in London. The show opens to the public on Saturday. ■ EAMONN M. McCORMACK/GETTY IMAGES

Giant cavity in Antarctic glacier signals rapid decay

The 300-metre-tall gap can hold 14 billion tonnes of ice



The Thwaites Glacier in Western Antarctica. ■ AFP

ice, and most of that ice melted over the last three years.

"We have suspected for years that Thwaites was not tightly attached to the bedrock beneath it," said Eric Rignot of the University of California, Irvine in the U.S.

"Thanks to a new generation of satellites, we can finally see the detail," said Mr. Rignot, who is also associated with NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL).

The cavity was revealed by ice-penetrating radar in NASA's Operation IceBridge, an airborne campaign beginning in 2010 that studies connections between the polar regions and the global climate.

The cavity is chipping away at the tradition with cremations preferred as a

more simple, clean and cheap passage into the afterlife.

For Mr. Thang's relatives, however, meeting his wishes of a reburial three years after he died of cancer aged 59 was never in question.

"Finally, he can rest in his nice new home. I feel so blessed and happy," said his wife Ha Thi Thua from his graveside at a cemetery on the outskirts of Hanoi.

The hours-long ceremonies are not for the impatient – or faint of heart.

Beginning in the evening, a shaman makes offerings to the spirit guardian and the deceased – in MR. Thang's case, sticky rice, boiled chicken, a paper horse model for the spirit guardian to ride on and fake U.S. dollar bills among a cornucopia of

items. Then the shaman chants and tosses coins to gain "permission" from the dead and the grave's spiritual guardian to begin the ritual, before the coffin is dug out by gravediggers and relatives. Once the coffin has

been carefully lifted out of the ground, the bones are gently removed.

If the remains are black and bare of flesh, as Mr. Thang's were, it's a relief. Otherwise, the grim but essential task of scraping the



FRIDAY REVIEW

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■ AFP

Road to Nirvana

Beyond the sights and sounds of the ongoing Ardh Kumbh Mela **Pages 6 & 7**

INSIDE



The queen of Country music

Loretta Lynn, the 87-year-old singer's songs continue to echo in music lovers' hearts **P4**



Master-stroke!

Tracing five masters at the ongoing India Art Fair in Delhi **P8**



A meeting of great minds

"Two Fathers" brings the larger than life image of Einstein and Gandhi into our tiny worlds with domestic challenges **P10**

TIME OUT



Amrita Lahiri will perform at Ananda Nartan- the Joyous Dance

INDIA HABITAT CENTRE**FEBRUARY 1****AMPHITHEATRE**

The Ishara Puppet Theatre Festival will showcase both traditional as well as modern forms of puppetry, ranging from rod to string puppets, to mixed performances with dance, theatre and music.

INDIA HABITAT CENTRE**FEBRUARY 1****STEIN AUDITORIUM**

Ananda Nartan- the Joyous Dance. Kuchipudi by Amrita Lahiri. Accompanying musicians are SudhaRaghuraman, G. Raghuraman, M.V. ChanderSekhar and Himanshu Srivastava.

INDIA INTERNATIONAL CENTRE**FEBRUARY 1****CONFERENCE ROOM II**

A programme Frontiers of History will be held. In the lecture Pastoralisms and Civilizations, Prof. Thomas R. Trautmann, expert on Arthashastra, will be the speaker. It will be chaired by Prof. Nayanjot Lahiri.

INDIA INTERNATIONAL CENTRE**FEBRUARY 1****C.D. DESHMUKH AUDITORIUM**

Screening of Baba Farid: Poet of the Soul. The documentary celebrates 12th century mystic poet, Farid al-Din Mas'ud Ganj-i-Shakar. Director Meera Dewan will introduce the film that has been produced by Films Division. It wil be followed by a discussion.



Indian classical and jazz music will be presented by An-atma

INDIA INTERNATIONAL CENTRE**FEBRUARY 2****C.D. DESHMUKH AUDITORIUM**

Jazz concert presented by working title - David Soin Tappeser (drummer); Gustavo Mezo (pianist); and Theo Malka-Wishart (double bassist). This is in collaboration with Embassy of Mexico. The group's game is highly interactive, collaborative and improvisation driven.

INDIA HABITAT CENTRE**FEBRUARY 2****STEIN AUDITORIUM**

An-atma - The art of improvised music. A confluence of free and spontaneous creative expressions, combining intricate musical elements of Indian classical and jazz music. This event has been organised in collaboration with the Italian Embassy Cultural Centre.

The charm of sundari!

The younger sister of shehnai captivated the listeners at the 10th edition of Sharngadev Samaroh in Aurangabad

MANJARI SINHA

This year was the 10th edition of Sharngadev Samaroh organised by the Mahagami Gurukul Aurangabad, celebrating the genius of the 13th century musicologist who authored "Sangeet Ratnakar", the most important treatise and definitive text for both, the Hindustani and Carnatic classical music systems of India. Sharngadev was attached to the court of Yadav king Singhana, whose capital was Devagiri, the present day Daulatabad in Aurangabad. With an aim to reconnect with the glorious past of this region and to establish the relevance of the text with the present day performing arts, the three-day festival comprised vibrant performances in the evening and seminar in the morning with eminent scholars, musicologists and gurus presenting lecture demonstrations highlighting various aspects of the text in respect to different forms of music with a pan Indian perspective.

Early beginning

Sundari, a double reed wind instrument was the centre of attraction this year, which according to the eminent musicologist Late Shri Chandavar Kar resembled the description of 'Madhukari Vadya' in "Sangeet Ratnakar". Known to be the younger sister of shehnai, sundari is also played in the similar way as shehnai. Presently confined to just the Jadhav family of Aherwadi in Solapur district, sundari was created by Baburao, the son of Bhimanna Laxman Jadhav.

Kapil Vishnu Jadhav, who was invited to play sundari at this year's festival, narrated during the morning lecture demonstration session, the story of how this instrument was born. "Once one of our



Mellifluous music Sundari exponent Kapil Vishnu Jadhav (centre); (below) Pt. Venkatesh Kumar

ancestors Bhimanna Laxman Jadhav, who was a shehnai player was asked to play the mangal vadya at king's palace on some auspicious occasion, but the strident sound of shehnai enraged the king. Then Bhimanna's son Baburao made a much shorter version of shehnai and when he played it for the king on some festive occasion, the king was really pleased. It was precisely on 27th February 1936, at a function in the court of Raja Fateh Singh Bhonsle of Akalkot that he played the instrument. The king was so pleased with the sweet music of the instrument this time, that he exclaimed 'Sundar Sundari' (beautiful instrument) and that was the day when the instrument was named sundari."

Kapil Vishnu Jadhav was born in this very musical family of Solapur. At 10 years of age he started training in sundari-vadan under his maternal uncle Pt. Balbhim Laxman Jadhav. A regular artiste of AIR Sangli, this talented sundari exponent has performed in many music festiv

als. He told us that this instrument is made of Shisham wood. The upper portion of the instrument is called nalli where the reed is fitted. Kapil reiterates that his father and uncles have improved the tonal quality with gradual experiments on the instrument.

He played a Teentala composition in raga Yaman, accompanied by his father on Chaughada, the special percussion instrument resembling a small Nagada.

His uncle and Guru Baburao accompanied him on sundari. From the times of Chhatrapati Shivaji, the Chaughada was played with wooden sticks with sundari but now tabla seems to be replacing the original and the authentic percussion Chaughada, which is a matter of concern. During the evening concert Kapil played raga Hamsadhwani and concluded with the bhajan, "Payo ji maine..." immortalised by Pt. D.B. Paluskar.

Pt. Venkatesh Kumar's recital

Sufi qawwali by Ustad Ahsan Hussain Khan Qadri and Ud. Adil Hussain Khan and group from Hyderabad, impressed not only with their total tunefulness but also with the selection of compositions presented. After a long time one listened to an authentic Sufiana ensemble who did not conclude with the usual loud frenzy of 'Damadum Mast Kalandar....' but a meditative 'rang' of Hazrat Amir Khusrro and left the listeners in a trance.

The festival peaked with Pt. Venkatesh Kumar's Ya-

man Kalyan, a performance of mounting tension and release. The Sadarang composition set to a vilambit (slow) Ek-tala tenderly coaxed the raga into vivid life through gradual alaap barhat. A variety of sargam patterns played hide and seek with the rhythm before the heavy showers of akaar taans drenched one deep inside to the core. The chhota khayal "Harwa mora re..." set to Teentala was rewarding in its melodiousness.

Homage to guru

The nostalgic Jhaptala bandish "Sakhi mori roomjhoom..." in raga Durga was mesmerising, followed with a Drut Teentala composition and Tarana that reached the ultimate in the Basant-Bahar, "Sakhi phool rahin belariyan....". The Charukeshi Bhajan and the concluding Bhaiyavi were just the formality to reach the concert to its climax.

Arvind Thatte on harmonium and Bharat Kamath on tabla embellished the performance at vital moments. The Sharangadeva Samman was conferred this year posthumously upon Late guru Banamali Maharana, the multi-talented guru and percussionist from Odisha who grammatised and formulated the unique style of Mardal Vadan and taught the art form to hundreds of students.

It was received by his son Surendra Maharana who opened the festival with a duet Mardal-Vadan along with his guru bhai Manas Sa-rangi as a homage to the departed guru.



Of warrior queen and witty bride

This year's Rangsheersh Jaydev Natya Utsav saw engrossing plays with strong female characters

DIWAN SINGH BAJELI

To inculcate into its students love for dramatic art and provide them creative platform to enact plays, Atma Ram Sanatan Dharma College, University of Delhi, formed Rangayan Natya Samiti in 2005. To achieve this objective, Rangayan has started to organise every year a theatre festival titled Rangsheersh Jaydev Natya Utsav in a big way as a mark of honour to Dr. Jaydev Taneja, the former senior faculty member and eminent theatre critic and scholar. The college invites seasoned theatre directors to produce plays featuring its present as well as old students showing promise as theatre artists, offering them opportunity to hone their art and maintain their cultural ties with their alma mater. This year's festival ended recently at Shri Ram Centre which made remarkable impression on young audience as well as theatre-lovers. The festival came to a close with the presentation of "Uttar Prashn", a award winning play by Meera Kant which focuses on the first woman ruler of Kashmir, Yashomati, who dares to challenge the male-dominated council of minister, royal priest and



Asserting their rights (Clockwise from above) Scene from "Uttar Prashn"; "Khoobsoorat Bahu"; "Adhe Adhure"

army commander, for whom it is an anathema to see a woman ruler.

After the death of her husband, King Damodar, at the hands of Krishna in the battle field, the ruling elites are timid enough to surrender to victorious Krishna. Stupefied, they are shocked to hear Krishna's command that Yashomati will occupy the throne who is pregnant having the infant of the deceased king in her womb. The queen ruled the kingdom with a stern hand, identifying the

corrupt and anti-people officers. She punishes them severely and is prompt to deliver justice to the aggrieved. She wins the hearts of her people. Exposed, the members of the council are working day and night to over-thrown the queen. In due course, Yashomati gives birth to a male heir to the kingdom. The council of minister, in league with the royal priest, decides to enthron the infant, forcing the queen to abdicate the throne. Brave, wise and master strategist as she is, she inflicts crushing defeat on the conspirators, determined to impart the right education to her son befitting of a brave, just and kind ruler. Structurally, the play is straightforward and as it reaches to the climax, the resolution of the conflict tends to be abrupt. The final encounter between the queen and the conspirators should have shown to provide some tense moments to the audience. We have seen this

play earlier presented in the realistic style. The production under review is directed by Vashishth Upadhyay who has enriched his production by incorporating into the structure lyrics set to music score by Atul Mishr. The lyrics move the story along and the music enriches the mood. The choreography by Vibhavari makes the production visually elegant. The blending of various expressive means contribute to make the production engrossing. Deekshya as Yashomati creates a striking image of her character.

Comic flavour

Nag Bodas's plays are immensely popular. His "Khabsoorat Bahu" was first produced by the Repertory Company of National School of Drama under the direction of Ranjit Kapoor. His "Thanku Baba Lorchandas" was produced for NSD's Repertory Company by B.M. Shah as a musical comedy with music by Panchanan

Pathak. It is popular with amateur theatre groups.

At Rangayan festival, "Khubsoorat Bahu" was directed by Suman Kumar who adhered to the original script with little pruning here and there. A blend of comedy and farce, the production exudes the folk flavour of rural Bundelkhand, capturing the day-to-day life of rural folks, their rituals, petty conflicts and the sense of joie de vivre. The narrative unfolds unobtrusively. The main characters are a widow, whose husband died when she was young and her exquisitely beautiful daughter-in-law. She loves her daughter-in-law so possessively that she remains all the time with her day and night. Her adopted son finds it difficult to consummate his marriage. The old widow is naïve enough to expect her daughter-in-law to give birth to a son. The staging is neat. The sets designed realistically are decorated with the motives of folk art of Bundelkhand. The rural ambience is further reinforced with the way colourful costumes are designed. The singers and instrumentalists are placed on a raised platform upstage, visible to the audience and the vital actions mostly take place downstage. The music score by Umashankar Prashad Singh and choreography by Pratibha Singh form the artistic whole intrinsically,

adding visual and aural charm to the production. The young performers impart tremendous buoyancy to the production, communicating them to the audience, establishing a lively rapport with it. Dibyanshi Bhatia as "Khoobsoorat Bahu" creates a lovely portrait of a young bride marked by grace, vivacity, wit and intelligence who frequently uses English to silence the illiterate village Romeo making her scene eminently comic.

Kritika Singh as Chachi, the mother-in-law of Khoobsoorat Bahu, delights the audience with her feisty spirit and naivety. Shubham Goswami as the husband of Khoobsoorat Bahu, Deepanshi Gusai as the wife of village rogue and Mukul Agarwal as the village rogue give commendable performances.

The three-day festival opened with Mohan Rakesh's celebrated play "Adhe Adhure" under the direction of J.P. Singh. This is a play about a dysfunctional family which moves round Savitri whose desperation for the quest of a perfect man culminates in disaster. She is the sole breadwinner of the family and despised by her two daughters, son and husband who themselves are utter failures. They have no exit from their hellish family environment. The production seems to be inadequately rehearsed.



Inclusive theatre set to dazzle

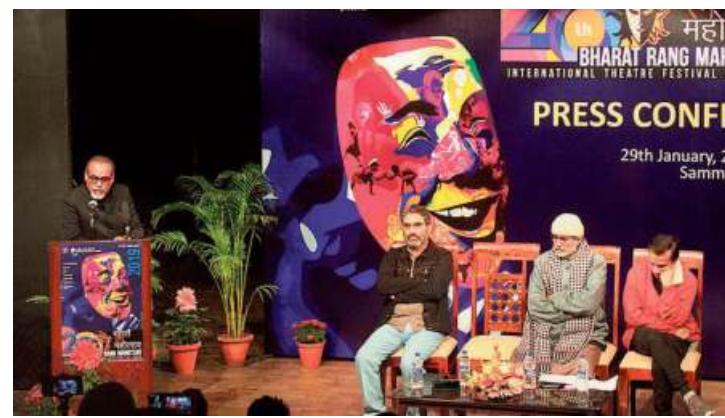
The 21-day long Bharat Rang Mahotsav festival, which enters its 20th edition this year, is celebrating the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi. Therefore, four plays will be staged on the life, philosophy, and principles of the Father of the Nation.

This year, the festival will be all-encompassing as it will stage plays in Hindi, English, and other regional and international languages. International productions from Bangladesh, Poland, Russia, Sri Lanka, the Czech Republic, Italy, Nepal, Romania, and Singapore will also enthrall the audience during the festival.

Organized by the National School

of Drama, the festival will showcase non-verbal, folk, and multi-lingual performances to make the event a unique theatrical spectacle.

Theatre aficionados will be able to watch 69 Indian plays. Twenty five plays will be in Hindi, 16 in Bengali, five in Kannada, two in Marathi, two in Odia, two in Gujarati, two in Manipuri, three in English, two in Assamese, two in Malayalam and one each in Maithili, Telugu, Nepali, and Sanskrit. The festival also brings eight folk performances to the city. In addition to these plays, nine folk productions, five plays by NSD's diploma students, one production from the Sikkim



Centre of NSD, three plays by the NSD Repertory as well as five invitee plays by eminent theatre practitioners will captivate theatregoers this time round.

Shedding light on the festival, Suresh Sharma, Director In-charge, NSD, said: "The art of theatre is the oldest and the strongest medium that conveys human emotions in a

manner that defies temporal boundaries. We are delighted to usher in the Bharat Rang Mahotsav to its 20th year and have made all efforts to bring a selection of quality plays, choosing the best out of 960 submissions. There are 9 folk performances being presented in Delhi as well as invitee plays and productions in regional languages.

We have tried to accommodate as many young theatre enthusiasts as we can, since the institution aims to foster the growth of young talents through the platform of BRM."

The international theatre festival will culminate on 21st February, bringing a diverse range of productions comprising multiple shows and allied events such as 'Director's Meet', 'Living Legend' and 'Master Class'.

4 VOICEOVER

The Piano Man

Let art find your child

The world is calling out for more creative thinkers and ideators across fields

ANIL SRINIVASAN



A few weeks ago I had spoken of becoming a professor at the newly launched Krea University. Education should be fluid, allowing us to combine memory and meaning, logic and passion, mathematics and music if we so wish.

I had spoken of the need for polymaths. Ground reality, however, is different. Parents continue to worry, and stop music lessons or dance lessons the moment a child enters senior grades in school. I hear their anxiety. But I disagree with their thought process.

This weekend I was by the docksides in Tiruvottiyur in North Chennai to address students at the Pioneer Music Academy. In a geography known to be rough and non-conducive to artistic development, here were a 100 or more children asking me about Bach and Behag in equal measure. I was thoroughly impressed.

Some of these youngsters had persisted and kept at their musical training despite parental objections. Given the economics of the neighborhood, I cannot imagine this was an easyfeat.

When I contrasted the two paradigms, I felt that we still haven't truly understood the effect art has on a child's development and why the need for blending learning and allowing for flexibility is vital especially as a child enters his teen years or senior grades in school. Here are some responses to popular concerns on the topic.

Music and Academics

We are in 2019, a time when a young mind need not be beset with 'job pressure' and economics alone. There is a statistic that nearly 80 per cent of the jobs the average 15-year-old can expect ten years from now haven't been invented yet!

What universities look for, and future employers (and entrepreneurs) – are holistic learners. The world is calling out for more creative thinkers

and ideators across fields. Multidisciplinary thinking will rule all fields in the future.

Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning will soon necessitate new ways of approaching workplaces. This will mean more flexible minds. It will need creative collaborators. Rather than stop the artistic training, I would urge them to step up musical/art training more as their children grow older. Marks are going to become less relevant.

Ignacy Jan Padrewski was a fabulous concert pianist. He was also Prime Minister of Poland as of January 1919, exactly a century ago. A revolutionary musician-politician, heralding the new age.

Albert Einstein was a concert violinist in addition to being the man who changed the world as we know it. Abdul Kalam played the veena, and V.S. Ramachandran leads the world's neuroscientist often times drawing his inspiration from his advanced Carnatic music training. The examples are many.

Despite this, there persists doubts on how children will "manage".

A row of student interviews in Andhra Pradesh revealed how students were told to go to school and IIT tuitions as per a schedule so intimidating that children had all but forgotten to eat or sleep. This in no way is preparing them to face life. It is doing the contrary.

In prior columns I have spoken of how music expands cognitive capacity of the brain and further strengthens "design thinking". None of these assertions have been forwarded without scientific research.

Those with young children or wards, please note – it's time you allowed them their music classes. Even if you don't, the music will find them!

The author is a pianist, music educator and Professor of Practice at Krea University.

The writer is a well known pianist and music educator based in Chennai



Timeless The singer-songwriter's work covers ageless themes

The West Wind

Straight from the heart

And that is why 87-year-old Loretta Lynn's voice sounds contemporary

PRINCE FREDERICK



In April, the grand old lady of heart strings-pulling country music will turn 87. A couple of weeks ago, there was news that Loretta Lynn's birthday would be marked by a tribute concert for her, orchestrated by some of the big names on the current Country music circuit. The details of the event have the clarity of a hazy winter morning in Shimla. That doesn't matter though, as it is hardly central to my tribute piece.

Before moving on, let me just call this upcoming concert a fitting gesture towards someone who has taken time out to celebrate the high points of her peers' career. From a relatively younger generation of Country music singers, Alan Jackson is not exactly her peer, but when he was inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame in 2017 (which we mentioned in these pages), Loretta was out there to celebrate it, despite recovering from a severe physical setback.

It's a gesture of humility that makes her much taller than she has become offering songs that are eminently relatable, even to the Millennials.

As part of its construct, Country music – the best of it, at least – tells people-centric stories. Loretta amplified this aspect of the genre with her soulful voice, honest songwriting and her simple and unassuming guitar playing.

Of course, no marks for guessing which song of hers, I – or for that matter, anyone – would rate as her best. 'Coal Miner's Daughter' is unparalleled for its emotional depth. I am sure that today, nearly 50 years since its release, the song would resonate with Millennials, if only we tried to get them to listen to it, and soak in its message of gratitude.

Emotional lines

The song has lines guaranteeing moist eyes.

"We were poor but we had love/ That's the one thing that daddy made sure of/ He shoveled coal to make a poor man's dollar/ My daddy worked all night in the Van Leer

'Coal Miner's Daughter' is unparalleled for its emotional depth. Nearly 50 years since its release, the song would resonate even with Millennials

coal mine/ And all day long in the field a' hoeing corn." As long as there are daddies who work till their living lights grow dim, trying to provide not just for their children's needs, but also whims and fancies, this song's message will stay relevant.

A parody has been done on this song. I wish somebody penned a contemporaneous version of this song, where a Millennial child lauds the daddy who has lived through pink slips, is continually upgrading his tech skills to stay in the reckoning, and, despite all the stress, gladly meets the child's every tall wish.

Now, Loretta's greatness as a songwriter-singer came from her ability to write and sing straight from the heart, either her own or that of someone she could quickly empathise with. 'Coal Miner's Daughter' is hundred-per cent autobiographical, as the world discovered when a film by that title based on Loretta's life hit the silver screen. According to country music lore, 'You ain't Woman Enough (To Take My Man)', another song that will stay relevant as long as humans live on the face of this earth, is based on the real-life struggle of a woman who spoke about it to Loretta.

Mind Your Yoga

Blow away those impurities

Through the practice of Pranayama, we gain clarity of both perception and awareness

A.G. MOHAN AND DR. GANESH MOHAN



We have seen that the root cause of sickness is an absence of awareness. Used properly, pranayama can be an effective means to bring about the needed awareness. It is important to remember that the goal of Yoga is freedom, whether it be freedom from disease or freedom from our mental taints. The means to achieve freedom is through the practice of Yoga, especially pranayama.

Pranayama can be likened to the blowing of air from a bellows, which are used to stoke a fire. And our mental colourings or taints can be likened to the ash removed from a stove and chimney, by using the bellows to stoke the flames. The result is that the taints that previously obscured the inherent fire of knowledge (jnana) have been removed. Through the practice of Pranayama, we gain clarity of both perception and awareness.

The basic practice of Pranayama involves consciously changing the pattern of breathing. This can be achieved either through passive observation or active modulation of the breath. We can achieve clarity of perception and awareness through the active modulation of the four components of the breathing cycle – inhale, hold, exhale, and hold. The active manipulation of these four components of the cycle of breath is a specifically yogic form of Pranayama and meditation.

Now despite the term that is used, the so-called ‘passive’ form of Pranayama actually involves an active observation of the breathing process. The word “passive” has only been used to distinguish it from the active modulation

of the four different components of the breathing cycle. In passive observation, we rest our mind on our breath, but we do not attempt to actively regulate or manipulate our breathing. That is, we passively observe our breathing without interference. By such observation, the breathing itself will change spontaneously, simply because we are aware of it.

Breathing cycle

By contrast, in active modulation, we emphasise one or more of the different components of the breathing cycle. For example, in active modulation we might extend the length of exhalation, without changing the length of inhalation, specifically in order to induce a calming effect. Focusing the mind on the breath or on some internalised image, combined with the use of mantra, can be very effective in bringing about changes in the mind.

Changing the pattern of breathing can be a very powerful tool because it can change the flow of Prana through the body. However, Pranayama can also be abused if the practitioner is not clear on how to use it properly.

Pranayama is a natural process of give and take in the breath. In order to restore balance, we must understand how the flow of breath occurs and how to flow with it. Any Pranayama practice must consider the following points:

- The posture used during pranayama
- Right methodology
- Ratio of the four components of breath
- Time of practice
- The person, in all their uniqueness.

As personalised knowledge of pranayama grows deeper in a practitioner, one will come to see that its effects are pervasive indeed.

The writers are yoga practitioners and authors of several books

Talking Theatre

Learning, scene by scene

Imran Rasheed has done it all, from serving tea backstage to writing and directing plays

DEEPA GAHLOT



When Imran Rasheed did the play ‘Phir Se Shaadi’ on the problems in the life of a young couple due to the Islamic practice of *halal*, Naseeruddin Shah told him he didn’t know there are even artistes from Bulandshahr, referring to the producer-writer-director-actor’s hometown that was in the news for law and order problem.

Imran grew up in Bulandshahr and then went to Aligarh Muslim University. “Theatre was hardly on my mind. Nobody in my family had even heard of it. When I went to Aligarh, I discovered the world of theatre; because Naseeruddin Shah was from Aligarh, he was talked about a lot. I heard of Nadira Zaheer Babbar too, because her uncle lived in that town.”

While Imran was trying to get into student politics, a friend suggested he get into theatre. So he joined the theatre club there. “I didn’t know what I wanted to do. But for the next five years, I went there every single day. I started doing some plays and connected with people from theatre. I had no idea till I came to Mumbai that there could be professional theatre and regular shows, that plays ran for years on end. In Aligarh, we did 30-minute shows and after one performance, a play folded up. I believed that is how theatre is done.”



In 2002, Imran came to Mumbai and joined Nadira Babbar’s group Ekjute. He began as a tea boy and cleaner, but eventually learnt how to mount a play and run a group. “When I started working with Nadiraji, I realised the hard work

that goes into a play. It was fascinating to watch her write while rehearsing and bringing a play to life. She gave me short pieces to direct in her productions and liked what I did. At Ekjute, I learnt to write, direct and act.”

Imran also started acting in plays by Makrand Deshpande, Akarsh Khurana and Manav Kaul, but he was excited about discovering his writing skills. “Because I had learnt everything from the bottom up, I found this was what I enjoyed doing. Now, writing has become a habit and *shauq* (passion). I can write a play in 10 days and put up a production in 15 to 20 days. I saw how Mak Sir used to write a few pages, get his actors together, wrote them into the play after a lot of improvisation. I too have adopted



A scene from ‘Bade Miyan Deewane.’ (Below) Imran Rasheed

this style.” He went on to form his own group Rangbaaz, with friends Pawan Uttam, Sumeet Vyas, Shivani Tanksale and others.

“I had no thought of forming a group, it just happened. I was asked by Rashmi Sharma Telefilms to write a serial; I told them it was not my cup of tea. The boss Pawan Kumar Marut asked me what I wanted to do and I replied, *natak* (play). He asked me how much it would cost and handed me a cheque. So I had the funds, but no play. Then someone recommended Shaukat Tharwi’s book, *Budbak*, which I adapted into ‘Bade Miyan Deewane’, adding a lot of humour to the already funny story. I invited a bunch of actors, we did readings, they gave me suggestions and our first production was off the ground. For so many months we rehearsed and partied with hardly a thought of going home.”

Fine network

Over the next decade, Rangbaaz did 14 productions such as ‘Papa’, ‘Jungle Book’, ‘James And The Giant Peach’, ‘Ek Poora Din’, ‘Pitras Ka Ras’, ‘Phir Se Shaadi’, Imran wrote and directed six. “I don’t want to do everything. Rangbaaz is what it is because other directors like Pawan Uttam, Sumeet and Shivani, Gagan Dev Riar, Raghav Dutt and Nitin Bhardwaj did plays with the group. So many talented directors and actors have emerged from Rangbaaz. I think this experiment worked, because it brought in so much dedication and variation to our work.”

The uproariously comic ‘Bade Miyan Deewane’, a Molieresque play about an old man (played by Imran) falling for a young girl, remains the group’s most successful production

which, Imran thinks, taught him how to connect with audiences, “A line we thought was funny sank without a laugh and the one we thought was okay had them cracking up with laughter. It takes about ten shows for a play to grow and settle, and it is a process of constant research.”

His latest production, ‘Phir Se Shaadi’, which conveys a powerful social message with humour has been turned into a film, retaining most of the actors from the play. “Like I never learnt to direct a play, I never formally learnt film direction – it just happened. I think a director’s prime task is to get the actors to perform well – the technicians do their jobs well anyway. I bring theatre discipline to a film shoot – I was the first to arrive and the last to leave, and though we were shooting in winter in Aligarh, we had a great time.”

Imran is now busy writing his next play ‘Mazhab’, about a man who finds he is worth more dead than alive. “It is a strange story, and like everything I write, somehow connected to my own experiences. Even the incidents in ‘Phir Se Shaadi’ actually happened in Aligarh. In ‘Mazhab’, I also want to include what is going on around us, this atmosphere of fear that Naseerbhai talked about, and look at the backlash he faced. I discovered myself through my work. Now I can do anything... theatre made my *shakhsiyat* (personality), so I can never ever leave theatre. I discovered myself through my work. Now I can do anything... theatre made my *shakhsiyat* (personality), so I can never ever leave theatre,” says Imran.

NAVINA JAFA

The idea of myth in India called gaatha is a lived experience of a circle of stories that translates into rituals and pilgrimages. The Kumbh Mela, arguably the greatest lived phenomenon of a gaatha, is anchored on faith to transcend into timelessness and sustain in the face of the struggle of life.

The gaatha of the churning of the ocean at one point has the majestic eagle - The Garuda who snatches the pitcher (Kumbh) of Amrit - nectar of immortality and flies away only to spill drops of nectar in four locations. When astrological stars combine in six (Ardh/half) and 12 years (poorna/full), the essence of nectar is revived and Kumbh Mela as the pilgrimage is renewed. This year it is the Ardh Kumbh in Prayagraj (Allahabad).

The Kumbh in Prayag, attains a greater importance since the cosmic energies are augmented by the confluence of rivers - the Ganges for purity, the Yamuna for devotion and hidden Saraswati for knowledge; and just as the Gods and the demons ran in frenzy following Garuda to seek the nectar, so do the millions of believers who move as a sea of humanity to congregate at the locations of Kumbh. They grapple to capture the idea of liberation with the one action of purpose - a holy dip in the waves forming the confluence called Sangam at Prayag. Says Tulsidas, the celebrated 16th century poet, "Beautiful is the meeting of the white (Ganga) and the dark Yamuna. Such that Tulsidas' heart leaps with joy at the sight of the waves transcending energies for the soul."

The UNESCO awakened to this centuries-old organic phenomenon only in 2017 and inscribed the Kumbh as part of the list of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. There is no invitation, the assembly of millions is self-driven. The multitudes begin their pilgrimage by boarding trains, riding bullock carts, tractors, buses, their belongings on their heads in bags of jute, buying their temporary chullahs for making food, boarding in the temporary tents along the dry sandy banks of the river their faces are lit with the live energies of faith.

Tale of the Teerthraj

In the 3rd section of the text called Matsyapurana, there is the explanation of reaping rewards by visiting, reading and listening to the account of the greatness of the place of pilgrimage. It also prescribes internal sequel of pilgrimage, appropriate time and gives an account of body-vibration caused by the pilgrimage. Prayag, the location for the Kumbh 2019, has its own spiritual cosmic topography that emerges out of the natural and mythical worlds and makes it the imperial beholder (Teerthraj) of pilgrimage spots. The pilgrimage geography is lined around the central location Sangam (confluence of the rivers). Prayag is where the first nectar drops fell and it is here that Brahma, the creator of the universe performed the first se-



Spiritual quest Myriad hues of Ardh Kumbh Mela ■ PTI, RITU RAJ KONWAR, AP, K. MURALI KUMAR

Collage of Kumbh

The ongoing Ardh Kumbh Mela in Prayagraj symbolises enactment and renewal of a focus for sublime peace which emerges from a chaotic space

ries of fire sacrifices (Yagna).

Unlike Varanasi, the rivers change their course in Prayag, it is, for this reason, Prayag has few built ghats (landing steps). The pilgrimage geography recreates the gaatha of the churning of the ocean - The Vaasuki Naag Temple recalls the role of the Serpent Vasuki who was transformed into rope for churning, while the Beni Madhav Temple is the city deity like Vishwanath (Protector of the World) in Varanasi. The occurrence of Kumbh also has the allegorical associations with astrological happenings, the time of sacred baths which have the potential of great rewards are allotted with careful mathematical calculations, and to recall

this there is a fascinating temple of Bhishma - a figure from the epic Mahabharata who lay injured on a bed of arrows awaiting the appropriate movement of the Sun in an auspicious space of the month of Maagh before he left his mortal being.

The phenomenon of ascetics

The culture of becoming a Sadhu, an ascetic in the Hindu tradition is varied and complex. In the historical sense, a variety of the sects of the ascetics called the akharas functioned as traders, and later as mercenaries which are also why they came to clash with the British East India Company. Gradually, they lost their sources

of income, and today most akharas survive on support by faithful many of whom are NRI Indians and a large number of traders especially from Rajasthan, Gujarat, and Kolkata.

Swami Akhanananda of the Swasti Juna Akhada says, "There are 13 registered akharas who are present in the Kumbh. Each section of akhara has a leader Mandaleshwar. The sadhus belong to two main categories, the Swati Nama and the Giri Nama. In all the categories, the constant test is sustaining detachment, controlling the senses, seeking the truth of existence and finding moksha the path of release from the cycle of birth. A Swasti Nama like me remains in the material world but sustains a strict

code of detachment and seclusion for meditation; the latter seek their liberation through meditative practices in the mountains (Giri). The Naga, (ascetics without clothes and covered in ash) come in the category of Giri Nama. They reach a height of detachment where the ego represented shedding of clothes and ash represents what their bodies will ultimately become."

The Kumbh is sociologically the biggest event for the ascetics. Akharas ensure the participation of their members. The main ritual bathing days generates power struggle. Depending on the number of members attending, the order for the great bathing dates is drawn in which the akharas will get to perform the ritual bath. On the said dates details are drawn for rituals and the manner in which the processions of the akharas as a living exhibition called Peshwai is enacted. Chariots, adornment of weapons, music and other kinds of performances become visual tools for asserting power. Apart from the main bathing days, the calendar of the akharas is marked by dictating instruction to ascetics, inducing new members and spiritual discourses along with outreach exercise to attract devotees who in turn financially support the akharas.

Unaccounted Sociology and Economics

During the Kumbh, Prayag as a pilgrim location exhibits an economic opportunity but also sociological complexities. Traditional communities like the Prayagwals (pilgrim priests), and the Nishads or the boatmen are important stakeholders. While the priests keep the Bahi



COURTESY: RAGHU RAI

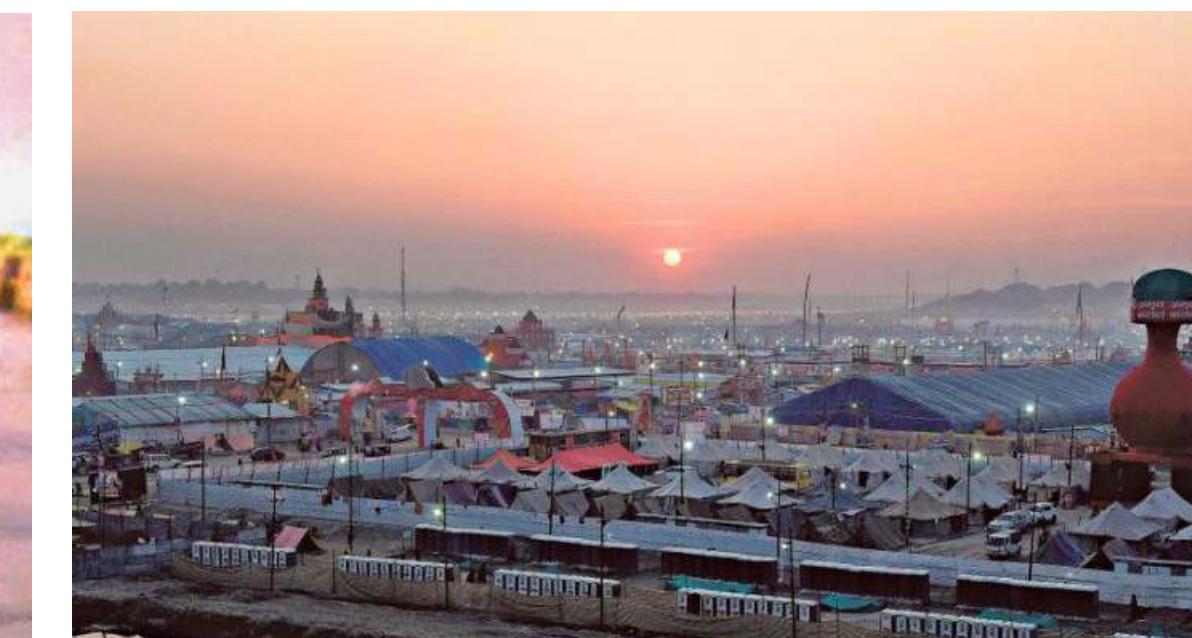


Decoding darshan

As colours and picturesque canvases emerge, the Kumbh becomes an intriguing frame for dynamic freezing of human action. Raghu Rai, the leading light of Indian photography has been photographing Kumbh on multiple occasions. His responses as an artist Yogi are distinct especially against the rage of a large number of photography tours, and the frenzy that grips media from all over the world - most, who do not realise how intrusive their actions become for the faithful who is focused in a private journey of liberation.

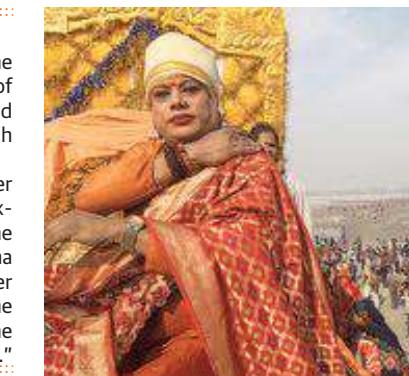
Rai says, "When in Kumbh, I am on a journey, I am not thinking, all I am doing is internalising the feeling of the faces and their body language. I hope like they (my subject) hope as they take a dip to gain their God. I, like them, seek to feel their freedom to travel the waves of energies. This country is a dynamic symbol of endless faith, where the millions are directed to take a single dip and have an interface of the ephemeral idea of Nirvana in a moment. Yes, it is all about a moment, when my click happens. I journey to capture that faith as they touch and speak to me. Photography of Kumbh is a spiritual journey of expressive feeling."

The media, which in recent times includes travel photographers and bloggers operate to facilitate not the pilgrim but the tourist exotic gaze. It is about feeding the capitalist market forces. The journey of internal spirituality so seminal beneath the external experiences goes missing while in telescoping the event without understanding in either photography or writing even through these visual and written accounts are entertaining to the urban Indian and the Western audiences. Most ascetics and other traditional stakeholders are aware now of the currency they represent and thus their 'darshan' transforms the arena of detachment into forums of material exchange. Talking about the photographic and travel blogging tours, Rai says, "Photography and writing are meditative, lonely journeys and not group activities. They can be merely fun..."



Distinct impulses

In every Kumbh gathering, your eyes will catch some usual acts that display the power of Yoga, meditation manifesting marvels that provide a spectacle of ascetics at all levels of spiritual development. Those who eat razor blades, stand in freezing water or stand on the head for days. However, the ongoing Ardh (Half) Kumbh 2019 has a couple of first time features: After the removal of the Section 377, the inclusion of the Kinnar (transgender akhara) as the 14th sacred sect of Hindu ascetics is a big milestone. Adi Shankaracharya (8thc) organised the Hindu ascetic sects in 13 Akharas to protect the Sanathan Dharma, (path of eternal duty). Says Swami Akhandananda (Juna Akhada), "There was always the intention to give representation to transgender (kinnar) ascetics by way of exclusive akharas. After the last Kumbh in 2013, the various heads of all the akharas, along with the Sankracharyas formalised the decision. This akhara like others follow rules, and is granted similar privileges."



kathas (or pilgrim records) and perform rituals, the Nishads (boatmen) called Mallahs or Kevat although low in caste hierarchy gain sacred legitimacy through the gaatha from the Ramayana.

It is believed that it was the Nishad from Prayag who took Ram, his wife and brother across the river when they were exiled. Hence carrying devotees symbolises a sacred activity. The Kumbh generates a large amount of income for these communities, who raise their prices and are well networked. They use code language concerning ways to deal with pilgrims to maximise profits.

The Kumbh Mela is a sociological a temporary city with complex dynamics. Managing non-violent crowds, facilities and maintaining hygiene and control of disease is a mammoth task for which historically there is very little data. A Mela Committee was set up after the 1954 stampede. I grew up listening to experiences. My mother, (writer Manorama Jafa) says, "We were students in the Allahabad University, I never want to go back, for all I remember was picking dead bodies after the stampede."

Another important occurrence is the abandonment of women. Late at night even today, there is

the announcement of women who are 'lost', a large number of them are widows. My own great grandmother had set up a widow home in a locality Lukergunj to provide shelter to abandoned women of Kumbh.

Over a period of time, not pilgrimage but exotic tourism has surfaced. In the quasi-religious spaces 'designed' meditation, yoga programmes, luxury tent cities, and exhibitions have emerged. Alongside, the ascetics display explicitly for their audiences - while some eat fire, blades others through Yogic powers pronounce prophecies. There is no doubt it is a performance of nirvana, display of colour and diversity where the poignancy of faith in the moving waves of the rivers drowns human politics and greed. It is a phenomenon where the faith of millions will defy all adversities to reassess hope for humanity.

Kumbh is a metaphorical representation co-scripted from gaathas, sociology, history and lived flowing traditions. It symbolises enactment and renewal of a focus for sublime peace which emerges from a chaotic space, from a screen of eyes of life and fire of faith and yet in the experience of the Darshan the Eyes of Life remains a losing struggle for permanence.

Sangam of swaras

SPIC MACAY has organised a special series of concerts at Prayag

CHITRA SWAMINATHAN

"When lakhs of people are coming to Prayag to take a dip in the Ganga, we also want them to take a dip in the ocean of music," says Kiran Seth, founder of SPIC MACAY (Society for Promotion of Indian Classical Music and Culture Amongst Youth).

The organisation has been chosen by the Government to organise classical concerts during the Kumbh Mela.

Since January 17, the massive Triveni Pandal, specially erected for the purpose, has been reverberating with music. It has been hosting Carnatic and Hindustani instrumentalists and vocalists, justifying its proximity to the Sangam.

"Though we cannot expect serious listeners at such events, it is heartening that the Government decided to have classical performances, besides the usual folk shows. Every initiative in supporting the classical arts counts hugely," says Seth, who has been working tirelessly for the past 41 years to take art and heritage to classrooms and campuses.

SPIC MACAY's Prayag line-up features top musicians of the country. "But it was quite a challenge putting it together in just about a month's time," says Madhu Shukla, the Uttar Pradesh coordinator of the organisation.

The credit goes to our dedicated team of volunteers at different cities, who have been connecting with artistes and constantly coordinating with us. It is at such times that we realise the significance of such youth-centric cultural movement."

Despite being organised at the Kumbh Mela, SPIC MACAY has been fostering its core aim of reaching out to students. "We have approached educational institutions in and around Prayag to send student groups to attend the concerts. We have even arranged for their transport and accommodation," informs Madhu. Seth adds that the facility is open to students from other parts of the country too. "They can contact our volunteers. Along with the concerts, they can get a first-hand experience of the Kumbh."

Veteran violinist N. Rajam, who is back in Mumbai after performing at Prayag, feels that the spiritual energy is so high that nothing else such as the biting cold and milling crowd matter. "Unlike the usual recitals, it was a rare experience to perform just about two km away from the Ganga," says she.

For ghatam exponent Vikku Vinayakram nothing can be more gratifying than performing in the punya kshetram. "I knew it would be difficult for me to handle the severe winter at this age, yet when an event establishes the spiritual link that defines music; it is hard not to participate. A platform for classical music at the Kumbh, has made it a confluence of body, mind and soul," says the Chennai-based vidwan. The SPIC MACAY music series is on till February 24. For details, call 91707 08469 or 99647 21022.

Master-stroke!

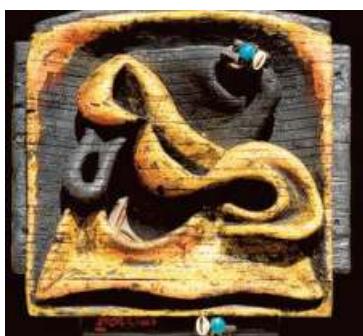
Tracing five veterans at the India Art Fair

UMA NAIR

Compositions, styles, narratives, contextualisation and sensibilities all give way to a feast for the senses. New York-based Zarina Hashmi, the distinguished Satish Gujral, the think tank Krishen Khanna, seasoned photographer Ram Rahman and autobiographical Anju Dodiya. These five artists defined different practices and materials in terms of technique and sensibility as it traversed years as early as 1981 to 2018, at the India Art Fair.

Satish Gujral's burnt wood sculpture

Chawla Art Gallery presents Satish Gujral's solo showing at their booth. While Gujral has a broad sweep of mediums and materials and techniques over more than six decades of work, it is his burnt wood sculptures that stand at the zenith of a sensibility that is both rare and deeply sensitive even as it hints at mythology as well as spirituality.



Ideas divide and forms unite when you think of artists who belong to the graph of India's masters. And Gujral's Untitled burnt wooden sculpture (oil on burnt wood, leather, cowrie shells, beads on plywood) is a cynosure for all eyes for the many worlds and materials it straddles and transcends. There is something hauntingly Indianesque in this work, although he has consciously refused to exploit traditional Indian styles but instead gone for universality of idioms in his creations. Perhaps this quality lies in the dry burnt wooden colour, charcoaled in essence and grittiness, that is dragged across the surface to create a folded biomorphic matte finish texture.

His sculpture is most impressive and carries with it a

imperative of music in the ritual of the wedding. It was in the 1970s that Khanna first explored the subject of Bandwallas, or members of local brass bands engaged to play at weddings and other public ceremonies. Krishen once told me, "While driving out of my Delhi studio, the path was blocked by the marching band of a wedding procession - this is how I came to paint the first Bandwalla portraits."

"The image of these musicians dressed in scarlet with their big brass instruments wrapped around them still remains as powerful for me today as it was that day in Delhi. The Bandwallas became a recurrent theme in my oeuvre. My choice of subject has either been inspired by the experiences of the daily

One cannot not miss Zarina Hashmi's fascinating cast paper work "Homecoming 1981" at the Gallery Espace Booth. The small, grey-toned monochromatic yet minimalist Zen aesthetic is a resonance we can't avoid. She is known for conceiving an intuitive aesthetic with a restraint that is both tranquil and sombre.

There is austerity and starkness in her articulation, but there is also an intense clarity of tone and warmth of timbre. Her visual translation of the four-cornered quartet concept encapsulates a narrative of experience, and memory, with the homecoming event. She alludes abstract emotions as well as a fleeting feeling with an economy of expression that is unique and subtle.

In this monochrome presence, we glimpse her passion for geometry. In 2005, at

wine vitality when you understand how the subtleties of colour begin to play across this harsh surface like hints of a myth that plays out in a dry desert. But this sculpture from an early period has an elusive quality even as it leads you into the profundity of commentaries as you attempt to grasp its ethos that flits through time and space. The sculpture with its fluid detailing speaks to us about what is transient and tangential, the sacred and the sublime so that eventually the seeming solidity dissolves into sliding planes of contours that make for a resonance that delves deep into the mapping of histories.

Krishen Khanna's Bandwallah

Palette Art Gallery has a collection of Indian masters and Krishen Khanna's Band-

wallah is a crimson tide creation that satiates your inner recesses. It reminds you of the power of music in our lives and the

her show in Singapore, she told me that geometry, is an "ongoing sacred practice". Indeed, her works are a litany of geometric forms: the square, the circle and the triangle. Resolutely rooted in Indo-Persian traditions through abstracted images and forms as well as Urdu poetry and personal history this work unveils a different realm.

Ram Rahman's imagery

Ram Rahman's images of artists at The Guild are the stuff of candour and caprice. Ram, the ace architectural photographer, who captures monuments and buildings across the world becomes a historian when he turns his lenses on India's contemporary artists. Among the many captivating moments two of them are epic in terms of expression and the distinctive moment. Francis Newton Souza at his home in New York 1998 as well as Bhupen Khakar 1985 are images that enchant as well as engage us for their brilliance of the imitable momentousness that assails our senses.

Souza sits chatting in his amiable provocative manner and we see in the background the French door of his apartment in which you see many of his drawings. If Souza's portrait is animated Bhupen Khakar's posture and poise as he sits within the space of Gandhi's statue in Delhi is an arresting and meticulously rendered, masterful print. Bhupen was a father figure to many and in seating him in



Homage to Bapu (Clockwise from above) Ram Rahman's photograph of Bhupen Khakar at Gandhi Museum; Krishen Khanna's 'Bandwallah', Zarina Hashmi's 'Homecoming', Anju Dodiya's 'Room with a view', Satish Gujral's burnt wood sculpture

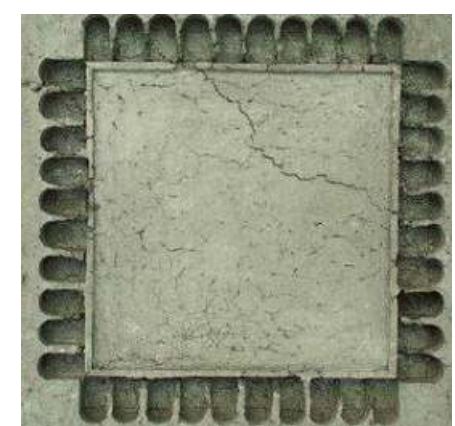


the lap of the Father of the Nation, Ram invites viewers to peruse the expression of demure softness on Bhupen's face.

Ram employs naturality and elegant simplicity of black and white idiom and the Gandhi statue to pose his subject, the petite Bhupen as his a model. It is Ram's distinct aesthetic that defines the 20th Century elegance and simplicity of style, with each brilliant image beautifully articulating his subjects who are indeed

personas in the world of contemporary Indian art.

With both, Ram achieves a characteristic balance of the playful with the sombre, the visual with the thoughtful, and the deeply personal with the thirst of wants from the



public.

Anju Dodiya's mattresses Chemould Prescott from Mumbai brings in its melange Anju Dodiya's work. The artist visualises themes of sleep and night in some of her mattress-as-canvas as well as watercolour and charcoal on unbleached fabric stretched on padded board.

'Room with a view' reflects monumentality and precise attention to detail. Complementing motifs and themes already present in life she remains rooted in the figurative and her works are evocative echoes of an emotive elegance unique to her artistic language. Recurring in changing pictorial contexts is the artist herself.

"Mattresses belong to the domestic terrain and here I continue to explore their surface as a base to paint images of home, dream and body," states Dodiya. "Desires and aspirations are just a flip second away from the real. The process of staining and marking with watercolour and charcoal on the resistant unbleached cotton is playful. The geometric shapes and lines reference the modernist minimal art of the '70s, while the elements of the lamp (after Carlo Mollino) and the landscape (after the Italian primitives) betray my attitude of devouring images from diverse sources and spilling them onto my work."

This triptych is an inward looking investigation with a unique sense of self-awareness and introspection. She compels the viewer to unravel untold stories of the (usually) female protagonists, yet does not quite reveal the entire narrative. She creates her own legends mirrored as self-disruptive autobiographies. Her paintings start a process of moving beyond the narrow self and towards a greater investigation into one's selfhood. They are more than mere pictorial quotations phrased across years, they are expressions of strong psychological continuities. Her allegorical narratives represent the inherent theatricality that mediates between the real and the illusory.

'We were never in a rush to reach the top'

Rajan and Sajan Mishra, foremost exponents of the Benaras gharana, on their musical journey that began in temples

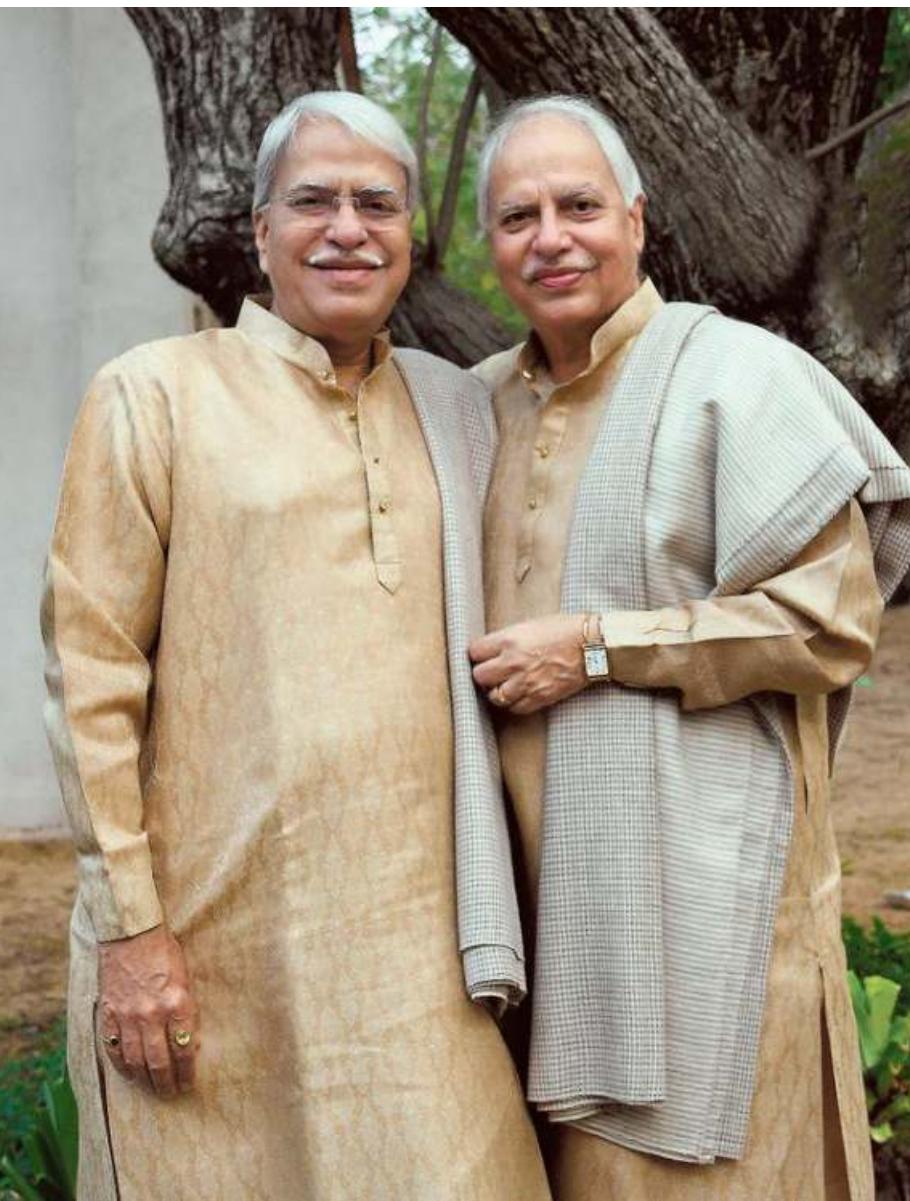
CHITRA SWAMINATHAN

Please join in our prayer. We are blessed to be sitting in this seat of arts and perform our puja," said Rajan and Sajan Mishra before their concert at Kalakshetra's Rukmini Arangham. Dressed in immaculate Benares silk dhotis and kurta-pajamas, they gently explored every nuance of raga Shree, their refined musical sensibilities and sublime singing creating a truly immersive experience.

"Surrender and bhakti is the essence of Benaras from where we hail. Also, we belong to a 300-year-old legacy of the Benaras gharana. *Hamare sangit mein Benaras ki sahajta toh honi hi hai* (our music has to have the intrinsic qualities of this ancient city)," say the brothers during an interview on the morning of the performance.

Clad in T-shirts and track suits, they show no sign of fatigue, despite flying from Jalandhar to New Delhi and then, to Chennai. In fact, over the past year, they have been travelling across the country and criss-crossing the globe with the conceptual musical creation 'Bhairav se Bhairavi tak - a journey through ragas'. They have performed more than 55 concerts in a span of 12 months and have a few more to go.

"It's a way of sharing with music lovers all that we have assimilated over the years, through our learning, performances and interactions with legends. The purpose is to unravel the distinctive features of different ragas, understand why they are sung at a particular time of the day and their tonal structure. Bhairav is usually the beginning piece in a concert and Bhairavi, the final. The raga-



A life in music (clockwise from top) Pandit Rajan and Sajan Mishra; a shot of the brothers on the Ganga from the documentary 'Adwait Sangeet'; young Rajan and Sajan

time cycle has an inherent affinity for Nature, human mind and emotions. At this point of time in our life, we want to look deeper into the tradition we have inherited from our gurus – granduncle Bade Ramdas Ji Mishra, father Pt. Hanuman Prasad Mishra and uncle Pt. Gopal Mishra.

"It wasn't easy living upto

the high musical standards set by them. Apart from keeping alive a vibrant legacy, we had to create our own space in the music world. And we decided to go through the ups and downs of this journey together," explains the duo.

Debut performance

The brothers first performed at a *haazri* (a musical ritual at temples) in 1967 at the famous Sankat Mochan temple in Benaras. Rajan was 10 and Sajan five. They soon became regular performers at temples. "That is how we developed a spiritual connect with our music, since the performances were an offering to God. We also spent a lot of time listening to stalwarts; Benaras had so many. Together they built up the stylistic features of the gharana. *Gaayan*, *vaadan* and *nritya* are embedded in the city's culture."

The narrow lanes of the Kabir Chaura in Benaras

prove this. Popularly known as the '*mohalla of kalaakars*', it once reverberated with swars and the sounds of tabla, sarangi and ghunghroo. The maestros of music and dance such as Sitara Devi, Kishan Maharaj and the Mishras lived here. Many of their descendants continue to stay here and are taking forward the legacy. The lanes and the old houses have now been beautified and heritage walks are conducted regularly.

Old-world street

As you enter the street, the ancestral house of Rajan-Sajan Mishra is situated on the left. It has symbols of music painted on its walls. During a visit to Benaras in November 2018, I was fortunate to meet them outside the house where the brothers and their musical journey were born. They were leaving for Banaras Hindu University to receive an honorary doctorate, conferred upon them as part of the institution's centenary

Documenting a legacy

Adwait Sangeet - Two Voices One Soul, the documentary by Makarand Brahme is a heart-warming narration of the brothers' musical story. The film, released in 2011, opened the Indian Panorama at that year's International Film Festival of India, Goa. It was also screened at other Indian film festivals and around the world. A theatre artiste and filmmaker, Makarand first heard Rajan and Sajan Mishra at the famous Sawai Gandharva Festival in Pune. "I was 21, passionate about classical music and was a volunteer at the festival. I was fascinated by the way their voices and thoughts melded. After the celebrated Ustad Nazakat Ali Khan and Salamat Ali Khan, they are the only successful duo vocalists of Hindustani music," says he. The film has been shot in Delhi, Dehradun and Benaras. It takes you through their concerts, interviews, riyaz sessions, classes at their gurukul and family time. "It was not easy for a filmmaker, who is more an ardent admirer, to edit the 45-hour footage to a 90-minute film. There are some moments in *Adwait Sangeet* that are a personal favourite, such as their singing of the rare bandishes of Benaras and a thumri, popularised by the Kathak legend Bindadin Maharaj, to which Pt. Birju Maharaj (whose daughter is married to Sajan's son) danced. I had a great time shooting the film, since the brothers are one of the most unassuming and warm musicians I have ever met," says Makarand.



celebrations.

"The city has become crowded and the traffic, chaotic, yet there is *sukoon* (peace). I still hear the strains of my father's sarangi when I step into this lane. We often walk along the ghats singing to the Ganga or sipping chai from a *kulhad*. The river has been our constant companion; with her we have shared our dreams and woes. There cannot be a better milieu for an artiste," says Sajan.

Technology, points out Rajan, may have made things easier and faster. "But *rashanubhava* in classical music comes from its traditional values, guru-shishya parampara is one such. No technological tool can help you master music. *Yeh kala sirf aamne saamne baithkar seekhi ja sakthi hai* (you have to sit face-to-face to train in the art). So we started Viraam, our gurukul in Dehradun. What is also important is to learn at a pace that offers you the time to internalise

every detail. Only when an artiste experiences the joy, can he or she share it with the listeners. We were never in a rush to reach the top. These days, youngsters think they are concert-ready with just a set of taans. We were taught to render a musical phrase in 50 different ways. It helps develop the imagination, so that you do not turn into a clone of your guru."

Though Benaras gharana is known for *dhruvapad*, *dhamar*, *khayal*, *chand*, *prabandh*, *thumri*, *chaiti* and *kajri*, the different elements of Hindustani music – Rajan and Sajan Mishra chose to focus on khayal and are among its foremost exponents.

"We also sing bhajans, taranas and thumris. But it is a beautiful exercise to bring alive poetry musically in khayal; it's quite like the feeling when sailing across the serene waters of the Ganga," say the maestros, who are always in the khayal (thought) of Kashi.



The making of a concert

Bombay Jayashri says when she chooses her repertoire, she tries to visualise the venue too

SHAILAJA KHANNA



Senior Carnatic vocalist Bombay Jayashri Ramnath is a rare reticent musician who prefers her music to do the talking. "My music will tell you more about me than I ever can." In Ahmedabad for her concert on the closing day of Saptak, the singer, who is also well-versed with Hindustani stream, mused over her music and how it changes according to audience, venue and climate.

Edited excerpts:

On the choice of ragas

If I am performing in the North, I look forward to delving deeper into one raga as is more traditional in the Hindustani style of presentation. I try to pick ragas that are known or familiar but not necessarily only Hindustani ragas. For mid morning concerts, the ragas that resonate with me are Shanmukhapriya, which is a very primary raga, Saveri, Madhyamavathi...."

On the venue

When I choose my repertoire, I do try to visualise the venue too, if I am familiar with it. Saptak is more or less open air, the quadrangle, it doesn't have a boxed in, closed auditorium feeling. Certain ragas are meant to be performed in open spaces, I feel - "vettai velli" music (open air music). Nobody has told me this, but I instinctively feel some ragas are made for the open. For instance, ragas like Shanmukhapriya, Sindhu Bhairavi....

I associate raga Shanmukhapriya with the temples - it is a raga whose spaces between the notes has been extensively explored by the great nadaswaram exponents in the temples. Most of us vocalists hear recordings of the great nadaswarams exponents; I feel we can't do even 10% of what they do.

On the audience

Since my concert at Saptak was on the last day of a 13-day-long festival, I also keep in mind that the audience would have heard pretty much every raga. Shanmukhapriya, I feel, still has the scope and range to interest the listener; it can pierce one's heart. It's used a lot for "ragam thanam" (alaap jor), so sang it as my main piece. The organisation I am singing for also matters - for example if I am singing for the Tamil Sangam in Delhi, I know the audience will have more South Indian listeners so I try to cater to their expectations too.

On the composition

Another consideration for me is the composition - if I am able, I try to pick some compositions where the lyrics may strike a chord. Some compositions that are loved by au-

diences in the South are simply packed with lyrics; these I feel may distract North Indian listeners from the melody. Also I prefer to sing Sanskrit rather than Tamil or Telugu compositions, if possible when I perform in the north. Sometimes I simply sing the "antara" (ending portion of the composition) not the full composition, so I can explore the notes more.

On introducing new music

I actually love singing to a new audience; every concert in the North is very important for me as I feel I am introducing a new type of music to an audience that may take to it. It's a great honour and quite a responsibility. Throughout my career, since the 1990s, I have sung wherever I could.

On the duration of concert and cold weather

The duration of the concert does not really affect my singing. In the South a typical concert is 150 to 180 minute long, in the North the duration is about 90 minutes but I feel that's enough time to create an impact.

Singing in the cold definitely requires my body and voice to adjust to the difference in temperature. I feel a minimum 16 hours is required. I actually like to wake up in the city I am to perform in.

I would love to sing at Harivallabh in Jullundhar, I have heard so much about the great music there, that it's an offering to the Devi. Since the dates are end December which is right in the middle of our Marghazi season, I don't know how I will manage to ever go there but you never know!

On special memories

Singing at Dover Lane, Kolkata was quite special - I was born in the Ballygunge area, where the Dover Lane festival is held and though I was only three when my parents left the city, I have grown up hearing the hallowed name so it was exciting to be invited there to sing. My slot was at 2 a.m. and I really don't like singing after 11 p.m. as my body really winds down. So I arrived in Kolkata two days ahead of the concert, and slept a whole day before. We are just not used to all night music sessions in the South.

On influences of Hindustani music

My music has been impacted by who I have heard over the years. From all that I have absorbed, I have to search and find my own voice, in all earnestness and sincerity, and with loyalty to the system I have trained in.

A meeting of great minds

"Two Fathers" brings the larger than life image of Einstein and Gandhi into our tiny worlds with the thread of domestic challenges that resonate widely

SHRINKHLA SAHAI

One can only wonder what a meeting between Gandhi and Einstein could have been like. Two of the most influential personalities of the 20th century, they both had immense admiration for each other but never had the opportunity to meet. Exploring this idea, playwright Sundar Sarukkai weaves an alternate universe of compelling rendezvous between the two great men and their children in *Two Fathers*.

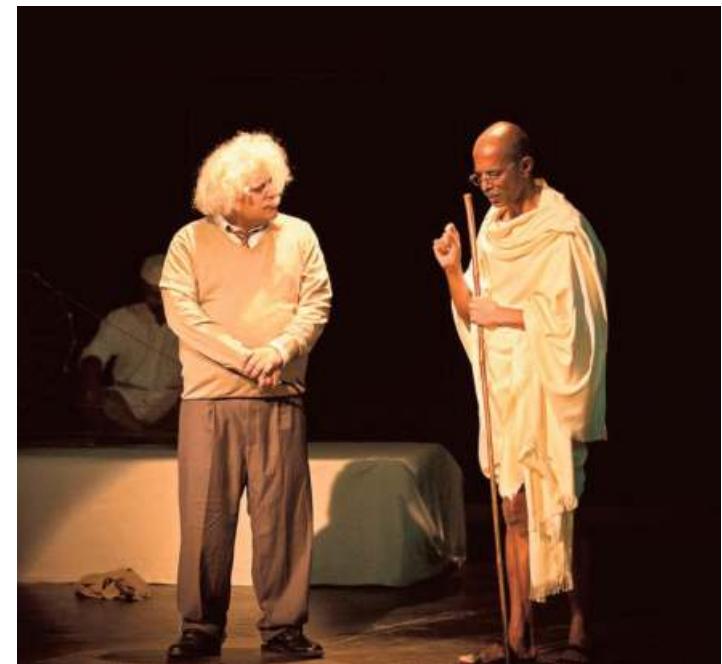
One would easily imagine Gandhi and Einstein in a profound conversation hinged on physics, metaphysics and politics. Instead, the script cobbles together a more challenging, subtle and emotional exchange. The two icons share the pain of parenting that remains largely unarticulated in the overarching narrative of their achievements and contributions to the world. With passing references to world history, the dialogues remain focused on their personal histories as fathers who constantly struggled in the role of a parent. While Gandhi's troubled relationship with his eldest son Harilal is common knowledge, Einstein never acknowledged Lieserl as his daughter since she was born out of wedlock. The play brings together these four characters in direct conversation that circumvents the obvious and engages in a deeply personal yet powerfully universal theme of parent-child relationships.

Script and stage

Minimalism is used as a potent theatrical trope in the play, yet at points it also lapses into visual monotony. High fidelity to the text props up the script with its nuanced characterisation and clever dialogues, yet it also means diminished stage action. The plot does not have much to look out for, the core remains the expression of emotional lives. The play is pointedly pinned on the textual rather than visual aspects.

For director Srinivas Bhashyam, the choice of frugal stagecraft was pivotal, "I was fascinated by the concept and did not want to artificially infuse action into the play." An acclaimed film director, Bhashyam returns to theatre with this production after a long time. As opposed to the cinematic spectacle, he found value in putting the spotlight on the core of theatre with very raw, bare sets and simplicity. Focusing on performance and script, he wanted the production to remain true to idea and emotion.

Even though the directorial vision does not offer a visual spectacle, there are moments in the play that make immensely powerful im-



Extraordinary men, ordinary fathers A scene from the play ■ SHIVYA KOCHAR

ages paired with crisp one-liners. For instance, Einstein attempting to spin the charkha exclaims, "Why do you spin so much when you wear so little!" Another moving moment is Gandhi gazing at his own photograph in Einstein's study, speculating that "I couldn't have been Professor Gandhi because I never said anything new."

The scenography remains unchanged with the stage divided into Gandhi's ashram (depicted with the charkha) and Einstein's study (with a desk and blackboard). Similarly, the music (by Rowan Serro) is used very sparingly, featuring Air- Einstein's favourite composition of Bach, and Gandhi's quintessential bhajan- *Vaishnavajan to*.

The script takes centre-stage, with emotive twists as a curious Einstein attempts to justify Gandhi's position to his son Harilal, while an empathetic Gandhi tries to assuage Lieserl's bitterness. Through the two interactions, the play invites the audience to examine their own family relationships, aptly pointing out that this is a story of 'extraordinary men who were ordinary fathers.'

From icons to men

The Professor and the Mahatma are daunting characters to play. The task became a greater challenge with the lack of English-speaking actors in Goa. Bhashyam recalls several frustrating auditions where a good actor was unable to speak fluent English or refused to shave his head for the role of Gandhi.

Finally Bhashyam himself took on the role, though he says, "I am amused that people think I can act, my physical appearance resembled the role and since there was no other actor I came in, but

my ambitions lie in direction." He adopted the distinct declamatory style to project Gandhi which seems somewhat patchy with the other three actors' realistic dialogue delivery.

Sheeba Shah shines as the disgruntled daughter of Einstein, whom she never came to know as a father. The narrative and performances build a unique and nuanced relationship between Gandhi and 'beti' Lieserl as he identifies his own mistakes as a father while listening to her resentment for Einstein.

Varun Kainth plays Einstein with ease. He talks to the audience as a confidante, sporting a convincing accent and alternating between being amusing and candid. Valentino Dias interprets the character of Harilal with tenderness. He unravels numerous layers, presenting a spectrum of vivid emotions from being the angry black sheep of the family, to secretly aching for his father's approval.

Posterity and possibility

The unobtrusive lighting by Tarosh Rao highlights the final imaginary meeting between the two great men as they enter an empty spotlight in the final scene. The conversation touches upon everything they possibly could have chatted about- non-violence, the war, the bomb, the moral burden of the disasters of the last century and the nature of truth.

"Two Fathers" may not be an enthralling watch, but it is engaging and makes one think. It brings the larger than life image of Einstein and Gandhi into our tiny worlds with the thread of domestic challenges that resonate widely. The play finally rests upon little truths of everyday life that 'great minds never see.'

Going Native

More than just rigid punctuation

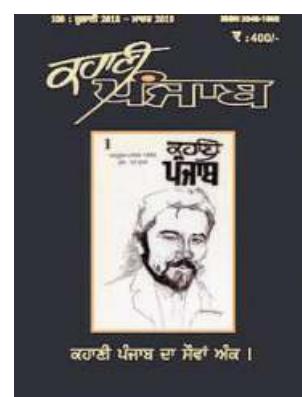
"Kahani Punjab" meticulously maps how Punjabi language traverses beyond its well defined regional and spatial confines

SHAFETY KIDWAI

Though pop melodies set in Punjabi folk tunes enjoy enormous popularity and longing for love and being loved and the cherished desire for spiritual sublimity in the 'spectacle society', still people seem quite unaware of the inherent potentiality of Punjabi literature that explores the inner realm of feelings and the complex gamut of external reality fabulously. Punjabi, a language having 90 million native speakers across the globe and reckoned as the eleventh most widely spoken language, exudes both warmth and innocence with equal vehemence and its literature produces a nuanced narrative of the lost world of innocence, wonder, nostalgia and emotional resilience. It does go beyond its immensely popular verse genres such as Janam-Sakhis, Bechans, Goshts, Paramarathas, Parichis, Unthaks and Bhule Shah's Kafis and proverbial tragic love story of Heer and Ranjha and how it is vastly relatable for the readers. It is what has been brilliantly delineated by a reputed literary periodical of Punjabi, "Kahani Punjab" through its 100th issue that appeared recently.

Romantic tales

The journal astutely edited by Dr Krantipal carries sensitively rendered short stories, perceptively argued essays and stunningly told poems that



In the last, Ankhi makes a poignant remark, "Believe 'Kahani Punjabi' appears only for attaining premature death. We will publish only one hundred issues. My green-eyed friends pray for my health so that I can see through its hundredth issue and there will be no issue after that, I assure them".



Nostalgic outpourings Dr Krantipal

betray a wide spectrum of feelings. These creative outpourings are contributed by many celebrated Punjabi, Hindi and Urdu poets. The readers are also exposed to Hindi, Rajasthani, Iranian and French stories through translations. The journal also published pulsating and wilful reminiscences of the "first love experience" of many eminent authors such as Karanjeet Singh, Jaswinder, Jasswant Singh Kanwal, Bhupinder Kaur Preet and Surjit Gill. The never told-before stories revolving around the first love encounters steeped in nostalgia unfold many layers of experience that transcend the usual romantic hankering of lovers in separation.

At a time when waves of hatred are washing over us, the journals published stories that offer a satirical commentary on the justification for ongoing widespread intolerance and vividly portrays the grotesque aftermath of hatred and revenge.

According to the editor Krantipal, an accomplished author, the special issue carries a judicious assessment of short stories, anecdotes, interviews, poems and translations that appeared in the previous issues.

The selected content zeroes in on the complex mosaic of multi-cultural aspirations and linguistic diversity

of the country.

The literary quarterly, primarily devoted to short stories, was launched by the prominent Punjabi novelist and fiction writer, Ram Sarup Ankhi in 1993. There exists a long standing tradition of literary journals in Punjab and Preet Ladi, Panja Dariya, Punjabi Duniya and Arsi are the widely respected periodicals but no journal makes the short story the object of a single pristine look and Ankhi tried to supplement what has been left out. The latest issue of "Kahani Punjab" reproduces the editorial that appeared in its tenth issue through which the editor candidly spells out his priority.

Realising dad's dreams

"The first issue of 'Kahani Punjab' was sent to a number of authors, literature lovers, personal friends and I requested them to send me one hundred rupees for ten issues, many responded positively but some of them asked me to send ten issues first then they will send the money. 'Kahani Punjab' keeps on grappling with financial crisis".

In the last, Ankhi makes a poignant remark, "Believe 'Kahani Punjabi' appears only for attaining premature death. We will publish only one hundred issues. My green-eyed friends pray for

my health so that I can see through its hundredth issue and there will be no issue after that, I assure them".

Unfortunately Ankhi Ji left us after editing the 67th issue and his son Krantipal resolved to realise the unfulfilled dream of his father. He added new features; the journal started giving award to the best story and organising a three-day annual symposium on short stories. According to Krantipal, the legacy of Amrita Pritam, Kartar Singh Duggal, Balwant Gargi, Suba Singh, Ishwar Chitakar and Surinder Singh Narula gets strengthened as the symposium elicited the attention of a number of short story writers and critics belonging to Punjabi, Hindi and Urdu. The three-day short story festival was attended by many eminent authors including Vishwanath Tripathi, Abdul Bismillah, Asghar Wajahat, Mahesh Darpan, Amrik Singh and Gauri Nath.

Evocative poems

The latest issue, in fact "the best of Kahani Punjab", carries articles of Asghar Wajahat, Ibbar Rabi, Sukhbir and Punjabi short stories of Gurmeet Karialwi, Bhola Singh Sanghera, Harpreet Seekha, Balbir Kaur Sanghera, Taliwinder Singh Dheer, Shamsher Dhapti, Baldev Misti, Manmohan Bawa, Tripta K Singh and Kesra Ram. Further, a section is devoted to translation of short stories that carries Punjabi translations of Balzac (French), Nadir Ibrahim (Persian), Manisha Kulshrestha (Rajasthani), Seema Azad (Hindi), Arun Parkash (Hindi), Asghar Wajahat (Hindi), Jyoti Chawala (Hindi) and Mohammad Arif (Hindi).

Punjabi is a language of inflexion and nuance and not rigid punctuation and it is the impression that one gets when he reads evocative and nuanced poems of Buta Singh Chauhan, Bari Nizami, Jagtar Sekha, Jagtar Salam and Jaswinder.

The latest issue of "Kahani Punjab" meticulously maps how Punjabi language traverses beyond its well defined regional and spatial confines and the editor Krantipal did well to document how Punjabi literature transposes us to a realm that is positioned on excitement and anxiety and the vibrant interplay of myth and reality.

Telling Voices

Speaking up against the rulers

In her book "Time for the Eyes to Adjust", Linn Ullmann, a Norwegian author, emphasises the point that the artist's duty is not only to write about the powers-that-be but also to criticise and expose them

SUDHAMAHI REGUNATHAN

Linn Ullmann, a Norwegian author, has come up with a new book titled Time for the Eyes to Adjust. An award winning novelist, she says, "Art is about realization and within realization you always find comfort. This is true for all art. Great art can sometimes manage to make people realize something..." Ullmann does not feel writing creates only an esoteric illusion, she is very down to earth as she says, "I think the duty of the artist is to write about power and expose power...but the form this should take will vary...the most hard hitting political novels are not necessarily the ones that say so...but the artist has the responsibility to be critical of power. There is nothing worse than an artist who sucks up to power, whether it is within music or literature or visual arts. An artist should use his or her tool to see through power structures in society. But this can be done in many different ways."



Ullmann, however, does not feel that the artist should speak out because he or she is called upon to, but it should be a delicately worded opinion that builds into their work. The artist has to be alert to it in his or her thoughts. But power is much larger in dimension as she visualizes it. She says, "I think that several of my books are about power structures. Power is embodied within language. Who is dead or alive? Who has the right to take a life..." Ullmann refers to one of her books titled The Cold Song and says, "There it is about who has the power to say what exists and what doesn't. What is worthless and what has value? The person who is telling the story is often the one who has the power. The person who says, "This is our story...", is the one who has the power." Ullmann defines good literature as, "In all good literature there is something which you can recognize. But for literature to be really good you need the opposite too. You need the element of unfamiliarity."

If you constantly recognise yourself and your emotions in literature, then it becomes a mirror. It needs to go beyond that. My biggest reading experiences have given me the feeling that the text is looking right at me and that I see myself in it. But they have also given me the feeling, "Wow I don't get any of this!"

Grandmother's guidance

How did I get here? This book really confounds me! I have to concentrate and understand this....If literature can bring about both recognition and that which lies beyond recognition then it is truly excellent."

Ullmann's grandmother was a bookseller. Ullmann says her grandmother laid great emphasis on speaking a language correctly, on being well read and reading all genres of writing. She was the one who sent her books constantly. My parents," says Ullmann travelled a lot and I often found myself lonely. Literature was a place where I could recognise things which I thought were felt only by me. I remember that as being really comforting..."

Festival favourite

Of creation and disintegration

As Prantik Basu's "Rang Mahal" makes it to the International Shorts Competition at Berlinale, the director discusses the layers of his parable like tale

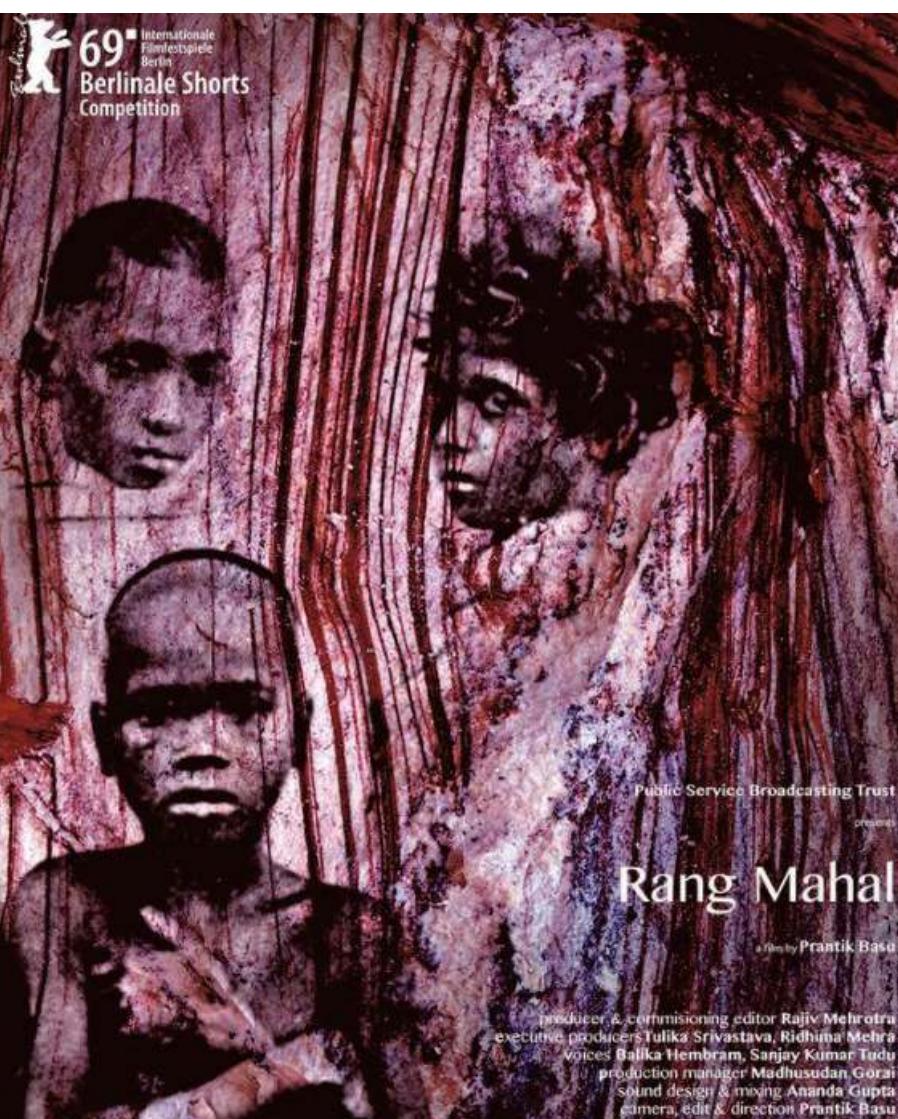
ANUJ KUMAR

For some years now, we are listening how young Indian filmmakers are working to break the formula. But more often than not this experiment is about the content, not the form. Prantik Basu's "Rang Mahal" quietly affirms how cinema is a visual medium. And that visuals can decide the form of storytelling. Produced by the Public Service Broadcasting Trust (PSBT), the film works as several levels. It tells a Santhal folk tale on creation myth through paintings made by locals on rocks, hills and trees. It captures the cogent bond between nature and culture touching upon the ecological and geological concerns along the way. Without employing the stereotypical privileged look at the loss of tribal culture, Prantik allows us to find our own meanings in a tale which at times sounds mysteriously realistic and at times realistically fantastical. The film is garnering attention in the festival circuit and is the only Indian film in the International Shorts Competition at Berlinale.

Edited excerpts:

What was the catalyst for "Rang Mahal"? What attracted you to Santhal folktales and what are you trying to achieve?

Most of my ideas stem from landscapes or locations. I have been making a feature length documentary in Purulia for the past three years now. It was during that shoot, I came across the colourful chalk stone hill where rocks are used by the local Santhali community to make murals and paintings on the walls of their houses for their annual festival of *Sohrai*. My film takes a micro look at this unique correlation of nature and culture and attempts to pre-



Evocative idiom A poster of "Rang Mahal"; Prantik Basu ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

sent a parable like tale of an existing ecological art at the threshold of extinction.

The film works at various levels. Please tell us about the form and layers of the film.

Every film brings along its own inherent form and rhythm. As a filmmaker, I try to recognise it and work towards it. I am intrigued by folklores and often try to interpret them in my work. There are many different versions of the Santhali creation myth. I asked some people from the community and they revealed that since these myths pass on orally, they vary in their telling and retell-

ing. I was fascinated by this idea, of having various versions of the same story. While this became the aural layer, I started to build upon the image layer with rocks, hills, trees and the village, sometimes in direct relation to the story, and sometimes leaving it open ended for the viewer to interpret their own version.

The film explains the formation of the earth through tribal folklore but there are elements which are pretty 'scientific' like the ability of earthworms to carry soil. Similarly buffalo/cow skeleton inspiring roof and fish scales for roof

cover. Please explain how difficult was it to arrive at the match between visual and background storytelling

The creation myth as a story was quite a visual one, almost fantastical. I could have gone the literal way, depicting its events through illustrative visual representations. But that would have left very little to the imagination. So I chose not to.

Instead, I put little visual clues, almost like a game of treasure hunt. In some parts, the connections are quite obvious, like the skeleton, or the fish scales and roof, or the part about the egg. When the

viewer is lost in the almost abstract textures, one sudden, literal visual connection to the story brings about a certain joy. There is a thin line between showing and letting one see on their own.

Where did you shoot? The rock faces become interesting metaphors to explain the story. At one level it almost becomes a geological study!

I shot the film in quite a few villages in Purulia - Icharih, Amruhasha, Malti, Dungidih to name a few. And, of course, in Khorai Dungri, the chalk stone hill close to the Bengal - Jharkhand border. The rock patterns there are so unique; they are artworks in themselves. The impending impermanence of this little known structure saddens me. While we hear the story of how the earth was formed by putting layers upon layers of soil, we see men digging and taking away soil in their gunny bags. Will the hill seize to exist one day? What will happen to the ecological art of making paintings on the walls of the huts with natural pigments? To an extent, it is our privileged, urban gaze to lament on the loss of tribal culture.

That is why I chose to stay away from the anthropological concerns and took a more 'geological study' approach in my visual narration. It also added an interesting contrast to the fantastical way in which the story is narrated.

The film shows how the good old dissolve hasn't lost its value in storytelling...

I am glad you pointed that out. I love classical cinematic devices. Since they are not much in use these days, they come across as more stylistic or 'experimental'. On the contrary, they are the most effective transitions, if used well. It goes well with my theme as well for I am telling a tale that is primitive. Hence using these ancient techniques were a natural choice.

Is accessibility of form and story a concern for you, while making a film?

All my works are very accessible, I feel. One just had to be patient and devoid of judgement while viewing them. For me, cinema is not about understanding, or decoding a formula that will derive the same result every time one watches it. It is more to do with feelings and evoca-

tions, things that words often fail to express. It goes beyond storytelling. If I were just to tell a story, I'd rather write a book.

If I am not wrong, your previous film "Sakhisona" was also based on lore... Tell us about your influences and how do you see cinema as a form of storytelling.

When I started making films in 2007, I was very interested in classical storytelling. Intense human drama, the complexities of human emotions and our ability/inability to express them was what I was interested in. Then my interest gradually meandered to the other forms of storytelling; how a story can be told in different ways or what is the most appropriate tonality to render a particular narrative is what excites me now. My work has become more about storytelling, than just telling the story as it is. For example, 'Sakhisona' was inspired by romantic folklore that haunts an excavation site in Bengal.

In archaeology, one never finds the whole at once; things only surface in parts. As an artistic choice, I kept the narrative fragmented, punctuated with texts and photographs. We also processed the negative in a way to make the footage appear almost archival.

Tell us about your conversation with narrator Balika Hembram. Did you direct her?

Honestly, I didn't have to. She is currently pursuing her PhD in Santhali language at the Sidho Kanho Birsha University in Purulia and has a very artistic mind. She instantly understood what I was trying to achieve with the film in terms of storytelling. So instead of a few technical inputs that my sound designer explained to her in terms of modulations and range, I did not have to brief her much.

What does the selection for Berlinale mean to you?

Hopefully, now my work will reach out to a wider audience. There is not much exposure for short films, and even lesser for the ones which are more 'experimental' in form. Festival selections can help in creating awareness about the kind of work I do and some more people might get curious to see it.



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**'Overstaying' in hospital**

Delhi Assembly Committee finds EWS patients admitted longer than needed in Max Hospital **Page 2**

**FIR against company**

Firm in a spot for overcharging for installation of high-security number plates **Page 3**

**Capping fuel pump numbers**

National Green Tribunal asks a committee to furnish report on capping fuel pump numbers **Page 4**

**Art of evolution**

Satire meets metaphorical slices of life in Rameshwar Broota's latest exhibition **Page 5**

IN BRIEF**Govt stalling Ayushman Bharat scheme: Tiwari**

NEW DELHI
Accusing the government of stalling the implementation of the Ayushman Bharat insurance scheme, BJP chief Manoj Tiwari said BJP MPs have begun extending the benefits of the scheme to their Parliamentary constituents.

CITY ▶ PAGE 2

Woman dies, 2 hurt as fire engulfs building

GAZIABAD
A woman died while two others, including her minor son and a fire personnel, sustained burns after a two-storey building caught fire at Gaziabad's Loni on Thursday morning, the police said. They added that a bakery unit was functioning on the ground floor and prima facie it appears that the building caught fire due to a short circuit.

CITY ▶ PAGE 3

Air quality of Delhi-NCR

Delhi	359	Gurugram	281
Ghaziabad	380	Faridabad	-
Noida	334	Greater Noida	348
Good 0-50	51-100	Moderate 101-200	
Poor 201-300	301-400	Severe >401	
AIR QUALITY INDEX AT 4 P.M. YESTERDAY (AVERAGE OF PAST 24 HOURS) SOURCE: CPCB			

HC quizzes lower court for not concluding trial in Soumya murder

One accused seeks ₹1 crore compensation for 'unreasonable, inordinate delay'

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Thursday asked a trial court here to give the reason for not concluding trial in the 2008 murder case of TV journalist Soumya Viswanathan.

Justice Mukta Gupta directed the city police to file a status report before indicating the reason for the delay even after nine and a half years passed since the chargesheet was filed.

"The trial court will also send the latest report on why even after almost nine and a half years since the chargesheet was filed, the trial has not concluded," the court said.

The High Court's direction came on a plea by one of the accused, Baljeet Malik, facing trial in the Soumya murder case, seeking to expedite and conclude the trial in a fixed time frame on day-to-day basis.

Malik also sought a compensation of ₹1 crore from the authorities for 'unreasonable and inordinate' delay in investigation and trial of the case.

Soumya was shot dead in

The case so far

September 30, 2008: Soumya was shot dead while returning home in her car. An FIR was registered at Vasant Kunj police station

March 28, 2009: One of the accused, Malik, was arrested in the present FIR and has been in jail since then

June 22, 2009: Chargesheet filed against all the accused, including Malik
February 5, 2010: Charges framed under Section 302 (murder) of the IPC against all the accused
January 28, 2019: Malik moved the Delhi High Court for speedy trial

DELHI HIGH COURT
The trial court will also send a latest report on why even after almost nine and a half years since the chargesheet was filed, the trial has not concluded

the small hours of September 30, 2008, while returning home in her car from office.

During the hearing, Ma-

lik's counsel submitted that his client was in jail since 2009 and the prosecution had cited 88 witnesses, of which approximately 45-46

have been examined till now. The counsel said it will take another four to five years to complete the trial.

Malik was arrested in the present case on March 28, 2009, and since then he has been languishing in jail.

His plea submitted that more than nine and half years is over since the date of his arrest but the government has not been able to conclude the trial of the present case so far.

'Speedy trial'
"Speedy trial is guaranteed as a fundamental right under Article 21 of the Constitution of India. It is an essential part of Right to life and liberty guaranteed and preserved under our Constitution," his pleade said.

"The unreasonable delay in investigation and trial of the present case is not only prejudiced the right of the petitioner but also the right of family of deceased," it said.

Malik along with two others – Ravi Kapoor and Amit Shukla – were earlier convicted in the 2009 IT executive Jigisha Ghosh murder case.

Jhajjar rape-and-murder case transferred to Delhi Police

Kin expressed displeasure over probe by Haryana cops

SAURABH TRIVEDI
NEW DELHI

The rape-and-murder case of a 27-year-old woman has been transferred from Haryana to Delhi Police after her family expressed displeasure over the former's probe, officers said on Thursday.

The family's request was approved immediately, they said, adding that officers from Haryana handed over the investigation documents to Delhi Police on Tuesday.

"We arrested all three accused, including the main accused Vidhan, who had kidnapped the woman on the pretext of giving her a lift on his bike, on Monday. Earlier, his accomplices Naveen and Neeraj Nara, residents of Najafgarh, were held under the Arms Act on January 25. During interrogation, they confessed to the murder," said DCP (Dwarka) Anto Alphonse.

"The unreasonnable delay in investigation and trial of the present case is not only prejudiced the right of the petitioner but also the right of family of deceased," it said.

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Malik along with two others – Ravi Kapoor and Amit Shukla – were earlier convicted in the 2009 IT executive Jigisha Ghosh murder case.



The accused in police custody. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

p.m., the police said.

The victim agreed as she knew Vidhan, who belongs to her village. "The way from Najafgarh to Dichaon Kalan village [6 km] was dark and Vidhan took advantage of the situation. He took the motorcycle to an isolated spot. Following this, he and two others attempted to rape her," said an officer. The victim begged them to let her go. When they refused, she threatened to tell everyone in the village about the incident.

"Scared of getting caught, they strangled her. To conceal her identity, they disrobed her and carried her body in a van. Then they dumped the body in a well in Jhajjar," the officer added.

After the victim did not reach home, her family

lodged a missing complaint at Kapashera police station in the south-west district.

In the last call to her family, the victim told them that she was in Kapashera.

After the body was recovered, the Haryana police registered a case of murder and started an investigation. They informed their counterparts in Delhi about the body of the woman, where her identification was done.

"We will add more Indian Penal Code sections in the case as per the investigation, which was affected owing to the issue of jurisdiction. Baba Haridas Nagar of Delhi and Jhajjar in Haryana are neighbouring areas. We will seek police custody of the accused for identification of the murderer spot," said a police officer.

Green panel seeks complete details on demarcation of Southern Ridge

Forest dept to pay ₹5,000 daily if work not completed by March

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The National Green Tribunal (NGT) on Thursday pulled up the Delhi government for not providing proper details pertaining to the demarcation of the Southern Ridge.

A Bench headed by NGT judicial member Justice Raghuvendra S. Rathore said: "We want authentic and complete information on incomplete work. Tell us how much time is required. We do not want tamasha [fuss] that you are filing in bits and pieces."

It added: "Same goes for the Forest Department."

The observations came after the Bench noted that the revenue department had filed varying figures pertaining to the demarcation of the Southern Ridge. ■ FILE PHOTO: V.V. KRISHNAN



The Bench noted that the revenue department had filed varying figures pertaining to the demarcation of the Southern Ridge. ■ FILE PHOTO: V.V. KRISHNAN

will be imposed on authorities if the work is not completed by March 1.

Residents' plea
The directions came while the green panel was hearing a plea moved by city residents Sonya Ghosh and others, who sought removal of encroachments from forest land in the Southern Ridge.

The NGT had also warned revenue and forest department officials of imposing a fine of ₹2 lakh on each respondent if the orders are not complied with.

Earlier, the NGT had rapped the State govern-

ment for adopting a "causal" approach in the matter. It had also directed the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests to file an affidavit stating the time required for the demarcation of forest land in the Southern Ridge.

The NGT had also warned revenue and forest department officials of imposing a fine of ₹2 lakh on each respondent if the orders are not complied with.

Earlier, the NGT had rapped the State govern-

Rational nexus
The above classification has no rational nexus to the object sought to be achieved, which is keeping high the morale of the CAPFs, who are performing yeoman service and supplementing the efforts of the armed forces and the police throughout the country," it said.

The Bench remarked, "It

is difficult to think that the government whether at the Centre or at the States would be able to combat the serious challenges of safety and security and of its people without the participation and the sacrifices made by members of the CAPFs."

"Their morale definitely needs to be preserved," the court said, striking down various Rules creating differential ages of retirement of members of the concerned CAPFs as discriminatory, violative of the Constitution.

The court directed the Home Ministry to implement its decision to fix a uniform age of retirement of members of the CAPFs irrespective of their rank, within a period of four months in consultation with the CAPFs.

The Bench remarked, "It

Child pornography found on rape accused's laptop, say police

The 30-year-old suspected paedophile would get drunk and visit slums to hunt for minor victims

SAURABH TRIVEDI
NEW DELHI

The 30-year-old man arrested on Tuesday for allegedly raping three minors in east Delhi used the laptop gifted by his mother to watch child pornography instead of finishing his schooling by correspondence, the police said on Thursday.

Suspected paedophile Manish Chaddha is accused of raping a seven-year-old girl on the terrace of a house in Madhu Vihar on Monday. He allegedly confessed to sexually assaulting two girls, both below the age of 10 years, in Ghazipur on December 20 and January 17. He was finally caught after he was forced to abandon his scooter in Madhu Vihar while being chased by locals.

Class VIII dropout
Manish's laptop and mobile phone, both seized from his home, have pornographic videos, contact numbers of sex workers and drug suppliers, the police said. The Class VIII

dropout told the police that he was unemployed and received "very little pocket money" from his mother, which was "insufficient to fulfil my needs for drugs and sex".

The accused would get drunk and then go trawling through slums on his scooter to hunt for minors, an officer said, adding, "We are yet to determine his involvement in other similar cases. He would fight with his mother for more money and often get drunk during the day."

A relative who stays in the same building in Shakarpur said: "Manish was rusticated from school in Class VIII because of his behaviour. He never took admission in a school after that. His mother recently enrolled him in

We stopped our children from interacting with Manish because of his bad habits. He often stared at his cousins, making them feel uncomfortable. He was not invited to any family functions

RAPE ACCUSED'S RELATIVE

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Discrimination among personnel will lower their morale, says Bench

SOIBAM ROCKY SINGH
NEW DELHI

Observing that discrimination in the age of retirement amongst members of the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) will lower their morale, the Delhi High Court on Thursday directed the Centre to fix a uniform age of retirement for all personnel and officers of the CAPF.

The CAPFs include forces such as the Assam Rifles (AR), Border Security Force (BSF), Central Industrial Security Force (CISF), Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP), National Security Guard (NSG) and Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB).

Differential treatment
The age of superannuation in the CAPFs has been a bone of contention for ma-

ny years now. Among the CAPFs, a differential treatment is given to those belonging to the AR, CISF, where all members in all ranks retire at the age of 60.

But, in the BSF, CRPF and ITBP two classes have been created where officers above the rank of Commandant retire at the age of 60 and all other ranks retire at the age of 57.

A batch of petitions were filed before the High Court concerning the age of retirement.

Out of which eight petitions pertain to members of the CRPF, 10 to members of the ITBP and one in the BSF.

The prayer in the present petition is that the retirement age should be enhanced to 60 to be at par with the officers above the rank of Commandant.

The Bench remarked, "It

IN BRIEF



Maliwal writes to PM on 'misleading speech'

NEW DELHI
DCW chairperson Swati Maliwal on Thursday wrote to PM Narendra Modi, urging him to not "mislead the nation" pertaining to the latter's statements on the safety of women in the country. "In a recent speech, you [PM] have said that rapists are given their due punishment within 3,7, and 11 days... This is far from the truth. You are requested to not paint a false picture of the reality of justice..." read her letter. STAFF REPORTER

Plea seeks fairness in SRB functioning

NEW DELHI
A petition filed before the Delhi HC has sought to ensure fairness and impartiality in the functioning of Sentence Review Board (SRB) and avoid extraneous considerations to affect its decision. The petition has said that it would be in the interest of justice if the proceedings of SRB are video-recorded so as to ensure transparency in its functioning. STAFF REPORTER

AAP sets up labour welfare wings in Delhi

NEW DELHI
Ahead of the Lok Sabha elections, AAP on Thursday announced the setting up of labour welfare units of the party in order to reach out to various workers' groups in Delhi. AAP Delhi unit convener Gopal Rai announced the appointment of office-bearers of its Delhi State labour welfare wing, the construction workers' wing, the DJB workers' wing, the Delhi mandis' wing, the DTC workers' wing, the power sector workers' wing and the Indian Railways workers' wing. STAFF REPORTER

Bar Council of Delhi welcomes SC judgment

NEW DELHI
The Bar Council of Delhi (BCD) on Thursday welcomed the Supreme Court verdict quashing certain disciplinary rules against advocates, including debarring a lawyer from practising. The BCD said that it appreciates the observations of the apex court that the Bar councils have a crucial role to play in a democratic society to ensure protection of human rights. PTI

JNU writes to Lok Sabha Speaker, Rajya Sabha Deputy Chairman

'MPs violated HC, JNU rules by attending protest at varsity'

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The JNU administration on Thursday wrote to the Speaker of the Lok Sabha and the Deputy Chairman of the Rajya Sabha informing them that two Members of Parliament, Manoj Jha and Jitendra Choudhury, had violated the order of the Delhi High Court as well as JNU's rules and regulations by participating at a protest at the administration block of the university.

The parliamentarians had visited the university to speak at a protest meet organised by the JNUTA on "dilution of reservations in public education", it said.

JNU administration in its letter wrote, "We write to you with considerable distress regarding an incident today involving parliamentarians, which has violated

Ayushman Bharat: Tiwari accuses govt of stalling implementation

'BJP MPs are extending benefits of scheme to their parliamentary constituents'

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Accusing the Delhi government of continuing to stall the implementation of the Ayushman Bharat insurance scheme in the Capital, Delhi BJP chief Manoj Tiwari said BJP MPs have begun extending the benefits of the scheme to their parliamentary constituents.

Mr. Tiwari accused Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal of depriving "lakhs of families" from getting financial assistance up to ₹5 lakh for surgical operations under the scheme.

"Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal has prevented the people of Delhi from getting the assistance of ₹5 lakh from the Centre, but he could not stop Prime Minister



Arvind Kejriwal has prevented the people of Delhi from getting the assistance of ₹5 lakh from the Centre, but he could not stop PM Modi from reaching out to the weaker sections

MANOJ TIWARI
Delhi BJP chief

Narendra Modi from reaching out to these weaker sections and providing financial assistance. All the BJP MPs are helping those who are financially incapable of getting treatment for serious diseases," the North-East Delhi MP claimed in a statement.

According to Mr. Tiwari, in his Parliamentary constituency alone, 152 people had applied for financial assistance from the relief fund for their treatment from May 1, 2014 till January 17, 2019 which were, he said, forwarded to the Prime Minister for consideration.

The Delhi BJP chief further accused Mr. Kejriwal of having "forgotten the interests of the common man" for his personal ambition, while the Centre was reaching out to "every house of the weaker section" and providing financial assistance from the PM relief fund.

"As much as ₹32,13,08,600 were granted from the PM relief fund, out of which ₹21,22,05,450 have been paid to the people concerned," Mr. Tiwari claimed.

"Crores of people are getting benefits but the Chief Minister of Delhi has not implemented this insurance scheme... and deprived lakhs of families from getting assistance of ₹5 lakh for 1,250 surgical operations," he alleged.

Delhi Assembly body finds EWS patients 'overstaying' in hospital

'Health Department to issue show-cause notice to hospital'

DAMINI NATH
NEW DELHI

The Delhi Assembly's Petitions Committee carried out an inspection of a private hospital in north-west Delhi on Thursday and found that some patients belonging to the Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) were allegedly admitted for longer than needed, committee chairperson Saurabh Bharadwaj said.

Members of the committee visited Max Super Speciality Hospital, Shalimar Bagh, to look into the operation of the EWS quota. While the committee members found the out-patient facility for EWS patients satisfactory, they found that some of the EWS patients who had been admitted were being

dialysis unit. The Health Department will be issuing a show-cause notice to the hospital," said Mr. Bharadwaj.

Sources also said that the dialysis unit could cater to 36 EWS patients a day, but was carrying out 12 to 15 dialysis treatments per day, while EWS patients were allegedly being turned away.

However, a Max Healthcare spokesperson said, "A committee formed by the Delhi Assembly inspected our EWS ward at Max Hospital, Shalimar Bagh, today [Thursday]. We are fully compliant with all the EWS norms and regulations and have not received any notice/observation from the [Delhi Assembly] committee."

"We have asked the hospital to give us the case summary of the 28 EWS patients as well as the details of the

CBSE to start psychological counselling service today

To help students overcome exam-related anxiety

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The CBSE will begin its pre-examination psychological counselling service to students and parents on Friday. The service will continue till the end of examinations in April to help students overcome exam-related anxiety.

Students and parents can call on a toll free number – 1800-11-8004 – and obtain pre-recorded information on tackling board exams, which includes tips for better preparation, time and stress management and answers to frequently asked questions along with live tele-counselling service.

"Counselling is offered by Principals and trained counsellors from within CBSE-affiliated schools located in

and outside India. It is a voluntary, free-of-cost service provided by the participants," said the CBSE. It added that for the first time, a comprehensive audiovisual presentation, titled 'Knowing Children Better', has been prepared and uploaded on the CBSE website that deals with real-time experiences and problems of

adolescents with suggestive measures as coping strategies.

Experts will answer queries of students through weekly question-answer columns to be published in major national newspapers in February. Online counselling will be available at cecbse@gmail.com.

+

Govt promotes 13 DANICS officers to IAS

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Thirteen officers of the Delhi, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Lakshadweep, Dadra & Diu and Dadra & Nagar Haveli Civil Service (DANICS) have been promoted to the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) by the Union government.

In a notification on January 23, the Department of Personnel and Training promoted the officers to the IAS AGMUT (Arunachal Pradesh, Goa, Mizoram and Union Territories) cadre to fill the vacancies that arose in 2017.

The promoted officers are Kuldeep Pakad, A.R. Talwade, K. Mahesh, Kuldeep Singh Gangar, Binay Bhushan, Subhash Chandra, Sarpreet Singh Gill, C. Uday Kumar, Krishan Kumar, Kulandaji Joshi, Ram Niwas Sharma, Ajay Kumar Gupta and Ajay Chagti.

Out of the box



A boy plays with a puppy on a winter afternoon in New Delhi. ■ PRADEEP KUMAR

Officials asked to issue notice to Ghogha plot allottees

Virmani issues instructions during an inspection at the site on Thursday

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Standing committee chairperson of the North Delhi Municipal Corporation, Veena Virmani, instructed officials to issue notices to dairy owners who have not started constructing on plots allotted to them at the Ghogha

dairy.

The endeavour to shift illegal dairies in the city to this one location in north-west Delhi has been in the works since the High Court ordered the unified municipal corporation to do so in 2008. Ms. Virmani issued the in-

structions during an inspection at the site on Thursday.

Ms. Virmani said that doing so would force plot owners to move their dairies to Ghogha. Ms. Virmani also directed them to improve cleanliness in the area.

The chairperson also inspected the veterinary hos-

pital in the area run by the Delhi government, which she said did not have stock of required medicines since the last one year.

Ms. Virmani also instructed officials to write to the government to inform it of the situation and make necessary arrangements.

Delhi Finance Commission (DFC)

The Mayor said the implementation of the new policy would result in a reduction of up to ₹1,300 crore per year in the SDMC's share of grant-in-aid.

Mr. Chawla said, "As per the third DFC's recommendations on devolution of funds earlier distributed under 'plan' and 'non-plan'

heads, as suggested by the fifth DFC will mean the funds apportioned to the local bodies."

In a statement, the South Corporation Mayor said that if implemented, it was imminent that the corporation would have a fund crunch and would face bottlenecks in implementation of welfare and developmental schemes.

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IN BRIEF



Online facility launched for arms licences

NEW DELHI
Delhi Police on Thursday launched an online facility for granting arms licenses to simplify the process. The 'Online E-Arms Licensing System' is intended to simplify the process like issue of new arms licences, renewal of existing arms licences, registration of arms licences issued from other states and addition of weapons. PTI

Man held with 360 kg of poppy straw in Delhi

NEW DELHI
Delhi Police Crime Branch has arrested a 28-year-old for drug trafficking and seized 360 kg of poppy straw from his possession, officials said on Thursday. The accused was identified as Mumtaz Ali, a resident of Sangam Vihar, they said. PTI

3 held for theft of vehicles, phones

NEW DELHI
Three men, including two brothers, who used to come to Delhi from UP's Hapur to allegedly steal vehicles and snatch mobile phones, have been arrested, the police said on Thursday. The accused were identified as Mohd Amzad (24), Mohd Firoz (28) and Dharmender (27). PTI

660 vehicles prosecuted for improper parking

NEW DELHI
In view of the rising parking menace in various parts of the Capital, Delhi Traffic Police had launched a two-day special drive in several areas during which it prosecuted 660 vehicles for improper parking. The special drive concluded Wednesday, the police said. PTI

Man found dead outside mohalla clinic

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI
An unidentified man in his 40s was found dead outside a mohalla clinic in Shahdara's Geeta Colony on Thursday morning. Police suspect that he either died of illness or cold.

A senior officer said they received a call around 8:30 a.m. from a passer-by alerting them that a person is lying dead. When the police reached the spot, the man was found dead and wrapped under three-four blankets. "He appeared pale and sick. There were no external injuries on his body. The body has been shifted to Sabzi Mandi mortuary for a post-mortem," the officer said.

While the man remained unidentified, enquiry revealed that he was a ragpicker and used to often stay near the mohalla clinic.

"A tea vendor nearby said that the deceased had tea around 9 p.m. on Wednesday. Locals also revealed that he was ill and had taken medicines from the mohalla clinic two-three days ago. Though he didn't have an Aadhaar Card, which is required to get medicines from mohalla clinic, they gave him medicines on humanitarian grounds," the officer said.

DELHI TODAY
Exhibition: "Shed & Light", an exhibition of paintings by Yuvraj Patil at Convention Centre Foyer, India Habitat Centre (IHC), 11 a.m. - 7 p.m.

Exhibition: "Tales of Yore", a group art show at Gallerie Nyva, 101-103 Square One Designer Arcade, C-2, District Centre, Saket, 11 a.m. - 7 p.m.

Exhibition: "Journey of Light", a group show of six artists from Norway, Taiwan, France, Britain and India at Pritihvi Fine Art & Cultural Centre, A1/232 Safdarjung Enclave, 11 a.m. - 7 p.m.

Exhibition: "Incised Lines", a solo show by Rachana Badrakia at Arts4All, W-114, Greater Kailash-II, 11 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.

(Mail your listings for this column to cityeditor@thehindu.co.in)

Boyfriend among 3 held for 20-year-old's death

Trio booked for abetting suicide after woman jumps to death

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police has arrested three people, including the boyfriend of a 20-year-old woman, who died after allegedly falling from the third floor of a building in central Delhi's Prasad Nagar. They were arrested under charges of abetting to suicide, said the police on Thursday.

POLICE OFFICER

In one of the CCTV footages, the woman was seen coming down from the third floor of the building. But it was not clear if she was thrown off or jumped herself from the apartment

During investigation, they detained her boyfriend, the owner of apartment and his wife for questioning.

Later, all of them were arrested. Police said the two got intimate following which the woman asked the man to marry him, but he refused. A verbal argument broke out between them and she jumped off the balcony.

She was rushed to a hospital where she succumbed to injuries.

"In one of the CCTV footages, the woman was seen coming down from the third floor of the building. But it was not clear if she was thrown off or jumped herself from the apartment. We are waiting for the forensic report," said a police officer.

Suicide prevention helpline: Sanjivini, Society for Mental Health, Telephone: 011-4076 9002, Monday-Saturday (10 a.m.-7:30 p.m.)

confirm any sexual assault. The police said *prima facie* it appears that the victim must have ended her life. "The woman used to live with her parents in outer Delhi's Kanjhawala. She had visited an apartment in Prasad Nagar with her boyfriend and later allegedly jumped off the balcony. No note was left behind by the woman. An FIR under IPC Section 306 [abetment to suicide] was registered in the case," said the police.

Two days after live-in partner found dead, woman ends life

Two have been living together till man's family opposed to it

STAFF REPORTER

GREATER NOIDA

Two days after her live-in partner ended his life, a 28-year-old woman also took the extreme step on Thursday morning. Police said the two have been living together for the last seven-eight months till the family of the man found out their relationship and forced him to return to his home town in Bulandshahr.

The incident occurred on Thursday at around 1.15 p.m. when the neighbours of the woman found her hanging at her rented room in Surajpur Town where she had lived with her live-in partner.

According to the police, a note was recovered from near the body of the woman in which she had mentioned

that she lost all reasons to live after her partner's death. The woman had been living with the man after getting separated from her family, said the police.

Could not trace family

"We have not found a single document or a phone number through which we could trace the woman's family. Neighbours told us that she was from Farrukhabad in UP. We are trying to trace her parents," said SHO at Surajpur Munesh Chauhan.

Earlier on January 27, the man was found unconscious near a pond in Dankaur where he had allegedly consumed poison. He died at the hospital on January 29.

The woman had written in the note that her live-in-

partner was forcibly taken back his home a week ago as his parents were against their relationship. She further said in the note that her partner had ended life because of this. However, his parents denied any knowledge of their relationship and said that he had been living with the woman without informing the family," Mr. Chauhan added.

Father of the deceased man claimed that the two ended life following some differences.

"He was not coming home since the last few months. Whenever we asked him, he said that he is working double shift," he added. Police didn't register a case as no complaint was received.

Court orders FIR against firm for illegal charges

Company was found overcharging for installation of high security number plates

ASHOK KUMAR

GURUGRAM

A local court here has ordered registration of a First Information Report against a private company over overcharging for installation of high security number plates.

Pronouncing the order, Judicial Magistrate First Class Mohini, said that the involvement of the company, M/s Link Utsav Registration Plate, and its three directors – Durga Prasad, Pradeep Kumar and Lucky Chikara – was nudged from the evidence produced before the court by the petitioner Ramesh Yadav.

SHO made accused
Mr. Yadav, an RTI activist, had filed the petition before the court under Section 156 (3) of the Criminal Procedure

Code alleging irregularities by the company. He had also made Station House Officer (SHO), Shivaji Nagar Police Station, an accused in the matter for not acting on his earlier complaint, besides the unidentified employees of the company.

Violating govt orders

Mr. Yadav in his petition maintained that the company, its directors and employees were illegally charging ₹295 more than the prescribed fee of ₹372 in violation of the government orders which amounted to cheating the public. Mr. Yadav told the court that one Balbir Singh had made a complaint to the Sub-Divisional Magistrate in this regard and the official, in his letter dated December 27,

2018, directed the company not to collect illegal charges.

Mr. Yadav placed another letter on record written by the Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM) to Gurugram Deputy Commissioner on January 7 seeking action against the company.

The SDM, in his letter, wrote that on receipt of complaints against high security registration plates counters set up by the agency, it was directed not to charge any additional/extra charges, but there was no improvement in its working. "...hence the matter was enquired by directing an official of this office...who has confirmed that the agency is charging additional/extra charges in violation of the government instructions.

The representative of the agency

Beating the cold



People sitting near a bonfire on a cold evening in the city. The chilling weather has affected normal life in the Capital with the minimum temperature settling at 8.2 degrees Celsius on Thursday. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

Woman dies, 2 hurt as fire engulfs building

Rescue work hit after cylinders explode; short circuit may have triggered fire

STAFF REPORTER

GAZIABAD

A 32 year-old woman died while two others, including her seven-year-old son and a fire personnel, sustained burns after a two-storey building caught fire at Loni in Ghaziabad on Thursday morning. The police said a bakery unit was functioning on the ground floor and *prima facie* it appears that the building caught fire due to a short circuit.

The police said a fire brigade unit was functioning on the ground floor and *prima facie* it appears that the building caught fire due to a short circuit. The situation turned worse after two LPG cylinders exploded and the building collapsed. It delayed the rescue operations.

According to Chief Fire Officer Sunil Kumar Singh, the incident took place around 1 a.m. and a call was received at around 1.40 a.m. from the neighbours.

Firefighter injured
Initially, three fire tenders

Fatima and her four kids got struck on the first floor. In order to save her children, she threw them down from the first floor during which Aneez got injured..

SANJAY VERMA
Loni police station SHO

Naveel Ahmad (34), husband of the deceased, runs a bakery shop with his two younger brothers.

"At the time of incident, I was sleeping with my wife and children on the first floor whereas my two younger brothers Nadeem (28), and Aseem (25), were on the second floor of the building," Ahmad said.

Witnesses said that the fire brigade managed to evacuate the rest from the building on time. The fire brigade and the NDRF team pulled out the body of the woman after four-hour of rescue operation.

Worker alerts others
SHO of Loni police station Sanjay Verma said Layeeq (22), a worker, was sleeping in the bakery on the ground floor and he woke up due to the heat. He immediately

alerted Ahmad about the fire.

"Ahmad and Layeeq rushed to the shop and tried to douse the fire. But within a few minutes, the fire spread to other portions of the building. In the meantime, Fatima and her four children got struck on the first floor during which Aneez got injured. Police took the child to GTB hospital for treatment," said Mr. Verma.

The police said, soon after that, Fatima fell unconscious and when the fire service personnel tried to pull her out of the building, LPG cylinders blast and the building collapsed.

"Later, Fatima was taken to the hospital where she was declared brought dead," said a senior police officer.

Lok Nayak Hospital suspects salary scam

Salaries dispensed to doctors who are not on pay rolls

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

Lok Nayak Hospital authorities have given a complaint to the Delhi Police after suspecting a salary scam of over ₹1 crore. Police have registered an FIR and are probing into the matter.

A senior officer privy to the case said they received a complaint two days ago stating that the hospital has been dispensing salaries to doctors, who have not been on their pay rolls, and the money has been transferred to 10 accounts without clearance from senior doctors.

Clerk's role suspected
The complaint said the authorities suspect the role of a senior clerk, who was in charge of distributing salaries, in the scam.

During an internal audit, the authorities found a surge in the salary expense in the books. Later, they found that the money was being transferred to fictitious accounts through e-transfer between 2013 and 14. The accounts to which the money, about a lakh in each account, was trans-

ferred to only had first names and designations as junior or senior resident doctors, said the complainant.

Police have registered a case under relevant Sections of the Indian Penal Code and are also scanning the CCTV footages of the accounts section to zero in on the culprit.

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ferred to only had first names and designations as junior or senior resident doctors, said the complainant.

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Woman alleges acid attack bid

Duo threatened, told me to withdraw rape case

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

A 22-year-old woman has alleged that an acid attack attempt was made at her by two bike-borne men on Thursday morning in South Delhi's Ambedkar Nagar. The men on the bike had threatened her to withdraw a rape case that she had slapped against one Asif alias Arif, she alleged. Police have registered a case and begun probe.

A senior officer privy to the case said the woman, a resident of Dakshinpuri and employee of a private company in Badarpur, was on her way to work when the in-

cident happened. "When she crossed a government school near her house, her scooter broke down. Suddenly, two men came on a motorcycle and threw acid in her direction," the officer said.

Empty bottle found

When police reached the spot, they found an empty bottle of toilet cleaner with liquid spread on the road. "The woman alleged that the men asked her to withdraw the rape case she had slapped against Asif alias Arif or else the acid will be thrown on her face next time," the officer said.

Police said the woman had alleged that she was raped by the accused after which a case under Section 376 (punishment for rape) of the Indian Penal Code was registered at Kalkaji police station this month.

Based on a complaint submitted by the woman on Thursday, police have registered a case under Section 195A (threatening any person to give false evidence), 326 (voluntarily causing grievous hurt by dangerous weapons or means), and 34 (common intention) of the IPC. "Efforts are being made to arrest the suspects," the officer said.

Police said they received a complaint on November 2018 in which the complainant said that he runs a garment shop on Tank Road and the accused entered his shop and demanded ₹2 lakh at gunpoint.

He extorted ₹1.5 lakh and threatened that he would come again to collect the remaining amount. On December 11, he returned and thrashed the complainant when the victim showed his inability to pay," Mr. Randhawa said.

Police said they received a complaint on November 2018 in which the complainant said that he runs a garment shop on Tank Road and the accused entered his shop and demanded ₹2 lakh at gunpoint.

Thrashed complainant
"He extorted ₹1.5 lakh and threatened that he would come again to collect the remaining amount. On December 11, he returned and thrashed the complainant when the victim showed his inability to pay," Mr. Randhawa said.

The accused, police said, returned the next day but the complainant wasn't present there. Therefore, he thrashed the workers and took away ₹3 lakh from the shop.

Involved in many cases
During investigation, it

4 CITY

IN BRIEF



RTI Act reduced to joke, DU tells High Court

NEW DELHI
DU on Thursday contended before the Delhi HC here that the RTI Act has been reduced to a "joke" with queries seeking records of all students who had passed the BA exam in 1978, including that of PM Narendra Modi. The court fixed the matter for hearing on February 4, when other similar petitions are also listed. The HC was hearing DU's plea challenging a CIC direction to allow inspection of the university's records of all students who had passed BA examination in 1978. PTI

CBI told to expedite probe in Tytler case

NEW DELHI
A court here on Thursday directed the CBI to expedite investigation into a 1984 anti-Sikh riots case in which Congress leader Jagdish Tytler has been given a clean chit for his alleged role, saying that the matter is of sensitive nature. The CBI informed Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Amit Arora that lie detector test of businessman Abhishek Verma, who volunteered to depose as a witness, was conducted last December but that report could not be finalised due to non-availability of scientists. PTI

Overcast skies in Delhi; rain likely today

NEW DELHI
Overcast skies prevailed in the Capital Thursday with the minimum temperature settling at 8.2 degrees Celsius, normal for this time of the year. The maximum temperature was recorded at 21.5 degrees Celsius, a notch below the season's average, said a Meteorological (Met) department official. The humidity oscillated between 97% and 60%. The Met office has forecast light rains and drizzle at one or two places for Friday. PTI

POOCH CAFE



HAGAR THE HORRIBLE



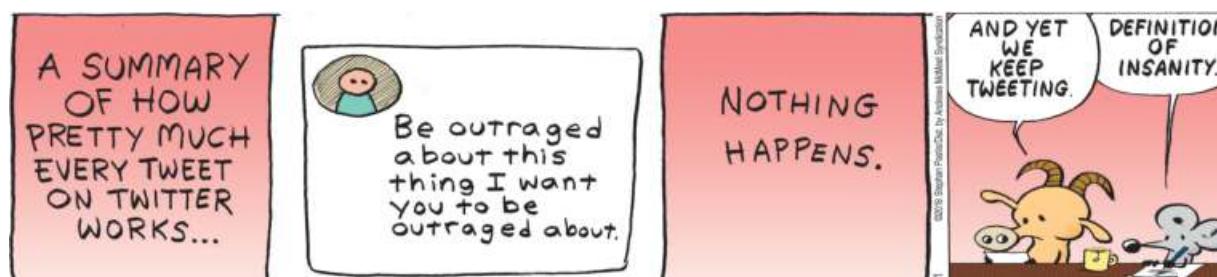
TIGER



WUMO



PEARLS BEFORE SWINE



Panel to look into plea on capping fuel pump numbers

National Green Tribunal asks committee to furnish report

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI
Following a plea seeking a cap on the number of petrol pumps, the National Green Tribunal (NGT) has directed a committee to look into the matter and furnish a report on the same.

A Bench headed by NGT chairperson Justice Adarsh Kumar Goel constituted the committee comprising officials from the Ministry of Petroleum and the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB).

"The first meeting of the committee may be held within one month and on review of the subject matter, appropriate guidelines be issued by the CPCB in exercise of its statutory power within three months thereafter," the Bench said.

'Environmental impact'
The directions came while the green panel was hearing a plea that alleged that an increasing number of unauthorised petrol pumps have an



The green panel was hearing a plea alleging that an increasing number of unauthorised petrol pumps have an adverse environmental impact. ■ FILE PHOTO: VIJAY SONEJI

adverse environmental impact. "The applicant has referred to a news item to submit that large number of petrol pumps are being opened without any concern for the environment and without any guidelines about sustainability of such large number of petrol pumps," the Bench observed, while noting the allegations in the plea.

The plea further referred to guidelines issued by Indian Road Congress, "General Conditions of Sitting", that laid down the distance from highways, and distance between two fuel stations.

"We are of the view that the matter needs to be looked into by a joint committee of representatives from the CPCB and Ministry of Petroleum. The CPCB may furnish an action taken report to the tribunal on or before April 30," the Bench said.

The plea further referred to guidelines issued by In-

EPCA issues directive on vehicles in Delhi-NCR

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI
All vehicles in Delhi-NCR should be affixed with colour-coded stickers and high security registration plates (HSRP) by October, the Supreme Court-appointed Environment Pollution Control Authority (EPCA) said on Thursday.

Colour-coded vehicles will help identify vehicles based on their fuel type. Hologram-based light blue stickers will be used on vehicles using petrol and CNG fuel, while diesel-run vehicles will sport an orange sticker. HSRP is a chromium-based hologram applied by hot-stamping number plates both in the front and back, besides laser-branding of a permanent identification number.

The move aims to fight pollution, especially during winters, when a particular type of vehicle can be banned based on its fuel type. In a meeting, chaired by EPCA chairperson Bhure Lal, with NCR State authorities and members from the Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM),

C The EPCA would like to get Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana and Rajasthan to notify the options and time frame under which they will ensure that all old four-wheelers get colour-coded stickers and HSRP

SUNITA NARAIN

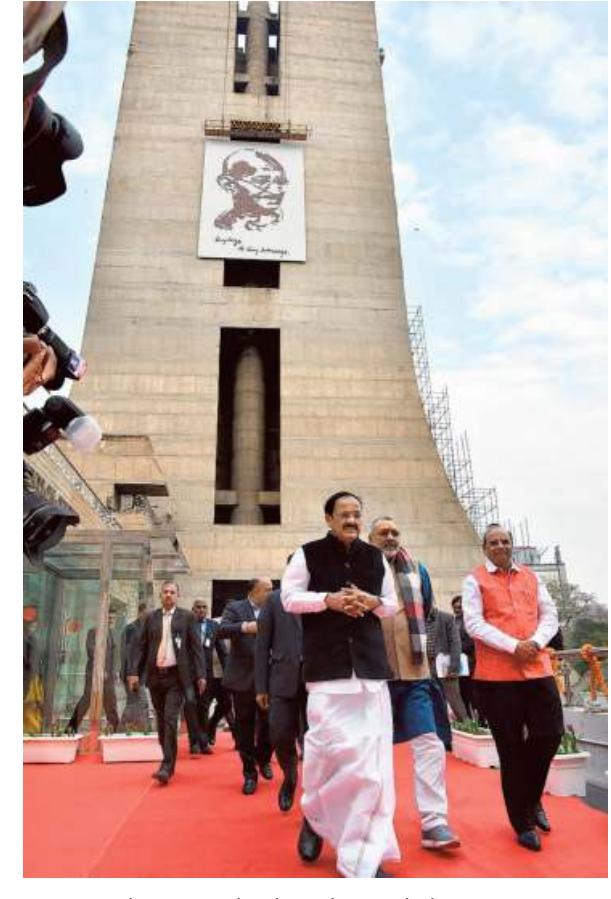
EPCA member

the apex body representing all major vehicles and vehicular engine manufacturers in India, he directed all old and new vehicles to affix colour-coded stickers by October.

"The EPCA would like to get Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana and Rajasthan to notify the options and time frame under which they will ensure that all old four-wheelers get colour-coded stickers and HSRP," said EP-

CA member Sunita Narain. Only 76,000 of 50 lakh four-wheelers registered in Delhi have already been affixed with both HSRP and stickers.

Tall tribute



Vice-President M. Venkiah Naidu unveiled a 150 square metre mural of Mahatma Gandhi, made by 150 potters across the nation using terracotta kuhads, at the main NDMC building in New Delhi on Thursday.

■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

Man charged with possessing drugs acquitted

Investigating officer failed to follow law for recovery of contraband from accused

NIRNIMESH KUMAR

NEW DELHI
A Delhi court has discharged a man charged with possessing 300 gram of heroin, saying that the city police failed to follow the law for recovery of the contraband from the accused.

According to Section 50 of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, the probe agency has to make recovery of narcotics from the possession of the accused in presence of a Gazetted Officer or an Executive Magistrate, which the investigating officer in the present case failed to do. The Crime Branch had arrested Bittan following a tip-off in east Delhi last year.

GIn the present case, the contraband was allegedly recovered from the pocket of jeans of the accused... However, since no Gazetted Officer or Magistrate was present at the time of recovery of the contraband, the said recovery stands vitiated...

SANJAY BANSAL
Additional Sessions Judge

"In the present case, the contraband was allegedly recovered from the pocket of jeans of the accused. Therefore, Section 50 of the NDPS Act will fully apply. In such a scenario, there was to be tal compliance with the said

Section. However, since no Gazetted Officer or Magistrate was present at the time of recovery of the contraband, the said recovery stands vitiated. This was clearly laid down by the Delhi High Court," said Additional Sessions Judge Sanjay Bansal.

"Considered so, the recovery cannot be considered legal. This leads to the conclusion that the accused cannot be charged for possessing the said contraband. As a necessary result, Bittan is hereby discharged from the case. He be released from judicial custody if not wanted in any other case. Case property be destroyed as per rules," the judge said.

Recently, the Supreme Court had in the case of Arif Khan held that even in cases where the accused refuses to opt for his search in presence of a Gazetted Officer or a Magistrate, the police officer concerned shall cause such a Gazetted Officer or Magistrate to join the recovery proceedings. It held that if no such Gazetted Officer or Magistrate joins the proceedings, the recovery stands vitiated due to non-compliance with Section 50 of NDPS Act," the judge added.

Bittan had refused to be

searched before a Gazetted Officer or a Magistrate.

Stating that this was one of the first books to be released after Section 377 was struck down, Mr. Divan said many authors from the community to start penning stories about

their own journey.

"The LGBTQ community that has been ignored for so long and has lot to talk about. The conversation has just started," he said.

Expressing happiness that the book was released without any censorship, Mr. Divan said after the 2009 Delhi High Court judgment, several religious forces got together to suggest "cures" for homosexuality but the media played a role in changing the attitude of society towards the LGBTQ community.

The panel comprised lawyers Anand Grover and Veer Divan, along with the author.

Recalling the legal journey, Mr. Divan said many arguments in court were not legal ones but about morality.

To a question on whether at any point in his life he wanted to leave India and settle in a country that was more accepting of gay men, Mr. Rangnekar said apart from not wanting to leave his mother alone, somewhere within him was a sense of protest.

He said he felt a need to fight for the right of the community and not run away.

Mr. Grover said the battle was far from over but it was not being fought by lawyers but by the LGBTQ community itself. He added that it will be a fight for equality, anti-discrimination, marriage rights and a change in the adoption laws, among others.

Section 377: 'attitudes need to change'

Book titled *Straight to Normal – My Life As a Gay Man* launched

STAFF REPORTER

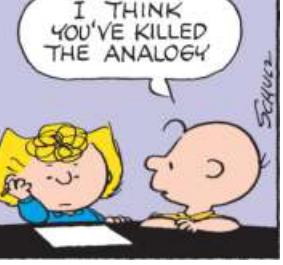
NEW DELHI

At a panel discussion that followed the launch of a book titled *Straight to Normal – My Life As a Gay Man* by Sharif Rangnekar, panelist spoke about the work it took to fight a legal battle to strike down Section 377 of the IPC and how attitudes need to change in society.

The panel comprised lawyers Anand Grover and Veer Divan, along with the author.

Stating that this was one of the first books to be released after Section 377 was struck down, Mr. Divan said many authors from the community to start penning stories about

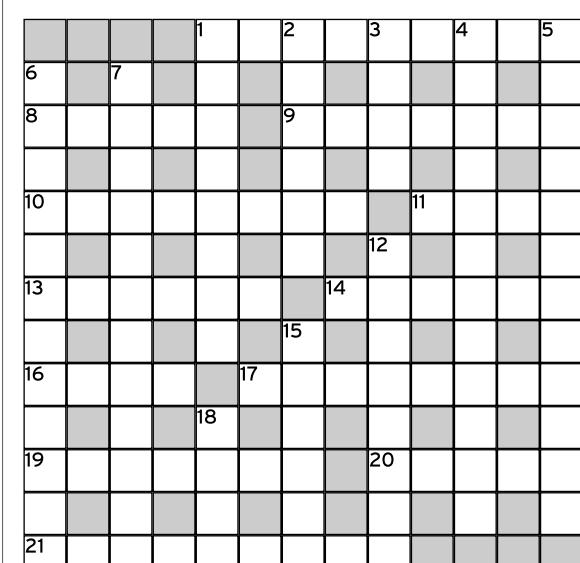
PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBES



THE GUARDIAN QUICK CROSSWORD-12982

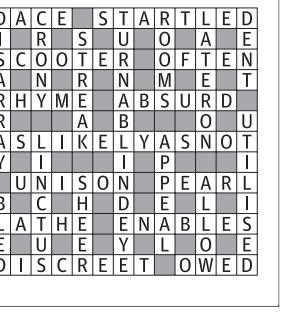


- 4 Impossible to conceive (12)
5 Produce a coherent whole (4,8)
6 Reach the desired standard (4,3,5)
7 Fruit (12)
12 Shy (8)
15 Deep gorge (6)
18 Coarse fibre from a coconut husk (4)

Solution will appear in Delhi Metro dated February 2, 2019.

Solution No.

12981

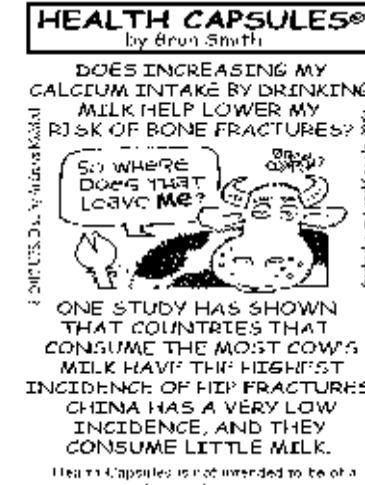
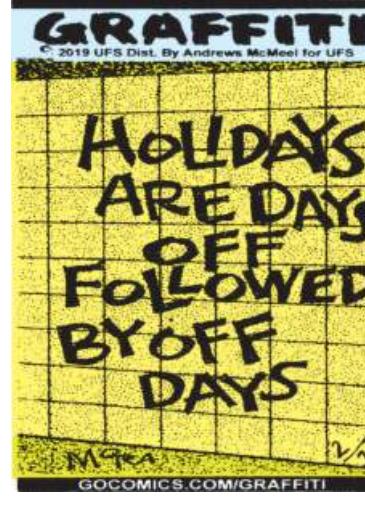


- Across
1 Easy target for a loan (4,5)
8 Totally exhausted (3,2)
9 Outburst of applause (7)
10 Increase rapidly (8)
11 Open wagon (to come after, not before, the horse) (4)
12 Attire worn by women riders (6)
14 Understanding (6)
16 Disease-causing bacterium (4)
17 Participate (4,4)
19 Court-ordered maintenance (7)
20 Put a price on (5)
21 Dinner she (anag) – held as sacred (9)
■ Down
1 Dotage (8)
2 Unfriendly (6)
3 Gin – hidden danger (4)

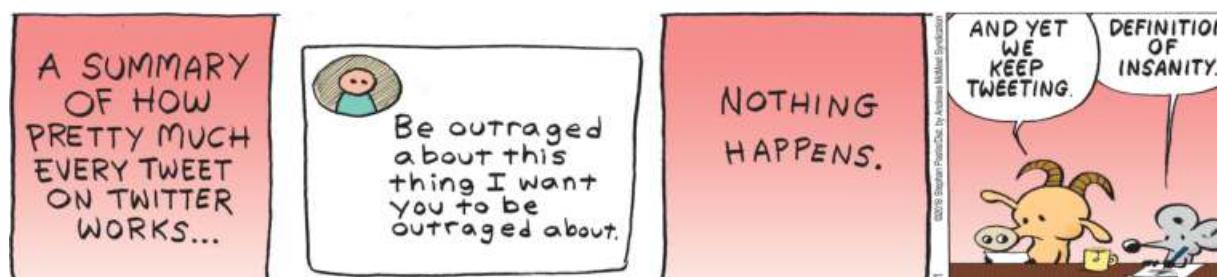
TIGER



WUMO



PEARLS BEFORE SWINE



'Rejections are the high points of my life'

Ankur Tewari on his romance with words and the music of the much-awaited *Gully Boy*

SHRINKHLA SAHAI

Underneath his unassuming demeanour and easy-going attitude, throbs a heart full of stories and a mind pulsating with words. Ankur Tewari has carved a niche in Bollywood as a Hindi singer-songwriter who is ready for risks and sways to his own tune. With his two recent releases - a new EP titled *Little Whale* and the music of the much-awaited film *Gully Boy*, Tewari has waded into new musical adventures. In the capital for the prelude to the Udaipur World Music Festival (15-17 February 2019), the songster says, "The city brings out my best and worst moments!"

Intense music

A conversation over lunch with Zoya Akhtar transformed into two years of intense music-making for *Gully Boy*, slated for release on 14th February. With a whopping 18-song soundtrack, the film pulls together diverse musical genres with an extensive team of rappers, hip hoppers and beatboxers. "It was a challenge to meld the two worlds of hip hop and Bollywood, but it was really exciting to get our heads together to create a complex and different sound."

The collaborative work involved multiple sessions of



Striking a balance: Ankur Tewari narrates stories through his songs ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT



C Most of the hip hop songs are rapped by Ranveer Singh for his character - Murad. "It was really exciting," says Tewari, "it lends honesty to the character."

ideation and improvisation with Tewari penning a few songs and supervising the music for the film, "Working with young artists, rappers, hip hop musicians, was an exciting and amazing experience - these are artists and young people who are not afraid to speak the truth, they express themselves unabashedly."

Most of the hip hop songs are rapped by Ranveer Singh for his character - Murad. "It was really exciting," says Tewari, "it lends honesty to the character." A few tracks have already found their way to the chartbuster lists. 'Apna time aayega', penned by Dub Sharma and Ankur Tewari "captures a powerful theme, it is something that everyone feels and dreams

of." Catchy and racy, it is quite different from the more subtle 'Jeene mein aaye maza'. The song is written and sung by Tewari, "I wanted to explore a softer, slower feel that tells the story of our lives with tenderness." The tracks 'Kab se kab tak' and 'Train Song' evolved as ideas between the musicians. "Some tunes grow on you, some words grow with you and at the heart of it, all songs tell a story," says Tewari.

An affair with words

Twining as a songwriter and singer, Tewari believes he is "essentially a storyteller." He confesses to being an avid eavesdropper, with a passion for reading, listening and sharing ordinary stories from everyday lives of people.

His romance with words started as a child in Belgium, listening to his parents' collection of French tapes he could not comprehend. He translated the unfamiliar sounds into words he would understand, building imaginary tales from the songs he heard. "My first attempt at storytelling was making excuses to my parents as a child about some task I had not completed or a rule I may have broken." The innocent exercise soon became a habit and grew into a passion that brought him from Roerke to Delhi and then to Mumbai, in an attempt to craft his own story.

Ear for acoustic

In an era when remixes and electronica ruled, Tewari developed an ear for

acoustic. Never one to blindly follow the trend, he arrived in Mumbai in 2000 with a dream to record an album. Doing the rounds of music label offices, he got the greatest education of his life-rejection. "Rejections are the high points of my life. I never really had any formal training in music and each rejection inspired me to do something different, it was my schooling." Sometimes these rejections would translate into songs, soulful stories drawn from life as it flowed.

Jannat, Tewari's debut album was finally released a decade later, in 2010. Today, along with Sidd Couto he has made a mark with his Hindi rock band, Ankur and the Ghatal Family known for what they best describe as

the head."

It is a continuous process where something sparks energy and inspires images,

"The only common thing about my process is that I try reaching a meditative state. I don't question much, just submit to the flow of life and where it takes me."

Bucking the tide and following the flow is Tewari's approach to life. He has let his talent brew, alongside his stories. When asked what would be the title of the story of his life, he took his time and finally exclaimed, "Believe it, or not."

Urdu and Hindi easy acoustic ballads with a mix of folk and rock, the songster has come a full circle with *Little Whale* being his first electronica album with collaborators Gaurav Raina and Karsh Kale. "What brings all of us together is our ear for music and our amazing sense of humour with that talent for bad jokes!"

Sitting in a bar one day, Tewari along with television and radio personality - Roshan Abbas, decided to form Kommune arts organisation that would bring stories and poetry to people. "We were just saying to each other that there are rarely any really interesting storytelling events, and then we decided to make that happen." What started with ten people getting together in a dance studio in Mumbai to tell each other stories, grew into a mega-event called Spoken Fest in three years with a confluence of like-minded people enabling each other in the art of storytelling. "Everyone has stories to share, and we want to bring that forward," says Tewari, "the most exciting part was that four people who were in the audience a couple of years back were on stage this time, narrating new tales."

The song of life

As a songwriter, Tewari is never on vacation. "I am writing songs all the time, collecting ideas, scavenging thoughts and stories, creating images, devising metaphors, putting it together in

the head."

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In sync: Rameshwar Broota's "Frozen in Time"

Art of evolution

Satire meets metaphorical slices of life in Rameshwar Broota's latest works

LATA GIDWANI

An exhibition of nuance and experimentation, master artist and photographer Rameshwar Broota's new solo show titled "Scripted In Time - II" is being presented by Vadhera Art Gallery at Shridharani Gallery.

"The age of digitisation has witnessed formidable accomplishments for photography technology, facilitating a range of effects. Ironically, the development has eclipsed the essence of photography as an art, one not merely for aesthetic pleasure but for appreciating detail and humanising the trends and cultures to trace the trajectory of human evolution, socially, politically and economically," remarks Broota.

The exhibition features used components like shreds of janmapatris (horoscopes), crumpled newspapers, torn notes, weathered postcards and stamps through the use of commercial and industrial material resin. In his unique concept of evoking introspection and mystery, he explains, "I first apply layers of different coloured paints on the surface and then finely scrape away the upper layers of the painting to unravel luminous images. Each work has multiple layers of resin with the used components

placed between the transparent layers as metaphorical slices of time."

One of his satirical works at the exhibition draws a sharp parallel between the thin, long, manicured fingers of a model and the claws of a crow, bringing to fore the hypocritically absurd social constructs of beauty. Printed in the Corning Gorilla Glass, a magnificent frame of semi-burnt thesis of Leon Trotsky (a Russian revolutionary, Marxist theorist who was assassinated upon the instruction of Stalin) at the Leon Trotsky House Museum, Mexico, as he informs, bathed in scarlet effect, is incredibly cathartic, "signifying the fire of revolution and bloodshed."

In yet another wall-mounted work, Broota has juxtaposed a human shadow against the aerial view of a metropolitan city. In his interpretation, he says, "It is a telling comment on the commercialisation of human intellect, abilities and experiences as capital."

Adhering to the genre of time, life and memory in his new oeuvre, he believes, "Creating these works has been like a process of meditation and meditation."

(The exhibition is on till February 12 at Shridharani Art Gallery, Triveni Kala Sangam, New Delhi)

SHORT TAKE

With silks, hand-woven cotton and organza



Actress Kangana Ranaut will lend her spark to the Lakme Fashion Week (LFW) Summer/Resort 2019 ramp when she will turn showstopper for Hyderabad-based designer Anushree Reddy in Mumbai on Saturday.

Kangana, fresh after the release of her film "Manikarnika: The Queen of Jhansi" will flaunt a creation from Reddy's 'Afirah' collection at the show here.

"When I first saw Anushree's collection, I absolutely loved it because it celebrates the woman of today - a woman of substance. I am in awe of the perfect amalgamation of the delicate beauty of the embroidery and the clear designs signifying the inner strength that every woman has within," Kangana said in a statement.

The collection is Reddy's ode to flowers and perfumes. The designer ex-

plained: "The collection represents the modern day bride who is confident, graceful and strong in her own right. Through design that is simple but very effective, we have all the elements that make her day significant."

For her line, Reddy has used pure silk, hand-woven cotton and organza, across a range of pastel colours.

IANS

Talking in queer riddles

In conversation with the father-daughter duo Sonam and Anil Kapoor, who reprise their real life roles in

'Ek Ladki Ko Dekha Toh Aisa Laga'

MANISH GAEKWAD

Conventional love stories can offer unconventional heroes. It's this unconventional that actors Sonam Kapoor and Anil Kapoor are trying to own, albeit with trepidation. In their upcoming film *Ek Ladki Ko Dekha Toh Aisa Laga*, Sonam plays Sweety, a young girl from Moga, Punjab, who is looking for acceptance from her father, Balbir (Anil Kapoor).

The theme of homosexuality has been hinted at in the trailer, but



when we meet the father-daughter team at a film studio in Mumbai - they neither confirm, nor deny it, appearing tight-lipped about the subject that perhaps needs a vocal shout-out. The Anil reiterates that it is a love story that needs to be discovered by the audience without reading too much into the trailer. He is happy to elaborate on the dynam-

ics of his working relationship with his daughter, and appearing together in it.

About their characters, Sonam says, "Sweety is a reflection of each person in this world who is struggling to be who they are. It is as simple as that. Acceptance is such a

huge part of our lives, whether it is going to college, to not studying engineering, getting married to someone from another religion, opting for a non-conventional career, sexual orientation - acceptance is so hard because Indian parents are brought up in a certain way which becomes cyclical in how harshly they treat their children. Sweety is that girl who is struggling to be accepted. Like when I told my dad that I wanted to be an actor, he accepted it, but my mother was not

as receptive - she wanted me to go to college, to study."

There is some confusion between them about how they perceive Anil's character. "Balbir is completely opposite [to me]. He works in the garments business, loves to cook, and lives in Moga. I have never been interested in cooking or clothes and have

Blacks and whites: Anil Kapoor and Sonam Kapoor at Mehboob Studio in Mumbai ■ EMMANUEL YOGINI

never played a character from Moga. He is a moderate-liberal kind of a person. I am not a moderate. I am a liberal at heart," he says.

Sonam differs slightly on his take. "Balbir is very similar to my dad. He loves me so much, his acceptance comes from that and it does not clash with what I wear, who my friends are, and how I spend my time," she reiterates.

Long innings

For someone who recently met the #10yearchallenge on Twitter with his own #AKChallenge, showcasing memorable roles in such films as *Ram Lakhan* (1989), *Taal* (1999) and *Slumdog Millionaire* (2009), Anil adds his role as Balbir in *Ek Ladki Ko Dekha Toh Aisa Laga*, to the illustrious list, redrawing the arc that has made him a bankable star in Bollywood for almost four decades.

Sonam feels that Dhar wants to tell the truth through this story. "I felt her honesty when she read the script to me. I was convinced that she would do a great job when I heard the line from the script, 'Agar tum apna sach batate ho toh log tumhe apna late hain.'

The collection is Reddy's ode to flowers and perfumes. The designer ex-

plained: "The collection represents the modern day bride who is confident, graceful and strong in her own right. Through design that is simple but very effective, we have all the elements that make her day significant."

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IANS

5 EVENTS WORTH-YOUR-WHILE



MUSIC FESTIVAL

Sopan 2019

Sahitya Kala Parishad presents "Sopan 2019", a six-day long festival of young musicians and dancers this evening. The festival will have a line-up of young talents who will present various art forms like Kathak, Bharatanatyam, Odissi, Kathakali and some musical notes of sarangi, mridangam, harmonium among others.

VENUE: Central Park, Connaught Place

TIME: 6:30 p.m.



EXHIBITION

Art

Ojas Art presents "Rerouted Realities", the first ever solo show of distinguished Mithila artist Santosh Kumar Das. Curated by Kathryn Myers, this month long show features 40 artworks with Mithila-Madhubani style of paintings. Santosh's highly inventive versatile images re-imagine and reroute conventional and fictitious realities.

VENUE: 1AQ, Qutab Minar Roundabout

TIME: 11 a.m. - 7 p.m.



PERFORMANCE

Music and dance

"Naad Nartan" presents its 9th Naad-Nartan Dance and Musical Festival in the memory of Kathak exponent from Jaipur Gharana, Pt.Tirath Ram Sharma 'Azad', this evening. Master Shadaj Iyer, a child prodigy from Agra-Artauli gharana will perform vocal and Kathak dance by Vidhushi Rani Khanam from Lucknow Gharana.

VENUE: Triveni Kala Sangam, Mandi House

TIME: 6 p.m.



EXHIBITION

Canvas

"Kitaab", a solo art show featuring three-dimensional installation paintings of Sumit Mishra on display at All India Fine Arts & Craft Society. In his works, Sumit diverts from the traditional treatment of flat canvas and creates three dimensional relief works that seems to break the boundaries of the canvas frame.

VENUE: AIFACS, 1 Rafi Marg

TIME: 11 a.m. - 7 p.m.



MUSIC

Sufi night

Bombay Brasserie, an all day restaurant and bar presents sufi night with singer Jayant



RUTH DSOUZA PRABHU

When the Michelin Guide Hong Kong and Macau recognised The Golden Peacock at The Venetian Macao in the first few months of its opening with one star, it triggered a wave of interest.

In December 2018, senior chef Justin Paul and his team of 15 celebrated receiving a Michelin star for the 6th consecutive year. An Indian restaurant, The Golden Peacock works on bringing authenticity, with a touch of inventiveness to the table. As Chef Justin says, "the idea is to get out of our comfort zones of cuisine and create something that truly delights even our most demanding and regular clients".

We connect with Chef Justin, originally from Kerala, on the Michelin star, his food philosophy, international perceptions on Indian food and what drives his team. Edited excerpts from the interview:

When and how did you realise that the kitchen was the place for you?

- My childhood was filled with the oral histories of cuisines of our region. That, and the multitude of ingredients available at home, got me interested in cooking.

My late father and I would spend hours together, with me as a disciple observing him earnestly cooking for family functions. Watching him get such delight from cooking inspired me greatly. These weren't exotic dishes, but traditional Kerala cuisine, with his own variations. He would minutely examine each ingredient, its smell and flavour. I loved the passion and precision that went

THE PEACOCK FLIES EAST

Kerala-born Justin Paul plates up artisanal Indian cuisine in Macau at The Golden Peacock, earning a Michelin star for six years in a row

into it, that too in an endearingly informal way. He was doing it out of sheer love and nothing else. I guess I got inspired by that.

One of my favourites from that period is certainly the Kerala fish curry. Even though I now live in Macau, that childhood memory's aroma is still around me. It has also influenced my cooking.

I am inspired by the traditional dishes and time-honoured recipes from those hinterlands. I try to experiment with them, but the core remains the same. It's also why we have a more extensive South Indian offering than most Indian restaurants. Quilon fish curry, for example, is not something you will ordinarily find.

What is it like living with a Michelin star, six years in a row? Is that a lot of pressure for you and the team to live up to?

- It's an honour for the entire team. The idea is that all of us should get out of our comfort zones of cuisine, and create something that truly delights even our most demanding and regular clients.

It's pressure, but the right kind



of pressure.

In 2018, we focussed on vegan dishes with an Indian background. We took ingredients or dishes easily found in Indian households and gave them an unexpected leap

• The process begins with imagin-



ing a new dish, then seeing what technique will organically suit it.

Some of our dishes have Western ingredients in Indian techniques and some vice versa.

Plating is an art that we take quite seriously. Even before the



social media demands of Instagrammable plates, we were imaginative in plating.

Descriptors are written with just one objective: They should be easily understood, while making the diner curious. We also have a government regulation here that names of dishes should be in their original language. That makes the cuisine more accessible.

How do you work on ensuring your food stays representative of India?

- I don't think any other country can match the culinary diversity of India. Authenticity is then a subjective experience. What I believe in, is finding the highest common denominator of any regional cuisine and then imagining

Fresh experiments: (Clockwise from left) Kandhari murgh tikka, muringakka rasam, Chef Justin Paul, the restaurant and khumb bajre ka soweta

■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

it to a whole new level.

The cuisine keeps evolving. It has to. So we strive to create something new from ingredients familiar to us. For example, Southern Roots is a celebration of common vegetables found in South India, but tried in new avatars. We also try to see how global cuisine can work with Indian components; Treasure Oceana is where we took European seafood and prepared it using Indian ingredients with Indian methods.

Indian cuisine is quite elastic in terms of its ingredients. I like to call this Artisanal Indian Cuisine.

What are the international trends, as far as Indian food is concerned, that you see coming up in 2019?

- I think there is growing widespread interest in Indian vegan cuisine. In 2018, we focussed on vegan dishes with an Indian background. We took ingredients or dishes easily found in Indian households and gave them an unexpected leap.

One of my favourites from our current offerings is *khumb bajre ka soweta*, a common North Indian vegetable stew made with organic millet, with sous vide Portobello mushroom. Another is drumstick essence or *muringakka rasam*: This is made from one of the most common vegetables, found in any South Indian backyard. It's an authentic Kerala soup with *muringakka* (drumsticks), asafoetida and vegan almond cream. There's also '*aneer* and *khajoor*', a favourite dessert in the eastern parts of the country, like Bengal. It has *medjool* dates, dried figs, pistachio roll and golden honey.

What do you like doing outside the kitchen?

- Like everyone else, I guess, I like spending time with my family. I love cooking with my two young daughters.

Macau and Hong Kong being such beautiful, historic regions, we regularly tour the cities. I am also a football fan. Though, I can't remember the last time I had the time to watch a complete game.



How ancient India cooked

Explore historic cook books and a dictionary documenting India's culinary tradition through the ages

CHITRA BALASUBRAMANIAM

Late Yeshwant Nene, founder of the Asian Agri-History Foundation, had often rued how, despite being one of the oldest civilisations, nothing much is documented about India's agricultural history. The Foundation was his initiative to contribute to the documentation and dissemination of the vast agricultural knowledge in the country. The same argument goes for ancient Indian food.

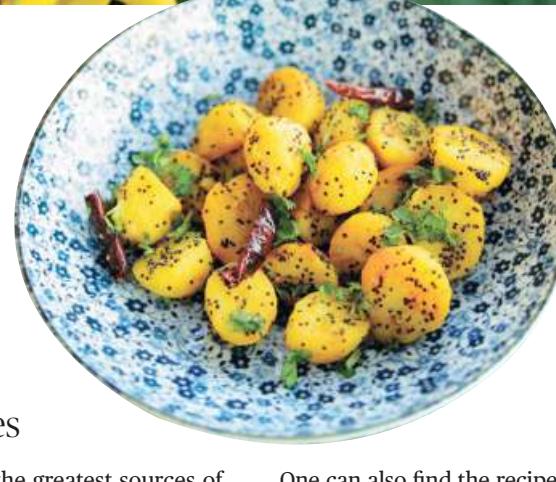
There is little information about what civilisations of yore ate. Recipe books from Mughal times are available, as are books on Indian cuisine from the British Raj, but when it comes to food from the kingdoms of Vijayanagar, Chola dynasty or Rajputana, the information is woefully inadequate.

Many references and works are present in Sanskrit, regional languages, Persian and Urdu, but there are no recipe books as such from these times.

One of the greatest sources of information is a compilation by KT Achaya. His book *Indian Food - A Historical Companion* is a source of immense information. He has documented what various kingdoms ate. He writes in depth of the Manasollasa (*Abhilashitartha Chintamani*) written around 1130 AD by King Someshvara III of Kalyana in Central India. It has a chapter titled 'Annabhoga', where 20 pages are devoted to the making of a variety of dishes.

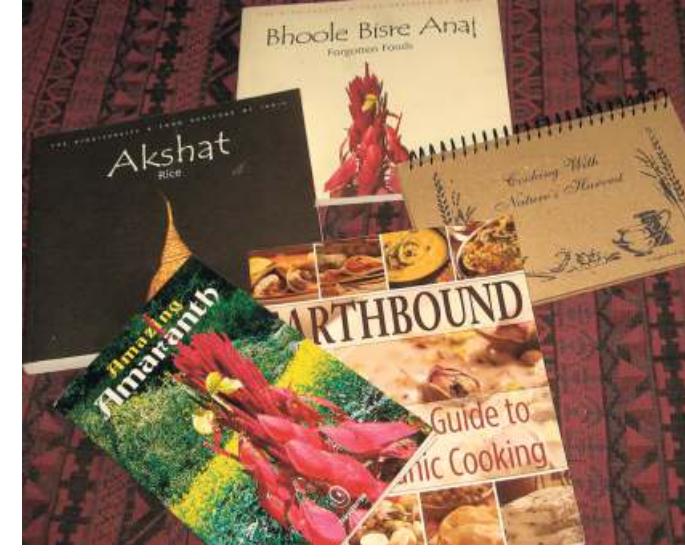
One can also find the recipe to make 'Purana', which might be our present-day *puranpoli*. There are copious references to ingredients, fruits, vegetables, cereals, milk products, meat... From ancestral legacies to touching upon the Harappan spread and the coming of Europeans, Achaya has covered a huge range: several methods of preparation, cooking styles, utensils and ingredients are given in the book.

Another book of his - *A Histor-*



A taste of the past: (Clockwise from below) Some books worth picking up; and dishes recreated in publications by the Centre for Science and Environment like *phutka pakora*, *jakhni aloo* and *sarata*

■ CENTRE FOR SCIENCE AND ENVIRONMENT



ical Dictionary Of Indian Food – describes its intent in the preface, "several readers of my earlier book Indian Food - A Historical Companion felt there was need for a historical dictionary that would bring together, in alphabetical order, material scattered all over the earlier volume".

The dictionary is worth its weight in gold, as it puts almost all vocabulary used with cooking and recipes – food, ingredients, utensils with meanings and references – in one place. Try this: "*adai* – shallow-fried circlet of the Tamil world. The thick ground batter consists of almost equal parts of rice and as many as four pulses. It is described in Tamil Sangam literature between the 3rd and 6th centuries AD as a snack served by vendors on the seashore." There is a long de-

scription on Bengali sweets. It is a one-stop place for the antecedents of food in India.

Two other famous cooks from our mythology are Bheema from the *Mahabharata* and King Nala. *Nala pakam* is a term which originated from Nala's proficiency in cooking.

Pakadarpana of Nala is a book by Madhulika, edited by Jay Ram Yadav and brought out by Chaukhamba Orientalia Varanasi. It is a translation of the *Pakadarpana* procured from the Saraswati Bhawan Library of Sampurnanand Sanskrit University in Varanasi. It has 24 folios. The Sanskrit shloka



From ancestral legacies to touching upon the Harappan spread and the coming of Europeans, KT Achaya has covered a huge range

There are plenty of documentations of recipes and new ones which are recorded. Trying to revive forgotten foods and their recipes are the two books by Centre for Science and Environment – *Down to Earth: First Food - A Taste of India's Biodiversity* and *First Food - Culture of Taste*. (Three of the writer's stories find their way into the second book.) Navdanya has a wonderful book with recipes on amaranth (*chaulai*). It has some interesting modern take-offs like apple cake, fruit juice and more.

Akshat, an ode to different varieties of rice, has recipes. *Earthbound - Navdanya's Guide to Easy, Organic Cooking* shows some fast everyday recipes. Several of these recipes use old forgotten grains in new innovative ways to suit the palette of today. It can be eaten with panache at a café!

TOTAL RECALL
Food in ancient India developed considerably within the Indus Valley Civilisation, which brought the use of wheat, barley, sesamum and brassica. Along with this, man had learned to tame buffaloes, goats and sheep.

