



Protesters lay siege to police station over vet's rape and murder
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New report on forest cover will be released this month: Javadekar
page 9



London attacker had been held earlier for terrorism offences
page 12



Paes extends Davis Cup record as India drubs Pakistan
page 17

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NEARBY



A solitary protest over crimes against women
NEW DELHI
A 24-year-old woman was detained on Saturday for staging a solitary protest near Parliament in the wake of the gang rape and murder of a 27-year-old veterinarian in Hyderabad, and other crimes against women. Anu Dubey from Rajasthan, who works in the national Capital, alleged that she was harassed and thrashed by the police while in detention at Parliament Street police station.

CITY ▶ PAGE 2

Case diary incomplete, claims Chinmayanand

SHAHJAHANPUR / LUCKNOW
Former Union Minister Swami Chinmayanand, accused of sexually exploiting a student of a law college run by his trust, told an Uttar Pradesh court on Saturday that the case diary provided to him was incomplete, prompting the court to order that a complete diary be made available to him. The court has fixed December 16 as the next date for hearing.

NORTH ▶ PAGE 5

Two soldiers killed in Siachen avalanche

SRINAGAR
Two soldiers were killed when an avalanche hit an Army patrol at Siachen Glacier in Leh district of Ladakh on Saturday. Defence spokesman Colonel Rajesh Kalia said the soldiers were part of an Army patrol party. An Avalanche Rescue Team rushed to the spot and pulled out all the members. Helicopters were pressed into service to evacuate the victims.

NEWS ▶ PAGE 10

MAGAZINE ▶ 12 PAGES CLASSIFIEDS ▶ PAGE 6 & 7

65% turnout in first phase of Jharkhand Assembly election



Round one: People await their turn at a polling station in Gumla, Jharkhand, on Saturday. ■ ANI

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
RANCHI
An estimated 64.72% votes were cast in 13 constituencies of Jharkhand in the first phase of polling for the Assembly election on Saturday, Election Commission officials said. The constituencies are in six Maoist-hit districts and polling was held amidst tight security.
Voting was largely peaceful and ended at 3 p.m., the EC officials said. A total of 37,83,055 voters exercised their franchise to elect their representatives from among 189 candidates, including 15 women.

Polling was held in Chatra, Gumla, Bishnupur, Lohardaga, Manika, Latehar, Panki, Daltonganj, Bishrampur, Chhatarpur, Hussainabad, Garhwa and Bhawanapthar constituencies. The Bhawanapthar constituency has the maximum of 28 contestants, while Chatra has the lowest with nine.

Jharkhand Additional Director General of Police Murari Lal Meena said Maoists set off an explosive device near a culvert in Bishnupur constituency in Gumla district but there was no casualty or damage.

Mr. Meena said 1,097 polling stations were marked as hypersensitive and 461 polling stations as sensitive.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 10

NE to be shielded from citizenship law impact

New citizens will not be allowed to settle in the region

VIJAYA SINGH NEW DELHI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah has assured civil society and political representatives from the northeastern States that tribal areas in Assam, Meghalaya and Tripura, and States protected by the Inner Line Permit (ILP) system – Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram and Nagaland – would be shielded from the impact of the proposed Citizenship (Amendment) Bill (CAB), 2019.

The exemption will mean that undocumented non-Muslims from Bangladesh, Pakistan and Afghanistan, who acquire Indian citizenship under the new law, will not be allowed to settle in these areas and States, but can do so in other parts of the country.

Civil society groups and political representatives from the region met Mr. Shah in Delhi as part of a consultative process on the CAB, which is expected to be introduced in the ongoing Parliament session.

Assam Finance Minister Himanta Biswas Sarma, who participated in meetings chaired by Mr. Shah with groups from the region on Friday and Saturday, told *The Hindu* that 99% of the delegations were against the CAB in its present form and that Mr. Shah had assured them that the concerns of all groups would be accommodated without compromis-



Allaying fears: Amit Shah with leaders from the northeastern States at a meeting in New Delhi on Saturday. ■ PTI

New legislation to enable nationwide NRC: Sarma

Assam's Finance Minister Himanta Biswas Sarma said on Saturday that Union Home Minister Amit Shah had indicated that after the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill was cleared by Parliament, there would be a fresh legislation for preparing a pan-India National Register of Citizens (NRC) with a uniform cut-off date. The exercise would be repeated in Assam, he said adding that the 1971 cut-off date used in the State could be modified to match the rest of the country. ▶ PAGE 11

ing the soul of the Bill.

The Bill passed by the Lok Sabha lapsed as it could not be passed in the Upper House. The fresh version being drafted for introduction in Parliament would mention December 31, 2014, as the cut-off date for religious minorities from the three countries, Mr. Sarma said. In the earlier form, the date was not specified in the Bill, but was implied, he added.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 10

NIA conducts searches at Tiruchi, Thanjavur

Documents, digital devices seized

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI/TIRUCHI

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) conducted searches at Thanjavur and Tiruchi in Tamil Nadu in a case linked to propagating terrorist ideology in India and related to April's terror attacks in Sri Lanka.

Documents and devices were seized in connection with a case against persons "propagating the ideology of the proscribed terrorist organisation Islamic State".

On May 30, the NIA lodged a case against six persons from Coimbatore for propagating IS ideology on social media with the intention of recruiting vulnerable youth and carrying out terrorist attacks in Kerala and Tamil Nadu. With warrants issued by an NIA Special Court in Ernakulam, two teams searched the houses of S. Sarfudeen, 28, in Edamalaiappattipudur on the outskirts of Tiruchi and Sheik Alaudin, 55, of Attumandhai Street in Thanjavur.

The search at Mr. Sarfudeen's house began around 6.30 a.m. and lasted for over two hours.

The NIA action came a day before he was reportedly scheduled to fly to Dubai.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 10

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CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 10

logist Milan Kumar Chauley. "Last year, we had written to the GHMC to stop the work after we noticed that a deep channel nearly 10-20 feet below the fort wall was being dug to lay a pipeline. But this is a new development," Mr. Chauley said.

The extent of destruction can be seen from a Google satellite image that shows an intact moat wall on April 2, 2018 with an earthmover in action and a June 9, 2019 image that shows a heap of rubble where the moat existed. As per the Ancient

SAURABH TRIVEDI NEW DELHI

The Hyderabad gang rape-and-murder incident has brought back chilling reminders of the Nirbhaya case not just for residents but also the Delhi Police, which has issued fresh instructions to all patrolling units to ensure safe transport facilities for women stranded at any location in the city during odd hours.

The advisory was first issued after the December 12 incident and has been in practice since then. The guidelines assume more importance in winter when the sun sets early, and the Hyderabad

incident has prompted the police to enforce them more vigorously now, said a senior police officer on Saturday.

DCP (PCR) Sharat Sinha said they keep sensitising the policemen deployed in PCRs about women's safety.

"PCR is the first responder to any distress call and we reach any location in the city within a few minutes. We also ensure the availability of women constables in PCRs operating during odd hours," said Mr. Sinha.

Last week, the PCR vans responded to seven calls made by women commuters who either lost their way or

suffered a vehicle breakdown on the road during odd hours. In all seven cases, the police personnel ensured that the women reached their homes safely.

"We request all women who travel late at night from their workplaces to install Delhi Police safety app 'Himmat Plus'," said a police officer.

Another officer said he had recently held a meeting with all SHOs and instructed them to sensitise autorickshaw drivers, e-rickshaw drivers and rickshaw pullers about women safety as they provide last-mile connectivity from any metro station.

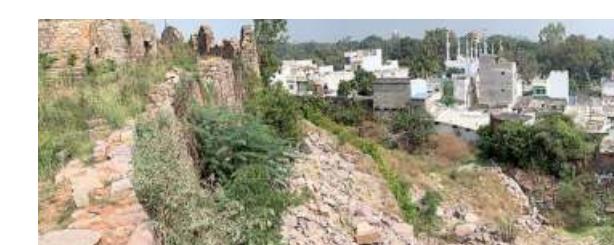
Pipeline work spells doom for moat at Golconda Fort

Efforts by the ASI to stop digging by Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation have gone in vain

SERISH NANISSETTI HYDERABAD

A large part of the 500-year-old Golconda Fort's moat has been pulverised by the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) for laying a pipeline. The moat wall between Ahana Burj and Mamola Burj of the Naya Qila area of the fortress has been turned into rubble using drills and earthmovers.

"The GHMC is again digging the moat. We have asked them to stop but the work is still on," said ASI's Superintending Archaeo-



Under siege: A view of the damaged portion of the moat wall at the Golconda Fort in Hyderabad. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 2002, officials can be punished with imprisonment and a fine for damage to protected monuments.

The ASI had agreed to a GHMC proposal for draining excess water from the Shah

Hatin Talab to the Langar Houz lake using the moat's natural gradient as the water was affecting the fort wall. "During monsoon, the Golconda gets flooded and the water can be harmful so we agreed to the proposal. But after seeing the destruction we stopped it," says Mr. Chauley. The ASI Director-General had written to the Chief Secretary on the damage. Water from the Shah Hatin Talab flows into the Naya Qila area before exiting to Langar Houz lake at present.

DELHI Timings		
SUNDAY, DEC. 01		
RISE 06:56	SET 17:24	
RISE 11:03	SET 21:48	
MONDAY, DEC. 02		
RISE 06:57	SET 17:24	
RISE 11:45	SET 22:42	
TUESDAY, DEC. 03		
RISE 06:57	SET 17:24	
RISE 12:22	SET 23:37	

Delhi Weather	max	min
Delhi City	23	12
Safdarjung	23	12
Palam	21	12

Delhi Palam Today
23°C Dry weather with moderate fog/mist during very cool morning. Day will be pleasant and sunny.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow
22°C Slight fall in night temperature. Shallow/mist during very cool morning. Day will sunny.

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THE HINDU
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IN BRIEF



Art exhibition for LGBTQ+ community

NEW DELHI InsideOut, a non-profit volunteer LGBTQ+ group in association with the NAZ Foundation and Keshav Suri Foundation, has brought together – Awakening – an art exhibition for the LGBTQ+ community. The exhibition is till December 6 at Art Junction, The Lalit. "This is aimed to educate broader society about the experience of being LGBTQ+ in India," read a release by the group.

Hyderabad case: woman detained for protesting near Parliament

She alleges harassment by police officers; DCW chief demands FIR in matter

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

A 24-year-old woman was detained on Saturday for staging a solitary protest near Parliament in the wake of gang rape and murder of a 27-year-old veterinarian on the outskirts of Hyderabad and other crimes against women.

Anu Dubey from Rajasthan, who works in Delhi, alleged that she was harassed and thrashed by the police while in detention at Parliament Street police station.

Ms. Dubey had come to protest with a placard reading – Why I can't feel safe in my own Bharat – near gate number 2 and 3 of the Parliament at 8 a.m. Deputy Commissioner of Police (New Delhi) Eish Singh said the woman was protesting in a high-security zone.

"She was told to do any such protest at Jantar Mantar but she was adamant. She was removed from the area by women police personnel and was released after due questioning," he said, adding that the police heard her



Anu Dubey in police detention in the city on Saturday after she staged a protest in the wake of gang rape and murder of a veterinarian in Hyderabad. • PTI

grievances.

Delhi Commission for Women chief Swati Maliwal met Ms. Dubey during which the latter shared the incident and her concerns.

Ms. Dubey then went to the police station again to submit her complaint.

She alleged that she was "deeply harassed" by officers and identified two of them as "Mr. Kuldeep and Head Constable Manju".

She said three women officers threw her on a bed, sat on her and thrashed her. She

had scratches on her hand and body, she said, adding that she was forced to write a letter stating that she will not protest again.

"A girl has been raped and burnt alive. The entire country is angry. As an informed citizen, if I am worried and wish to protest, it is my right to do so. Instead of ensuring proper protection for girls, even innocent people are treated in such an inhumane manner by the Delhi Police," she wrote.

Ms. Dubey said she does

not wish to share her details with the police and her point of contact will be DCW office. Responding to the complaint, the police said: "The lady has made certain allegations. The matter will be looked into by a senior woman police officer for necessary action."

Ms. Maliwal has demanded that an FIR be lodged against those responsible for the "misbehaviour". Troubled by the traumatic rape incident in Hyderabad, when a student wanted to raise her voice, she was detained and beaten up by the Delhi Police. I met the girl at the police station, she is scared. Will this be the fate of those who raise their voices?" Ms. Maliwal tweeted.

Report by Dec. 4

The DCW has sought reasons for removing the woman from the site even though she was alone and sitting quietly. It has also sought the details of officers responsible for misbehaving with her and action taken against the police personnel by December 4.

IYC, NSUI protest rising crimes against women

Protesters criticise Centre, State govt. for failing to provide minimum safety

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Indian Youth Congress (IYC) held a candlelight march here on Saturday to protest the rise in crimes against women in the country, the group said.

'Slogans not enough'

"Despite all tall claims of the BJP government, the graph of crimes against women has gone up in India," it said, adding that slogans such as "Beti Bacho, Beti Padhao"

were not enough.

Raise awareness

The group said it is crucial to raise awareness on such issues and take immediate action against the accused.

Earlier in the day, the National Student Union of India (NSUI) also held demonstrations here demanding justice over the recent case in Hyderabad.

The group marched from Patel Chowk to Parliament Street and burnt an effigy representing the Telangana government.

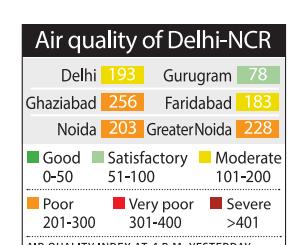
Calling for stringent punishment against the accused in the case, NSUI national president Neeraj Kundan condemned an "insensitive" statement made by the Telangana Home Minister with regard to the murder.

Minister bats for preserving historic chowk

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The historic Bhai Mati Das Chowk should be made an "integral" part of the ongoing Chandni Chowk redevelopment project as per the directions of the Delhi High Court and the Religious Committee of the city government, PWD Minister Satyendar Jain said.

Mr. Jain's comments come in the wake of a complaint filed by Preetpal Chawla, president of the Bhai Mati Das Sewa Simran Society, seeking permission for the upkeep of the Chowk. Bhai Mati Das Chowk, located near the Sisganj Gurdwara in Old Delhi, has a memorial of Bhai Mati Das, who was an aide of Guru Tegh Bahadur and was executed, along with his younger brother, the Mughals.



DELHI TODAY

Exhibition: "Cocktail on the wall II", an exhibition by Winnie Singh and Khushroo Kalyanwala at Convention Centre Foyer, India Habitat Centre (IHC), 11 a.m. - 7 p.m.

Exhibition: "Raabta", a group art exhibition, curated by Erum Khan at All India Fine Arts & Craft Society, 1 Rafi Marg, 11 a.m. - 7 p.m.

Exhibition: "Configuration" a painting show by Somnath Singh at Triveni Gallery, Triveni Kala Sangam, 205, Tansen Marg, 11 a.m. - 8 p.m.

Culture: 118th Thirunakshatra celebration of Sriwan Sataloka Sri Veera Raaghava Sataloka Yateendra Mahadesikan, the 43rd Jeer of Sri Alobila Mutt, Mahe Sudarshan homam at Sri Lakshminarayana Mandir, Pusa Road, Karol Bagh, 8 p.m.

Culture: South Indian Association, Faridabad has organised a cultural event which will feature felicitation of senior members and performance by children at Rajasthani Seva Sadhan, Sector 10, Faridabad, 6 p.m. (Mail your listings for this column at citeditor@thehindu.co.in)

Will bring adjournment motion to discuss illegal colonies: BJP

Two-day Delhi Assembly session will start tomorrow

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The Delhi BJP will bring an adjournment motion in the coming session of the Assembly to discuss the issue of unauthorised colonies in the national Capital.

The two-day session, which will begin on Monday, is scheduled to see the tabling of two Bills: one for setting up a skill and entrepreneurship university; and another for a sports university.

"Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal is making false statements about regularising unauthorised colonies by the Centre to mislead the people of Delhi... he is showing his irresponsibility by spreading false statements," Leader of Opposition in the Delhi Assembly Vijender Gupta said.

"In this session, we will move a *Kaam Roko Prastav* [adjournment motion] in the House, under which we will challenge the Delhi government to stop all work and discuss giving ownership to over 40 lakh people

Congress accuses BJP, AAP of delaying regularisation

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The Delhi Congress on Saturday accused both the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government and the BJP-led Centre of deliberately delaying the regularisation and registry of unauthorised colonies in the Capital.

"The two governments nullified the notification issued by the Congress government and came out with a new notification only to delay the issue," read a statement issued by the party.

Delhi Pradesh Congress Committee president Subhash Chopra said, "Both the Narendra Modi-led government at the Centre and the Arvind Kejriwal-led government in Delhi are deliberately delaying the regularisation and registry of

unauthorised colonies... both parties are betraying 40 lakh people living in illegal colonies."

"The two governments nullified the notification issued by the Congress government and came out with a new notification only to delay the issue," read a statement issued by the party.

Delhi Congress chief spokesperson Mukesh Sharma said that party workers would gherao Union Urban Development Minister Hardeep Puri's office at Nirmal Bhawan on Tuesday.

living in unauthorised colonies... and not to use marshals against the Opposition," Mr. Gupta said.

The Rohini legislator accused the CM of "repeatedly

lying" to the people regarding availability of registries, adding that the Centre was starting the registration of properties from December 16.

CAMPUS 'FEE'VER | JNU students on why fee hike should be rolled back

We have to ensure the gates of JNU are open for everyone



NANDINI SHARMA
MA student,
Pashto

Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.

-NELSON MANDELA

We are being asked to pay for bills which are not personal



HARSHITA ARYA
MA student,
Chinese

My father is a small businessman with six people dependent on him. My generation is the first from my family to pursue higher education, and I am the first girl to study in a university.

I got admission in Jawaharlal Nehru University in 2016. I belong to Gaya district of Bihar where I completed Class 12th in 2015. I initially took admission in Delhi University in BSc Maths Honours, but when I calculated my monthly expenditure, it came up to ₹37,000-₹8,000. Since DU has limited number of hostel seats and some colleges don't even have girls' hostel, my father couldn't afford the hefty amount and I had to withdraw my admission.

While reading a newspaper I found out about foreign language courses and the best university for it, according to NAAC, was JNU. I looked up its fee structure which was: tuition fee per semester - ₹250, hostel fee per semester - ₹650, mess bill - ₹2,000-₹3,000 per month. In 2018, our hostel fee increased to ₹1,500 per semester, but the students accepted it because it was still reasonable. But now our monthly fee will go up to ₹6,000, which is injustice to students like me whose annual family income is less than ₹1.4 lakh.

My first year was wasted because I couldn't find an inexpensive university. Now, JNU is also being 'privatised'. I am using this word because we are being asked to pay for sanitation workers, mess workers, electricity and water bills, though it is not personal. If this fee hike is not rolled back, I may have to quit my master's programme and look for a job.

As told to Kallol Bhattacharjee | NEXT ► SONU SARAF, NISHANT KUMAR DONGRE

'Active connivance behind halting appointment of ad hoc teachers'

DUPA seeks clarifications from university regarding its directive

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

The Delhi University Principals Association's (DUPA) move to put on hold the appointment of ad hoc teachers is being undertaken due to the "active connivance of certain influential college principals", alleged Academic Council member Saitat Ghosh.

In a letter to the Vice-Chancellor, the DUPA said it had decided to put in abeyance the appointment of ad hoc teachers until such time as the university makes certain clarifications regarding its directive to appoint guest teachers against new vacancies arising in the current session.

These include whether the post of an ad hoc teacher resigning in the current academic session must be treated as a new vacancy or

The DUPA in a letter to the V-C warned that it would go on an indefinite strike if its demands were not met within three days

not, whether ad hoc appointments made even after the university's directive may be retained and as to whether new appointees of a "higher order" are to be considered compared to existing appointees of a "lower order".

Responding to the decision of the principal's association, the DUPA in a letter to the V-C warned that it would go on an indefinite strike if its demands were not met within three days, chief among which was the withdrawal of the original university directive to appoint guest teachers.

ALCOHOL REDUCES THE ABILITY TO SEE DISTANT OBJECT BY 25%

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Man held for attacking friend's mother-in-law

He was nabbed from Punjab: police

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

A 39-year-old man has been arrested for allegedly attacking his friend's mother-in-law with a knife in west Delhi's Khyala, the police said on Saturday.

Stabbed with knife

Deputy Commissioner of Police (West) Deepak Purohit said the accused, Vijay, is from Raghbir Nagar. On Friday, a case was registered based on the statement of a 75-year-old woman who said Vijay, a close friend of her daughter-in-law, stabbed her with a knife and fled the spot, the police said.

The woman, also a resi-

dent of Raghbir Nagar, was taken to Guru Gobind Singh Hospital and later referred to Deen Dayal Hospital. Her condition was stated to be stable.

"CCTV footage of the area was checked and call record details of the accused were analysed. The accused was nabbed from Pathankot in Punjab," Mr. Purohit said.

Vijay allegedly told the police that the complainant's daughter-in-law is his friend and a quarrel took place between the two women. "The daughter-in-law told him about the incident following which he attacked the complainant to take revenge," the DCP added.

An officer said the accused from Kishanganj, who used to work in an eatery close to the woman's house, has been arrested. He had recently quit the job.

A man who owns a clock shop near the victim's house said she used to live alone and ran a shop selling articles of worship on the front side of her residential room.

At 8 a.m. on Saturday, her relative, who used to visit her regularly, found the shop's wooden door open, he said.

The relative thought she had gone to get water. After waiting for sometime, he went inside the shop and saw her lying dead. He then called the neighbours after which the police were informed," the shop owner said.

On reaching the spot, the police shifted the body to a mortuary for post-mortem. They said rape and death by strangulation are suspected but the report will throw light on the details.

The police then scanned

overnment godowns. The Centre is responsible for the paucity of onions every year," Mr. Singh said. He added that when there was a need to stock-up on onions, the Centre preferred to export it.

He added that when there was a need to stock-up on onions, the Centre preferred to export it. "When there is shortage in the domestic market, it directly benefits the black marketers and hoarders," said the AAP MP.

"There is a nexus between BJP and black marketers and hoarders. This unholy nexus has led to an increase in onion prices across the country. The Delhi government was selling onion to the people at ₹23.90 per kg," Mr. Singh said.

"But to stop this, the Centre increased the rate from ₹15 per kg to ₹60 per kg, while 32,000 tonnes of onion rotted away in go-

HEMAMI BHANDARI
NEW DELHI

A 55-year-old woman was allegedly raped and murdered by a 22-year-old man in north Delhi's Gulabi Bagh in the early hours of Saturday, the police said.

An officer said the accused from Kishanganj, who used to work in an eatery close to the woman's house, has been arrested. He had recently quit the job.

A man who owns a clock shop near the victim's house said she used to live alone and ran a shop selling articles of worship on the front side of her residential room.

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The police then scanned

He entered the shop on the pretext of buying something after which he forced himself on her and when she resisted, he strangled her with his hands and fled the spot

POLICE OFFICER

CCTV footage from a shop close to the victim's house which showed a man getting out of her house at 12.30 a.m. The suspect was identified by residents and shopkeepers.

He was arrested from his residence within a few hours, the police said.

During interrogation, he allegedly told the police that he was drunk at the time of the incident and had known the victim as she used to often come to the eatery where he earlier worked.

"He entered the shop on the pretext of buying something after which he forced himself on her and when she resisted, he strangled her with his hands and fled the spot," said a senior officer.

Victim lived alone

The victim was staying here since the early 1990s and her

mother passed away two decades ago while her father died in 2006, said one of her relatives.

She did not have any siblings and therefore managed her expenses through the shop. "She was not in touch with her relatives. She was a reserved woman and we would meet her in months. I had shared my contact details with a neighbour and had asked him to contact me in case of an emergency," he said.

A pan shop owner said the victim was very conscious. "She was a courageous woman. If a man even looked at her, she would spit on him and ask him to leave. She often washed clothes late night outside her house and if a man would come near her, she would throw a bucket full of water at him," he said.

"She was a protector as she wouldn't mind giving an earful to people if she found them suspicious," he added.

The owner of the shop where the 22-year-old worked said the accused was a drunkard.

"The woman used to often come to the eatery. She was a well-behaved woman. The accused lied and quit the job but I know he wanted to start his own stall of food," the 50-year-old owner said.

11-year-old girl sexually assaulted; manhunt on

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

An 11-year-old girl was allegedly sexually assaulted by a man in outer north Delhi on November 26, the police said on Saturday.

She is said to be stable, they said. An officer said on November 26, the victim was reported missing by her parents.

The complainants said they are labourers and were at work when the incident happened.

Following this, a kidnapping case was registered and the police started looking for the girl. She was found walking in the area and was rushed to a hospital. The minor told the police that a man lured her to an isolated plot where he sexually assaulted her and threatened her not to tell anyone.

A case under relevant sections of the IPC and POCSO Act has been registered and further investigation is under way, the police added.

Rape victim succumbs to burn injuries in U.P.

NSA invoked against culprit: police

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
SAMBALI (U.P.)

The 16-year-old girl who was allegedly raped and set ablaze by her neighbour in a township area here last week succumbed to serious burns in a Delhi hospital on Saturday, the police said.

The victim was battling for life for the past nine days, said SP Yamuna Prasad.

On November 21, she was

alone at her house in the township when her neighbour allegedly raped her, said Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP) Alok Jaiswal. The accused later set her ablaze. He has been arrested.

The National Security Act is being invoked against the culprit and the case will be taken up in the fast track court, SP Prasad said.

Accused arrested; he was drunk at the time of the incident

BJP-hoarder nexus behind soaring onion prices: AAP

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Aam Aadmi Party on Saturday alleged that a nexus between BJP and onion hoarders was behind soaring prices of the vegetable.

AAP MP Sanjay Singh alleged that the Centre was to blame for the "annual furore" over the availability and price of onions, and was directly responsible for "this onion chaos".

"There is a nexus between BJP and black marketers and hoarders. This unholy nexus has led to an increase in onion prices across the country. The Delhi government was selling onion to the people at ₹23.90 per kg," Mr. Singh said.

"But to stop this, the Centre increased the rate from ₹15 per kg to ₹60 per kg, while 32,000 tonnes of onion rotted away in go-

overnment godowns. The Centre is responsible for the paucity of onions every year," Mr. Singh said. He added that when there was a need to stock-up on onions, the Centre preferred to export it.

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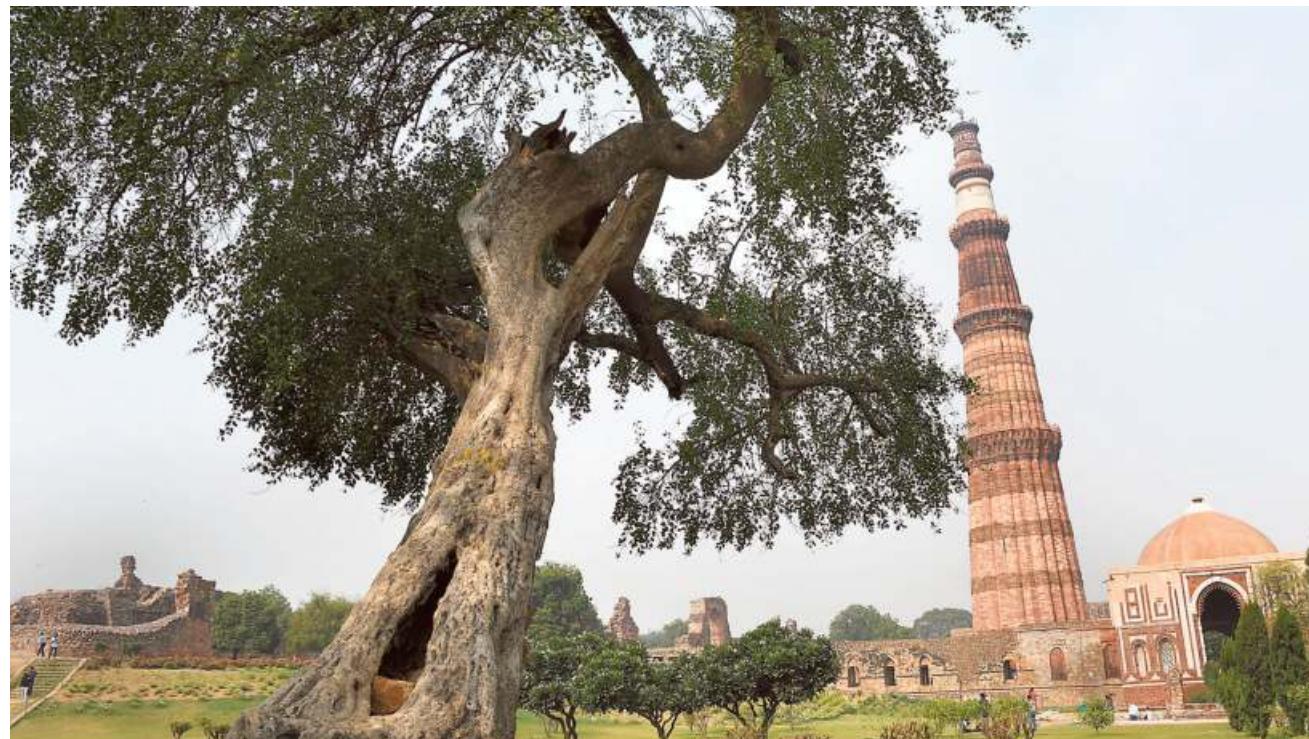
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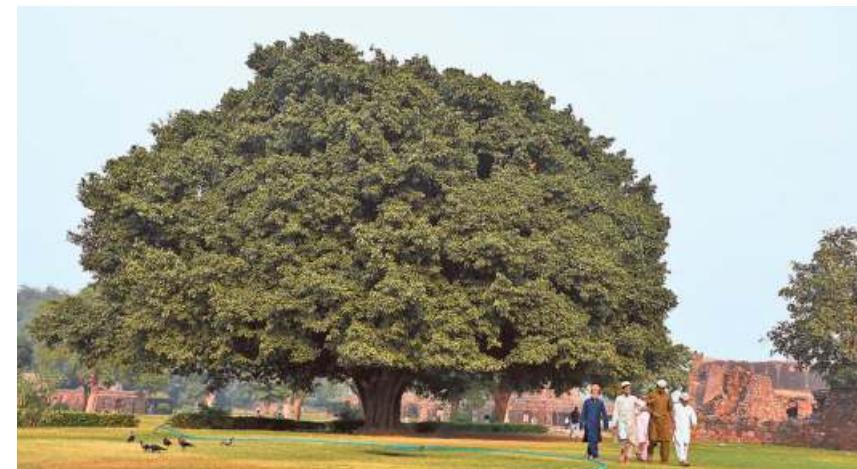
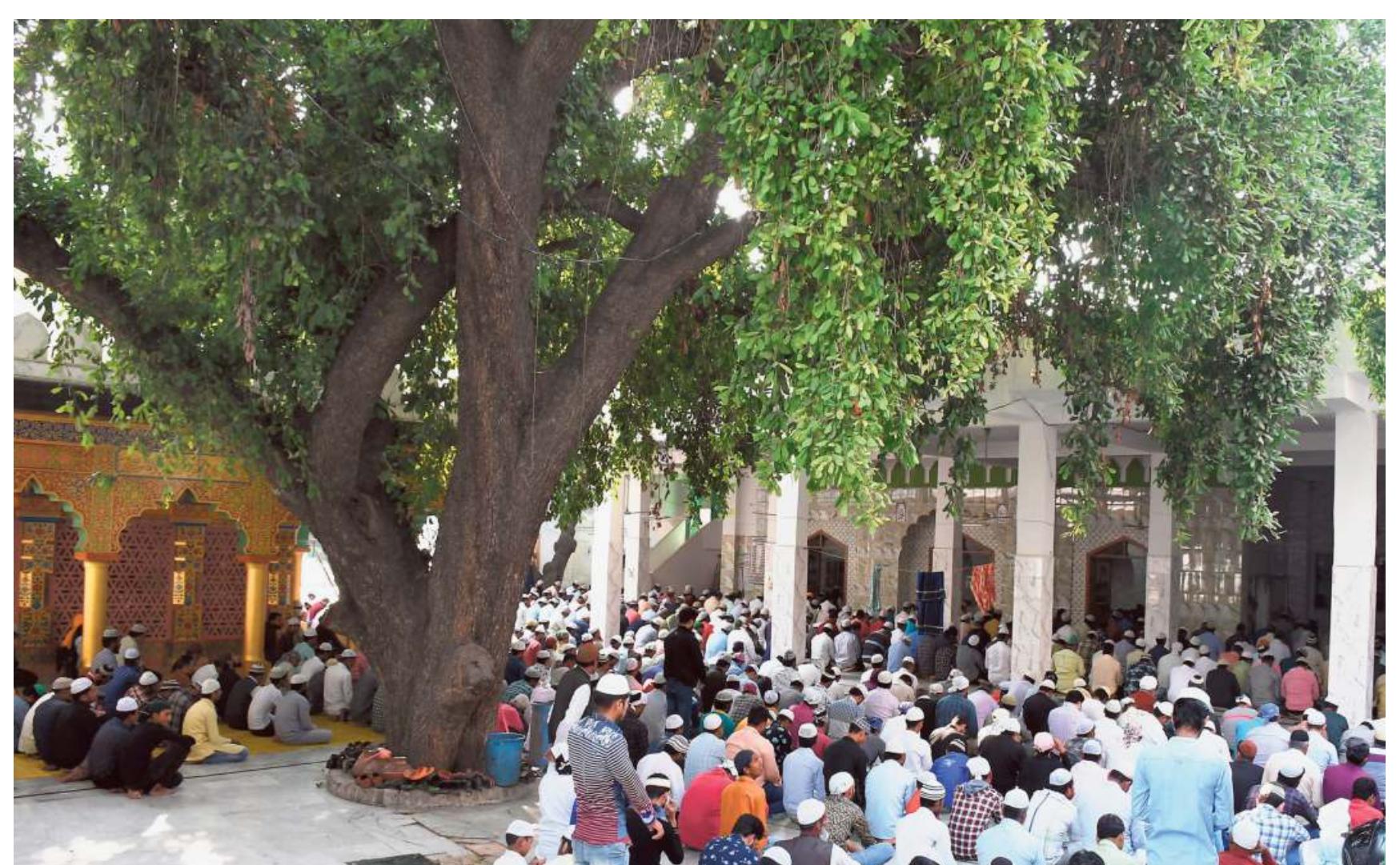
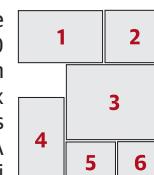
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The stories they could tell

V.V. Krishnan captures trees in the Capital that have stood the test of time

1 A salvadora tree at the Qutub Minar complex **2** An imli tree in the Hauz Khas fort complex is believed to be over 100 years old **3** Manilkara hexandra (locally known as Khirni) in Dargah Hazrat Nasiruddin. Some believe the tree dates back to the 14th Century **4** A mango tree with large burls (unusual growths) near Bada Gumbad in Lodi Gardens **5** A pilkan tree at Feroz Shah Kotla **6** A semal tree at Teen Murti



IN BRIEF

Man arrested with bullet at IGI Airport

NEW DELHI

A Bangkok-bound passenger has been apprehended by the CISF at the Delhi airport for allegedly carrying a live bullet in his baggage, an official said on Saturday. The bullet was detected during the baggage search of the traveller at the Indira Gandhi International Airport on Friday. "A live bullet of 7.65 mm calibre was recovered from the bag of the passenger who had an Indian passport," the official said.

BJP protests over 'polluted water' in city

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The BJP Delhi Pradesh Yuva Morcha on Saturday staged protests across the city and accused the Aam Aadmi Party government of failing to provide clean drinking water to its citizens.

The protests were held at Palika Bazar in Connaught Place; Khan Market; and at South Extension Part-2. It was led by Yuva Morcha chief Sunil Yadav.

"The drinking water in the national capital has failed on all standards... the Chief Minister [Arvind Kejriwal] is fully responsible," said Mr. Yadav.

'Smog towers inefficient, expensive'

Environmentalists urge SC to not direct the Centre or States to buy the purifiers

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

A group of environmentalists have written an open letter to the Supreme Court, urging it not to direct the Centre or the States to spend public money on "expensive" and "inefficient" smog towers, which will "only benefit the manufacturers and sellers".

Earlier this week, the apex court had asked the Centre to take a concrete decision within 10 days on whether to install smog towers in Delhi-National Capital Region to combat rising pollution.

The direction had come after pollution levels in Delhi peaked to a three-year high.

"India's leading air pollution scientists and researchers unanimously say that outdoor air purifiers are inefficient to the point of being useless," Jyoti Pande Lavakare, co-founder of Care for Air India, a nonprofit advocacy group, wrote in the letter.

"We earnestly request you [the Supreme Court] – please do not direct any governments, local, State or Central, to spend public money to buy expensive smog towers. These are ineffective in bringing down PM2.5 levels and may even add to pollution when the dirty filters are disposed off in our already overflowing landfills and burnt."



Activists say industrial and vehicle emissions standards should be strengthened, and clean fuels should be promoted to curb pollution. ■ FILE PHOTO: SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

read the letter.

Last year, China had set up the world's largest air purification tower in Xi'an.

Co-director, UrbanEmissions.info, and Care for Air India expert Sarath Guttikunda said that at 100% efficiency, a Xi'an-like smog tower can purify just 0.00007% of Delhi's air.

"Delhi's airshed is around 80 km x 80 km. If you assume Delhi is a box (like a room), atmospheric height is at least 1 km (3 km in summer). At an average wind speed of 2 m/sec, the volume of air passing through the city is more than 5 trillion cubic metre per hour. The capacity of the smog tower in Xi'an is a fraction

of that – 4,16,000 cubic metre per hour," he said.

Only sellers will benefit
The reason indoor air purifiers work well and outdoor air purifiers do not is that this ratio is more favourable indoors, the advocacy group said. "Like the odd-even scheme, the best one can expect from smog towers is increased public awareness and political mileage. What is worse, in the case of smog towers, the only people who will profit will be the manufacturers and sellers," it said.

Ms. Lavakare said better results can be achieved if the Supreme Court could direct the power companies sur-

rounding Delhi to add filters to their chimneys to catch emissions at source.

"This was supposed to be done by December 7, 2017... they have lobbied to get this date pushed back to December 2019 and then 2022, with staggered deadlines."

"China and other countries have not brought their pollution down by using smog towers. Rather, they have strengthened industrial emissions standards, phased out small and polluting factories and outdated industrial capacities, upgraded industrial boilers, promoted clean fuels and strengthened vehicle emission standards," she added.

Noida police recover 10 out of 34 stolen pedigree puppies

Accused locked the canines in a house; he is absconding

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GHAZIABAD

Ten out of 34 pedigree puppies allegedly stolen from a private veterinary hospital in Noida were recovered on Saturday, the police said.

Phase 3 SHO Devendra Singh Yadav said a police team had rescued these puppies from the house of a pet breeder, Gyanendra Pratap, in Sector 93 on Thursday evening after receiving a complaint from Srishti Rachna Joshi, a board member of Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA).

He said Gyanendra was

not running an illegal enterprise but he did not fulfill some of the conditions to run a pet shop in a residential area.

Cruelty to animals

"He left the animals locked in the house without any care. We booked him under Section 11 (1) of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1960. As we didn't have space, we put the puppies in Krishna Veterinary Hospital in Sector 122 for check-up and care," Mr. Yadav told *The Hindu*.

On Friday morning, Gyanendra and his three staff

members stole the puppies from the hospital, the officer said, adding: "On Saturday, a team nabbed one of his staffers and recovered 10 of the puppies from a society in Sector 119. Gyanendra is absconding with the rest," the officer added.

Dr. Krishna said Gyanendra and his staff "stormed" into the hospital and took away the puppies after "threatening" the staff, in two cars.

"The puppies were of expensive exotic breeds such as golden retriever, French bulldog and maltese," he said.

Court restores cheque bounce complaint

NIRNIMESH KUMAR
NEW DELHI

A Delhi court has restored a complaint for consideration in a cheque bounce case.

A Metropolitan Magistrate court had dismissed the complaint after the complainant failed to appear and record his pre-summoning evidence on three occasions.

In his revision petition in the court of District and Sessions Judge Neena Bansal Krishna, the complainant said that his authorised re-

presentative could not record his evidence due to his ill health.

"Ample opportunity was given by the Metropolitan Magistrate to the revisionist for adducing pre-summoning evidence, but considering the explanation given and also that the complainant is still at the initial stage where pre-summoning evidence is yet to be recorded, no prejudice will be caused to any party if the revision is allowed and the complaint is

restored to its original number," the Judge said.

"As has been pointed out during the arguments, the matter was fixed for pre-summoning evidence on five dates out of which on three dates, the authorised representative was not present; on one date, the court was not available while on another date, file of the connected matter was not available," the Judge further said.

"The revision petition is allowed," the Judge added.

Case diary given by SIT was not complete, claims Chinmayanand

Former Union Minister is accused of sexually exploiting a law student

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

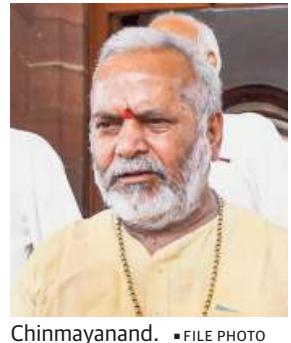
SHAHJAHANPUR/ LUCKNOW

Former Union Minister Swami Chinmayanand, accused of sexually exploiting a student of a law college run by his trust, told a U.P. court on Saturday that the case diary provided to him was incomplete, prompting the court to order that a complete diary be made available to him.

Tight security

Chinmayanand was produced before Chief Judicial Magistrate Omvir amid tight security.

His counsel Om Singh said the case diary made



Chinmayanand. ■ FILE PHOTO

available to him by the Special Investigation Team was incomplete and the court has directed for providing a complete case diary.

The CJM court fixed December 16 as the next date

for hearing, prosecution counsel Lal Saheb said.

The SIT – probing sexual harassment allegations against Chinmayanand and a related extortion case – filed a voluminous charge sheet in a court here on November 6 in the two cases.

Arrested in September

Chinmayanand was arrested on September 20 and is in jail after the 23-year-old law student filed a case against him under section 376C of the IPC, an offence pertaining to the abuse of position to "induce or seduce" a woman to have "sexual intercourse not amounting to the

offence of rape".

This is a lesser charge than section 376, under which a rape convict faces a maximum punishment of life imprisonment. The punishment under section 376C is between five and 10 years in jail.

The four accused in the extortion case include the woman law student. All of them are in jail.

The 72-year-old former Minister also faces the charges of stalking under section 354D, wrongful confinement under section 342 and criminal intimidation under section 506 of the IPC.

U.P. told to pay ₹25 lakh to lawyer's family

Deceased was not properly diagnosed, says Allahabad High Court

OMAR RASHID

LUCKNOW

The Allahabad High Court has directed the Uttar Pradesh government to pay a compensation of ₹25 lakh to the family of a young lawyer who died at a government hospital in Prayagraj due to "gross medical negligence" while suffering from dengue.

Medical negligence

A Division Bench of Justices Pradeep Kumar Singh Baghel and Piyush Agrawal had on November 14 ruled that the

death of lawyer Piyush Mishra in 2016 was caused due to "gross medical negligence as dengue was not diagnosed".

The order was passed on a PIL registered on the basis of a letter sent to the court by the deceased's father B.P. Mishra, an advocate himself. In his letter on November 4, 2016, Mr. Mishra had mentioned the "insensitivity" shown by the doctors at Swarup Rani Nehru Medical College in Prayagraj in not rendering medical assistance to

his son, while drawing attention to the "casual approach" of the State functionaries towards the menace of dengue fever.

The patient died at the Sanjay Gandhi Postgraduate Institute of Medical Sciences, Lucknow, on October 30, 2016, and the cause of death was mentioned as "dengue shock syndrome ARDS". He had been shifted to Lucknow after his condition became critical.

However, the SGPGI reported that the diagnosis

at SRN Medical College was wrong. While the patient was suffering from dengue, his condition was diagnosed by the Prayagraj facility as "fever with shock with thrombocytopenia with Multi Organ Dysfunction Syndrome", the court noted. "...we are satisfied that death of Piyush Mishra was caused due to gross medical negligence as the patient was not provided any treatment for dengue. The deceased was not properly diagnosed and for the said reason, he died."

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'No relevance for Shaurya Diwas now'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

LUCKNOW

Days before the anniversary of the demolition of the Babri Masjid on December 6, Hindu outfits here on Saturday said they would not observe the day as "Shaurya Diwas" this time in view of the Supreme Court verdicts in the Ayodhya case and urged people to maintain communal harmony.

After the demolition of the disputed structure on December 6, 1992, Hindu organisations, including the VHP, had been observing "Shaurya Diwas" (victory day) while Muslim outfits remembered the incident as the "Yaum-e-gham" (day of mourning).

Communal harmony

Ram Janmabhoomi Nyas chief Mahant Nitya Gopal Das said there was no relevance left for it after the apex court verdict and urged people to light earthen lamps in their homes and temples besides reciting Lord Ram 'aarti' to give a message of communal harmony.

VHP spokesman Sharad Sharma too said his organisation would not observe the day.

The mahant said just as the countrymen presented an example of peace and harmony after the verdict, "we need not organise any public programme on December 6 and provide any opportunity that could lead to tensions".

Unorganised workers demand recognition of labour rights

Workers' union in Rajasthan adopts motto 'Let there be dignity of labour and decent wages for work'

MOHAMMED IQBAL

JAIPUR

Unorganised workers from different sectors in Rajasthan, who formed their first-ever union two years ago, have sought recognition of their labour rights for getting minimum wages, social security, monthly ration through public distribution system and implementation of law with the guarantee for 100 days of work in a year to each household.

The Rajasthan Asangathit Mazdoor Union (RAMU) organised its biennial general body meeting at Raipur village in Pali district over the week-end to deliberate on the issues confronting the labourers and devise strategies to enhance their participation in the movements for asserting their rights. The union adopted a motto: *Izzat Ho Har Kaam Ki, Mazdoori*



Unorganised labourers participating in the general body meeting of Rajasthan Asangathit Mazdoor Union at Pali district's Raipur village. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Ho Shaan Ki (Let there be dignity of labour and decent wages for work).

Formed at Ajmer district's Jawa village in 2017, the RAMU was registered by the State government under the Trade Union Act, 1926, in June 2018. The union has established two fronts for rural

workers, comprising the labourers of the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, and the street vendors.

Addressing the labourers who had arrived from Bhilwara, Rajsamand, Ajmer, Pali and other districts, social activist and Magsaysay Award winner Aruna Roy said the labourers and common people

should come together to strengthen the rights which they had gained after prolonged struggles. There should be no scope for denial of minimum wages and minimum days of employment to workers, she said.

Nikhil Dey of the Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan said the NREGA, adopted after a long-running campaign in Rajasthan, was not just a legislation, but had the potential to bring about "revolutionary changes" if implemented in its true spirit. No compromise could be made on getting minimum wages for work, he added.

Submit a memo
Hundreds of labourers took out a march from Mela Chowk in Raipur to the Pancharat Samiti office and handed over a memorandum to the Development Officer.

RAMU members said more fronts would be established shortly to give representation to women domestic workers, porters and daily wage earners.

Former Harmada Sarpanch Norti Bai, who has been in the forefront of the right to information campaign, was chosen the union's president for the second consecutive term. Babu Lal was elected general secretary and three divisional secretaries were nominated for Ajmer, Jodhpur and Udaipur.

Over 40 representatives of public movements from 15 States attended the meeting. The groups included Khedut Mazdoor Chetna Sangathan of Gujarat, Sangnit Kisan Mazdoor Sangathan of P. Jan Jagaran Shakti Sangathan of Bihar and Gondwana Adiavasi Sangathan of M.P.

UNIDENTIFIED DEAD BODY

General public is hereby informed that one unknown male person was found dead by Train Accident at Pole No. KM. 19/13-33 Baghdola Fatak Near Palam Railway Station, Delhi on Dated 26.11.2019 Time 1:19 AM. The dead body has been preserved at DDU Hospital Mortuary identification for 72 hrs. In this regard vide DD No. 01 Dated 26.11.2019 has been lodged at P.S. Delhi Cantt, Rly,

Station, Delhi.
The description of the dead body is given as under Name: Unknown, S/o Unknown, R/o Unknown, Age: 25-30 Years, Face-Round, Built-Medium, Complexion: Sallow, Height: 5'2", Hair : Black Wearing: Pink Colour Shirt and Cream Colour Pant.

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

SHO
P.S. Delhi Cantt. Rly. Station , Delhi
Ph.: 011-225688505
8750871309

DP/4219/RLY/19

Note: Date of Opening of Financial part will be decided after evaluation of Techno-commercial part.

The tender document can be downloaded from the portal (<http://www.jharkhandfenders.gov.in>) The tender document cost may be submitted in the form of DD from any nationalized Bank/ scheduled Bank against Tender fee in favour of Jharkhand Bijli Vitran Nigam Ltd, Ranchi payable at Ranchi.

The EMD shall be in the form of crossed bank draft/pay order/ Bank Guarantee in favour of Jharkhand

Bijli Vitran Nigam Limited, Ranchi payable at Ranchi from reputed (i) Public sector bank located in India

or (ii) Scheduled commercial Indian Private Bank as per attached list in RFP.

Further details against the above NIT can be seen on website <http://jharkhandtenders.gov.in> and may be contacted on Mobile No. 09431135523 / 9430348596/ NIC helpline No. 0651 -2400178. Submission of tender fee/EMD will not be accepted by counter/Regd. Post. Further details.

स्वास्थ्य एवं साक्षरता में ऊर्जा अपनी शिक्षणों का टॉल फ़ोन 1800 345 6570 पर दर्ज करें।

PR No. 221469 PR 222401 Jharkhand Bijlee Vitran Nigam Ltd (19-20)_D

SEARCH FOR MISSING

General Public is hereby informed that one House Maid (girl) Namely: Rina Khuzur, D/o: Sh. Titush Khuzur, R/o: VPO-Toli, Police Station-Siskar Mantoli, Distt-Gumbla, Jharkhand has been missing from H.No. 3/45, Jangpura B, Hazrat Nizamuddin from the area of PS Hazrat Nizamuddin, South-East District, Delhi since 01.07.2019. In this regard a DD No.

025-A, dated 17.07.2019 has been registered at P.S. H.N. Din, Delhi. The description of the missing girl are as under: Age: 20 years, Height: 5'3", Complexion: Wheatish, Face: Longer, Built: Strong, Wearing: Suit-salwar and chappal in feet. Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the girl but no clue has come to light so far. Any person having any information or clue about this girl kindly inform to the following.

Website: <http://cbi.nic.in>
E-Mail ID : cic@cbi.gov.in
Fax No. 011-2436839
Ph. Nos: 011-2436838, 2436841
DP/7718/SE/19

SHO
P.S. Hazrat Nizamuddin, Delhi
Ph.: 011-24355758, 8750870929

Office of the General Manager, Construction Unit, U.P. Jal Nigam, Saharanpur

Letter No. 3533/203/221 Dated : 29.11.2019

Short Term E-Tender Notice

Online percentage rate e-tenders on two bid system for construction and operation on Build Operate and Transfer (BOT) basis in various villages of District Muzaffarnagar are hereby invited on behalf of chairman, U.P. Jal Nigam form the reputed contractor and having requisite work experience and financial capabilities. M.D., U.P. Jal Nigam, Lucknow office order no. 4290/ कायापंजीकरण (2021 - 0261)/2018/1311 Dated 12.09.2018 have removed the essentiality of registration with U.P. Jal Nigam in requisite class of work in the tender process for which prequalification condition adopted Tender document shall be available at e-procurement website <http://etender.up.nic.in>. Interested contractors may view and download tender documents on e-procurement website <http://etender.up.nic.in> from date 05.12.2019 (1500 Hrs) to 12.12.2019 upto 17:00 hrs. Upload duly filled online Dt. 12.12.2019 (upto 17:00 hrs). Technical bid opening Date 13.12.2019 (at 15:30 hrs) at Office of the Executive Engineer, Construction Division, U.P.Jal Nigam, Muzaffarnagar.

SD-
R.O. No. 170/North/DMC/2019-20 Executive Engineer-(M)-1, Karol Bagh Zone

EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY E-TENDER NOTICE

Open Tender Batch No. : 11/19 Dated : 29.11.2019 E-Tender Notice for supply of materials- "participation in through" web portal of IREPS - www.ireps.gov.in offers are invited for supply of the following materials : The closing time for all tenders is at 14.00 hr.

S. No. Tender No. Brief Description Quantity Closing on

1 05195687 Upended insert 30mm neutral 2584 Nos. 23.12.2019

2 06195692 Supply Installation, Testing and Commissioning 94 Nos. 23.12.2019

Participants are required to submit their offer only on-line through the web portal of IREPS- www.ireps.gov.in before the closing date and time. Other details regarding Consignee and detailed description of stores are available in tender documents in tender notice on the above portal.

PR/1772/HQ/STORE/T/19-20/40 Principal Chief Material Manager/ECR/Hajipur

+

NORTH DELHI MUNICIPAL CORPORATION

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (M-1)

KAROL BAGH ZONE, ROAD NO. 34, OPPOSITE FIRE STATION, MOTI NAGAR, NEW DELHI - 110015

NIT No. 22/EE(M-1)/TC/KBZ/2019-20 Dated: 27.11.2019

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Executive Engineer (M-1), Karol Bagh Zone, invites on behalf of the Commissioner, North Delhi Municipal Corporation, sealed percentage rates tender from the approved and eligible contractors registered with the MCD (General Wing) as per following schedule.

Start Date of Sale of Tender Documents : 28.11.2019 from 18:00 PM

Last Date of Bid Submission : 12.12.2019 up to 15:00 PM

Opening of Financial Bid : 13.12.2019 at 15:30 PM

S. No. 1, Name of Work: Strengthening of road by Pdg. Dense carpeting from 4/1 to 4/52, 5/41 to 5/6/17, 3/8 to 16/1, 6/8/B to Shop No. 52, round of sindhi park, in front of swami dayanand school, 4/1 to 5/7/17 and Rajendra Place Metro Station to Arya Samaj Mandir in Old Rajinder Nagar at Ward No. 102-N/KBZ, Tender No: EEM-1/TC/KBZ/2019-20/22-1, H/A: XL-VIII- S(d), Tender Amt. in Rs.: 8369363/-, Earnest money: 167400/-, Time of completion: 3M, Rate Hold Goods for: 5M, Tender Cost: 1000/-

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AUDI

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West Bengal sees big crowds for Aadhaar updatations

To manage the surge, UIDAI has decided to introduce online appointments in 45-odd post offices across State

BISHWANATH GHOSH
KOLKATA

West Bengal, the State with the highest Muslim population, is seeing a sudden and huge surge in the number of people updating their Aadhaar cards in post offices, according to figures available with the Department of Posts.

This can be attributed to repeated assertions of Union Home Minister Amit Shah that an Assam-like National Register of Citizens will be created in the rest of the country. People are eager to get rid of typos and other discrepancies in their card in order to avoid trouble in future.

Even Kerala, which also has a sizeable Muslim population, has seen a nearly 100% increase in the number of people updating their cards – from 6,000 in September this year to 11,000 in October. But in terms of sheer numbers, West Bengal leads the list. As many as 81,000 people in the State got their cards updated in October, up from 58,000 in September – a sharp rise of 39%.

And to manage the crowds, the UIDAI (Unique Identification Authority of India) has decided to introduce online appointments in about 45 post offices across the State.

This will give people the option to book their slots



As many as 81,000 people in the State got their cards updated in October, up from 58,000 in September.

online instead of queuing up at post offices.

"The process should roll out in about 10 days," Amritab Singh, Postmaster General (Kolkata Region), told *The Hindu* on Friday. "This will save people from spending a better part of their day unnecessarily queuing up at the post office. The updating takes exactly 10 minutes, and the post office is open daily for nine hours, so we cannot accommodate more than 45 people in a day," he said.

Large turnout

Mr. Singh, whose jurisdiction ranges right up to Murshidabad, said he personally witnessed a big crowd while passing through Rampurhat (near Murshidabad). "I saw a large

C The highest jump – 100% – in the number of people updating their cards was witnessed in Murshidabad district: from 1,800 in September to 3,600 in October

crowd gathered outside the local post office. I thought something untoward had happened. It turned out they were all waiting to get their Aadhaar card updated."

The highest jump – 100% – in the number of people updating their cards was witnessed in Murshidabad district: from 1,800 in September to 3,600 in October. But in terms of numbers, Purba Medinipur district tops the list, with 12,000 people in Tamluk and 11,000 people in Contai towns alone getting their cards updated that month. In Kolkata, the number of applicants went up from 4,800 to 6,000.

To manage crowds, Mr. Singh ordered the opening of Aadhaar counters in 70 more post offices in his region in October.

"We moved fingerprint machines that were lying unused at various locations to these post offices, which are situated mostly in far-flung areas," he said.

Contractual Engagement of 01 Sr. Resident in the Dept. of General Surgery at B.R. Singh Hospital, Sealdah

A walk in interview will be held for selection of one Sr. Resident for the Department of General Surgery at B.R. Singh Hospital, Sealdah, Kolkata-700014 on 16.12.2019 at 14.00 hrs. Candidates will be engaged on the following terms & conditions which is also available in Eastern Railway website : www.er.indianrailways.gov.in Applications are invited with CV and one copy of recent passport size photograph (self-signed), pasted on the proforma (to be collected from this office on the date of interview) are invited from the eligible candidates. All original documents i.e. Madhyamik Admit Card (as age proof), Professional Degrees, Caste Certificate, MCI Registration Certificate, Conferences attended, Paper presentation/Publication along with one set of documents (photocopy) to be produced. A No Objection Certificate from the present employer, if any, stating that 'The candidate if selected will be spared to join within stipulated time' should also be enclosed. Minimum professional Qualification : In the Specialties of General Surgery, the candidates having passed MS/DNB within 60 months from the University recognized by State/Central Government. Age Limit as on 01.12.2019: (i) 37 years for candidates having MS/DNB qualification. (ii) 05 years to be relaxed on the above stated age limit for SC/ST candidates. Emoluments to be paid in Pay Level 11 (Rs. 15600-39100/-) and other allowances as admissible. Tenure of Sr. Residency : The contract of appointment for Sr. Resident will be maximum period of 3 years, subject to renewal/extension every year. The termination of contract can be done on one month's notice from either side or surrender of one month's salary to the candidate. Venue, Date & Time of Interview : Medical Director's office, B.R. Singh Hospital, E. Rly., Sealdah, Kolkata-14 on 16.12.2019 at 14 hrs. Reporting time of candidates : 12 A.M. on 16.12.2019 for documents verification. No TA/DA will be admissible for interview and joining purpose. Suppression of any fact at any stage will make the candidature liable to be terminated forthwith.

Medical Director, B.R. Singh Hospital, Sealdah

EASTERN RAILWAY

EASTERN RAILWAY

Tender Notice No.: MC/59/Works/Pt/siding/2019-20; dated : 22.11.2019. Open Tender is invited by Senior Divisional Mechanical Engineer, Eastern Railway, Asansol for the following work: Case No.: MC/59/Works/Pt/siding/2019-20.

Name of work : On train welding repairing work of unloadable BOXN wagon at various coal loading siding i.e. Shankarpur, Ukhra and Pandabeshwar area of Asansol Division for a period of 1(one) year.

Tender value : ₹ 36,77,228. Earnest money : ₹ 73,600. Date and time of closing and opening : 16.12.2019. Complete details seen in the Railway website : www.reps.gov.in (ASN-188/2019-20)

Tender Notices are also available at Eastern Railway's website : www.er.indianrailways.gov.in/www.reps.gov.in

SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY

(CONSTRUCTION)

e-PROCUREMENT NOTICE No./15/2019 dt.26.11.2019

Tenders for Manufacture & Supply of Specific Size Metal Liners to Drg. No. BNC/T-2019 & BNC/T-2020 were uploaded in IREPS Website: Quantity-5 lakh sets. Date of opening: 17.12.2019

For details of the same please visit IREPS website www.reps.gov.in. Please check the website till the opening date of the tender for details of any corrigendum.

Sd/-
Dy.Chief Engineer/Stores
Construction, S.W.Railway, Bangalore.
No.PUB/47/AAP/PRB/SBC/19-20

Tender Notices are also available at Eastern Railway's website : www.er.indianrailways.gov.in/www.reps.gov.in

EASTERN RAILWAY

e-Tender No. : ERCON20192019;

Dated : 27.11.2019. Chief Administrative Officer, Construction, Eastern Railway, Kolkata invites following e-Tender, uploaded on 18.11.2019 on IREPS website : www.reps.gov.in for supply of the following item(s) from RDSO approved sources for the tendered item(s) : Tender Title : Manufacture and Supply of Combination Metal Liner to RDSO Drg. No. T-8616 and T-8617 Alt-1, for use with ERC Mk-V on PSC Sleeper [RT-8527] suitable to 60 Kg. [UIC] Rail for 1673 mm Gauge and confirming to IRS Specification for Metal Liners for use with ERC [Provisional]-2013 with corrigendum no. 1 of October-2016 Item Description (s) : Details descriptions of the tendered item are available in the E-Tender Notice and E-Tender Document (Chapter-III at page 25) uploaded on www.reps.gov.in Tended Quantity : 379869 Sets. Approx. Tender Value : ₹ 3,34,39,868.07; Earnest Money : ₹ 6,68,800; Date and time of closing/opening of the tender : 10.12.2019 at 14.30 hrs. Note : Interested tenderers may visit website : <http://www.reps.gov.in> for complete information along with the e-tender document of above e-Procurement Tender is available and they may submit their offers online. (2) In no case manual tender for the tendered item(s) will be accepted. (CON-122/2019-20)

Tender Notices are also available at Eastern Railway's website : www.er.indianrailways.gov.in/www.reps.gov.in

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IN BRIEF



Rape accused Franco Mulakkal's bail extended

KOTTAYAM The additional district sessions court here on Saturday extended the bail granted to bishop Franco Mulakkal in a nun rape case and posted the case for further hearing to January 6. As per the prosecution, bishop Franco had raped the nun and forced her to unnatural sex on many occasions between 2014 and 2017. The accused can get life imprisonment or imprisonment of not less than 10 years, if found guilty.

Madiga Samiti Anantapur unit president murdered

ANANTAPUR Madiga Reservation Porata Samiti Anantapur district unit president Jaggula Prakash, 58, was murdered in broad daylight in Anantapur of Andhra Pradesh on Saturday. The samiti is a not-for-profit institution standing for human rights. According to the police, the accused, Ramana, 29, a tailor, allegedly paid money to Prakash to settle a dispute between him and his wife, but Prakash reportedly neither returned the money nor settled the dispute. A case has been registered.

Police heighten security on State borders

VIJAYAWADA The Andhra Pradesh police have sounded high alert on State borders and in the Agency areas in the wake of the PLGA Week to be observed by the CPI(Maoist) from December 2. The Maoists observe the week in all the areas where they have considerable presence in Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Chhattisgarh, Odisha and other States. They take out rallies, organise meetings and pay tributes to those who were killed in encounters.

Angry protesters lay siege to police station over vet murder

Four accused moved to prison in Hyderabad

MARRI RAMU SHADNAGAR

Amid vociferous protests by hundreds of enraged people, the Cyberabad police on Saturday presented the four accused of killing a woman veterinarian before an executive magistrate who remanded them in judicial custody for 14 days.

With contingents of police in riot gear guarding the vehicle ferrying the accused, the police shifted them from Shadnagar police station on city outskirts to Charlapally central prison. Footwear and stones were hurled at the vehicle by angry protesters who shouted "neutralise the killers or hand them over to us."

Police had to resort to mild lathi-charge to disperse the protesters who tried to



Public fury: Police officers wielding batons against demonstrators during a protest in Shadnagar. ■ REUTERS

obstruct the convoy of police vehicles shifting the accused to the prison. The Shadnagar Bar Association has said none of its members would represent the accused in the local court.

The Cyberabad police announced the arrest of the four accused on Friday. They were shifted to Shadnagar police station for completion

of legal formalities and presenting before the local magistrate.

Learning on Saturday morning that the "killers were inside", people began assembling in large numbers outside the police station. As the crowds swelled, additional forces were deployed.

Police brought executive magistrate Pandu Naik to the

3 policemen suspended for delay in filing FIR

HYDERABAD

A sub-inspector of Shamshabad police station and two head constables with RGI Airport police station were placed under suspension on Saturday for the delay in registering FIR in the woman veterinarian missing case citing jurisdictional issues. The development came a day after the victim's family accused police of inaction. They alleged that at least the woman's life could have been saved, had the police reacted on time.

station as it had become difficult to shift the accused to his office. He announced the judicial remand of the accused.

Police then brought three mini buses to the police station, had the four lie down in one of the vehicles and drove off with huge contingents guarding the convoy in the front and the rear.

Probe sought into 'sabotage' of Vande Bharat Express

Railways planning global tenders for 160 coaches

S. VIJAY KUMAR CHENNAI

In a twist to the ongoing controversy over halting production of Train18 coaches at the Integral Coach Factory (ICF) here, a top railway official has written to Railway Board Chairman V.K. Yadav demanding an enquiry into the 'sabotage' of the Vande Bharat Express project.

Chief Administrative Officer, Rail Wheel Plant, Bela, Shubhranshu, who played a key role as the Principal Chief Mechanical Engineer in rolling out the indigenously built Train18 in record time, has expressed concern over the vigilance enquiry against almost all the senior officials of Team Train18 and alleged that efforts were on to implicate officers in some case or the other.

"The purpose [of enquiry] seems to be to sabotage the indigenous train forever and to kill the initiative... I, as the builder of the Vande Bharat Express, a senior government official and a concerned citizen of India, demand a vigilance enquiry into this sabotage of the Vande Bharat in ICF and what intended to create more competition and make the playing field more uneven.

"I have learnt that an import proposal for 60 train sets has been made costing over ₹25,000 crore citing delay in the production of the train.

"It is over six months now that the Vigilance has been going through the Train18 files of ICF with a fine tooth comb, but has found nothing incriminating. What started as accusations of violating procedures against the innovative, bold and nationalistic team of ICF later evolved into a full bloom vigilance enquiry," he said.

The letter of Mr. Shubhranshu, an officer of the Indian Railway Service of Mechanical Engineers, came at a time when the Ministry of Railways plans to float global tenders to procure 16 train sets (160 coaches) for the trains.

The video "showed" Kumar cautioning University College student Nithin Raj in harsh language against raising the flag of the KSU on the college campus.

The police booked Kumar for assault, intimidation and wrongful confinement based on Nithin Raj's statement.

The police were also probing the allegation that Kumar had occupied a hostel room for 10 years without being a student.

A KSU worker said there were more "SFI outsiders" in the hostel such as Kumar.

Soon after halting the

work on making more rakes and transferring out some top officials involved in the making of Train18, the ICF was told to refer the design to the RDSO for approval.

work on making more rakes and transferring out some top officials involved in the making of Train18, the ICF was told to refer the design to the RDSO for approval.

Import order

The revised specifications of the self-propelled train set, Mr. Shubhranshu argued, would narrow down the competition and make the playing field more uneven.

"I have learnt that an import proposal for 60 train sets has been made costing over ₹25,000 crore citing delay in the production of the train.

"It is over six months now that the Vigilance has been going through the Train18 files of ICF with a fine tooth comb, but has found nothing incriminating. What started as accusations of violating procedures against the innovative, bold and nationalistic team of ICF later evolved into a full bloom vigilance enquiry," he said.

The letter of Mr. Shubhranshu, an officer of the Indian Railway Service of Mechanical Engineers, came at a time when the Ministry of Railways plans to float global tenders to procure 16 train sets (160 coaches) for the trains.

The Team ICF manufactured Train18 in a record 18 months, which was flagged off by Prime Minister Narendra Modi between New Delhi and Varanasi in February. The second rake was launched between New Delhi and Katra later.

Though the Express has been running successfully since its launch, it was alleged that the engineers

compromised on safety aspects by not obtaining the sanction of the Research Design and Standards Organisation of the Railways.

Officials who were part of Team18 project say the new design and specifications would result in a sharp increase in the cost of procuring the train sets involving global manufacturers.

5 SFI men held for attack on KSU leader

Kerala police hunt for former SFI leader

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM The Kerala police have arrested five Student Federation of India (SFI) activists "responsible" for the attack on Kerala Students Union (KSU) State president K.M. Abhijith and others in front of the University College on Saturday.

The police charged them with attempt to commit culpable homicide not amounting to murder.

The provision entailed a maximum punishment of



Congress leader Ramesh Chennithala along with injured Abhijith and other KSU activists in Kerala. ■ S. MAHINSHA

three years of imprisonment and fine. The law enforcers raided the University Hostel and inspected the house of M.R. Mahesh Kumar, 38, alias 'Yettappan', at Muttathara. The 38-year-old former SFI leader had come under spotlight after a furtive mobile phone capture of him in

intimidating a KSU worker in a room at the University Hostel emerged in the mainstream media.

The video "showed" Kumar cautioning University College student Nithin Raj in harsh language against raising the flag of the KSU on the college campus.

The police booked Kumar for assault, intimidation and wrongful confinement based on Nithin Raj's statement.

The police were also probing the allegation that Kumar had occupied a hostel room for 10 years without being a student.

A KSU worker said there were more "SFI outsiders" in the hostel such as Kumar.

Tough trek to school for this mother-son duo in Karnataka

Physically challenged boy is carried 4 km to school everyday



S. BHUVANESHWARI

CHITRADURGA

For four days in a week, Jayalakshamma from Rangavanhalli village in Chitradurga district in Karnataka carries her physically challenged son Rajesh Babu to school four kilometres away in neighbouring Meerasabihalli. She waits at the school through the day and carries him back home. On the remaining three days, Rajesh skips classes, while Jayalakshamma works as a daily wage labourer to support her family.

Rangavanhalli has no high school or public transport, Jayalakshamma says.

Babu, the eldest of three children, was keen on continuing his education after he finished Class 7 at the government primary school in his village. Jayalakshamma

had no other option but to admit him to a private school in Meerasabihalli. And she has been carrying him to the school ever since June when term started.

Ms. Jayalakshamma, whose husband is no more, does not want to leave Rajesh in a hostel. "He cannot even go to the toilet on his own. How can I send him to

school?" she asks in despair.

"I told Babu to stop studying after Class 7 but he would not listen," says Jayalakshamma. "He even gave up food for three days, refusing to drop out."

Help finally

But help may be at hand for the determined duo. Deputy Director of Public Instruction K. Ravishankar Reddy has promised to arrange for an autorickshaw to ferry Rajesh to school and back. On Saturday, officials of the Directorate for the Welfare of Disabled visited Ms. Jayalakshamma and gave the boy a tricycle to help him move within the village.

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Help finally

Antibiotic prescription rate high in private sector

India is considered to be one of the top users of antibiotics, says report

BINDU SHAJAN PERAPPADAN
NEW DELHI

The private sector clocked high levels of antibiotic prescription rates (412 per 1,000 persons per year), according to a new study by researchers at the Public Health Foundation of India (PHFI). The highest rate was seen among children aged 0-4 years (636 per 1,000 persons) and the lowest in the age group 10-19 years (280 per 1,000 persons).

The study is the first ever estimate of outpatient antibiotic prescription rates and patterns in the private sector and has been published this month in *PLOS One* titled – “Outpatient antibiotic pre-

scription rate and pattern in the private sector in India”.

12-month period

The authors used the 12-month period (May 2013–April 2014) medical audit data set and concluded that the prescription rates for certain classes are on a higher side in India as compared to the developed nations.

The study said the percentage of prescriptions for wide-spectrum antibiotics like cephalosporins and quinolones (38.2% and 16.3%) was significantly higher than the U.S. (14.0% and 12.7%) and Greece (32.9% and 0.5%).

Unusually high prescrip-

In large doses

A look at the outpatient antibiotic prescription rate in the private sector in India

519 mn prescriptions dispensed between May 2013 and April 2014. (412 prescriptions per 1,000 persons per year)

55% prescriptions given for diseases of the respiratory system

10% for diseases of the genitourinary system

9% for symptoms, signs and abnormal clinical findings



■ Antibiotic prescription rate highest in the age group 0-4 years

tion rates of beta-lactam-penicillins and cephalosporins in uncomplicated upper respiratory infections in children is in stark contrast to the prescription rates and

pattern reported in Europe. India is considered to be one of the top users of antibiotics and there is a growing problem of antimicrobial resistance.

The study noted that the per capita antibiotic consumption in the retail sector has increased by around 22% in five years from 2012 to 2016.

Clinical guidelines

Though clinical guidelines on judicious antibiotic use explicitly mention that they should not be prescribed for common cold, non-specific upper respiratory tract infection (URD), acute cough illness and acute bronchitis, the study shows a high rate of prescriptions for respiratory infections in primary care.

The study highlighted that of the 519 million antibiotic prescriptions, the majority were dispensed for the diseases of the respiratory system (55%), followed by geni-

tourinary system (10%) and symptoms, signs and abnormal clinical findings (9%); generally these infections are viral in origin and self-limiting in nature.

Dr. Shaktivel Selvaraj, director - Health Financing and Economics, PHFI and one of the authors of the study said: “Irrational prescription and use of antibiotics has its origins in production and selling tactics of pharma companies. There is a need to target antimicrobial stewardship programmes to specific constituencies and stakeholders to raise awareness on antibiotics and prevent its misuse.”

The misuse of antibiotics and easy access fuels antimicrobial resistance (AMR) which is a growing concern worldwide and in India.

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 Sunday: Thunderstorm accompanied with lightning very likely at isolated places over Rayalseema, coastal and south interior Karnataka, Kerala, Mahe, coastal Andhra Pradesh, Yanam, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Karaikal and Lakshadweep.

CITY RAIN MAX MIN CITY RAIN MAX MIN

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	—	29.3	—	Kozhikode	—	11.8	—
Ahmedabad	—	30.1	19.0	Kurnool	—	33.0	21.2
Aizawl	—	23.8	11.9	Lucknow	—	26.8	13.6
Allahabad	—	29.3	15.6	Madurai	16.9	28.0	—
Bengaluru	1.6	—	27.0	Mangaluru	—	35.9	24.0
Bhopal	—	28.9	—	Mumbai	—	33.0	23.0
Bhubaneswar	—	—	—	Mysuru	—	24.4	19.1
Chandigarh	—	22.8	—	New Delhi	—	22.8	12.0
Chennai	20.2	—	30.6	Patna	—	28.6	15.4
Coimbatore	1.2	—	27.7	Port Blair	—	31.3	26.9
Dehradoon	—	26.1	—	Puducherry	8.2	—	22.4
Gangtok	—	16.4	—	Pune	—	30.6	19.2
Goa	—	33.4	—	Raipur	—	30.4	18.4
Guwahati	—	30.5	—	Ranchi	—	26.2	14.4
Hubballi	—	29.0	—	Shillong	—	20.5	7.6
Hyderabad	30.2	—	20.6	Shimla	—	16.7	—
Imphal	—	23.0	—	Srinagar	—	10.6	—
Jaipur	—	22.9	—	Tiruvananthapuram	21.9	—	24.8
Kochi	—	30.6	—	Tiruchi	37.8	—	23.6
Kohima	—	24.2	—	Vijayawada	—	31.8	23.2
Kolkata	—	30.4	—	Visakhapatnam	—	31.0	23.8

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

Yesterday

CITIES	SO	NO	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	—	85	36	—	80	...84
Bengaluru	04	42	68	67	86	...53
Chennai	11	10	09	33	53	...53
Delhi	16	32	51	284	176	...217
Hyderabad	03	65	40	148	122	...122
Kolkata	17	36	44	279	217	...217
Lucknow	10	39	84	231	231	...231
Mumbai	18	79	37	231	171	...171
Pune	—	80	17	51	176	...126
Visakhapatnam	11	38	36	128	104	...104

In observation made at 6.00 p.m., Singrauli, Madhya Pradesh recorded an overall Air Quality Index (AQI) score of 339 indicating a dangerous level of pollution. In contrast, Tirupati, Andhra Pradesh recorded a healthy AQI score of 31.

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

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

NO: 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.

PM2.5 & 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

Two Naxals killed in encounter in Maharashtra

GADCHIROLI
Police raided a training camp of Naxals in Maharashtra's Gadchiroli district on Saturday and killed two rebels in an encounter, officials said. The encounter took place in Bhamragad, ahead of the 'Peoples Liberation Guerrilla Army Week' which the Naxals observe from December 2 to 8.

SOUTHERN RAILWAY

INDICATIVE ADVERTISEMENT

No.CPB/1/98/Act/TP/Vol.XXI dated: 29.11.2019

It is proposed to engage Act Apprentices for the year 2020 at Southern Railway. The establishments and the vacancies are furnished hereunder:

Sl.No.	Establishment	Vacancies
1.	Carriage Works, Perambur	1208
2.	Central Workshop, GOC	723
3.	Signal & Telecom Workshop, Podhanur	1654

The candidates should have the qualification of Matriculation/ITI. The candidates should be in the age group 15-24. The candidates should apply online through <https://www.sr.indianrailways.gov.in/> -> News & Updates -> Careers.

The candidates are eligible for stipend as prescribed under the Apprentices Act. The selection is on the basis of merit list prepared based on the marks secured in the Xth Std and ITI in respect of all the candidates who apply against the notification.

The candidates have to Pay Rs.100/- as processing fee through online mode (except SC/ST/PWD/Women candidates) the access to the server gets closed on 31.12.2019 at 17.00 hrs.

Workshop Personnel Officer, Carriage & Wagon Works, Perambur, Chennai - 600 023.

SMART CITY THIRUVANANTHAPURAM LIMITED

CIN U75302KL2017GCC05027

E-TENDER NOTICE

e-Tenders are invited for the projects- Construction of Open Air/Theatre and park at Putharikandam Maidanam and Supply and Installation of Interactive Information Kiosk in Thiruvananthapuram Smart City area.

Name of Project	E-Tender ID	Probable amount of Contract (PAC) (Exclusive of GST)
1) Construction of "Open Air Theatre and park at Putharikandam Maidanam"	2019_SCLTL_325909	Rs. 8,11,79,769/-
2) Supply and Installation of Interactive Information Kiosk	2019_SCLTL_325916_1	Rs. 43,25,000/-

* Bid Submission Last Date: 21.12.2019, SATURDAY, 5:30 PM

Date and Time of Opening Price Bid: To Be Intimated Separately to Technically Qualified Bidders by Email. All the RFP documents and details are available on the e-Procurement Website. Bids are only accepted online on the Website <https://etenders.kerala.gov.in>

(Sd/-) CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, SMART CITY THIRUVANANTHAPURAM LTD.

For more information contact: Mr. S. Sankar, Manager, Smart City Thiruvananthapuram, Tel: 0471-2462222, E-mail: s.sankar@smartcitytn.com

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FROM PAGE ONE

Uddhav Thackeray wins trust with 169 ayes

Mr. Walse-Patil said the matter did not come under the jurisdiction of the Assembly.

"The swearing-in ceremony took place at outside. It is the duty of Governor to look into. So I am not authority to talk about that," he said.

After this, Mr. Thackeray introduced his cabinet colleagues to the House amid sloganning from the BJP MLAs, who later walked out of the Assembly.

Numbers break-up

The break-up of numbers included 56 from the Sena, 53 from the NCP as Mr. Walse-Patil was in the chair, and 44 from the Congress. Among the others who supported the government were three MLAs from the Bahujan Vikas Aghadi (BVA), two each

from Prahar and Samajwadi Party (SP), one each from the Swabhiman Paksha and Peasants and Workers Party (PWP).

The independents who supported the government were Rajendra Patil-Yadvarkar, Shankarrao Gadakh, Manjula Gavit, Ashish Jaiswal, Narendra Bhondewar, Kishor Jogewar, Sanjay Shinde. Of the four MLAs who abstained, two were from the AIMIM and one each from Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) and Communist Party of India (Marxist).

Thanking the MLAs of the three parties and the people, Mr. Thackeray said his government would work to bring about a State envisioned by the great kings, saints and social workers.

65% turnout in first phase of Jharkhand polls

Mr. Meena said a total of 1,097 polling stations were marked as hypersensitive and 461 polling stations as sensitive.

The BJP, seeking a second straight win under the leadership of Chief Minister Raghubar Das, contested from 12 seats in the first phase and supported an independent candidate. The AJJSU party, which is an NDA ally contested on its own.

Opposition alliance
The opposition alliance of the Jharkhand Mukti Mor-

cha, the Congress and RJD were also in the fray in the seats.

Congress contested in six seats, JMM in four and the RJD in three constituencies in the first phase.

Key candidates in the fray were BJP nominee and State Health Minister Ramchandra Chandravanshi and JPCC president Rameshwar Oraon, who is taking on his predecessor Sukhdeo Bhagat, who joined the BJP.

The next phases of polling will be held on December 7.

NE to be shielded from new citizenship law

+ "You can be a citizen in Bengal or Delhi, but not these States for the purpose of voting, business or doing jobs etc. The Bill will have this safeguard," Mr. Sarma explained.

Citizens from other States require ILP to visit Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram and Nagaland as per Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation, 1873.

Regional concerns
Meghalaya and Mizoram are also opposed to the Bill amid concerns that outsiders would settle there, and that their unique tradition and culture would be compromised.

Mr. Sarma said some mechanism would be devised for Manipur also. "In Tripura and Assam, a large number of people are likely to claim citizenship under the new Bill. What kind of protection can be given to the indigenous communities of these two States will be examined," he added.

The meeting with representatives and groups was held in the backdrop of protests against the Bill in Northeastern States. Many there say it would nullify the provisions of the Assam Accord of 1985, which fixed March 24, 1971, as the cut-off now?" Mr. Sangma said.

NIA conducts searches at Tiruchi, Thanjavur

Besides questioning the inmates of the house, the NIA officials checked the electronic devices used by him.

Previous searches

The NIA said previous searches were conducted on June 12 and based on the incriminating facts revealed, two accused – Mohammed Azarudheen and Sheik Hidayathulla – were arrested.

"Now, during searches at the houses of two associates, namely Alavadeen, resident of Thanjavur, and S. Sarfudeen, resident of Tiruchi, digital devices including two laptops, six mobile

date for deportation of illegal migrants, irrespective of religion.

The groups were told on Saturday that the CAB would have a provision to detect and deport all illegal migrants who entered after December, 2014.

P. Siem of Khasi Autonomous District Council in Meghalaya said the CAB should not be applied in the State.

Former Meghalaya Chief Minister Mukul Sangma, who met Mr. Shah said after the meeting, that the Bill was going to create a chaotic situation, bring in a sense of insecurity and mistrust among the ethnic indigenous communities of the Northeast.

"Has any proper study been done on how many people will be granted citizenship? On the other hand, they say there will be simultaneous NRC. Can we have two categories of citizens? What is the difference between a citizen and a foreigner who is awarded a citizenship? It is a question of ramification in the long run... you may say you have protective laws but you have seen what happened in Kashmir, you had certain provisions, does it still exist now?" Mr. Sangma said.

The meeting with representatives and groups was held in the backdrop of protests against the Bill in Northeastern States. Many there say it would nullify the provisions of the Assam Accord of 1985, which fixed March 24, 1971, as the cut-off now?" Mr. Sangma said.

phones, 11 SIM cards, one pen drive, one hard disc, one memory card, five CDs/DVDs, one axe and 17 documents have been seized," the NIA said.

The investigation agency said the seized items, including the digital devices, would be submitted to the NIA Special Court and the digital devices subjected to forensic examination.

"The suspects are being examined to ascertain their association with the arrested accused persons besides their involvement in any unlawful activity, intended to further the objectives of IS," the NIA said.

Uddhav, BJP spar over protocol

Alliance leaders dismiss charge that swearing-in did not follow procedure

ALOK DESHPANDE
SHARAD VYAS
MUMBAI

After the Maharashtra Vikas Aghadi (MVA) won the floor test in the Maharashtra Assembly on Saturday, Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray took on the BJP over allegations that the swearing-in had violated procedures, with Ministers taking oath in the name of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar and Mahatma Phule.

"I never imagined that the Opposition would go to such a petty level and target us. Why should I be afraid of taking Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj's name before my oath? How can it be wrong? I did it and I will do it again, if necessary," Mr. Thackeray told presspersons.

In the Assembly, former Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis said the Uddhav Cabinet had no right to sit in the House as it had not followed the protocol of taking oath. Earlier in the day, Maharashtra BJP president Chandrakant Patil told presspersons that the Chief Minister could not be sworn in unless he was a member of either House.

'Rules defied'
"Governor's letter clearly mentions that Uddhavji will have to become member of any of the two Houses in six months. Does Chandrakant Patil not agree with Governor," Mr. Malik asked.

On the swearing-in, Mr. Patil said, "The new government has defied State legisla-



On the offensive: Former Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis and other BJP MLAs protesting at the Vidhan Bhavan on Saturday. ■ VIVEK BENDRE

pended that Mr. Patil should have spoken to his leader, Narendra Modi, before making the allegation as the latter became Gujarat Chief Minister in 2002 when he was not a member of either House.

ture rules right from its swearing-in ceremony."
"We have faith in late Balasaheb Thackeray, Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, Babasaheb Ambedkar. But oath has to be taken in a particular format. It is not considered an oath if it is not taken in that format. A petition is being filed before Governor in this regard," he added.

Cabinet Minister and NCP leader Jayant Patil took on the BJP in the Assembly. "Why is the BJP opposing taking names of Chhatrapati Shivaji and Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar? Why are they against these great people?

They have just shown the mentality which they have been nurturing for generations," Mr. Patil said. He also termed the allegations an attempt by both Mr. Fadnavis and Mr. Patil to win the Leader of the Opposition post.

Former Advocate-General of Maharashtra Shreehari Aney questioned the grounds for the BJP's legal challenge. He said, "You don't like something because you don't get to sit on the Treasury benches [that] doesn't mean that there is possible court case."

(With inputs from Sonam Saigal)

On the draw SURENDRA



2 soldiers killed as avalanche hits Army patrol at Siachen

Four soldiers and two civilian porters were killed earlier

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
SRINAGAR

Two soldiers were killed when an avalanche hit an Army patrol at Siachen Glacier in Leh district of Ladakh on Saturday.

Defence spokesman Colonel Rajesh Kalia said the soldiers were part of an Army patrol party.

An Avalanche Rescue Team (ART) immediately rushed to the spot and pulled out all members of the patrol.

Choppers to the rescue
Helicopters were pressed into service to evacuate the avalanche victims who were manning a post located at an altitude of 18,000 feet in the southern Siachen Glacier.

Two soldiers later succumbed to injuries at the Siachen medical facility," said the Army spokesman.

Earlier, four soldiers and two civilian porters were killed on November 18 in an avalanche in the northern Siachen Glacier.

Happy with recruitment drive turnout: J&K police

People from militancy-affected districts show enthusiasm

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
SRINAGAR

The J&K police on Saturday said its recruitment drive had evoked tremendous response from local youth, with 77,641 of them applying for 5,199 posts. Even militancy-affected districts of south Kashmir have shown equal enthusiasm, they say.

"The recruitment offer has evoked tremendous response from the aspiring youth across the Union Territory. As many as 77,641 youth applied for these posts. The physical tests for these posts have been conducted across the Valley and the final process of recruitment is in progress," a police spokesman said.

Despite the hectic schedule in handling the law and order, the police are conducting recruitment for 5,199 posts of Special Police Officers (SPOs), the spokesman said. In the Kashmir zone, according to the police, 26,594 youths applied for the recruitment drive.



New beginnings: New recruits of J&K police taking part in a passing-out parade recently. ■ NISSAR AHMAD

tions for 813 posts were received.

Central schemes

The Centre in September enhanced the monthly honorarium of over 30,000 SPOs between ₹6,000 and ₹18,000, depending on the period of service.

Besides, the police said it had sanctioned ₹7 crore in favour of 1,100 personnel this year. Dilbag Singh, DGP, on Saturday announced ₹63 lakh in favour of 85 police personnel.

Kushwaha ends fast in Bihar

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
PATNA

Upendra Kushwaha, Rashtriya Lok Samata Party president and former Union Minister, on Saturday ended his fast demanding free land to open two Kendriya Vidyalayas in the State.

"I ended my fast... but my protest will continue," Mr. Kushwaha said soon after grand alliance leaders visited him at the Patna Medical College and Hospital and offered him juice to end the fast that lasted five days.

Senior leaders of the opposition alliance like Sharad Yadav, Jitan Ram Manjhi, Tejashwi Yadav and Mukesh Sahni said they would take forward the protest against the State government.

Mr. Kushwaha began his fast on November 26 demanding five acres to open the two schools sanctioned for Bihar by the Union government.

However, Chief Minister Nitish Kumar had said that the State government could not provide the land free.

Third quarter GDP could be worse, says Chidambaram

Congress leaders accuse government of 'ruining' economy

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

A day after India's gross domestic product (GDP) went below the 5% mark, Congress leaders on Saturday went on the offensive and accused the Modi government of 'ruining' India's economy.

Former Finance Minister P. Chidambaram, who's in the Tihar jail on allegations of corruption, warned that the third quarter GDP could be worse, and said the GDP numbers for the second quarter was on predicted lines.

"As predicted widely, GDP growth in Q2 has come lower at 4.5%. Yet the government says 'All is well'. Q3 will not be more than 4.5% and in all likelihood will be worse," Mr. Chidambaram said in a tweet put out by his family on his behalf.

"The people of Jharkhand must vote against the BJP and record their rejection of its policies



P. CHIDAMBARAM
Former Finance Minister

"The people of Jharkhand must vote against the BJP and record their rejection of its policies

Former Union Minister Manish Tewari tweeted, "Economy has collapsed not because of bad economics – but GMG-Gujarat Model of Governance that rests on three struts CBI, ED & IT. Extortion through coercion is the new economic mantra."

Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra accused the government of ruining the economy by making false promises.

"I urge all of you to play your part in ensuring that our message is spread far and wide," Congress chief Sonia Gandhi said at a parliamentary party meeting.

INTERVIEW | GOTABAYA RAJAPAKSA

'Sri Lanka must have control of strategically important projects'

I am usually very frank, so I hope to tell India honestly if I can't do something; and if I can, I will do it soon, says the new President

SUHASINI HAIDAR

Promising a more 'frank and upfront' relationship with India after his meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi, the newly elected Sri Lankan President Gotabaya Rajapaksa says the suspicions between the two nations are a thing of the past. In an exclusive interview to The Hindu, he speaks about Chinese investment, the Tamil issue and the constitutional changes expected.

How do you hope to take India-Sri Lanka ties to a "higher level", as you said here in New Delhi, and what are the priority areas?

■ I would like to be consistent. I am usually very frank, so I hope to tell New Delhi honestly if I can't do something; and if I can, then do it soon and not drag out commitments. We were successful during the previous government because we had a separate mechanism, the Troika [a three-man coordination team], with New Delhi. I think the main issues India could have with us would be on [our relations] with China or Pakistan, but if we

Priyanka seeks probe into student's death

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra has urged Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath to order an inquiry into the alleged suicide of a school student in the State.

"The body of the student was found in her hostel room in mysterious circumstances. It bore injuries, but no post-mortem was done. Her family has said the girl was murdered," Ms. Vadra said in a November 28 letter to the Chief Minister.

On September 16, the body was found hanging from the ceiling of her hostel room. The police said a suicide note, found in the room, read that she was taking the extreme step as her room-mates had publicly humiliated her over the theft of some snacks.

However, her father filed a complaint against the school principal, the hostel warden and two students, alleging that his daughter was murdered.

Ms. Vadra said the family had the right to know the action taken. "They have every right to know what had happened to their daughter and who all were involved. Is the administration trying to shield someone," she asked.

"To ensure the safety of girls, it is important that action be taken in this matter," she added.

Ms. Vadra's letter came after Congress leader Jitin Prasada visited the family on November 19 and demanded an inquiry.

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MANAGING DIRECTOR

SAMWAD/T.C/3862/2019-20 Dt. 30.11.2019

DIPR R.O No : 617/2019-20

Date : 29-11-2019

No: DSCL/E-Tender/2019-20/ 1750

SHORT TERM RE-TENDER NOTIFICATION

Through Government of Karnataka E-Procurement Portal Only

As per Karnataka Transparency in the Public Procurement Act-1999-2000 (Amendment) Law of

Act-2000 and under standard Tender Documents Rule KW-4 the undersigned invites tenders in

two cover system through e-procurement portal for the detailed below. The tenderer may

submit tenders for works given in the table through e-procurement portal of the Government of

Karnataka (<https://eproc.karnataka.gov.in>). Further details may be obtained from the office of

the undersigned or by contacting e-procurement helpline Telephone No.+91 80 23010900, +91

80 23010901. (Amount in Lakhs)

Sl. E-Procurement No.

Name of the Work

EMD (Amount in Rs.)

Completion Period

1 UDD/DSCL/ CR-84/ 2018-19 Call-3

IMPLEMENTATION OF ENERGY EFFICIENT STREETLIGHT BY

REPLACEMENT OF EXISTING CONVENTIONAL LAMPS

ALONG WITH CENTRALIZED CONTROL AND MONITORING

SYSTEM (CCMS) IN DAVANAGERE SMART CITY.

Note : Any change of date and other information will be notified only in e-procurement portal.

(1) Date & Time of Pre-bid meeting : 16-12-2019 hrs : 12.00. (2) Last date & time for tender

queries: 30-12-2019 hrs : 15.00. (3) Last date & time for submission of Tender : 30-12-2019 hrs :

16.00. (4) Date & time of opening Technical bids: 31-12-2019 hrs : 16:30. (5) Date & time of

opening of Financial Bid: 03-01-2020 hrs: 11.30

Sd/- Executive Engineer, Davanagere

Approved Sd/- Managing Director,

Davanagere Smart City Ltd., Davanagere.

Ro No 146102, Ro Date :- 29/11/19 . website- www.upgov.nic.in

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London attacker was set free last year

The accused was convicted in 2012 for being part of a plot to blow up the London Stock Exchange

REUTERS
LONDON

The 28-year-old British man who killed two people in a stabbing spree on London Bridge before the police shot him dead had been released from prison after a previous conviction for terrorism offences, prompting political recriminations ahead of an election.

Wearing a fake suicide vest and wielding knives, Usman Khan went on the rampage on Friday afternoon at a conference on criminal rehabilitation beside London Bridge. He was wrestled to the ground by bystanders and then shot dead by the police.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson, who faces a snap election on December 12, said it was a terrorist attack and vowed to end a practice whereby serious offenders can be automatically let out of prison early, as the Opposition attacked the policy.

Khan, whose family is



Taking stock: British Prime Minister Boris Johnson and Home Secretary Priti Patel visiting the scene of a stabbing on London Bridge on Saturday. ■ REUTERS

from Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, was convicted in 2012 for his part in an al-Qaeda-inspired plot to blow up the London Stock Exchange. He was released in December 2018 subject to conditions.

"This individual was known to authorities, having been convicted in 2012 for terrorism offences," Britain's

top counter-terrorism police officer, Neil Basu, said in a statement. "Clearly, a key line of inquiry now is to establish how he came to carry out this attack."

Two people – a man and a woman – were killed in the attack, which took place days before London is due to host NATO leaders, including U.S. President Donald

Trump. A man and two women were injured and remain in hospital, Mr. Basu said. The police searched an address in Stafford, central England, as they continued their investigation.

The Opposition Labour Party criticised the government's record on crime. "There are big questions that need to be answered," Lon-

don Mayor Sadiq Khan, the most senior Opposition politician in Britain in a position of power, told Sky News. "One of the important tools judges had when it came to dealing with dangerous, convicted criminals... was their ability to give an indeterminate sentence to protect the public," he said. "(That) was taken away from them by this government."

'Changes needed'

Mr. Johnson said sentencing rules needed to be toughened up. "I have long said that this system simply isn't working," he said after visiting the scene of the attack.

"It does not make sense for us, as a society, to be putting people convicted of terrorist offences, serious violent offences, out on early release."

The Conservatives defended an independent decision taken a few weeks ago to lower Britain's terrorism threat level.

Dutch police arrest homeless man day after knife assault

Three teens were injured in the attack on a street in The Hague

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
THE HAGUE

The Dutch police arrested a homeless man on Saturday over a knife assault in a busy shopping street in The Hague in which three teenagers were wounded.

The 35-year-old suspect was detained in the centre of the city a day after the stabbing which caused panic as shoppers hunted Black Friday bargains.

The police had earlier said they were investigating "several scenarios" and that it was "too early to speculate" about whether there was a possible terror motive.

The attack happened just hours after a terror suspect stabbed two people to death in London.

"Following the stabbing incident in Grote Marktstraat, a 35-year-old man has just been arrested in the centre of The Hague. The



Following the marks: Forensic experts looking for clues at the scene of the crime at The Hague on Friday. ■ AP

man has no fixed place of residence," the police said on Twitter. "He will be transferred to a police station where he will be questioned."

The victims were a 13-year-old boy and two 15-year-old girls, none of whom knew each other, the police said.

They were all treated in

hospital but released overnight.

The attacker ran off after the stabbings at a department store in the city centre, triggering a huge manhunt involving police helicopters.

"I saw two girls screaming and running away. A man fled. He jumped very athletically over benches to get away," a witness said.

Iraqis ignore PM's vow to quit, continue protests

Demand complete overhaul of system

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
NASIRIYAH

Iraqis kept up anti-government protests in Baghdad and the south on Saturday, unsatisfied with the premier's vowed resignation and insisting on the overhaul of a system they say is corrupt and beholden to foreign powers.

Protesters have hit the streets since early October in the largest grassroots movement Iraq has seen in decades.

Facing pressure from the street and the country's top

Shiite cleric Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani, Prime Minister Adel Mahdi announced on Friday that he would submit his resignation to Parliament, due to meet on Sunday.

But demonstrations have not subsided, with crowds in the capital and across the Shiite-majority south sticking to their weeks-long demand of complete regime change. "Abdel Mahdi's resignation is only the first step, and now all corrupt figures must be removed and judged," a protester said.

Elders join youth in Hong Kong rallies

Pro-democracy activists continue battle against 'police brutality and unlawful arrests'

REUTERS
ASSOCIATED PRESS
HONG KONG

Secondary school students and retirees joined forces to protest in Hong Kong on Saturday, the first of several weekend rallies planned across the city, as pro-democracy activists vowed to battle what they say are police brutality and unlawful arrests.

A local boys' band belted out songs to tell protesters that "the whole Hong Kong is supporting you." Speakers reminded the crowd that it wasn't time to celebrate and



People participating in an anti-government protest on Saturday. ■ REUTERS

eroding their rights promised when the former British colony returned to Chinese rule in 1997.

"The government wants us to desert the front-liners and young protesters, but we will stick with them," rally organiser Tam Kwok-sun, 64, said to loud cheers from the crowd. "Sometimes their actions are violent and aggressive, but we are more unhappy with the government's behavior."

"I came out for the peaceful protest in June when there was more than one million people, but the go-

vernment did not listen to our demands," said a 71-year-old woman in Hong Kong's Central district who only gave her name as Ponn.

"I have seen so much police brutality and unlawful arrests. This is not the Hong Kong I know," said Ms. Ponn.

Although the protests were sparked by an extradition bill that was later scrapped, demonstrators have been making "five demands" that include universal suffrage in choosing the city's leader and an independent inquiry into the use of force by the police.

Two held for 'meddling' in Hong Kong affairs

One is a Belizean, the other Taiwanese

REUTERS
BEIJING

China has arrested a citizen of Belize for allegedly colluding with people in the U.S. to meddle in the affairs of Hong Kong, the official Guangdong Communist Party newspaper reported on Saturday, citing local authorities.

Lee Henley Hu Xiang, a Belizean businessman who lives in China, had funded key members of "hostile forces" in the U.S. to undermine China's national security, and supported activities

that led to chaos in Hong Kong, the *Southern Daily* said. It did not give details.

Mr. Lee was arrested in the southern Chinese city of Guangzhou on Nov. 26 by the Guangzhou State Security Bureau, the report said.

Separately, the newspaper confirmed that a Taiwanese man, Lee Meng-Chu, was also arrested by the police in Shenzhen on October 31, for allegedly stealing state secrets for foreign forces after he made a trip to Hong Kong in August to support "anti-China" activities.

ELSEWHERE



N. Korea warns Abe of 'real ballistic missile'

SEOUL North Korea on Saturday warned Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe that he could soon see a "real ballistic missile". In the wake of a recent launch by Pyongyang, Mr. Abe had termed the fired weapons "ballistic missiles" that violated UN resolutions. "It can be said that Abe is the most stupid man ever known in history as he fails to distinguish a missile from multiple launch rocket system while seeing the photo-accompanied report," a Foreign Ministry official said in a statement. "Abe may see what a real ballistic missile is in the not distant future." AFP

Hafiz Saeed may be indicted on Dec. 7

LAHORE Mumbai terror attack mastermind and chief of the banned JuD, Hafiz Saeed, will be prosecuted for terror financing charges by an anti-terrorism court here next month, an official said on Saturday. An Anti-Terrorism Court in Lahore held a hearing against Saeed and his accomplices on terror financing on Saturday and fixed December 7 as the date for his indictment and others in the case. PTI

China bans 'fake news' created with AI, bots

BEIJING China has issued new rules banning online video and audio providers from using artificial intelligence (AI) and virtual reality technologies to produce "fake news", which has been generalised to mean anything from a mistake to a parody or a deliberate misinterpretation of facts. The rules come into effect on January 1. The regulations particularly stressed the dangers of "deepfakes," or technology that manipulates videos to appear genuine but which depict events or speech that never happened. AFP

Climate protesters occupy German coal mines

Say the govt. is not doing enough to phase out the fossil fuel

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
SPREMBERG

Thousands of activists on Saturday occupied several opencast coal mines in eastern Germany, seeking to put pressure on the government to phase out the fossil fuel – a divisive issue in the country's rust belt.

Wearing masks and dressed in white, hundreds of campaigners stormed into the Jaenschwalde Ost mine while another 450 sat down on a railroad connected to the site. Similar action hit the Welzow-Sued mine, also in the Lausitz basin.

Meanwhile, MIBRAG which operates another mine – the Vereinigtes Schleenhain site – south of Leipzig said about 1,200 protesters blocked a coal-excavator, forcing the group to halt operations.

"We have nothing against peaceful protests and the ex-



ercise of democratic rights, but we reject all forms of breach of laws and violence," MIBRAG chairman Armin Eichholz said in a statement. Both MIBRAG and Czech-controlled LEAG which operates the two Lausitz mines said they were filing legal action against the protesters. The Police were able to clear the mines only after several hours. In these mining regions, thousands of jobs depend on coal. But some residents are

protest. All three mines hit on Saturday produce lignite, a low-grade type of brown coal that is considered the most harmful to human health and the environment.

'Another year lost' Calling Saturday's coordinated action a success, a spokeswoman Ende Gelaende (Game Over) said around 4,000 turned up for the blockades and related protests.

"Despite all the nice speeches and promises, 2019 was another lost year for the climate," said Nike Malhaus.

The occupation is being supported by other environmental groups, including the German branch of Fridays for Future which is also holding a protest at a power station in the region.

Campaigners say the government's plans to phase out coal by 2038 announced this year do not go far enough. They want that date brought forward for Germany to meet its international commitments to slash carbon pollution.

Germany pretends to be a pioneer in climate protection abroad, yet its climate policy making is disastrous," said Ms. Malhaus.

The mining industry in the Lausitz basin, which stretches all the way into Poland, is vital to the local economy. LEAG is one of the region's largest employers with 8,000 workers. Opposition to the government's plants to shut down coal mines was seen as a factor behind a surge for the far-right AfD party in regional elections in September. The local council in Cottbus, a city a few kilometres from the Lausitz basin, passed a motion condemning the occupation with the support of all parties except the Greens.

Ms. Malhaus admitted there was "a climate of defiance towards our movement on the local level".

But she also pointed to local support in the Lausitz. "We have a lot of campaigners here so it's not true to say that all inhabitants of this region are in favour of coal," she said.

SUDOKU

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DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

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CM
YK

Kochhar moves court against ICICI Bank

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

Former ICICI Bank MD and CEO Chanda Kochhar has moved the Bombay High Court challenging the bank's decision to terminate her from service last year. The petition was filed on November 20 and will be heard on December 2 before a division bench of Justices Ranjit More and M.S. Karnik.

The petition said, after having accepted her request for early retirement with effect from October 4, 2019 – after which she would cease to be an employee of ICICI Bank – the bank ought not to have terminated her services.

Following charges of quid pro quo, ICICI Bank had commissioned an enquiry against Ms. Kochhar headed by retired justice B.N. Srikrishna. After the panel's report, the bank decided to terminate her services. ICICI Bank's decision to claw back her past bonuses has also been challenged.

Hyundai Venue set to enter S. Africa on Dec. 2

Bookings may reach 1 lakh by year-end

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI

Hyundai Motor India Ltd's (HMIL) Venue is all set to enter South Africa on December 2, propelled by strong demand for its first connected mobility in the Sport Utility Vehicle segment from the overseas market.

The first shipment of 1,400 Hyundai Venue vehicles left from Chennai Port to South Africa market on Saturday, said the company in a statement.

The popularity and demand for the made-in-India Venue is evident in the overseas market as well, it added. "Venue is already being exported to Nepal, Bhutan, Mauritius and Seychelles," according to the statement.

The batch that left for South Africa comprises the right-hand drive model. The left-hand drive model is under development and would be exported to the Gulf,

Jio likely to bag RCom's tower, fibre assets for ₹3,600 crore

Bharti's ₹9,500 cr. bid seeking deferred payment for spectrum dues may be rejected

PIYUSH PANDEY
MUMBAI

Reliance Jio is likely to bag the tower and fibre assets of Reliance Communications (RCom) for ₹3,600 crore, while Bharti Airtel's conditional bid of ₹9,500 crore is likely to be rejected by the Committee of Creditors (CoC), given that most of the money will go to the government and there would be little left for the lenders.

A banker in the know of the development told *The Hindu*, "Bharti Airtel's conditional bid of ₹9,500 crore seeks deferred payment for the spectrum liability to the government. There is not much for the lenders."

New Delhi-based UV Asset Reconstruction Co. and U.S.-based private equity fund Varde Partners have also submitted their bids, but the financial value and the nature of the bids could not be independently verified by *The Hindu*. "The Committee



Jio's pact with RCom in 2017 did not get DoT's nod as the bidder did not want to take over past liabilities. ■ REUTERS

of Creditors (CoC) would like to sell all assets in a single transaction, but they may have to sell the spectrum, tower and fibre assets separately due to the nature of the bids received. The stated objective of the IBC is value maximisation," said another person close to the development.

In this case, the tower and fibre assets may go to Reliance Jio, while spectrum and real estate assets may go to Bharti Airtel.

In December 2017, Reliance Jio had entered into an agreement with Reliance Communications to buy its spectrum, telecom, fibre and allied infrastructure for ₹25,000 crore.

The deal did not get approval from the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) as Reliance Jio did not want to take over the past liabilities of RCom.

RCom has 43,000 telecom towers and 178,000 route kilometres of optic fibre network.

Base corporate tax for existing companies has been reduced to 22% from 30%, and for new manufacturing firms incorporated after October 1, 2019 and starting operations before March 31, 2023, it was slashed to 15% from 25%.

"Now, even the combined bid of Reliance Jio and Bharti Airtel put together is less than what Jio wanted to pay two years ago for RCom's assets," said Paras Bothra, president – equities at Ashika Stock Broking.

■ Lower value

"In the biggest reduction in 28 years, the government, in September, reduced corporate tax rate by almost 10 percentage points, in a bid to give a boost to the sagging economy.

Base corporate tax for existing companies has been reduced to 22% from 30%, and for new manufacturing firms incorporated after October 1, 2019 and starting operations before March 31, 2023, it was slashed to 15% from 25%.

■ Nounced the corporate tax cut. There were many companies which were showing interest and wanting to come back."

"So, this task force has already started contacting many of these companies. The last count, I came to know was about 12 of them have already been spoken to, their minds understood, their expectation listed out so that the government can come up with a concrete offer for them to shift from where they are now, so that the ecosystems can get built here, new industries can



Nirmala Sitharaman

come," she said. The Minister said the effort taken towards bringing newer industries, which were moving out of China, was actively moving forward. "And I am sure, I will be able to report some progress on that," she added.

With regard to investment of ₹100 lakh crore in the next five years, she said the task force would come out with a list of 10 major infrastructure projects by December 15 and investment in these projects would be front-loaded. "We made sure that a set of officers was looking into the pipeline that can be ready, so that once the fund is ready, it will be front-loaded..that task is near completion," she said.

The Finance Ministry, in September, set up a task force headed by the Economic Affairs Secretary to prepare a road map for the 'national infrastructure pipeline' from 2019-20 to 2024-25 under a ₹100-lakh crore infra plan.

RBL Bank to raise ₹826 cr. from 5 investors

Funds to boost lender's capital base

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

The board of private sector lender RBL Bank has decided to raise ₹826 crore equity capital from five investors to boost its capital base.

The bank will issue 24.24 million shares to these investors at ₹340.7 a piece, the bank said in a communication in the stock exchange.

Post the allotment, WF Asian Reconnaissance Fund Limited will hold 1.45% stake in the bank, Ishana Capital Master Fund will have 1.39%, FEG Mauritius FPI Limited 0.56%, East Bridge Capital Master Fund I Ltd. 0.97% and Bajaj Finance Limited will have 0.97%.

"The infusion will help improve the bank's capital adequacy, which fell from 15.95% in Sept. 2017 to 11.88% in Sept. 2019.

"After the hike in MSP, wheat planting has become even more attractive for farmers," Mr. Galipelli said. For the time being, dealers say wheat exports from India next year would be difficult because of their comparatively high cost.

"India could easily produce more than 100 million tonnes but could not export even 1 million tonnes unless government provides subsidy for exports," said a Mumbai-based dealer with a global trading firm.

'Work on to fix cross-border insolvency'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI

Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India chairman M.S. Sahoo on Saturday said work is on to amend the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code 2016 that will address cross-border insolvency.

On Thursday, Mr. Sahoo had said the government is keen to introduce a globally accepted and well-recognised cross-border insolvency framework, which will make India an attractive investment destination, given the increased predictability and certainty of the insolvency process.

"There is proposal to amend the IBC to provide for such cases like cross border insolvency and to address some of the problems that have come up, but I will not be able to say which these are," Mr. Sahoo told reporters here.

INTERVIEW | WARREN HARRIS

'India has key role in achieving price point in EVs'

Country's technology capability will make it a source of supply for global OEMs: Tata Technologies MD

LALATENDU MISHRA

As the automotive industry shifts to alternative propulsion systems, specifically electric vehicles, Tata Technologies Ltd., a subsidiary of Tata Motors, having expertise in providing end-to-end solutions, is playing a pioneering role in helping auto companies adapt to changes. In an interview with *The Hindu*, the company's CEO and MD, Warren Harris, says India has the potential to lead the EV revolution globally due to its strengths in frugal engineering. Edited excerpts:

What is the future of the automotive industry in India?

If you look at the changes globally, the industry is disrupted in three directions:

The move to electrification, the move to connected services, ride sharing-cost sharing and the move to autonomous driving.

The reason I am bullish is the price point at which those solutions have been developed today is acceptable not just for India, but for the global automotive market. I think India has a great role to play in helping achieve a price point that will enable those technologies to be delivered to the mass market. It has a great role to play in the IP to be developed for this. The technology capability that is here and the capacity that India has in software and the likes of mechatronics will again make India a source of supply for the world's OEMs and engineering services firms will play a pioneering role.

What needs to be done?

As far as the market is concerned, a lot will depend upon government legislations. In the past, the organisations that developed the best products had won. But going forward, the ability to develop the best product is going to require the ability to develop partnerships across the technology stack. India has to make a decision as to whether it wants to accelerate that change or whether it wants to wait for the rest of the world to make that change and then to follow it.

I trust and hope that India takes a leading role in it. This is a tough market. The Indian market is a very hard one. In the passenger vehicles space there are 20 companies that compete and two companies have 67% of the market. You have

18 companies competing for the rest. So it is a really tough market to invest in. If nothing is done to ensure that they invest in the market, you will see other companies exit the market like GM and Ford have. That is the real danger.

What is your view about the EV revolution that is supposedly gripping India?

The projection for the global EV market has extended from 3 million units in 2017 to 30 million units in 2020. Some ambitious analysts suggest that it will grow to 130 million units by 2030. So, there is a lot of hype. And I think some of that hype is getting desiccated now.

I think the Indian government is doing the right things and signalling what is right. But public-private partnership is critical. The alignment is there. If you look at the automotive industry, there have been a lot of dialogue mainly in the last three months between the Finance Minister and the OEMs.

But we have not seen that translate yet into legislation and to a regulatory framework that will provide the incentives, the safety net to the OEMs to really

invest. India is a price-sensitive market and that is somewhat of an inhibitor to EVs, but it's also an opportunity. For example, today, an autonomous vehicle is priced at about \$300,000 but that has to come down to \$50,000 to \$60,000 if it is going to be successful.

That is going to require a lot of frugal innovation. The government has to take a proactive stance in providing an environment in which people can invest.

Despite all the hype, India sold less than 3,000 EVs last year...

When you take a traditional IEC platform and convert that to an electric propulsion system, then you are really not optimising the product in the way you have the opportunity.

When you don't have an engine and you have got a battery pack that sits underneath the vehicle, the opportunity to optimise the cabin space [and] the ability to improve the passenger experience is lost.

When you are worried about the price and you cannot afford to make those investments or you are concerned about your ability to sell them, it compromises your ability to innovate and invest and I think the government has a role to play in this to help.

The Indian automotive industry is witnessing

contraction. What is the global scenario?

Since the financial crisis, the automotive industry has been going in the upward direction. Last year, 92 million units were sold globally. That will come down to about 86 million units this year.

Ten years ago, we used to go through this cycle every five years. This is a cyclical industry. But the emergence of countries like India and China have sustained the growth for a period in which the industry should have gone down.

So, what we are now seeing globally is the re-establishment of the cycle that we had seen before 2008-2009. This has been compounded by trade wars [and] macroeconomic issues but the drop in other territories is likely to be much shallower than it is here in India.

The first headwind that the Indian market is faced with is the liquidity crisis. The transition from BS-IV to BS-VI is a big jump and that impacts short-term demand. The speculation that GST would be reduced did not help in demand creation.

Globally, there is a slowdown. The unique issue in India is that there is a real need for the government to do something in the short term to stimulate demand. If they don't, you will find OEMs cutting cost, which will then compromise their ability to be competitive in two to three years' time.

12 global firms interested to shift base from China to India: FM

Competitive tax rate of 15% announced recently a key draw'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Saturday said about 12 global companies had evinced interest to shift their base from China to India, taking advantage of the competitive tax rate of 15% announced recently.

In the biggest reduction in 28 years, the government, in September, reduced corporate tax rate by almost 10 percentage points, in a bid to give a boost to the sagging economy.

RCom has 43,000 telecom towers and 178,000 route kilometres of optic fibre network.

Base corporate tax for existing companies has been reduced to 22% from 30%, and for new manufacturing firms incorporated after October 1, 2019 and starting operations before March 31, 2023, it was slashed to 15% from 25%.

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e-Toll for the road

How will the FASTag toll collection programme help cut delays and losses on India's highways?

DEVESH K. PANDEY

The story so far: From December 15, 2019, FASTag, a prepaid rechargeable tag for toll payments, on national highways will become mandatory for all vehicles. The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways extended the earlier deadline of December 1 on Friday.

What is FASTag?

It is a prepaid radio-frequency identification-enabled tag that facilitates automatic deduction of toll charges. The new system will now do away with a stop-over of vehicles and cash transactions at toll plazas. Projected as the 'Aadhaar' card for vehicles, the FASTag electronic toll collection programme is being implemented by the Indian Highways Management Company Limited (IHMCL), a company incorporated by the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI), and the National Payments Corporation of India in coordination with Toll Plaza Concessionaires, tag issuing agencies and banks.

Currently, FASTag can be bought from 22 certified banks, through various online platforms, online applications and at select points-of-sale locations.

The tag, which can be recharged through cheque or online payments, is fixed on the windshield of a vehicle, ideally on the glass just behind the rear-view mirror. It is scanned by the tag reader and the toll amount is deducted when the vehicle approaches a toll plaza. The user gets a short message service (SMS) alert on the registered mobile phone about all transactions and the available balance.

Service providers have developed a 'My FASTag' mobile application to provide a one-stop solution to users. An NHAI prepaid wallet has also been launched, giving users the option of not linking the tags to their bank accounts.

FASTag has a validity of five years. Over 70 lakh FASTags had been issued till November 27.

Why does it matter?

A joint study in 2014-15 by the Transport Corporation of India and the Indian Institute of Management-Cuttack (launched by the Minister of Road Transport and Highways and Shipping Nitin Gadkari in 2016) estimated the cost of delay on Indian roads at \$6.6 billion per year. The cost of additional fuel consumption due to delays was also put at \$14.7 billion per year.

The study said: "The average cost of delay, including the shipper's expenses, was ₹151.38 an hour. The figure may seem insignificant. However, the effect of delay on the economy is not insignificant... as per the Road Transport Year Book 2011-12, available on the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways website, there were about 7.6 million goods vehicles as of March 31, 2012, increasing at 8.9% per annum in the last couple

of years. If we consider a conservative 8% growth, the number of goods vehicles as on March 31, 2015 is estimated at about 9.6 million, which means that the annual cost of delay to the Indian economy could be a whopping ₹432 billion or \$6.6 billion."

If added: "If mileage can be improved by increasing fuel efficiency, improving road conditions and reducing stoppage delays, the impact on the economy could be huge."

The report had suggested that to expedite the toll collection process, India should gradually move towards electronic toll collection, which would not only reduce congestion and queues at toll plazas but also reduce operating costs for toll operators and plug revenue leakages.

How did it come about?

The electronic toll collection system was initially implemented as a pilot project in 2014 on the Ahmedabad-Mumbai stretch of the Golden Quadrilateral. It was gradually extended to other parts of the country. The tag is currently accepted at more than 500 National Highways and about 40 State highway toll plazas. Till September, the total collection through FASTag was over ₹12,850 crore.

What are the benefits?

Apart from plugging revenue leakages and reducing the cost of delays and fuel consumption, which is also likely to cut down the nation's GDP loss, according to the government, the tag helps remove bottlenecks, ensures seamless movement of traffic and saves time. The centralised system provides authentic and real-time data to government agencies for better analysis and policy formulation. It also helps reduce air pollution and the use of paper besides cutting the cost of managing toll plazas.

What lies ahead?

On October 14, 2019, the IHMCL and GST Network signed a memorandum of understanding for integrating FASTag with the e-way Bill system. The arrangement has been made for a more efficient 'track-and-trace' mechanism involving goods vehicles. It will also check revenue leakage at toll plazas. The integration, which will become mandatory across the country from April 2020, will help revenue authorities check whether goods vehicles are actually headed to the specified destination. Suppliers and transporters will also be able to keep track of their vehicles through SMS alerts generated at each tag reader-enabled toll plaza.

The Central government also plans to enable the use of FASTag for a range of other facilities such as fuel payments and parking charges. Several States have already signed memoranda of understanding to join the system.

Fractured verdicts and the Governor's role

What do the Sarkaria Commission recommendations say? What has the Supreme Court ruled on this issue?

K. VENKATARAMAN

The story so far: Not for the first time in recent years, there was a prolonged stalemate in Maharashtra over the formation of a government as no single party had a majority of its own after the Assembly election in October. It was not a wholly fractured verdict. A pre-poll alliance of the Bharatiya Janata Party (105 seats) and the Shiv Sena (56) had a clear majority (161 in the 288-seat Assembly, with 145 being the majority mark), but the Sena broke the alliance over unresolved issues related to sharing of power. Even as a post-poll combination was being worked out, Maharashtra Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari's controversial decision to administer the oath to Devendra Fadnavis of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) as Chief Minister and Ajit Pawar of the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) as Deputy Chief Minister was taken to court by the Shiv Sena, the NCP and the Congress. After the Supreme Court of India ordered an early floor test, Ajit Pawar resigned. Mr. Fadnavis followed suit, admitting that he did not have the required majority. A new post-poll combination, between the Sena, NCP and the Congress and some independents, has now formed the government. The developments have brought under focus the role of the Governor in such circumstances.

What should the Governor do if there is a hung Assembly?

The Constitution envisages that the Governor act on the aid and advice of the Council of Ministers, except in those situations in which he is, by or under the Constitution, required to act in his discretion (Article 163). It is clear that in identifying a candidate who, in his opinion, is in a position to command a majority, the Governor has to make his own decision, subject, of course, to democratic norms. This is why one often sees the Governor of a State inviting leaders for discussions as part of efforts to explore the possibility of forming a government. When the Governor appoints the Chief Minister in this way, it is accompanied by a stipulation that the appointee prove his or her majority within a specified time on the floor of the House.

Is there a preferred order for this process?

The Governor may invite the leader of the largest single party first. However, if it is clear that the largest single party has no potential ally or enough independent members to ensure a majority, he may also invite the leader of the largest pre-poll combination or alliance.

If there is no combination or alliance, he may invite leaders one by one in the order of their size in the new Assembly. During this process, a post-poll combination may emerge, if any one of them agrees to form a government. The Governor may insist on letters of support from those outside the leader's party who are willing to join or extend support to him.

Is there any guidance to the Governor on this?

The Sarkaria Commission on inter-State relations has dealt with this question. The Commission's report suggests the following orders for Governors to follow: 1. An alliance formed prior to the election; 2. The largest single party staking claim with the support of others, including independents;

3. A post-electoral coalition, with all partners joining the government; 4. A post-poll coalition, with some joining the government, and others extending support from outside.

As general principles, the Sarkaria Commission says the Governor should look for a party or combination that commands the widest support in the Assembly



Proceedings before a floor test, at the Vidhana Soudha in Bengaluru in 2018. ■ FILE PHOTO/PTI

combination that commands the widest support in the Assembly, and that "his task is to see that a government is formed, and not to try to form a government which will pursue policies which he approves".

How does the Governor ascertain majority?

Decades ago, there were instances of party leaders parading legislators supposedly supporting them in Raj Bhavan, and Governors doing a headcount or verifying signatures. This approach has been deprecated by courts, and there is consensus now that the floor of the Assembly is the only place where the majority is to be decided. The Sarkaria Commission recommends that a person, who has been appointed Chief Minister without a clear majority, should seek a vote of confidence in the Assembly within 30 days. "This practice should be strictly adhered to with the sanctity of a rule of law," it says.

Similarly, when the majority of the Chief Minister is contested by a significant number of legislators, the Governor should not risk a determination of his own outside the House, and it would be prudent "to cause the rival claims to be tested on the floor of the House". In this, the Governor may advise the Chief Minister to summon the Assembly, if it is not in session, to demonstrate his support. Normally, under Article 174, the Governor summons the House only on the advice of the Council of Ministers, but will be within his constitutional rights to cause the House to be convened if there is reason to believe that there is a doubt about the incumbent's majority.

What are the principles evolved by the Supreme Court?

Some seminal judgments of the Supreme Court have dealt with these issues. The key principle that ought to guide the Governor is set out in the S.R. Bommai vs. Union of India case (1994). The proper course, the court said, for testing the strength of a ministry is a floor test. "That alone is the constitutionally ordained forum..." it observed. Even though this verdict was in the context of the imposition of President's rule in different States, the principle holds good for any situation in which Governors have to decide on the appointment of a Chief Minister or continuance of a regime based on its numerical strength in the House.

In Rameshwari Prasad (2005), the court ruled that there was nothing wrong in installing a post-poll combination, and that the Governor could not decline the formation of a government on the ground that it was being done through unethical means.

In February 1998, in an unusual and trend-setting order (*Jagdambika Pal vs. Union of India and Ors*), the Supreme Court ordered a 'composite floor test' involving two rival claimants – Kalyan Singh and Jagdambika Pal. The Governor had dismissed the former and installed Ms. Pal in office. Kalyan Singh won the floor test that day. A significant aspect of the court's order was that it was made clear that the floor test would be the only item on the agenda of the House.

A similar order was passed in March 2005 in the Jharkhand Assembly. More recently, in 2016, Harish Rawat won a floor test ordered by the Supreme Court in Uttarakhand. In 2017, a similar order was passed in respect of the Goa Assembly.

Karnataka (2018) and Maharashtra (2019) are instances of the court ordering a floor test in a situation in which the Assembly had not yet been convened after the general election. Therefore, the legislators were yet to take their oaths. The court directed the appointment of a pro tem Speaker, to be followed by the administration of oath to the new members and, thereafter, a floor test.

In a case examining the validity of the Governor advancing a session of the Arunachal Pradesh Assembly on his own, a Constitution Bench cautioned Governors against acting on internal party developments or "entering the political thicket".

What are the questions left for adjudication?

The court has so far justified its intervention by way of ordering floor tests, reasoning that such orders were necessary to preserve constitutional and democratic values. In its recent order in the Maharashtra case, the court observed: "In a situation wherein, if the floor test is delayed, there is a possibility of horse-trading, it becomes incumbent upon the court to act to protect democratic values."

Such cases raise the issue of "boundaries between the court's jurisdiction and parliamentary independence", as the court itself noted. This may have to be dealt with in a suitable case some day. Also, the acts of Governors in seeking letters of support, requiring Chief Ministers to prove their majority, and entertaining letters of withdrawal of support have so far been based on convention. Whether such acts are justifiable may require adjudication. In the latest case too, the question whether the Maharashtra Governor's decision to invite one claimant, rather than another, based on an un-substantiated letter of support is correct, is open to adjudication. A set of written instructions or guidelines for Governors to act in such situations has been mooted in the past.

Why are there objections to the Transgender Persons Bill?

Does the Bill address issues of gender and identity? Does it consider the appeals and the concerns of the community?

RAMYA KANNAN

The story so far: Parliament has made into law the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Bill, 2019, which had been framed for the welfare of transgender persons. The Bill was passed in the Lok Sabha on August 5 this year, a month after its introduction in the House, and the Rajya Sabha cleared it on November 26, with a last minute move to refer it to a Select Committee being defeated in a voice vote. The community had organised protests across the country, urging changes to the Bill, claiming that in the form in which the Central government had conceived it, it showed a poor understanding of gender and sexual identity.

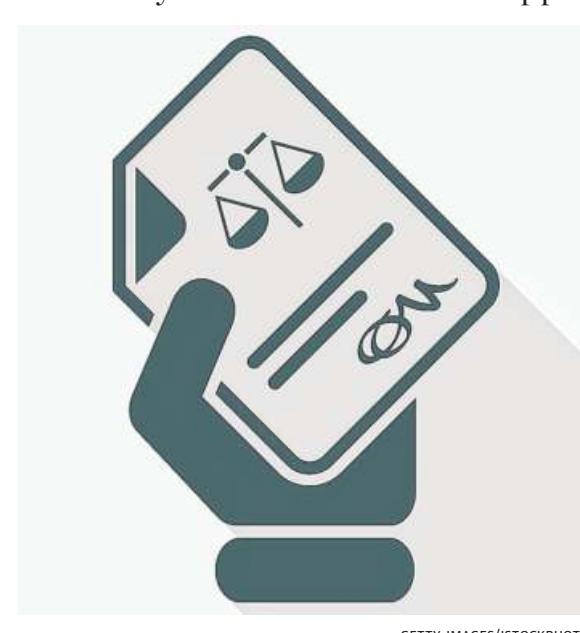
What were the objections to the Bill?

Activists had problems right from the beginning, starting with the name. 'Transgender' was restrictive, they argued, and it showed a lack of understanding of the complexities in people who do not conform to the gender binary, male/female. Charging that the Bill had serious flaws, because of this basic lack of comprehension about gender, some activists also wrote an alternative wish Bill, outlining their demands.

The Bill was meant to be a consequence of the directions of the Supreme Court of India in the National Legal Services Authority vs. Union of India case judgment, mandating the Central and State governments to ensure legal recognition of all transgender persons and proactive measures instituted for their welfare. Activists harked back to this judgment of April 2014, chastising the Union government for failing to live up to the opportunity to ensure that fundamental rights are guaranteed to all people regardless of their sex characteristics or gender identity. Rejecting 'Transgender' as the nomenclature, they suggested instead that the title should be a comprehensive "Gender Identity, Gender Expression and Sex Characteristics (Protection of Rights) Bill", and in definition, sought to introduce the distinction between transgenders and intersex persons upfront. Members of the community perceive transgender as different from intersex, and were insistent that the distinction be made in the Bill.

Transgenders have a different gender identity than what was assigned to them at birth, while intersex indicates diversity of gender based on biological characteristics – ambiguity in anatomical genitalia – at birth. There are also multiple variations in intersex people.

While the Act is progressive in that it allows self-



GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

perception of identity, it mandates a certificate from a district magistrate declaring the holder to be transgender. This goes against the principle of self-determination itself, activists argue, also pointing out that there is no room for redress in case an appeal for such a certificate is rejected. One long-pending demand has been to declare forced, unnecessary and non-consensual sex reassignment surgery illegal, and to enforce punitive action for violations.

Transgender and intersex persons might require a range of unique health care needs, and that should have been incorporated into the Act, activists say.

While the Act envisages the setting up of a National Council for Transgender Persons to provide the institutional framework for its implementation, suggestions on the composition of such a council, or the demand to set up a working group for a Council for Intersex Persons were also ignored.

What is the historical context?

In 2013, the government set up an expert committee to study the problems of transgenders and recommend solutions. The committee, comprising experts from various fields and members of the community, also looked at past experience as in the State of Tamil Nadu,

which had set up a welfare board for transgender persons, and made recommendations right from allowing a 'third gender' in official forms, to setting up of special toilets, and customising health interventions.

In 2014, a private member Bill, The Rights of Transgendered Persons, was introduced in the Rajya Sabha by Tiruchi Siva, a Member of Parliament from Tamil Nadu, which looked at a range of entitlements of such persons, providing specifically for them in health, education sectors, skill development and employment opportunities, and protection from abuse and torture. It was passed in the Rajya Sabha.

In 2016, the Government introduced its own Bill in the Lok Sabha and it was referred to a Standing Committee, which made a number of recommendations including defining the term persons with intersex variations,

granting reservations for socially and educationally backward classes, and recognition of civil rights including marriage, partnership, divorce and adoption. However, with the dissolution of the 16th Lok Sabha (2014-19), that Bill lapsed. Earlier this year, the Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court declared a ban on sex normalisation surgeries on intersex children and infants, relying on a petition to the National Human Rights Commission on the subject from Gopi Shankar, an intersex person, and activist. The Tamil Nadu government followed this up with issuing a Government Order banning such surgeries.

What is the future?

While the community is miffed that the Bill has become an Act without any effort to make valid or relevant changes to its original composition, it worries about how implementation will address the pressing needs of the community.

It only hopes that the National Council for Transgender Persons will allow for a more favourable implementation of the law, and thus provide more elbow room for genuine representations of the community that the Bill itself failed to accommodate.

SNAPSHOTS



Eating up CO₂
Scientists have engineered a strain of *E. coli* bacteria to eat carbon dioxide and grow rather than eat sugars and other organic matter. The report is published in the journal *Cell*. This is a breakthrough and can be used to make several organic molecules in the lab which can be used as biofuels or food.



Animal bridges
Animals such as penguins, carrying sensors could help humans monitor the oceans according to a study which assessed 183 species. When monitoring oceans, large areas still remain under-sampled, leaving gaps in our knowledge. Using animals can bridge this gap, the study found.



Amazon burning
The scale of fires in the Amazon rainforest drew global attention earlier. However, the concerns were countered by the Brazilian government's claims that the fires were of the "normal" amount. A new study by an international team of scientists says that the number of active fires in August was three times higher than in 2018 and was the highest since 2010.



Plant defence
Grey mould caused by fungus devastates soft fruit crops. A study published in *Nature Communications* found strawberry plants had a bacteria (*Streptomyces globisporus*) in its vascular tissues and pollen that rendered them immune. Pollinating bees gained by ingesting the pollen and helped spread immunity.

Combination therapy using malaria drug quickly clears TB

The treatment led to near-complete clearance of the bacteria from the mice lungs in just two months

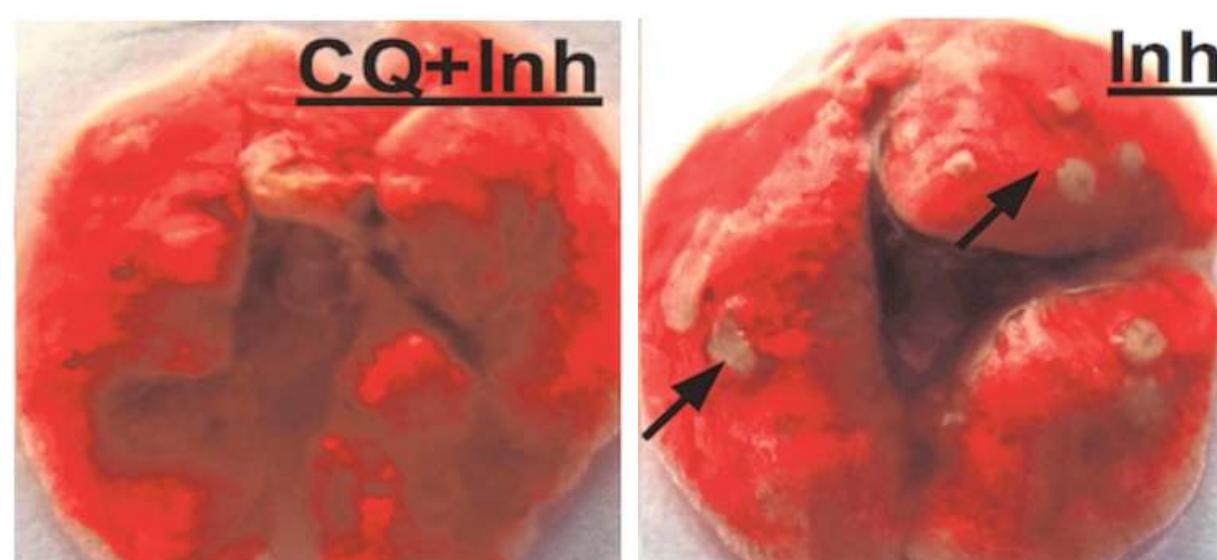
R. PRASAD

Researchers from Bengaluru have made an important discovery of the mechanism used by TB bacteria to tolerate TB drugs, which necessitates longer treatment of six-nine months. They have also demonstrated that a drug combination that prevents the bacteria from inducing this mechanism leads to almost complete clearance of the bacteria from the mice lungs in just two months of therapy. If further studies and trials show similar results, a shorter treatment regimen might be sufficient to treat drug-sensitive TB.

The common notion is that only the non-replicating or slowly metabolising TB bacteria become tolerant to anti-TB drugs. But the team led by Amit Singh from the Department of Microbiology and Cell Biology, and Centre for Infectious Disease Research at the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) found a fraction of the bacteria inside the macrophages was able to tolerate anti-TB drugs even when actively multiplying.

The researchers found that using an already approved anti-malaria drug chloroquine in combination with a TB drug isoniazid can almost clear all the bacteria from the lungs of mice and guinea pigs in just eight weeks. In addition, the drug combination also reduces the chances of TB relapse. The results were published in the journal *Science Translational Medicine*.

Reducing the pH to make it acidic is the first-line of defence by macrophages when



Potent combination: TB lesions (white patches) are absent in lungs of mice treated with chloroquine plus isoniazid (left) while these can be seen in the lungs of mice treated with isoniazid alone (right) as indicated by arrows.

infected with pathogens. But the researchers found that instead of controlling the TB bacteria, the mildly acidic pH was actually facilitating a fraction of the bacteria to continue multiplying and develop drug tolerance.

Counter oxidative stress

"We used a biosensor which we had developed a few years ago to see the amount of oxidative stress inside the TB bacteria during infection. We found that anti-TB drugs induce oxidative stress to kill bacteria inside macrophages. However, the drug tolerant bacteria have a remarkable ability to counter oxidative stress," says Prof. Singh. "The bacteria used the acidic pH of macrophages as a cue to specifically increase its capacity to deal with oxidative stress." Also, the drug-tolerant bacteria in-

duce efflux pumps to expel antibiotics as an additional mechanism to reduce antibiotic efficacy.

The drug-tolerant bacteria were found in macrophages that were more acidic (pH 5.8) while the drug-sensitive bacteria were seen in macrophages that were less acidic (pH 6.6).

"We hypothesised that reverting the pH within macrophages to its normal state could probably make the bacteria sensitive to antibiotics," Prof. Singh says. "The chloroquine drug does just that – it neutralises the pH within the macrophages. This prevented the bacteria from inducing the mechanism to protect themselves from oxidative stress. So no drug-tolerant TB bacteria emerged." Once the pH is neutralised, the isoniazid drug was able to eradicate

TB from animals.

While the two-month treatment was able to completely sterilise mouse lungs, a near-complete eradication was observed from the lungs of guinea pigs. "The combination was shown to reduce TB bacteria load in both mice and guinea pigs," says Richa Mishra from IISc and the first author of the paper.

Many times effective

In the case of *in vitro* studies using cell lines and mice macrophages, the ability of the combination drug therapy to reduce TB load was found to be three- to fivefold higher than when treated only with TB drugs. "Reduction in bacteria load was more when we combined chloroquine with isoniazid," says Mishra. "We observed threefold reduction when we combined chloroquine with rifampicin

and fivefold reduction when we used chloroquine-isoniazid combination."

To determine TB relapse following treatment, mice infected with TB were completely rid of bacteria using the drug combination. Eight weeks later, the immune system of mice was suppressed using a drug. While all the five mice treated with only isoniazid relapsed with high bacterial load, three of the five mice treated with the combination drug showed very little presence of bacteria. "This shows that the drug combination reduces the chances of TB relapse," says Mishra.

The work was carried out in collaboration with researchers from Bengaluru's National Centre for Biological Sciences and Foundation for Neglected Disease Research.



Question Corner

Light and shade in photosynthesis

Q Is there less photosynthesis taking place in leaves on lower branches of a tree and in permanent shade from direct sunlight?

A ARUN K. SHANKER, CRIDA, Hyderabad

Yes, photosynthesis will be less in leaves that are in shade. Usually they will not be in permanent shade, there will be some light falling on them at some time of the day, also due to wind the leaves will get light.

The leaves in shade will adapt to shade. One of the adaptations of these leaves that are in shade is to have larger area to capture more light for photosynthesis.

These leaves are thinner than the leaves that are open to the Sun. The shade leaves are dark green in colour and also the chloroplasts and the light harvesting complex moves within the cells to places where there can be more light interception. The shade leaves are more efficient in photosynthesis, the problem is that they lose more water by transpiration at the same temperature and humidity conditions.

The shade leaves also have low dark respiration rates and hence fewer light compensation points

- which is the light intensity on the light curve where the rate of photosynthesis exactly matches the rate of cellular respiration - this is low for leaves in shade. These adaptations take place during the development of the leaves. Leaves in shade also have short and long term strategies to count fluctuating light intensity. The short term strategy is rearrangement of antennae system in photosystems in the leaves so that they can make use of the available light effectively.

This is done by movement of the mobile pool of the light harvesting complex in the photosystems. The long term strategy of the leaves in the shade is to overexpress some of the genes of Photosystem I - psaA, psaB and Photosystem II - psbA.

This week's questions

How does a fully charged mobile phone lose its charge when left unused for several days together?

Why and how does the blue light of light emitting diodes affect sleep while yellow promotes sleep?

How do some aircraft avoid detection by radar? Can clouds hamper detection?

BHAVANI GIDDU,
New Delhi

These questions will be answered in subsequent weeks in this column.

Readers may send their questions /answers to questioncorner@thehindu.co.in

Fossil reveals how middle ear evolved

Extinct rodent lived 145-66 mya in what is now northeastern China

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Researchers have unearthed well-preserved middle ear bones from a new species of an extinct rodent that lived 145-66 million years ago in what is now northeastern China, an advance that may lead to better understanding of the evolution of hearing.

The study, published in the journal *Nature*, looked at fossils of the extinct rodent-like mammal – *Jeholbaatar kielanae* – at Jehol Biota of China, and noted that these animals had a middle ear that is distinct from those of its relatives.

The researchers, including those

from the Chinese Academy of Sciences, said the evolution of the rodent's bones and muscles involved in hearing may have been driven by specialisation for hearing. They said the fossil clues provide solid evidence of the morphology and formation of the inner ear bones, which are fully detached from the lower jaw.

Unique configuration

According to the researchers, the bones reveal a unique configuration with more complete components than those previously reported in these creatures.

The new fossil, they said, reveals

a transitional stage in the evolution of the surangular – a "reptilian" jawbone. Based on the new findings, the scientists speculated that in a class of extinct mammals, the joints connecting the middle ear to the ear-drum, and those connecting bones in the cheek region to the lower jaw may have evolved in tandem, allowing a distinct jaw movement while chewing.

They suggested that in these extinct mammals, the evolution of the middle ear may have probably been triggered by functional constraints on the bones and muscles involved in feeding.

Oxygen bars are surely not a solution for pollution

No medical community has come forward to spread awareness on this captivating yet unscientific business

SUBHABRATA MOITRA

The popularity of packaged air began around four years ago when a Canadian company launched 'canned air' for people in China when air pollution in many cities became alarmingly high. The newer addition – oxygen-bar – a recreational parlour or cafe which serves 'pure oxygen' is becoming a more attractive destination, particularly in cities with dangerous levels of air pollution. At times, the oxygen comes in different scented flavours.

In cities with highly polluted air, the business of 'canned oxygen' or 'oxygen-bar' is flourishing. The recent launch of such a recreational oxygen parlour in Delhi amidst the city's infamously bad air condition has caught significant media attention. But how safe are they and are any benefits at all?

First, do we really need this extra oxygen? The simplest answer is no. Unlike conventional oxygen therapies used in respiratory conditions that is administered for a short or long period in hospital or at home, people take oxygen for an ultra-short period in these bars (30 minutes or less). As per the standard clinical procedure, oxygen supplementation can be administered only in case of hypoxemia (lowering of oxygen saturation in the arterial blood below 95%) and it does not have any consistent beneficial effect on non-hypoxic patients.

These cross-links constitute approximately 10% of total cross-links in Gram-negative bacteria like *E. coli* and *Pseudomonas*. However, they are predominant in many Gram-positive bacteria such as *Mycobacteria* and *Clostridia* (occur up to 80% of total cross-links).

The next step according to Dr. Reddy is "identifying small-molecule inhibitors for this class of enzymes and also to understand the molecular mechanisms by which the cell wall growth is initiated".



New trend: A user breathes in oxygen mixed with perfume at an oxygen bar in New Delhi. ■ REUTERS

people with a lung condition, even a short-term acute exposure to such exogenous fragrance or oils can be life-threatening.

It must be borne in mind that oxygen-bars are sole-proprietorship ventures and are not legalised to administer oxygen for therapeutic purposes. These bars are not endorsed by local or federal healthcare systems and are not obliged to follow clinical bylaws, and thus cannot be held liable for any unwarranted health effect or an acute medical condition that occurs in the bars. Moreover, there are no statutory warnings or guidelines available at these bars about the potential adverse effects, particularly applicable to vulnerable population such as children, aged and person with allergies or lung conditions.

Captivating yet unscientific
It is unfortunate that no medical community has come forward to spread awareness among people for this increasingly captivating yet unscientific business with no known or established clinical benefit. It definitely calls for serious vigilance by the clinicians and safety makers to ensure the safety issues associated with recreational oxygen use, particularly flavoured oxygen in such bars, parlours and spas.

The writer is a European Respiratory Society Research Fellow at ISGlobal, Barcelona, Spain, and associate member of the Royal Society for Public Health, United Kingdom. subhabrata2207@gmail.com

CCMB team uses *E. coli* to study bacterial cell wall development

The cell wall of the bacteria is made up mostly of one large molecule called peptidoglycan

SHUBASHREE DESIKAN

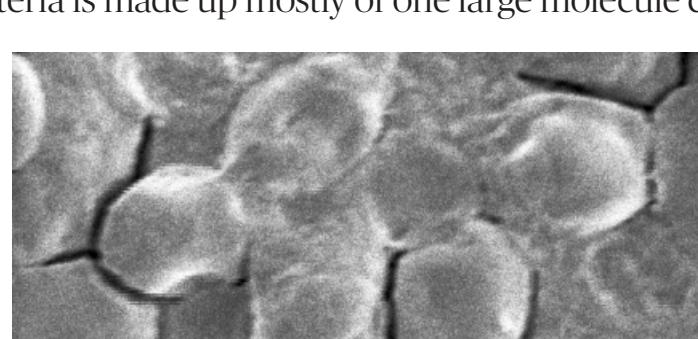
Researchers from Hyderabad have identified an enzyme that plays a crucial role in the enlargement and growth of bacteria, by studying *E. coli*. The enzyme MepK helps in cutting a particular class of bonds that connect the peptidoglycan, which is a sac-like molecule that envelopes the cell. This action allows more material to be added to the cell wall, making a larger compartment for the cell to reside in.

One of the most important features of a bacterium is its cell wall which protects it from external environmental conditions and also internal pressure and keeps it in shape. Harming the cell wall causes irreversible damage to the bacterium and eventually kills it.

Crucial factor

For example, *E. coli* are rod shaped bacteria often experimented with in the lab. The bacteria die when the integrity of the cell wall is destroyed. Its crucial role in maintaining the wellbeing of the bacterium makes the cell wall a target of study, especially by scientists interested in developing new drug strategies to combat the bacteria.

In this context, understanding how the bacterial cell wall deve-



Cellular damage: A scanning electron microscopic image of *E. coli* shows their cell walls ruptured hence losing the rodlike shape and dying. ■ CCMB

lops during growth and division of cells is an important question being addressed in Manjula Reddy's lab at the Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CSIR-CCMB) in Hyderabad for a decade now.

In an earlier work, done in 2012, Dr Reddy's group showed that opening the cell wall by hydrolysing enzymes is crucial for the new material to be incorporated into it, leading to the cell's expansion and elongation.

The cell wall is made up mostly of a single net-like molecule (peptidoglycan). This consists of many sugar polymers interconnected by short peptides. It encloses the bacterial cytoplasmic membrane very much like a jute bag. The

peptides connecting the baglike structure are cross-linked in several ways. Of significance to this work are the links between particular amino acid residues located on adjacent peptide chains. This is a rare component present only in bacterial cell walls and is known as mDAP for short..

Vital enzyme
In a paper published recently in the *Proceedings of National Academy of Sciences (PNAS)*, the group identified an enzyme (MepK) which helps in breaking down the bond between two mDAP residues. This leads to cutting the molecular mesh and thus aiding the growth (or enlargement) of the cell. "By cleaving

these cross-links, MepK [along with other known enzymes] contributes to growth and enlargement of sac-like peptidoglycan... This emphasises the fundamental role of cross-link cleavage in bacterial cell wall synthesis," says Pavan Kumar Chodisetty, from CSIR-CCMB and the first author of the paper.

"The class of enzymes reported in this paper was not known earlier, and identifying this enzyme [MepK] gave us lot of excitement," says Dr. Reddy. "[The study] has higher significance in organisms like *Clostridia* and *M. tuberculosis* because cell walls of these bacteria have very high levels of mDAP-mDAP type of cross-links. Therefore, MepK-like enzymes will be very important for the growth of these bacteria."

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The next step according to Dr. Reddy is "identifying small-molecule inhibitors for this class of enzymes and also to understand the molecular mechanisms by which the cell wall growth is initiated".

Placebo, at best

It must and should be remembered that the oxygen level does not alter in the air even when the pollution level is high. The same applies to our health – oxygen saturation in blood remains unchanged in healthy people in normal conditions, and such recreational oxygen can not provide any health improvement. It can at best have a placebo effect. Though users and proponents of purified oxygen claim several benefits such as relieving stress, headache and migraine, and help in achieving

better energy and mood, there is no clinical evidence available so far in support of the beneficial effects of recreational oxygen use.

Most importantly, the use of scented oxygen might not be safe. To add scent to oxygen, the oxygen is bubbled through a liquid containing scented additives or aroma oil. Users will seldom know the properties of the oils or the components of the additives used. Scented oxygen can be harmful to people, particularly to those with allergies and lung diseases. Fragrant materials very often contain aromatic hydrocarbons, many of which are potential allergens and can trigger asthma and allergic symptoms.

Moreover, the aromatization of oxygen generates ultrafine droplets of essential oils which, when inhaled with oxygen, get deposited in the lungs and accumulate in the alveoli leading to a respiratory condition known as "lipoid pneumonia". In this condition, deposited oil droplets can cause severe inflammation, damage alveolar septa (thin single cell lining between two adjacent alveoli) and lead to fibrosis. Long-term exposure to such exogenous oil substances may cause chronic lipoid pneumonia in which the patients remain asymptomatic and are often diagnosed at a very late-stage, and that too, incidentally, due to other illnesses. Among peo-

Firefighters under fire for fighting Amazon blaze

Four volunteers, who were fighting the Amazon fires, were arrested on charges of starting fires

SAO PAULO



At the dawn on Tuesday, armed policemen arrived at the doors of four volunteer firefighters in the Alter do Chão area of Para State in the Amazon region. Bundled into the police cars, they were taken away without any arrest warrant. Then they were paraded on TV like criminals – dressed in prison uniforms, handcuffed, their heads shaved off, walking down the corridor of a notorious prison, where dozens have been hacked to death in two years. The same day, the police raided the office of Health and Joy, an NGO in the area, and took away their computers and papers, without a warrant.

The arrest of volunteers, who have been fighting the forest blaze

with minimum resources, on the charges that they were “starting fires and filming them to raise money from international donors” sparked an outrage across the country. “My son is a guardian of the forest. He gave up his comfortable life in São Paulo and chose to live in a wooden cabin with no fence because he loves the forest and believes in protecting it,” says Patricia Romano, the mother of Joao Vitor, 27, who was one of the four arrested.

Mr. Vitor worked as a producer of videos in São Paulo before moving to Para in 2016 and founded the volunteer force with three others from this city. Known as the Alter Brigade, the group works voluntarily to protect the forest and communities of Alter do Chão, a scenic place caught in the crosshairs of land-grabbers. Mr. Vitor’s mother Ms. Patricia, a pioneer of Indian classical dances in Brazil,

credits the influence of Indian culture for her son’s work. “I raised my children in a very Indian environment. From a young age, Joao used to meditate and chant mantras. His love for forest and animals also comes from those traditions,” says Ms. Patricia, who travelled to India first time in 1996 to learn Bharatnatyam and Mohiniyattam at Natyayala run by Kalambalam Sumathi in Perumbavoor, Kerala. “Joao and his colleagues risk their lives to defend the Amazon.”

The Amazon has been burning for months, with little being done to control the blaze. The arrest of Alter Brigade volunteers, which became an international headline in less than 24 hours, has exposed the deep fault-lines colliding in the world’s biggest ecosystem. Shaji Thomas, a post-doctoral researcher at the Federal University of Para who has lived in Alter do Chão for 10 years coordinating many social and environmental projects, blames the government for the crisis. “The government has



done practically nothing to curb the fires. There is a parallel government run by landlords and big companies who dictate what the state should do. The timber lobby here is so powerful that they even block the police action,” says the academic, origi-

nally from India, who last month released a book on the history of social movements in the region.

Conflict zone

Mr. Thomas, who lived on a boat with local people at Alter do Chão, describes how the picturesque area, which has a sweet-water beach, became a conflict zone between hotel developers and indigenous tribes. In the past 30 years, says Mr. Thomas, almost all the locals were displaced from the village as the tourist industry rolled in, causing the destruction of local communities who were helped by some NGOs. “The NGOs are seen as enemies of development by both businesses and the government. Now, criminalising these NGOs is part of the new government’s strategy,” says Mr. Thomas, commenting on the arrest of Alter Brigade volunteers.

When the Amazon fires caught the world’s attention in August, Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro blamed it on NGOs, without offering any evi-

dence. With the Amazon situation getting worse, a group of Brazilian lawyers and a human rights group are seeking to indict Mr. Bolsonaro at the International Criminal Court for “encouraging genocide against Brazil’s indigenous people”. But that hasn’t stopped Mr. Bolsonaro from pushing his evidence-free narrative. On Friday, he accused Hollywood actor and environmentalist Leonardo DiCaprio of funding the Amazon fires, trying to link him up with the Alter Brigade volunteers who were ordered released by a Para judge on Thursday.

As they stepped out of jail on Thursday evening, the four men held hands, raised their fists and shouted “Amazônia Viva!”, before collapsing into the waiting arms of their families and friends. The volunteers are now back in Alter do Chão, resuming their work as fighters against the ragging blazes even as Mr. Bolsonaro trends on social networks around the world as a meme for dragging DiCaprio into this Amazonian affair.

Ballots, billionaires and Bloomberg

The former New York Mayor is directing his own fortunes towards his presidential campaign

WASHINGTON



“I’m running for President to defeat Donald Trump and rebuild America,” the former New York City Mayor, Michael Bloomberg, wrote as he launched his campaign a few days ago. “He [Trump] represents an existential threat to our country and our values. If he wins another term in office, we may never recover from the damage.”

Mr. Bloomberg, a businessman and philanthropist, is one of the world’s richest people, with a net worth of about \$55 billion. He is a moderate and a strong advocate for climate action and gun control. Mostly a Democrat through the years, Mr. Bloomberg ran as a Republican in the mayoral race in NYC in

2001, became an independent during his second term and later, returned to the Democratic fold.

In the past, he has helped build a strong political counterforce to the National Rifle Association (NRA), a powerful gun lobby in the U.S. In 2018, he was the largest external spender on Democratic mid-term races, giving some \$24 million to 24 House races, *The New York Times* reported. He has also given millions to Republicans, whose policies were aligned with his own.

Now, Mr. Bloomberg is directing his fortunes towards his own campaign, raising some tough questions. Last week, he bought an astronomical \$37 million in nationwide TV ads.

Independent Senator from Vermont, Bernie Sanders, and Democratic Senator from Massachusetts, Elizabeth Warren, both progressives competing for the Democratic nomi-



nation, have criticised Mr. Bloomberg for throwing his personal wealth into the campaign.

“Michael Bloomberg is making a bet about democracy in 2020. He doesn’t need people, he only needs bags and bags of money,” Ms. War-

ren said in Iowa on Monday.

“I’m disgusted by the idea that Michael Bloomberg or any other billionaire thinks they can circumvent the political process and spend tens of millions of dollars to buy our elections,” Mr. Sanders said.

Media ties

Mr. Bloomberg does not plan on taking any political donations or a salary if he wins, his principal adviser Howard Wolfson said. Mr. Wolfson said Mr. Bloomberg not taking contributions makes him “wholly independent of special interests”.

The announcement also raises important policy questions about how Mr. Bloomberg’s media ties will be addressed. John Micklethwait, editor-in-chief of Bloomberg News, has responded to the situation, saying that while the company would continue to report on the elections, conduct polls, etc., it would take a break from publishing unsigned editorials and would not investigate Mr. Bloomberg or his Democratic rivals. Mr. Biden (31%).

Mr. Biden has said he welcomes the competition with Mr. Bloomberg. “In terms of his running because of me, the last polls I looked at, I’m pretty far ahead,” he said earlier this month.

Nevertheless, some are concerned that Mr. Bloomberg’s presence could take away votes from Mr. Biden, another centrist Democrat.

The former Mayor’s election strategy is also unusual. Not only has Mr. Bloomberg entered the race late, he intends to skip the early State Democratic primaries, i.e., those in Iowa, New Hampshire, Nevada and South Carolina, and will instead go straight into ‘Super Tuesday’, a day in March when a large number of States will hold their primaries. It appears that he is counting on there being no clear contender from the early States.

If a week is a long time in politics, then perhaps it is unwise to speculate too much on what can happen in a few months and with billions of dollars.

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Is Sri Lanka witnessing a shift in rainfall patterns?

The country has been alternating between droughts and floods over the past few years

COLOMBO



The outcome of their November 16 presidential poll may have given Sri Lankans much to discuss in the fortnight since, but many of them are invariably discussing another topic – the intensity of the recent spells of rain.

Even as Sri Lanka’s scheduled northeast monsoon is kicking in, the volume and force of the rainfall over the past week, almost every evening in many parts of the island, have drawn everyone’s attention.

Especially so, with the Disaster Management Centre predicting 100-150mm rainfall every day in many parts, including the north and the east that are prone to floods during heavy bouts of rain.

In a tropical country like Sri Lanka, it invariably rains at least a few days every month. Whether it is schoolchildren or office-goers, they are seldom deterred by the rain. They brave bad weather with practised ease and go about their daily routine. If the recent heavy spells came as a surprise to some locals, could there be a shift in the pattern of rainfall?

“Usually the end of November marks the onset of our second main [north-east] monsoon season. Some parts of the north and the east may be prone to flooding on days with very heavy rainfall, but the season is considered a favourable monsoon,” said Anusha Warnasooriya, Director at the Department of Meteorology. At the same time, the rainfall recorded in August and September was above average, she said.

Pointing to global phenomena

such as the El Nino, the Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) and the La Niña – in which sea-surface temperatures tend to oscillate [rise or fall] depending on certain natural conditions – Ms. Warnasooriya said shifts in rainfall are being observed globally.

“Such phenomena could either enhance or reduce our monsoon or inter-monsoon spells in Sri Lanka as well.”

Around the same time last year, flash floods wreaked havoc across the northern districts of Kilinochchi, Mullaitivu, Mannar, Vavuniya and Jaffna, affecting tens of thousands of people. In September this year, one person died and nearly 50,000 were affected when several parts of the island’s Southern and Western provinces flooded with up to 200 mm rainfall recorded in certain areas.

The instances of floods come two years after Sri Lanka experienced its worst drought in 40 years. In 2017, Sri Lankan farmers’ paddy cultivation took a severe beating, even raising concerns over food security. Of

the 8,00,000 hectares of paddy that Sri Lanka had hoped to cultivate that year, about 50% was damaged due to the drought. Over a million people were badly affected in the rice-eating country.

While subsequent monsoon brought some relief, the respite was short-lived. Ahead of last year’s northern floods, officials shifted from distributing drought relief to flood relief in a span of few weeks, as they tried addressing one crisis after another. While climate experts are yet to speak of any drastic departure from the usual rainfall patterns, the changes apparent are not insignificant, they say.

‘Being prepared’
Lareef Zubair, principal scientist at the Kandy-based Foundation for Environment, Climate and Technology (FECT), analysed data on climate captured over more than a century. “Colleagues in other countries and I found that this is the fifth occurrence of the Indian Ocean Dipole in 150



years,” he said.

Rather than using “monsoon” and “inter-monsoon” that are commonly used to connote seasons of rainfall in Sri Lanka, Dr. Zubair prefers to go by the Maha (October to March) and Yala (April to September) agricultural

cycles that are linked to rainfall. Much of Sri Lanka receives 50% of its annual rainfall in the three months beginning October. In case of the north and the east, the period from October to December accounts for almost 70% of the rainfall.

“We used data to study how the IOD impacts the Maha season and predicted a shift,” he said, referring to a collaborative research publication that he was part of.

As of Saturday evening, the Disaster Management Centre’s situation report said as many as five people had died and nearly 1,500 affected in the recent bout of heavy rain. The Centre has also issued a warning to residents, asking them to stay indoors.

Given that there is widely shared concern over a potential shift in patterns, are authorities prepared to tackle the changes around harvesting seasons and for water management? “The short answer is that a lot more could be done in terms of preparedness,” Dr. Zubair said.

The rise of red tourism in China

Showcasing the revolutionary past is helping govt. promote the legitimacy of the Communist Party

LOUSHANGUAN



Red Tourism, which attracts tourists in hordes to sites that showcase China’s revolutionary past, is beginning to breed prosperity in the countryside.

State planners have methodically developed a robust ecosystem, energised by carefully choreographed stories of how the founding father of Red China, Mao Zedong, and his comrades battled for the communist revolution in 1949.

The tales woven around prominent locations – markers on the path that led to the emergence of Red China – are now being leveraged for tourism. In turn, the glorification of the Chinese revolution is having a major downstream impact. Not only is red

tourism helping the authorities in eliminating rural poverty, but also promoting the legitimacy of the Communist Party of China (CPC). China’s millennial and Generation-Z, especially, are being expertly blooded into the patriotic mainstream as framed by the CPC.

The Long March, the epic escape of the rank and file, as well as the leadership core of the CPC, in the face of almost certain annihilation by forces led by Chiang Kai-shek’s Kuomintang (KMT), is today at the heart of China’s flourishing red tourism industry.

Logging almost 9,000 km, in the face of natural and human adversity, Mao’s forces, adopting guerilla tactics, and pursuing great acts of deception, managed to escape a massive siege laid by a far more powerful enemy.

For 370 days beginning in October



1934, the Red Army, starting from eastern China’s heavily mountainous Jiangxi province, and then wading through rivers, marshes and snow-capped mountains, broke out of the KMT’s deadly encirclement. Finally, the Long March ended in northwest

China’s Shaanxi province, at Yanan, which subsequently became the crucible of the revolution, accomplished in 1949.

“Adventure, exploration, discovery, human courage and cowardice, ecstasy and triumph, suffering, sacrifice and loyalty, and then through it all, like a flame, an undimmed ardour and undying hope and amazing revolutionary optimism of those thousands of youths who would not admit defeat by man or nature or God or death – all this and more seemed embodied in the history of an odyssey unequalled in modern times,” wrote Eward Snow, the American writer who chronicled a detailed account of the Long March in his famous classic *Red Star Over China*.

In the story of the Long March, the city of Zunyi, in southwest China’s Guizhou province, is a pivotal landmark. Following a nearly catastrophic military setback on the banks of the Xiang river, it was during a review conference in Zunyi, that Mao

stamped his leadership on the party.

Currently, crowds of tourists, donning the Red Army’s grey uniforms, throng the elegantly pillared two-storey building, where the three day Zunyi conference was held from January 15, 1935.

Besides this star attraction, people surge to a nearby museum, exhibiting turning points along the Long March. Built four years ago, it is an icon representing the renewed focus on the revolutionary past on the watch of China’s current President, Xi Jinping.

‘Truly inspiring’
Within an hour’s drive from Zunyi is the Loushan pass – another major site along the Long March route. The successful capture of the Loushan pass was critical in preventing the Red Army’s entrapment in Zunyi city. “The story of the Loushan pass battle is truly inspiring. It helps us to recognise our red genes and makes us ready to accept any challenge,”

says Xie Shixue, a post-graduate student of psychology. “We learn about the Long March and even our daily news through a dedicated mobile phone App,” she says.

It is at the village of Loushanguan, on the edge of the famous battleground, that the fusion of red tourism and China’s assault on rural poverty gets magnified.

“My business has doubled since the red tourism began,” says Ma Yi, a former migrant worker, who has returned home to launch a state-backed start-up, turning around his family’s traditional bamboo and rattan furniture business. A zero percent loan from the local rural credit cooperative bank, supplementing his personal savings, had fed into Mr. Ma’s grassroots business.

Mr. Ma’s enterprise is also part of Alibaba, China’s giant e-commerce network. “I was recently in Shanghai for the import expo looking for overseas customers, as we have decided that our humble business must now go global.”

India proves too good for Pakistan

Paes notches up a 'special win' to extend tournament record; Croatia awaits next

DAVIS CUP

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NUR-SULTAN (KAZAKHSTAN)

Veteran Leander Paes bettered his own Davis Cup record by winning his 44th doubles match, this time partnering debutant Jeevan Nedunchezhiyan, as India blanked Pakistan 4-0 on Saturday to earn a spot in the 2020 qualifiers.

Hapless youngsters

Pakistan teenagers Mohammed Shoaib and Hufaza Abdul Rehman were no match for the Indian combination of the battle-hardened Paes and Jeevan, who needed just 53 minutes to win 6-1, 6-3.

Last year, Paes became the most successful doubles player in the history of Davis Cup when he won his 43rd match, surpassing Italian



Dominant show: The Indians present a happy picture after blanking Pakistan. ■ COURTESY TWITTER

great Nicola Pietrangeli during the tie against China.

The 46-year-old had taken 56 ties for his 43rd win while Pietrangeli competed in 66 ties for his 42 victories.

"This was my 44th win but it felt like my first."

"All my wins are special. Engraving India's name in the record books is something special for me," said Paes.

In the reverse singles, Sumit Nagal trounced Younas Khalil 6-1, 6-0 for his second

straight win. The sides opted not to play the fifth rubber.

The results:

India bt Pakistan 4-0 [Leander Paes & Jeevan Nedunchezhiyan bt Mohammed Shoaib & Hufaza Abdul Rehman 6-1, 6-3; Sumit Nagal bt Younas Khalil 6-1, 6-0].

It will be Karnataka's batting vs TN's bowling

The former has the advantage, having prevailed over the latter twice recently

MUSHTAQ ALI

S. DIPAK RAGAV
SURAT

For the second time in two months, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka will face off in a final, this time for the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy.

Defending champion Karnataka holds the advantage after beating TN – both in the Super League match last week and in the summit clash of the Hazare Trophy last month.

The teams have been in good form, having lost just two games so far. They play different brands of cricket, however.

Batting powerhouse

Karnataka is powered by its batsmen, with opener Devdutt Padikkal topping the charts (548 runs in 11 matches at an extraordinary strike-rate of 178). K.L. Rahul and Manish Pandey have also been in good touch.

TN, on the other hand, has depended on its spin-



Seasoned campaigner: Tamil Nadu will look to skipper Dinesh Karthik to deliver in the summit clash. ■ VIJAY SONEJI

ners. Left-arm R. Sai Kishore is the leading wicket-taker with 20 while M. Siddharth, who has played only four games, has impressed with a bag of 12.

In the semifinal, Karnataka chased down a formidable 195 in just 15 overs with Padikkal and Rahul felling the Haryana attack, including those with international

experience like Yuzvendra Chahal, Amit Mishra and Jayant Yadav.

In the other clash, TN restricted Rajasthan to 112. The spinners were helped by medium-pacers Vijay Shankar and T. Natarajan who picked up three wickets between them.

TN coach D. Vasu said it could well be a battle bet-

ween his bowlers and Karnataka's batsmen.

"We are going to play to our strengths which is our bowling and spinners. Yes, we lost to them twice in recent times but in this format, it depends on what happens on that day and how we execute our plans," said Vasu.

While their strengths have brought the teams thus far, both sides have a few weaknesses too.

The chinks

For Karnataka, the middle-order hasn't been tested and the pacers have gone for runs, while for TN, the opening woes continue. On Friday, Ashwin became the fourth opener to be tried out in the last one week.

Having lost to Karnataka twice this season, TN would want to get one back and take the honours in white-ball cricket before the two sides meet yet again in a week to kickstart the Ranji Trophy in Dindigul on December 9.

Match starts at 7 p.m.

England on the backfoot

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
HAMILTON

England lost two early wickets in reply to New Zealand's 375 as its hopes of saving the series faded after another Black Caps defining partnership involving B.J. Watling here on Saturday.

When New Zealand had the wobbles, first-Test hero partnered debutant Daryl Mitchell in a 124-run stand for the sixth wicket to get it up to a respectable total.

England was then in immediate trouble with Dom Sibley and Joe Denly removed as it reached stumps at 39 for two.

SCOREBOARD

New Zealand—1st innings: J. Raval c Root b Broad 5, T. Latham b Broad 105, K. Williamson c Root b Woakes 4, R. Taylor c Root b Woakes 53, H. Nicholls c Broad b Curran 16, B. Watling c Burns b Broad 55, D. Mitchell c Archer b Broad 73, M. Santner c Woakes b Archer 23, T. Southee c Pope b Woakes 18, M. Henry (not out) 5, N. Wagner c Sibley b Curran 0; Extras (lb-15, lb-3) 18; Total: (in 129.1 overs): 375.

Fall of wickets: 1-16, 2-39, 3-155, 4-182, 5-191, 6-315, 7-330, 8-357, 9-375.

England bowling: Broad 28-7-73-4, Archer 28-8-75-1, Woakes 31-6-83-3, Curran 23.1-7-63-2, Root 3-0-14-0, Stokes 13-5-36-0, Denly 3-0-13-0.

England—1st innings: R. Burns (batting) 24, D. Sibley (lbw b Southee 4, J. Denly c Watling b Henry 4, J. Root (batting) 6; Extras (lb-1) 1; Total: (for two wkts. in 18 overs): 39.

Fall of wickets: 1-11, 2-24.

New Zealand bowling: Southee, 8-1-24-1, Henry 7-3-10-1, Wagner 2-0-3-0, Mitchell 1-0-1-0.

Warner slams a triple century

Smith crosses 7000 Test runs; Starc has Pakistan in dire straits

PAK IN AUSTRALIA

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
ADELAIDE

An irrepressible David Warner smashed an unbeaten 335 on Saturday while Steve Smith became the fastest man to 7,000 Test runs as Australia took control of the day-night second Test against Pakistan.

Skipper Tim Paine waved his players back into the pavilion at 589 for three ahead of the second day's dinner break with Warner on the 10th highest Test score ever, also a personal best.

The decision to declare deprived him of a crack at Brian Lara's all-time high 400 not out, but it proved to be the right one with the Australian bowlers quickly tearing through Pakistan's hapless top-order under the Adelaide Oval lights.

At stumps, Pakistan was in deep trouble at 96 for six with Mitchell Starc grabbing four. Babar Azam was not out 43.

"It's just sunk in that it is very rare that you get these opportunities... I'll cherish this moment for the rest of my life, definitely," said Warner.

Pakistan removed Marnus Labuschagne for 162 in the first session and also bagged Smith, caught behind by Mohammad Rizwan off Shoaib Afridi 36.

Smith, meanwhile, had shattered a record that had stood since 1946. He took a single off Muhammad Musa to reach 7,000 runs in his 126th innings, taking possession of a mark held for 73 years by English great Wally Hammond, who reached the milestone in his 131st in-



Ecstatic: David Warner celebrates a remarkable landmark. ■ AFP

nings. Smith also moved past legendary countryman Donald Bradman's 6,996 Test runs to become Australia's 11th highest scorer.

Facing a tough last session under lights, Pakistan's batsmen quickly caved in.

Starc removed Imam-ul-

SCOREBOARD

Australia—1st innings: J. Burns c Rizwan b Afridi 4, D. Warner (not out) 335, M. Labuschagne b Afridi 162, S. Smith c Rizwan b Afridi 36, M. Wade (not out) 38; Extras (lb-6, nb-7, w-1): 14. Total (for three wkts. decl. in 127 overs): 589.

Fall of wickets: 1-8, 2-369, 3-490.

Pakistan bowling: Abbas 29-7-100-1, Afridi 30-5-88-3, Musa 20-1-114-0, Yasir 32-1-197-0, Yasir 15-0-75-0, Azhar 1-0-9-0.

Pakistan — 1st innings: S.

Haq, who got a thick edge to Warner on two, before Pat Cummins had Azhar caught for nine.

Josh Hazlewood accounted for Shan Masood before Starc nabbed Asad Shafiq, Iftikhar Ahmed and Rizwan cheaply.

Facing a tough last session under lights, Pakistan's batsmen quickly caved in.

Starc removed Imam-ul-

Masood c Paine b Hazlewood 19, Imam-ul-Haq c Warner b Starc 2, A. Ali c Smith b Cummins 9, A. Shafiq c Paine b Starc 9, B. Azam (batting) 43, I. Ahmed c Paine b Starc 10, M. Rizwan c Paine b Starc 0, Y. Shah (batting) 4; Total (six wkts. in 35 overs): 96.

Fall of wickets: 1-3, 2-22, 3-38, 4-69, 5-89, 6-89.

Australia bowling: Starc 13-5-24-4, Hazlewood 8-2-29-1, Cummins 14-1-45-1.

SCOREBOARD

New Zealand—1st innings: J. Burns c Root b Broad 5, T. Latham b Broad 105, K. Williamson c Root b Woakes 4, R. Taylor c Root b Woakes 53, H. Nicholls c Broad b Curran 16, B. Watling c Burns b Broad 55, D. Mitchell c Archer b Broad 73, M. Santner c Woakes b Archer 23, T. Southee c Pope b Woakes 18, M. Henry (not out) 5, N. Wagner c Sibley b Curran 0; Extras (lb-15, lb-3) 18; Total: (in 129.1 overs): 375.

Fall of wickets: 1-16, 2-39, 3-155, 4-182, 5-191, 6-315, 7-330, 8-357, 9-375.

England bowling: Broad 28-7-73-4, Archer 28-8-75-1, Woakes 31-6-83-3, Curran 23.1-7-63-2, Root 3-0-14-0, Stokes 13-5-36-0, Denly 3-0-13-0.

England—1st innings: R. Burns (batting) 24, D. Sibley (lbw b Southee 4, J. Denly c Watling b Henry 4, J. Root (batting) 6; Extras (lb-1) 1; Total: (for two wkts. in 18 overs): 39.

Fall of wickets: 1-11, 2-24.

New Zealand bowling: Southee, 8-1-24-1, Henry 7-3-10-1, Wagner 2-0-3-0, Mitchell 1-0-1-0.

Sathiyan's dream run ends

ITTF WORLD CUP

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
CHENGDU (CHINA)

G. Sathiyan's dream run at the International Table Tennis Federation (ITTF) men's World Cup came to an end after the Indian went down to former World No. 1 Timo Boll on Saturday.

The World No. 30 Sathiyan, making his World Cup debut, went down 1-4 (11-7, 8-11, 5-11, 9-11, 8-11) to the German in the pre-quarterfinals.

While issuing notice for the AGM, the BCCI secretary Jay Shah has proposed amendments to six key clauses of the new BCCI Constitution.

Boll bounces back

Sathiyan started on a bright note, taking a 1-0 lead, but the experienced Boll replied quickly to level the match.

The two-time World Cup champion dominated the tie, winning the next three without trouble.

While their strengths have brought the teams thus far, both sides have a few weaknesses too.

The results:

India bt Pakistan 4-0 [Leander Paes & Jeevan Nedunchezhiyan bt Mohammed Shoaib & Hufaza Abdul Rehman 6-1, 6-3; Sumit Nagal bt Younas Khalil 6-1, 6-0].

BCCI AGM to consider amendments and policy matters

Modifications proposed to six key clauses of new Constitution

G. VISHWANATH
MUMBAI

The outcome of the 88th Annual General Meeting of the BCCI at the Cricket Centre on Sunday could substantially diminish the new BCCI Constitution written by the now defunct Committee of Administrators (CoA) and accepted by the Supreme Court in August 2018.

ICC and similar organisations, making the Apex Council and the office-bearers powerful and the secretary supreme.

The BCCI with a new governance structure called the Apex Council came into existence on October 23 this year, with Sourav Ganguly elected unopposed as the president and Jay Shah the secretary.

The AGM will also consider the report and recommendations of the Apex Council, the CEO and the committees and to propose policy directions to the Apex Council, report and recommendations of the Governing Council, reports of the Ombudsman and Ethics Officer and any recommendations, among others.

Sourabh keeps Indian interest alive

Marin in final; Rituparna and Son Wan Ho surrender

BADMINTON

RAKESH RAO
LUCKNOW

Unseeded Sourabh Verma bounced back to win the final six points and ensured that the Indian interest in the \$150,000 Syed Modi International badminton tournament here lasted till the final day.

After Rituparna Das exited, Sourabh gave the vociferous crowd a reason to return on Sunday by overpowering Korea's Heo Kwang Hee 21-17, 16-21, 21-18 and reaching his second final here in eight years.

Son struggles

TV PICKS

New Zealand vs England: 2nd Test, SS Select 1 (SD & HD), 3.30 a.m.

NBA: Sony Ten 1 (SD & HD), 6.30 a.m.

ITTF World Cup: SS Select 2 (SD & HD), 8 a.m. & 2 p.m.

Australia vs Pakistan: 2nd Test, Sony Six (SD & HD), 9 a.m.

Syed Modi badminton: Star Sports 2 (SD & HD), 2 p.m.

I-League: D Sport, 5 p.m.

Serie A: Sony Ten 2 (SD & HD), 5 p.m., 7.30 p.m. & 10.30 p.m. & Sony Ten 1 (SD & HD), 1.30 a.m. (Monday)

F1: Abu Dhabi GP: SS Select 2 (SD & HD), 6.30 p.m.

Syed Mushtaq Ali T20: (final): Star Sports 1 (SD & HD), 7 p.m.

Premier League: SS Select 1 & 2 (SD & HD), 7.30 p.m. & 10 p.m.

ISL: Star Sports 2 (SD & HD), 7.30 p.m.

IN BRIEF



Milwaukee Bucks win 10 in a row

LOS ANGELES Giannis Antetokounmpo drained four clutch baskets down the stretch as the Milwaukee Bucks won their 10th consecutive game with a 119-110 victory over the Cleveland Cavaliers on Friday. **The results:** Brooklyn Nets 112 bt Boston Celtics 107; Charlotte Hornets 110 bt Detroit Pistons 107; Toronto Raptors 90 bt Orlando Magic 83; Milwaukee Bucks 119 bt Cleveland Cavaliers 110; Philadelphia 76ers 101 bt New York Knicks 95; Indiana Pacers 105 bt Atlanta Hawks 104 (OT); Miami Heat 122 bt Golden State Warriors 105; Utah Jazz 103 bt Memphis Grizzlies 94; Oklahoma City Thunder 109 bt New Orleans Pelicans 104; San Antonio Spurs 107 bt Los Angeles Clippers 97; Dallas Mavericks 120 bt Phoenix Suns 113; Portland Trail Blazers 107 bt Chicago Bulls 103; Los Angeles Lakers 125 bt Washington Wizards 103. **AGENCIES'**

Toor to be India's flag-bearer at SAG

NEW DELHI Star shot putter Tajinder Pal Singh Toor will be India's flag-bearer at the South Asian Games opening ceremony, to be held on Sunday in Kathmandu, according to IOA secretary-general Rajeev Mehta. Toor is the reigning Asian Games champion. PTI

Rajnigandha Achievers enters final

NEW DELHI Rajnigandha Achievers beat Jindal Panther 8-7 to reach the final of the Col. Girdhari Singh Cup 8-goal polo tournament on Saturday. In the final to be played at the Jaipur Polo ground on Sunday, Rajnigandha will play Adie Broswon. **The results (semifinals):** Rajnigandha Achievers 8 (Padmanabh Singh 4, Daniel Otamendi 3, Kuldeep Singh Rathore) bt Jindal Panther 7 (Simran Shergill 5, Phil Seller, Venkatesh Jindal). Adie Broswon 4 (Salim Azmi 2, Dhananjay Singh, Basheer Ali) bt Col. Girdhari Singh ASC 3 (Naveen Singh 3).

Mairaj-Areeba shoot mixed skeet gold

Sekhon & Sukhbir pair clinches silver

NATL. SHOTGUN

KAMESH SRINIVASAN
NEW DELHI

Mairaj Ahmad Khan and Areeba Khan won the mixed skeet gold for Uttar Pradesh as they beat Ganemati Sekhon and Karam Sukhbir Singh 37-36 in the 63rd National shotgun championship which concluded at the Dr. Karni Singh Range, Tughlakabad, on Saturday.

Rajasthan won the bronze through Anant Jeet Singh Naruka and Darshna Raftore, who beat Zahra Deewala and Chetan Reddy of Telangana 39-33, after having scored 141 in qualification and missed the gold contest by one point.

Ganemati Sekhon went on to win the junior gold, with Abhay Sekhon as the duo beat Ajay Thakur and Khushi Dhakad 36-34, after having topped qualification 141 to 139.

Telangana pair of Zahra Deewala and Munek Battula



Golden pair: Mairaj Ahmad Khan and Areeba Khan who were on target in the mixed skeet event on Saturday.

• SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

won the tie-shoot against Rajasthan's Karttiki Shaktawat

and Indradev Hada for the junior mixed skeet bronze.

Javia strides to title

Sanjana yields to Lanlana

ITF TENNIS

KAMESH SRINIVASAN
NEW DELHI

Top seed Dev Javia's all-round game brought him a 6-4, 6-4 victory over Rostislav Galfinger of Kazakhstan in the boys' final of the ITF grade-4 junior tennis tournament at the DLTA Complex on Saturday.

Serving well, moving smoothly into his strokes and hitting top-spin drives with varying degrees of loop, the 17-year-old Javia controlled the contest, and his tall opponent like a puppet on a string.

It will be another good opportunity for the Indians when they move to Pune for the grade-3 tournament next week.

Former National coach and chairman of the National selection committee Balram Singh presented the trophies.

The results (finals): Boys: Dev Javia bt Rostislav Galfinger (Kaz) 6-4, 6-4.

Girls: Lanlana Tararudee (Tha) bt Sanjana Sirimalla 6-4, 6-2.



Reason to smile: ITF junior tennis champions Dev Javia and Lanlana Tararudee. • KAMESH SRINIVASAN

Aizawl holds Mohun Bagan

I-LEAGUE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
AIWAZL

Host Aizawl Football Club held Mohun Bagan to a goalless draw in the opening match of the 13th I-League here on Saturday.

The season's inaugural game had several moments of excitement but a goal eluded both. The referee flashed the yellow card a few times, but overall, the game was played in a competitive spirit.

The results: At Aizawl: Aizawl 0 drew with Mohun Bagan 0.

At Kozhikode: Golukom FC 2 (Henry Kisekka 43, Marcus Joseph 49) bt Neroca 1 (Taryk Sampson 88).

CFC, Gregory part ways

A successor is yet to be announced

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI

Chennaiyin FC (CFC), on Saturday, announced that it has parted ways with head coach John Gregory by mutual consent.

The club is yet to announce a successor for the Englishman.

In a joint statement, the CFC co-owners said: "The club would like to sincerely thank John for his services. He led us admirably well and delivered our second Indian Super League (Hero ISL) title. He, thus, also made us the first ISL club to qualify for the AFC Cup and oversaw our debut appearance in Asia while also reaching the 2019 Super

Cup final. All of us at the club would like to wish John the very best in his future endeavours."

"This decision has been taken after a detailed discussion with John, and all parties involved believe this will be the right step for everyone associated with the club."

Gregory's final match turned out to be the one at home against Odisha FC which ended in a 2-2 draw on Nov. 28.

The Hindu has learnt that Gregory has left for London on Saturday, and the fact that the news was put up by the club online at around 5 a.m. showed the level of secrecy involved.

Hamilton back on pole

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
ABU DHABI

Lewis Hamilton claimed his first pole position in four months with a scorching record lap at the Yas Marina circuit on Saturday as Mercedes dominated qualifying ahead of Sunday's Abu Dhabi Grand Prix.

The recently-crowned champion delivered a late lap in one minute and 34.77 seconds to outpace teammate Valtteri Bottas.

Starting grid: 1st row: Lewis Hamilton (Mercedes), Max Verstappen (Red Bull); 2nd row: Charles Leclerc (Ferrari), Sebastian Vettel (Ferrari); 3rd row: Alexander Albon (Red Bull), Lando Norris (McLaren); 4th row: Daniel Ricciardo (Renault), Carlos Sainz Jr. (McLaren); 5th row: Nico Hulkenberg (Renault), Sergio Perez (Racing Point); 6th row: Pierre Gasly (Toro Rosso), Lance Stroll (Racing Point); 7th row: Daniil Kvyat (Toro Rosso), Kevin Magnussen (Haas); 8th row: Romain Grosjean (Haas), Antonio Giovinazzi (Alfa Romeo); 9th row: Kimi Raikkonen (Alfa Romeo), George Russell (Williams); 10th row: Robert Kubica (Williams), Valtteri Bottas (Mercedes).

Rajiv finishes 14th, gets two points

SPORTS BUREAU
BIRIRAM (THAILAND)

It was a day of mixed fortunes for IDEMITSU Honda Racing India team in the Asia Production 250cc class in the final round of the FIM Asia Road Racing Championship here on Saturday.

The team's top rider Rajiv

Sethu was out of the top 15 front bunch in the morning qualifier but staged a strong comeback in Race 1 to finish 14th, thus adding two more points to the Indian team's kitty.

After qualifying 16th with a best lap time of 1:54.737s, Rajiv quickly gained two po-

sitions in the first lap, but he finally ended in the same position recording a total time of 19:16.421s.

Senthil Kumar, the team's other rider, however, crashed out of the race in the opening lap with an aggressive cornering in the last turn.

Krishna is ATK's saviour with last-minute strike

His goal salvages a point for the host against Mumbai City in an exciting contest



Joy unlimited! Roy Krishna is over the moon after slotting home the equaliser. • RAJEEV BHATT

ISL

AMITABHA DAS SHARMA
KOLKATA

ATK and Mumbai City's resolve came to the fore in an exciting 2-2 draw in their ISL contest at the Salt Lake Stadium here on Saturday.

Watched by a partisan crowd of 33,515, the teams shared four goals, the last two coming in injury time. ATK took the lead through Michael Soosairaj late in the first half before Mumbai equalised through Pratik Chowdhury early after the break.

The visitors seemed to have wrapped it up when substitute Kevin Angoue put it ahead in the 93rd minute, but Roy Krishna struck in the

final minute of added time to salvage a point for the host.

ATK managed to keep the shape of its attack despite the visitor enjoying a greater possession in the opening half. Mumbai was quite active in the creative zone, the Portuguese-Tunisian combination Paula Machado and Mohamed Larbi doing a lot. Both Amine Chermiti and Modou Sougou were busy upfront with regular assists coming their way, but the scoreline remained unaltered due to poor finishing.

Soosairaj strikes

ATK broke the deadlock in the 38th minute when Soosairaj latched on to a through-ball from Edu Garcia who split the Mumbai de-

fence open with his delightful pass.

Mumbai returned strongly after the break, adding punch to its attack by introducing Angoue who replaced Brazilian Diego Oliveira. The skill and pace of the Gabonese midfielder posed problems for the ATK defence and Mumbai found the equaliser in the 62nd minute off a set-piece, thanks to a superb header from centre-back Pratik.

In injury time, the fantastic efforts of Angoue and Krishna provided a fitting climax to the tie.

The result: ATK 2 (Michael Soosairaj 38, Roy Krishna 90+6) drew with Mumbai City 2 (Pratik Chowdhury 62, Kevin Angoue 90+3).

Khelo India Games to be held from January 10

Various locations in Guwahati will host the event, which will see 451 medal events



Let the Games begin: Swapna Burman, Lovlina Borgohain, Union Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju, Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal and Hima Das at a ceremony announcing the third edition of the Games. • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

The third edition of the Khelo India Youth Games will be held at various locations in Guwahati from January 10 to 23. The announcement was made at the launch ceremony event here on Saturday by Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal and Union Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju.

The event marked the unveiling of the composite logo of the third edition of the Games, the players jersey, the Games Mascots and the theme song at the Karmabir Nabin Chandra Bordoloi Indoor Stadium, Sarusajai.

Athletes Hima Das, Swapna Burman and Lovlina Borgohain joined the ceremony, which was attended by a host of dignitaries from the world of sport.

"I am delighted to welcome the Khelo India Youth Games to Assam. The Games will surely inspire all the children in the State as well as the entire North-East region to take up sports and bring glory for themselves, our state and indeed our coun-

try," Sonowal said.

Rijiju hoped the Games would trigger a sports revolution across the north-east region. "The Khelo India Youth Games is one of the most empowering initiatives of the Indian Government that hopes to not only give a

try," Sonowal said.

Rijiju hoped the Games would trigger a sports revolution across the north-east region. "The Khelo India Youth Games is one of the most empowering initiatives of the Indian Government that hopes to not only give a

platform to youngsters from all over the country to make a future in sport, but also to build India into a sporting nation," Rijiju said.

"I invite every sports-loving and talented youngster to grab this opportunity and begin his or her journey towards excellence, he added.

Hima Das, one of the most celebrated athletes from Assam, noted, "This is the biggest boost for us athletes not just in terms of scholarships but also in terms of moral encouragement and motivation," said Hima.

Pugilist Lovlina Borgohain observed, "We are all so excited that the Games are taking place in our home State. I believe that this is going to spark a huge interest for sports among the young-sters."

D. Vinod Sivappa, second left, chairman of the Bangalore Turf Club, with the winner of the Bangalore 1000 Guineas Anjeze owner Tegbir Brar, right, trainer S.S. Attaollahi, and jockey P Trevor, left. • K MURALI KUMAR

SHP: 98, THP: 59, FP: 585, Q: 484,

Trinella: 4,070 and 1,221, Exacta:

52,159 (carried over). Favourite:

Unifit. Owners: Mr. Neil

Derashan. Trainer: Neil Derashan.

15 and 48 (p), SHP: 47, THP: 144,

FP: 1,438, Q: 729, Trinella: 44,634

and 19,128, Exacta: 1,80,667 (carried over). Favourite: Silver Eclipse. Owner and trainer: Mr. S. P. Mistry & Mr. Shantanu Sharma. Trainer: S. Narrede.

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