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Sciver stars in England's win against India in tri-series match
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Kohli's men need a victory to keep ODI series against NZ alive
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Shaheen Bagh protests: SC to hear plea on Monday

NEW DELHI
The Supreme Court on Friday deferred hearing a plea to direct the Delhi police to stop the Shaheen Bagh protests against the CAA and the NRC and clear the "roadblock" till the Delhi elections are over. A Bench led by Justice S.K. Kaul indicated the court would not be party to any sort of pre-election narrative to garner votes a day before the polls on February 8.

[NEWS ▶ PAGE 13](#)

W.B. Governor reads speech critical of CAA

KOLKATA
West Bengal Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar on Friday stuck to convention in delivering the speech provided by the State's TMC government and included remarks critical of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, the National Population Register and the National Register of Citizens. The Governor had earlier hinted that he might omit or add certain portions.

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Govt. set to host another visit by foreign diplomats to J&K

Several EU envoys express willingness ahead of Jaishankar's trip to Brussels

SUHASINI HAIDAR
NEW DELHI

The government is making preparations to organise a second visit of diplomats, including several European Ambassadors, to Srinagar and Jammu next week, sources confirmed here.

According to the sources, about 20 to 25 envoys from "different geographical regions" are being invited to join the delegation.

Unlike the last visit in January, when European Union (EU) members declined to travel and asked to be sent as a combined group of 27 members, this time, several members of the EU have agreed, sources said.

Meeting with EU heads
On Friday, Mr. Jaishankar met the EU Heads of Mission (HOMs) in South Block, where he is understood to have discussed his upcoming visit, the planned visit of envoys to Jammu and Kashmir as well as concerns against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, which are likely to come up during his visit to Europe.

"We received a lot of positive feedback from the last visit," said one official source, referring to the delegation, which included U.S. Ambassador Kenneth Juster,

who travelled to Jammu and



Fresh initiative: Sixteen ambassadors visited Srinagar on January 9. This time round, 20-25 envoys from different geographical regions are being invited.

Kashmir on January 9-10.

"While all the Ambassadors expressed their concerns about issues like political detentions and Internet restrictions, they were able to see that there was normalcy on the roads, and the entire Union Territory is not under lockdown as they had expected," the source added.

He explained that the government now intends to take diplomats to the Union Territory on a regular basis.

Other sources confirmed that logistical planning and

security arrangements for the visit, which will repeat the schedule of the previous visit of the envoys, is being finalised. Helicopters will also be kept on standby, in case there are difficulties in road travel at any point.

Briefing by the Army

The visit will include a briefing by Army officials, and meetings with civil society members and politicians chosen by the government.

Diplomatic sources said negotiations over the scope and schedule of the pro-

posed visit have been on for the past month, and had run into issues over specific demands by the European diplomats to meet detained former Chief Ministers Mehbooba Mufti, Farooq Abdullah and Omar Abdullah.

It is unlikely that these demands would be met this time either, as the government has just charged all of them under the stringent Public Safety Act.

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PROCEEDINGS AGAINST KATHUA CASE 'MINOR' STAYED | [PAGE 12](#)

Ready to roll



Officials checking election material on the eve of the State Assembly polls in Delhi on Friday. ■ R.V. MOORTHY (REPORT ON PAGE 13)

Ex-PSO gets death for killing judge's wife, son

ASHOK KUMAR
GURUGRAM

The Personal Security Officer (PSO) of a judge was sentenced to death by a local court here on Friday in connection with the murder of the latter's wife and teenage son in 2018. He was also sentenced to rigorous imprisonment of five and three years respectively, and ordered to pay a fine of ₹15,000 for destruction of evidence under the Indian Penal Code and unlawful use of a weapon under the Arms Act.

Mahipal had shot dead the mother-son duo in full public view at South City-II market on October 13, 2018.

[DETAILS ON ▶ PAGE 3](#)

Mehbooba was working with separatists: dossier

PEERZADA ASHIQ
SRINAGAR

The Public Safety Act (PSA) dossier, based on which former Chief Minister and PDP president Mehbooba Mufti has been booked include public remarks allegedly made by her against the Army, pro-militant tweets and attempts "to collaborate with separatists".

The *Hindu* has learnt that the dossier against Ms. Mufti underlines that there were "confidential reports" suggesting she was "collaborating with the separatists".

It also mentions tweets, where she called for "dignity to militants after death" and accused "the Army of using chemical weapons against them". The dossier also mentions her tweets opposing the triple talaq law passed by the BJP-led go-

Opposition upset at use of PSA

Opposition leaders criticised the Centre for invoking the Public Safety Act (PSA) against Mehbooba Mufti and Omar Abdullah. Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra said the leaders "deserved to be freed". ▶ [PAGE 12](#)

vernment and critical remarks over the lynching of Muslims in the country.

Public speeches made by Ms. Mufti and former Chief Minister Omar Abdullah of the National Conference on the issue of Articles 370 and 35A are also listed in the dossier compiled against them.

[SPEECHES LISTED ▶ PAGE 12](#)

[EXTENDED FOLLY ▶ EDITORIAL](#)

'Modi attributed wrong quote to Omar'

It was picked from a satire website, says CPI(M) leader Sitaram Yechury

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Opposition parties on Friday accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi of attributing a wrong quote to former Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, saying it was picked from a satire website.

"PM Modi, while replying to the Motion of Thanks to the President's Address, in Parliament claimed that statements made by two J&K ex-CMs were not acceptable. It has now been shown that these statements have been taken from satire website *Faking News*," CPI(M) general secretary Sitaram Yechury wrote on Twitter.

The party's Polit Bureau accused Mr. Modi of using false charges to frame Mr. Abdullah and Peoples Democratic Party leader Mehbooba Mufti.

PM Modi, replying to the Motion of Thanks to the President's Address, in Parliament claimed that statements made by two J&K ex-CMs were "not acceptable". It has been shown that these statements have been taken from "Faking News"

SITARAM YECHURY, CPI(M) general secretary

With every passing day, one blow at a time, the Mo-Sh [Modi-Amit Shah] BJP government makes a mockery of Parliament

DEREK O'BRIEN, Trinamool Congress MP

simply does not exist. This is an affront to the Indian Constitution and democracy," it said.

On Thursday, Mr. Modi said Mr. Abdullah had said dilution of Article 370 would cause a massive earthquake that would divide Kashmir from India.

Hours later, Mr. Abdullah and Ms. Mufti were booked

under the PSA. Both have been under arrest since August 5 when the Rajya Sabha approved the withdrawal of the special status from Jammu and Kashmir.

Writing on Twitter, Trinamool Congress MP Derek O'Brien indirectly referred to the use of *Faking News* by Mr. Modi. He said: "If an MP quotes #FakeNews to mislead #Parliament these options are available. Rule 222, Question of Privilege, Rule 380, Expunction Direction, 115, Write to Speaker Rule 376 Point of order for violation of Rule 353 (defamatory) Rule 377 and raising a matter that's not a point of order."

He added, "With every passing day, one blow at a time, the Mo-Sh [Modi-Amit Shah] BJP government makes a mockery of Parliament.

The country's largest lender indicated that the lending rates would come down further.

Bank of India, State Bank cut interest rates

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

A day after the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) announced measures to ease interest rates, the State Bank of India (SBI) and the Bank of India (BoI) have reduced their lending rates by cutting the marginal cost of fund-based lending rate (MCLR).

The SBI has reduced the MCLR by 5 bps across all maturities.

From Feb. 10
The one-year MCLR will become 7.85% with effect from February 10.

The country's largest lender indicated that the lending rates would come down further.

[CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 12](#)

A ND-NDE

FIR against 25 people in Moradabad

They stopped district information dept. officials from distributing pro-CAA pamphlets at protest site

ANU KUMAR
GAZIABAD

A volatile situation was defused in time in Moradabad on Thursday when a team of the district information department faced the ire of protesters holding a sit-in against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act. Deputy Director (Information) Jahangir Alam along with three members of his team had gone to the Idgah ground in the Galsheeda area of Moradabad to distribute pro-CAA pamphlets among the protesters.

According to Amit Anand, Superintendent of Police (City), some protesters stopped the team from doing its work and Mukul Kumar, the driver, was confined and beaten up. They allegedly questioned him in a threatening tone and snatched his cell phone. "The



Anti-CAA protesters in Moradabad. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

team was rescued by the police and the phone recovered. Extra force had to be rushed to the protest site. An FIR has been registered on Friday against two named and around 25 unnamed persons under several sections including 143 (unlawful assembly), 506 (criminal intimidation) and 323, 332

(voluntarily causing hurt), 342 (wrongful confinement) of the IPC," he told *The Hindu*.

Playing down the incident, Mr. Alam described it as trivial. "We were doing our job and the people were registering their protest," he told reporters. Local sources said it indicated the growing mis-

Protests should continue: Darul Uloom Deoband

GAZIABAD Darul Uloom Deoband has clarified that it has not issued an appeal to end the protests against the CAA-NRC. In a statement, Mohamamim (Vice-Chancellor) Maulana Abdul Qasim Nomani said "peaceful protest" should continue and they would pray that the struggle is crowned with success.

trust between the administration and the protesters.

"The protest is being run by common people. There is no single leader. It has been more than a week, and they are showing great maturity," said Masood Hashmi, a leader of the Samajwadi Party's youth wing.

He said the Prime Minister

had a great opportunity to win the confidence of protesters while addressing Parliament on Thursday. "But he continued with his *jumblebaazi* [gimmickry]," he said.

Notices in Aligarh

In Aligarh, the administration has begun issuing notices against around 1,000 persons under 107/116 of the CrPC for inciting people to indulge in violence. Hundreds of women are sitting on a dharna at the Idgah ground in the city's Shahjama area against the CAA-NRC.

"It is a regular preventive procedure where we identify people who could create a law and order problem on the basis of inputs. They are asked to sign a bond by the magistrate for maintaining peace," said Abhishek, Superintendent of Police (City).

Farmers stage protest over stray cattle menace

They loaded 250 stray animals into tractor trolleys as part of their agitation

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHANDIGARH

Annoyed over persistent damage caused to their crops by stray cattle, several farmers having allegiance to the Bharatiya Kisan Union (Lakhawal) on Friday staged a protest with stray cattle loaded on tractor trolleys as a part of their agitation in Punjab's Faridkot.

The farmers were adamant on releasing stray cattle on the Deputy Commissioner's office premises. They were, however, stopped on the outskirts of the town and were pacified by the local authorities after talks.

"We brought around 250 stray cattle to register our protest. Our aim was to send a message to the local administration about the grave



BKU (Lakhawal) said stray cattle destroy standing crops. ■ FILE PHOTO

them. "Stray cattle destroy our standing crops and have become a serious threat to human lives in several cases, but we are helpless. Be it sugarcane, wheat, potato or seasonal vegetables, stray cattle damage the crop in almost every season. The State government should take some concrete step to solve the problem otherwise we will be forced to intensify our agitation," he said.

Mr. Singh said that as a part of their Statewide agitation, farmers, under the banner of BKU (Lakhawal), will stage a similar "march with stray cattle" towards the Deputy Commissioner's office in Jalandhar on February 18. "We will hold such protests in all the districts. Yesterday, we had protested in Ludhiana," he said.

As the problem of stray animals continues unabated, principal Opposition in the State, Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and Shiromani Akali Dal, have time and again accused the government of "completely failing" to protect the life and property of people here.

AAP senior leader Harpal Singh Cheema recently alleged that while the government collected "cow cess" and other taxes in the name of taking care of stray animals, nothing concrete was being done to tackle the menace. The Akali Dal had demanded development of stray cattle pounds, free power to *gaushalas* on the pattern of the previous SAD-BJP government and judicial use of "cow cess" to tackle the issue of cattle menace.

Prepoll promises belied, biggest achievement of govt. was scams: State Cong. chief

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHANDIGARH/NEW DELHI

Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar on Friday said the BJP-Jannayak Janta Party government has given a clean, transparent and corruption-free government in the State during its 100 days in power, something the previous Congress governments had failed to deliver. The Chief Minister, along with Deputy Chief Minister Dushyant Chautala, addressed a press conference on the completion of 100 days of the State government.

"We have worked to meet the expectations of the people and have also prepared a road map for the next five years," said Mr. Khattar.

He said the developmental works undertaken during his last tenure are being car-

Kashmiri youth dies in Jaipur after brawl with co-worker

Accused arrested; police deny hate crime angle

MOHAMMED IQBAL
JAIPUR

A Kashmiri youth, who worked with a catering firm, died following a brawl with one of his co-workers at a marriage function here late on Thursday, the police said on Friday. The co-worker has been arrested, they said.

The 17-year-old, identified as Basit alias Ghulam Mohideen, who was hit on the head, succumbed to injuries at Sawai Man Singh Government Hospital.

Basit hailed from Kupwara district of Jammu & Kashmir. He was admitted to the hospital in a critical condition and was operated upon. He had sustained internal injuries in a fight with co-worker Aditya. The co-worker

C The offence of murder was added to the first information report registered in connection with the incident, on the complaint of the deceased's friend

ANAND SRIVASTAVA
Police Commissioner

had allegedly thrashed him following a spat over sitting in a vehicle at Anantham Marriage Garden here.

Basit's friends rushed him to the hospital when he vomited and complained of a headache. He was admitted for surgery, but his condition deteriorated and he died on the operation table.

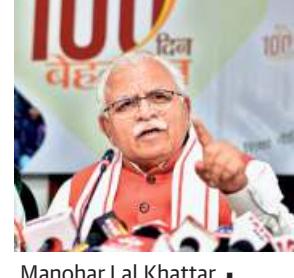
Police Commissioner Anand Srivastava said here on Friday that the offence of murder had been added to the first information report registered in connection with the incident, on the complaint of the deceased's friend

Basit's body was handed over to his family after the post-mortem. His relatives had arrived from Kupwara, the police said.

The police denied that it was a case of hate crime and said the fight between the young boys had ensued all of a sudden and had no connection with the victim's religion or native place.

Haryana CM presents 100-day report card

Prepoll promises belied, biggest achievement of govt. was scams: State Cong. chief



Manohar Lal Khattar ■

and other social security pensions from ₹2,000 per month to ₹2,250 per month. Besides, liquor vending would be allowed only outside the village if women demand it. "So far 872 gram sabhas have passed resolutions against opening liquor vends in their areas," he said.

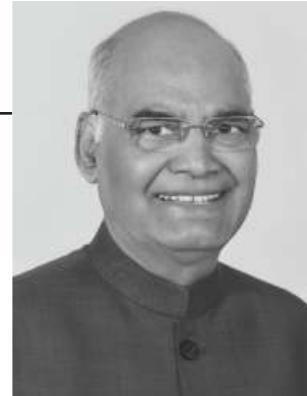
The government also launched a scheme named "Mukhyamantri Parivar Samridhi Yojana" on Friday, under which annual financial assistance of ₹6,000 will be provided to those families whose annual income is up to ₹1.80 lakh and landholding less than 5 acres.

Reacting to the government announcements, Haryana Pradesh Congress Committee president and Rajya Sabha MP Kumari Sel

ja said the Chief Minister presented only 'jumbas' (gimmicks) in his 100-day report card, adding that the biggest achievement of his government was the multiple scams that had taken place during this period.

"After watching the trailer of the first 100 days of this alliance government in the State, it has become clear how their performance is going to be in the next five years. No work has been done on the promises made to the public before election," said Ms. Selja.

The Haryana Congress chief alleged that soon after the formation of the BJP-JJP government, there was a big scam in the purchase of paddy from farmers. The purchase of sugarcane crop was also delayed, she said.



Shri Ram Nath Kovind
Hon'ble President of India



Hon'ble Ranil Wickremesinghe
Former Prime Minister of Sri Lanka



Hon'ble Bhupesh Baghel
Chief Minister of Chhattisgarh



Manish Tewari
MP & Congress Party Leader



Ajit Ranade
Economist



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The long wait for maternity benefits

The Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana announced by Prime Minister Modi three years ago offered a lifeline to pregnant mothers. However, in Gujarat's tribal district of Dahod, **Jagriti Chandra** finds mothers struggling to receive their entitlements as the scheme gets entangled in a bureaucratic maze of paperwork

Protest songs and slogans on their lips and toddlers cradled in their arms, nearly 70 women march in single file into the three-storied District Panchayat office in Gujarat's Dahod. Confidently, the women climb the first two floors and park themselves outside the office of the Chief District Health Officer. While many young mothers sit along the corridor tending to their young infants and nursing them, others dance in circles to impromptu renditions of folk songs that are aimed at shaming the government officials for nine recent maternal deaths in the district and prevalence of malnutrition. The primary refrain, though, is that the officials are forcing the mothers, who live in remote villages, to travel for hours to demand their rightful benefits, when they should actually be caring for their young ones. "Sisters have been pushed around and forced to come to the district panchayat," they say.

Dahod is primarily a tribal district bordering Madhya Pradesh. "74.3% of the population [is] from the Scheduled Tribes such as Bhil, Nayak, Rathwa, Bhabhor; people travel to different parts of the State in search of work. Poverty, early marriage and illiteracy with higher family size is the typical profile of the rural areas of Dahod," explains Neeta Hardikar, co-founder of ANANDI, an NGO which works for poor rural women in Gujarat.

These are also the reasons cited by the Population Foundation of India for a high decadal growth in the population of Scheduled Tribes in the district between 2001 and 2011 which, at 34%, was nearly double that of the rate of population growth in the country. For Dahod as a whole, this figure was 30%, and for Gujarat, it was 19.28%. On the ground, too, four to five children in a family seems to be the norm.

A 120-km travel for young mothers
The mothers are here to demand their maternity entitlements under the Central government's Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY) and the Gujarat government's Kasturbhai Sahay Poshan Yojana (KSPY). Coming from the remote villages of Piplod, Dabhva, Bara, Fulpura and Juni Bedi in Devgadh Baria taluka, they have travelled for nearly three hours and covered a distance of about 120 km in jeeps.



The protest is timed to coincide with the third anniversary of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's televised address, in which he promised a sum of ₹6,000 to pregnant women and young mothers across the country, on the birth of their first child. This programme was later christened Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana. The scheme promises a total sum of ₹5,000, to be given in three instalments to pregnant women and lactating mothers. Those who receive similar benefits from their employers and government employees are excluded from the scheme.

The benefit is provided only for the first live birth and the money is to be credited to the beneficiary's Aadhaar-linked savings account in different intervals over a period of nearly 14 months. Each instalment is paid after the mothers meet certain conditions – the first instalment after early registration of pregnancy; the second instalment after six months of pregnancy on the completion of at least one ante-natal check-up; and the third instalment after the registration of child-birth and the first cycle of immunisation of the child.

The government has clubbed this with the Janani Suraksha Yojana, which provides a benefit of ₹700-₹1,000, to claim that women will get "on an average" ₹6,000 for every first child.

In Dahod, among those occupying the second-floor corridor is a grief-stricken and expressionless 26-year-old, Ushaben Girishbhai Naik. While she does not join the chorus of protest, she is here to mark her presence nevertheless. On December 12, she lost her 20-month-old daughter, Vilasaben, after a severe bout of diarrhoea and vomiting.

Back at her home in village Juli Bedi, the girl's grandfather pulls out from an iron trunk among the few memorabilia he possesses – a piece of paper on which is scribbled Vilas's date of birth, April 3, 2018; and date of death, December 12, 2019. The infant's father brings a framed photo of hers neatly wrapped in a red and white *gamcha* and the entire family breaks down in a collective outpouring of shared grief.

When Vilas was 14 months old, an examination by a local health worker affiliated with ANANDI, the NGO, revealed that she weighed merely 5.2 kg, (i.e.) 30%-45% less than her ideal weight. As per the World Health Organization (WHO)'s child growth standards, this placed the toddler in the 'red' or 'severely underweight' category, while the local anganwadi worker had marked her in green on her growth chart, identifying her as a child with healthy growth levels. At the NGO's intervention, the child was admitted to the local Child Malnutrition Treatment Centre for 14 days, where she showed signs of recovery and gained two kg. But when her

used the money when I needed it the most – immediately after my child was born. I had to take a loan to buy fruits, ghee, almonds and milk. For two to three months after the delivery, my monthly expenditure went up by ₹1,700-₹2,200. We should get the money at least four months after childbirth, but in almost all cases that never happens. The scheme does not fulfil the purpose it is meant for," explains her husband Shailesh Kumar Saiba.

An arduous process

Saiba, with an MA and a B.Ed, is among the few literate residents of the village and also a local activist; but even for him, filling in the application was a lengthy and arduous chore that called for nearly four visits to the local bank, 20 km from his home, to link his wife's Aadhaar card with her account. He was also asked to bring his heavily pregnant wife to provide her thumb impression.

Saiba's neighbour, 21-year-old Patel Parvati Ben Aditya, submitted her documents for the scheme more than a year ago, but on this visit to the Zilla Panchayat office, she has been told that there is no record of her application. Members of the local women's collective inquired in their village and found out that her application was sent by the anganwadi worker but was not processed at the taluka office. It emerged that the computer operator couldn't feed Parvati Ben's information in the system because the computer had been lying unprepared for several months. The money would have been a substantial help for the family whose total monthly income is a mere ₹2,000-₹3,000.

The lengthy documentation work in-

cludes filling up six documents, totalling 32 pages – an application form to be filled for each of the three instalments; an application for linking the Aadhaar card with bank account; another one for linking the Aadhaar card with the post office account; and a feedback form. Applicants have to also submit at

least nine other documents for verification. These include an Aadhaar card (or enrolment slip when there is no card), an identity proof, a voter ID card (as age proof). Each of these documents have to be submitted by the woman beneficiary and her husband. Apart from these, there must be a copy of the ration card issued to the husband's family, a bank passbook and the maternal and child protection card. To top it all, the woman's Aadhaar card must have the husband's name on it. Most young mothers have their first child in the first year of their marriage. Just collecting the documents can take six to seven months.

Patriarchy at play

Sample this – a woman has to first obtain a new election card because of the change in her address after the marriage and after that she places a request for adding her husband's name to her Aadhaar card. Once this is done, she can have her name added to the ration card of the marital family. These require visits to the local taluka block-level officer deputed at a primary school in the village, to the Aadhaar Kendra in the taluka and then to the magistrate. "This is patriarchy at play. A woman has to be married and living with her husband to avail the benefits under PMMVY. If she is abandoned and she returns to her natal family, she can't provide her husband's Aadhaar card and she is left out of the purview of the scheme. When a woman is pregnant, it is visible to everyone. She should be able to provide her own Aadhaar card and demand the cash incentive owed to her," says Seema Shah, from the NGO ANANDI.

While in New Delhi, senior Union Ministers and top bureaucrats have time and again underlined that the purpose of an Aadhaar card is to enable the availing of government benefits and checking pilferage and that no one can be denied access to a scheme for not possessing an Aadhaar card, in reality, not owning this identity document can prove to be punitive. Further, there are

The PMMVY needs to be brought in line with the National Food Security Act by removing the arbitrary restriction that permits a cash benefit only for the first-born

REETIKA KHERA,
Development economist

April 2018 and December 2019, a total of 2,042 women from Devgadh Baria taluka received the first instalment; 2,012 received the second instalment and 1,534 received the third instalment. From the start of the scheme in 2017 and till December 31, a total of 2,921 women have received at least some benefits. The taluka has a population size of 2.49 lakh of whom 1.24 lakh are women according to 2011 Census.

Chief District Health Officer R.R. Parmar meets the protesters and promises that the backlog of applications would be cleared and funds transferred to the bank accounts of the beneficiaries. However, he is more concerned about the "large size" of some families and explains that the district has "directions to spread awareness about family planning, encourage birth spacing and use of contraceptives". Meanwhile the Child Malnutrition Treatment Centre is full. Records show that in any given month, it has 120% occupancy, i.e. an average of 24 children per month where it expects 20 children. Activists say there have been nine maternal deaths and eight infant deaths in Devgadh Baria in the past three months – the data is collected through a network of women volunteers across different villages.

Low coverage
Nationally, 38.3 lakh women, or 61% of 62.8 lakh beneficiaries registered under PMMVY between April 2018 and July 2019, received the full amount of ₹5,000 promised under the scheme, according to an RTI application filed by economists Reetika Khera, Jean Dreze and Anmol Somanchi. The researchers assert that the scheme failed to reach at least 49% of total 123 lakh mothers who are estimated to have given birth to their first child and, therefore, it was able to benefit only 31% of its intended beneficiaries. Worse, the economists contend, since the total number of births in 2017 was 270.5 lakh, the number of births covered stands at 23% of the total number of child births that year, and the proportion of those who actually received the cash benefit is a paltry 14%.

Ms. Khera explains how the scheme can be improved: "The PMMVY needs to be brought in line with the National Food Security Act (NFS), 2013, by removing the arbitrary restriction that permits a cash benefit only for the first-born. Second, the amount of cash benefit also needs to be increased. Both of the above are violations of the NFS. In fact, the government should emulate the example of Tamil Nadu, which offers ₹18,000 under its State scheme. Third, mandatory use of Aadhaar should be removed. Any government identity document should be acceptable so that beneficiaries are not forced to run from pillar to post. Instead, make the banking system more robust and widespread. NEFT is an effective way to transfer money electronically, whereas linking Aadhaar with bank accounts has created new problems."

But for the mothers of Dahod, it has been an exhausting wait for their entitlements. The PMMVY could have been a lifeline; instead the scheme is lost in a maze of bureaucracy.

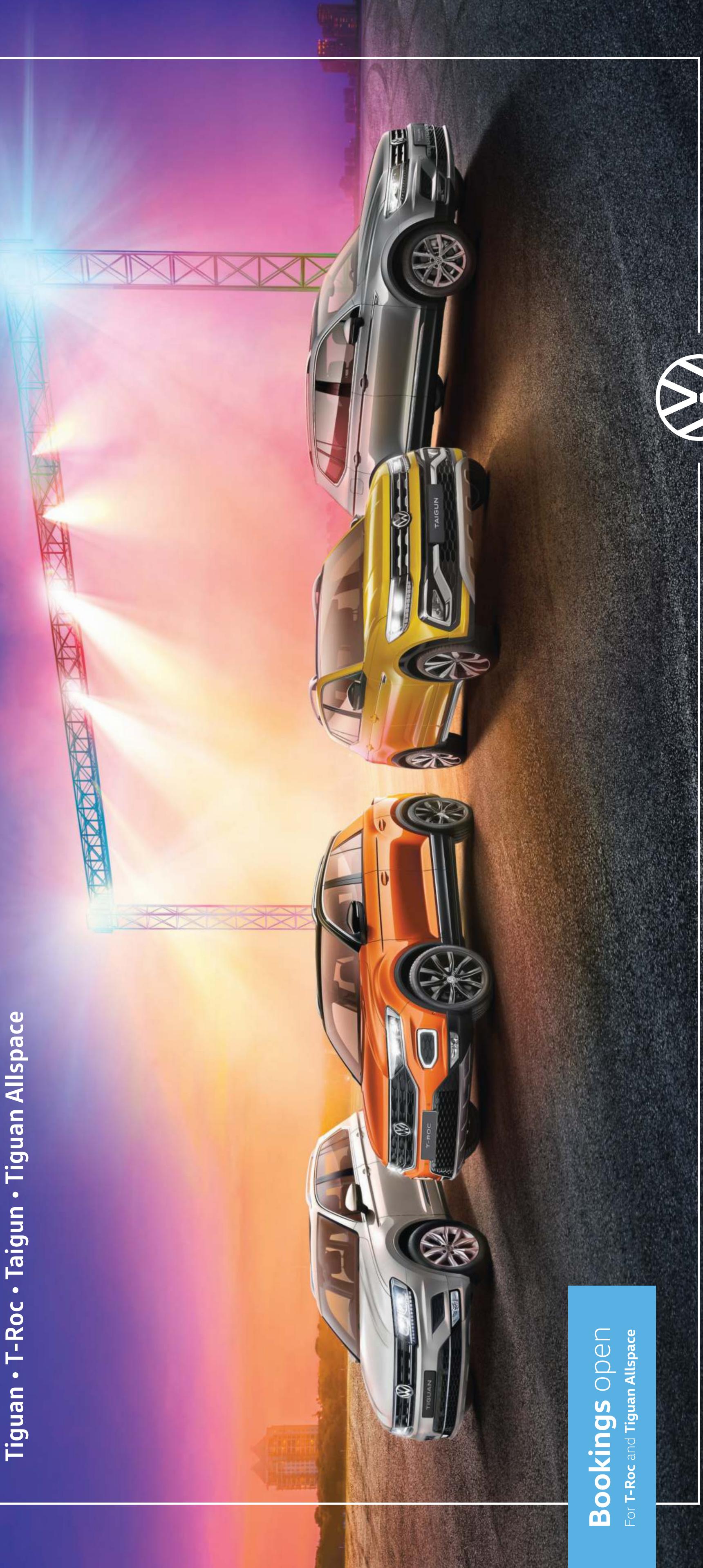


Ushaben Girishbhai Naik and her family are inconsolable as they mourn the death of Vilas, her 20-month-old daughter, in Dahod, Gujarat. • VIJAY SONEJI



Women protesting at the panchayat office in Dahod. • VIJAY SONEJI

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