



IAF bids farewell to MiG-27 at ceremony in Jodhpur
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Jammu and Kashmir will get statehood soon, says Ram Madhav
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Israel's Netanyahu sweeps party primary in re-election boost
page 14



Travis Head's century puts Australia in command
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NEARBY



'Solving traffic chaos key agenda for next term'

NEW DELHI
Addressing traffic congestion and ensuring 24-hour drinking water in Delhi will be on the agenda of the AAP government in the next five years if re-elected, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said on Friday. AAP will release its manifesto for the upcoming Assembly polls between January 15 and 20, the Chief Minister announced.

CITY ▶ PAGE 3

Eight-year-old girl raped and murdered in Nuh

Nuh
An eight-year-old girl was allegedly raped and murdered in Nuh, the police said on Friday. The girl from a village in Ferozepur Jhirka had taken her goats for grazing in the forest on Thursday when she went missing. Her parents found her body on Friday morning and informed the police.

CITY ▶ PAGE 4

Modi is lying about detention camps: Gogoi

GUWAHATI
Senior Congress leader Tarun Gogoi on Friday called Prime Minister Narendra Modi a "liar" for saying that there is no detention camp in the country. "In 2018, the Modi government had sanctioned ₹46 crore for the largest detention centre at Matia in Goalpara district of Assam for housing 3,000 illegal immigrants," Mr. Gogoi said.

EAST ▶ PAGE 6

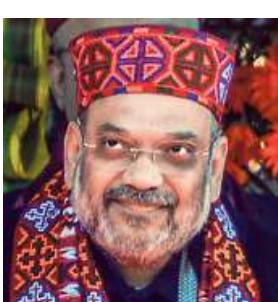
Search for life



Tardy take-off: Rescue personnel at the site of a plane crash near the Almaty International Airport in Kazakhstan on Friday. Twelve people died when a Bek Air plane with nearly 100 passengers crashed into a building shortly after take-off. ■ AP (PAGE 14)

Prove allegations on CAA, Shah dares Rahul

It only confers citizenship: Minister



Amit Shah

Mr. Shah, however, did not make any comment on the National Register of Citizens (NRC). "I want to tell everyone, and especially the minorities, that the Congress and company are misleading and spreading rumours that under the CAA, the citizenship of Muslim brothers is about to be taken away. I challenge Rahul *babu* to please come and pre-

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 12
OUTREACH TO MUSLIMS ▶ PAGE 13

Rahul equates NRC, NPR with demonetisation

Both tax the poor, says Cong. leader

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Former Congress president Rahul Gandhi on Friday equated the National Register of Citizens (NRC) and the National Population Register (NPR) with the demonetisation of November 2016. He said both the exercises taxed the poor and if the NRC was implemented across India, the poor would suffer the most as they would have to pay bribes to correct any mistakes made during the enumeration.

"Whether NPR or NRC, it is a tax on the poor people of the country. You understand demonetisation. It was a tax on poor people.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 12



Rahul Gandhi

sent any single provision in the Act that mentions that citizenship of any person will be taken away," said Mr. Shah in Shimla at a rally to commemorate the BJP's two years of power in the State.

GO TO BANKS AND GIVE YOUR MONEY BUT DO NOT WITHDRAW MONEY FROM YOUR ACCOUNT. ENTIRE MONEY WENT TO THE POCKET OF 15-20 RICH PEOPLE. THIS [NPR OR NRC] IS THE SAME THING," HE TOLD REPORTERS AT RAIPUR AIRPORT.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 12

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Protesters raise slogans against CAA and NRC on Friday outside Jama Masjid in Old Delhi. ■ SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

Jama Masjid observes peaceful protest

Cong. leaders head stir; will continue agitation till govt. strikes down CAA: demonstrators

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Hundreds of people gathered outside Jama Masjid in Old Delhi to protest against the Citizen (Amendment) Act (CAA) and National Register of Citizens (NRC) on Friday.

With placards reading – “India against CAA NRC” “Withdraw CAA” and “We Demand Equality” – the protest amid police presence was peaceful.

Former Congress MLA Shoaib Iqbal and Congress leader Alka Lamba were among those who headed the protest, though many of the protesters were people who came for namaz at the mosque.

The protestors said they will continue the agitation as

long as the government does not strike down the CAA and promise to not implement the NRC. Mr. Iqbal and Ms. Lambademand that the Centre should call a joint session of the Parliament and take back CAA, and also tell people that NRC will not be implemented.

Identify me: Lamba

Wearing a hijab before entering the platform, Ms. Lamba said: “Since the Prime Minister said in Jharkhand that protesters can be identified by their clothes, people like me have started to change their clothes. Now identify who is a Hindu and who is a Muslim.”

A 25-year-old protester, Irshad Ahmad, who works at a shop, had come to the mos-

que to offer prayer when he came to know about the stir. “We are protesting so that our voices are heard.”

A senior citizen, Fahim Akbar, who gives tuitions for a living said: “Now that Babri Masjid issue is over and we Muslims have accepted that verdict, the BJP is looking for something else to divide people.” Mohammad Suhail, 29, who had come from Laxmi Nagar with a handmade poster that reads – India against CAA NRC – said: “Modiji has accepted refugees from six religions, then why not Muslims? We had also fought for independence.” Mr. Suhail said he had to come to Jama Masjid to protest as the police did not allow him to the same in Laxmi Nagar. When asked

whether the protest is dying down at Jama Masjid, 24-year-old DU student Mohammad Numan, said: “Police’s violence is very high. In Banaras, people were dragged out of their houses and beaten.”

“Those who failed in Class X and XII are now telling university students that they are being misled,” he added.

The protesters said compared to last Friday when there was a call for protest and people had shut their shops in Old Delhi, this time, the stir was “weaker”.

Meanwhile, 40-year-old Kurshid Ahmed, selling caps and prayer beads said: “The number of tourists has fallen by at least 70% since the protests began and the business is also affected.”

Over 300 detained for protesting outside U.P. Bhawan against CAA

DCP says stir conducted in violation of Section 144, detainees released by 5 p.m.

SAURABH TRIVEDI
NEW DELHI

Over 350 people were detained on Friday after they staged a demonstration outside Uttar Pradesh Bhawan here over alleged police atrocities against those protesting the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) and the proposed pan-India National Register of Citizens (NRC).

Deputy Commissioner of Police (New Delhi) Eish Singh said the protest was held in violation of Section 144 of the CrPC imposed in the area.

“The protesters did not have permission and were asked not to protest but they refused to follow the directions issued by the police...357 protesters, including 75 women, were taken to Mandir Marg and Connaught Place police stations. All of them were released by 5 p.m.” he said.

The officer said on Thursday, Badre Alam, the leader of the protesters, was told by the police to take proper permission to hold a protest at U.P. Bhawan or conduct the same at Jantar Mantar. “But he did not pay any heed to the advice of the police,” the DCP added.

The police said they had deployed adequate security personnel in and around U.P. Bhawan.

“Most of the roads leading to the Bhawan were barricaded. The police and paramilitary personnel were deployed to stop any protesters marching towards U.P. Bhawan,” said an officer.

Around 150 people marching towards U.P. Bhawan were detained at Kautilya Marg roundabout. All of them were taken to Mandir Marg police station in buses, the police said. There was also a water



(Above) Women being detained during a protest against the CAA; students raise slogans outside U.P. Bhawan on Friday.
■ R.V. MOORTHY

drashekhar Azad and against the CAA were stopped by the police outside Jor Bagh metro station.

Delhi Police Spokesperson M.S. Randhawa said all the protests, held across the city, ended peacefully.

“We had made elaborate security arrangements. People gathered at many places but dispersed after a peaceful protest. We had deployed drones to keep watch on anti-social elements,” he said.

The Delhi Metro Rail Corporation on Friday closed the Lok Kalyan Marg metro station, for over an hour, due to demonstrations outside the U.P. Bhawan.

(With inputs from Elisha Verma)

Seemapuri violence: court allows test to ascertain age of accused

Police say no valid identity proof available; asked to submit report by December 30

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

A court here allowed the police on Friday to carry out a bone ossification test to ascertain the age of an accused, arrested in connection with a violent protest at Seemapuri against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act and National Register of Citizens, claiming juvenility.

Metropolitan Magistrate Gita passed the directions af-

ter the police submitted that the accused did not have any valid age proof and it needs to conduct the test. The court directed the Medical Superintendent of GTB hospital to conduct the test on December 28 and asked the police to submit the report by December 30.

Bone ossification test
“In the opinion of the court, the ossification test of accused is necessary as no document as mentioned in the

Juvenile Justice (Care and protection of children) Act, 2015, is produced on behalf of the accused. And in the absence of any such document, bone ossification test is last resort by which age of accused can be determined,” the court said. The court was hearing a plea, filed through advocates Zakir Raza and Monis Rais, claiming that the accused was a juvenile.

During the hearing, the court noted that the docu-

ments submitted by the counsel for the accused to prove his age were not valid as they were certificates issued by a Madrasa where he studied. The police said no other identity proof was available with them and hence bone ossification should be done to ascertain his age.

Advocate Raza opposed this and said that as per the Centre’s notification, certificates from Madrasa are valid

documents to prove one’s age. The court had earlier directed the investigating officer to verify the documents submitted by the accused and file a report by today.

Meanwhile, 10 other accused arrested in the case filed bail pleas in the court.

The court had earlier sent 14 people, arrested in connection with violent protests at Seemapuri, against CAA and NRC, to 14-day judicial custody.

If anyone tries to snatch diversity, make all efforts to stop them: Kejriwal

CM says he has tried to run the govt. on path shown by Christ

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Friday said diversity is the “biggest quality of India” and if anyone is trying to snatch it, then people have to make all efforts to stop them.

Addressing a Christmas and New Year celebration at the Delhi Assembly, he said: “Our country’s soul is that it has different religions, castes, languages, and cul-

tures. You will not find this diversity in any other country, which is our biggest quality.”

He said the government has tried to serve the poor as shown by Jesus Christ. “Our government has completed five years and the satisfaction we have is that we have tried to run it on the path shown by Christ. For the poor, we opened Mohalla Clinics and also made schools better,”

Mr. Kejriwal said. He added if they could complete 1% of what Jesus had said then he would consider themselves lucky.

“Archbishop Anil Joseph T. Couto, Bishop Rt. Rev. Subodh C Mondal, Diocese Rt. Rev Waris K Masih, Bishop Rt. Rev Jacob Mar Barnabas, Bishop Karam Masiah, and MLAs present on the occasion,” an official statement said.

Delhi Metro museum turns 11, launches exhibition on suicide prevention campaign

DMRC invites 30 girls from NGO, organises ‘nukkad natak’

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

The museum of Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) at Patel Chowk station on Friday turned 11 and a host of activities were held at the venue, said officials.

An exhibition themed on suicide prevention campaign #Nevergiveup was also inaugurated on the occasion. The campaign is an initiative of the DMRC launched earlier this year to spread awareness on suicide

prevention.

Established in 2008, the museum has been a special attraction for visitors and commuters of the Delhi Metro over the past decade.

The museum has also been the venue for various events and initiatives taken up for children by the DMRC.

“Over 30 girl children from the NGO – Sarthak Prayas – were invited to visit the museum and take part in the anniversary celebrations,” the DMRC said in a

statement.

Help those in distress
The children were told about the history of the Delhi Metro. A ‘nukkad natak’ by artists was also organised for them.

A pledge was administered to the children to stay positive and help those in distress. To spread the message, takeaway cards with positive messages were kept at the exhibition, which can be collected by the visitors.

Dance The second day of IIC Winter Festival of Dance will feature a Satyriya recital by Meenakshi Medhi from Delhi, a disciple of the late Guru Adhyapak Jibanan Dutta and Adhyapak Haricharan Bhuyan Borbayan, followed by a Kuchipudi recital by Vidhya S. from Chennai, a disciple of Guru Kalaimamani Salilaj, at C.D. Deshmukh Auditorium, India International Centre (IIC), 6 p.m.

Exhibition: “The Homeland” an exhibition that interrogates the idea of home by Moutushi Chakraborty at Kamaladevi Complex, IIC, 11 a.m. - 7 p.m.

Exhibition: ‘Alekhya’, a group show of painting exhibition by Artist Nidhi and Artist Mohit Bhardwaj along with their mentors Artist Ganesh Prasad Sahu and Artist Krishna Shreshtha at AIFACS, 11 a.m. - 7 p.m.

Exhibition: “India: A Mapful Story”, an exhibition of historical maps and other engravings by Anubhav Nath, Curatorial Director of Ojas Art Gallery at JAQ, Qutab Minar Roundabout, Mehrauli Road, 11 a.m. - 7 p.m.

(Mail your listings for this column at cityeditor@thehindu.co.in)

'Will work on solving traffic congestion in next tenure'

Arvind Kejriwal says AAP will release election manifesto around mid-January

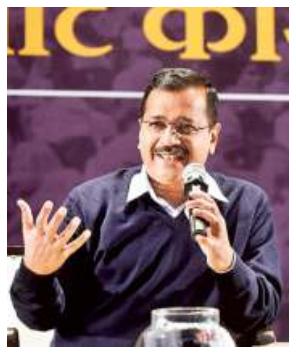
STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Addressing traffic congestion and ensuring 24-hour drinking water in Delhi will be on the agenda of the Aam Aadmi Party government in the next five years, if re-elected, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said on Friday.

He was addressing a gathering at a town hall meeting, the second one held as part of AAP's election campaign.

"Travel for women will be free in buses and electricity will be free till 200 units as long as AAP is in power in Delhi," Mr. Kejriwal said at the Pitampura Dilli Haat.

"As long as we have our government in Delhi, we will continue to provide pe-



Arvind Kejriwal

manifesto for the Assembly elections based on consultations with people through town hall meetings.

"We discussed cleanliness on Thursday, and now we are discussing traffic congestion. We will continue to discuss and add an issue each day to ensure that all important points are covered in our manifesto, which is to be released around January 15-20, 2020," he said. The Delhi Assembly polls are likely to be held in February.

List of roads

Talking about traffic congestion, Mr. Kejriwal said that the government has designated a consultant to create a list of locations in Delhi where there are daily traffic jams.

"The designated consultant will provide us with a report within 9-10 months on how to solve the problem of traffic congestion in these locations," he said.

The Chief Minister added that they will then start working on resolving congestion issues on each road mentioned in the list.

"Just as we have worked on addressing issues in the fields of education, health, power, water, sewer, and drainage, etc., in the last five years, we will work on resolving traffic congestion issues in the next five years," said Mr. Kejriwal.

He added that currently 93% of Delhi receives tap water. "Our next step is to provide 24-hour water supply to the people of Delhi," he said.

One dead after truck hits bike

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

A 30-year-old man died and his friend was injured after a truck hit their motorcycle on Signature Bridge here, the police said on Friday.

Sandeep fell from the bridge after his bike was hit by a truck as he and his friend Abhishek, both residents of Nathupura, were coming from Gokulpuri on Wednesday night.

The police took the duo to a nearby hospital where Sandeep, who was an electrician, was declared brought dead by doctors

Abhishek, 28, is undergoing treatment. A case has been lodged at Timarpur police station.

Big businesses have a problem with street vendors, says CM

Kejriwal says vendors should not be seen as encroachers

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal met with members of the Town Vending Committees (TVCs) on Friday and urged them to facilitate a survey to resolve the issue of displacement of street vendors by authorities.

He also announced that the Delhi government would bear the cost of the survey, which is to be conducted by the municipal corporations.

"I hope that the vendors will not have to face any obstacles after the survey... industrialists and big businesses have a problem with street vendors and small-scale businesses. They have a problem with parallel businesses as they stand to lose. I promise that I will not let injustice against you [street vendors] prevail" he said.

Source of employment

"I believe the government must ensure employment to the people when the country



A street vendor prepares a cup of tea for a customer in Old Delhi on a cold Friday morning. ■ AFP

is suffering from major unemployment and economic slowdown. We often hear about incidents where street vendors are removed from their places by the authorities," Mr. Kejriwal said, adding: "In other countries, street vendors are encouraged as they are a source of employment."

In India, street vendors are seen as encroachers... but in other countries, the vendors have legal support of their governments... the same system

should be established in India, said the Chief Minister.

Mr. Kejriwal also sought to assure the street vendors that after the survey was conducted, vendors would be allotted a permanent space and no authority would be able to displace them.

"I want to request the civic body officials to call a meeting of the TVCs by Tuesday. The meetings will decide and finalise the agencies that will carry out the survey," said Mr. Kejriwal.

Through the haze



A blanket of fog engulfs India Gate in New Delhi. ■ SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

Congress picks apart AAP govt. report card

It is a bundle of lies: Subhash Chopra

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Delhi Congress on Friday released a 'post-mortem report' on the '10-point report card' by the AAP government and termed it a "bundle of lies".

DPCP chief Subhash Chopra said that the reality of the Arvind Kejriwal-led government is that "it provides only dirty drinking water and polluted air to the people of Delhi".

He added that the AAP government has been promoting itself with "misleading ad campaigns" and "lies", and that Mr. Kejriwal has woken up to the reality of the welfare of the people only in the last three months of his government's tenure.

"AAP, which came to power on the issue of Lokpal and Swaraj, is now running away from both issues and the Lokayukt, which was established by the then Congress government, has been made ineffective," said Mr. Chopra.

The party further claimed that the AAP government had not spent 42% of its budget on health and that the "inflated health budget remained only on paper".

Former MP Sandeep Dikshit said that Mr. Kejriwal had promised to set up 1,000 Mohalla Clinics, but established only 189 clinics out of which 100 are not functional. He added that the clinics were opened after shutting down 500 government dispensaries.

KVs outperformed Delhi govt. schools: think-tank

Report based on 1,000 RTI replies

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

A report by the BJP-linked think-tank, Public Policy Research Centre (PPRC), has claimed that Central government schools outperformed Delhi government schools in 2019.

The report, released on Friday, was compiled over three months based on around 1,000 Right to Information replies by the Aam Aadmi Party government.

Govt. rejects findings

The report claimed that Class 10 pass percentage in Delhi government schools came down from 95.81% in 2015 to 71.58% in 2019; pass percentage of Kendriya Vidyalayas during the same

period improved from 99.59% to 99.79%.

The Delhi government has dismissed the report stating that it was "unfair" to compare its schools with Centre-run Kendriya Vidyalayas, which admit students through entrance tests.

"Over 1.6 lakh Delhi government school students sat for Class 10 Board exam in 2019; the number in Kendriya Vidyalayas of Delhi was around 7,800," said a government official.

PPRC director and BJP MP Vinay Sahasrabuddhe alleged that the Delhi government "indulged in propaganda" and published full-page advertisements but did "nothing" on the ground.

IN BRIEF

Junior Engineer held for taking ₹36,000-bribe

NEW DELHI

A Junior Engineer of the Delhi Jal Board was arrested for allegedly taking a bribe of ₹36,000 from a private firm manager, officials said on Friday. The Anti-Corruption Branch said Auragzaib Khan, a plant manager of a private firm, lodged a complaint on Thursday alleging that a JE posted at the DJB's Keshopur Sewage Treatment Plant had demanded a bribe for clearance of the firm's bills. A trap was laid and the accused was caught while taking the bribe, an ACB official said. PTI

IN BRIEF

Fire breaks out at building in Vasant Vihar

NEW DELHI A major fire broke out at a residential building in south Delhi's Vasant Vihar on Friday, a fire department official said. The department got a call regarding the incident around 8.30 p.m. and four fire tenders were rushed to the spot, he said. No casualty has been reported so far, the official said, adding that the reason behind the fire is yet to be ascertained. PTI

Thief, jeweller who bought stolen ornaments arrested

NEW DELHI A man has been arrested for stealing jewellery and a jeweller was nabbed for purchasing stolen ornaments from him, the police said on Friday. The alleged thief, identified as Sunil Kumar (42), a resident of Vijay Vihar, used to sell stolen articles to Rakesh (43), a jeweller in Nangloi, they said. One countrymade pistol and two live cartridges were recovered from his Mr. Kumar's possession. Stolen silver weighing 4 kg and 520 gram of gold ornaments were recovered from the jeweller, they added. PTI

Minimum plummets to 4.2°C, lowest this season

Met forecasts further dip in mercury

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI It was the coldest night of the season on Friday with the minimum temperature settling at 4.2 degrees Celsius in the Capital with the Met department forecasting that it may slip further in the next few days.

According to the bulletin issued by the Met department, a fresh western disturbance is very likely to affect the western Himalayan region from December 30 night onwards and under its influence, Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand are very likely to experience light or moderate scattered to fairly widespread precipitation between December 31 and January 3 with peak intensity on January 2.

CM deprived Delhiites of Centre's housing scheme benefits, says Puri

'Only State to not submit proposal under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Delhi residents have not gotten any benefit from the Centre's urban housing scheme due to the ego of a Chief Minister who does not want to implement a scheme in the name of the Prime Minister, Housing and Urban Affairs Minister Hardeep Singh Puri said on Friday.

Delhi is the only State which has not submitted any proposal under the urban section of the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY), a flagship central scheme promising housing for all by 2022. Earlier this week, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal launched the Mukhya Mantri Awas Yojana for residents of the city's slum clusters and promised to provide them with pucca houses.

"He has prioritised his ego and the name of a scheme, and he has sacrificed the scheme for his ego... If deve-

lopment is going to be based on the nomenclature of a scheme, then you are depriving your own citizens," said Mr. Puri.

Queries to the Delhi government about the State's failure to implement the central scheme, and Mr. Puri's allegations, were not answered.

Mr. Puri claimed that the AAP-led Delhi government's decision to put on hold for more than a year a survey for in-situ slum rehabilitation under the PMAY was a classic example of "a political

approach based on a pack of lies". While the State had consented to the survey in January 2018 and accepted money to conduct the same in September, it never completed the survey, depriving the city's slum-dwellers of benefits under the central scheme, said Mr. Puri. The Centre is now implementing slum rehabilitation through the centrally run Delhi Development Agency.

"If they had a conscience, they would have made at least a proposal," he added.

PMAY (Urban) was launched in June 2015 and includes four verticals to develop urban housing, three of which require the State government to present proposals to the Centre. PMAY data shows that no such proposals have come from the State.

However, more than 16,000 people in the city have taken advantage of the

fourth vertical, which is a credit-linked scheme whereby individuals directly apply for interest subvention on their housing loans without any State involvement. Also, PMAY has completed more than 50,000 homes in the city which were sanctioned under the earlier central scheme, the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission, with proposals coming from the previous Congress government in Delhi.

In total, the PMAY has crossed the one crore milestone in terms of houses sanctioned nationwide, as against a validated demand of 1.12 crore. However, only 32 lakh houses have actually been completed so far, with another 28 lakh having reached the grounding stage. The Centre expects to sanction the entire target next year and complete construction by 2022.

The fire brigade

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI The city has been witnessing the longest December cold spell since 1997 when the mean maximum temperature was 17.3 degrees Celsius.

This year, the mean maximum temperature till Thursday was 19.85 degrees Celsius and is expected to dip to 19.15 degrees by December 31.

December cold spell The city has been witnessing the longest December cold spell since 1997 when the mean maximum temperature was 17.3 degrees Celsius.

This year, the mean maximum temperature till Thursday was 19.85 degrees Celsius and is expected to dip to 19.15 degrees by December 31.

Court allows man to recover ₹24 lakh loan from friend

Cheque issued by borrower was rejected by the bank

NIRNIMESH KUMAR

NEW DELHI

A Delhi court has allowed a man to recover ₹24.20 lakh loan from his friend with 6% interest for the period his recovery suit was pending.

The plaintiff used to lend money to his friend as he required it for running his chit fund business. According to the complaint, the lender had lent this amount to the borrower between September 2008 and January 2009.

The plaintiff would lend money and the borrower would issue promissory notes to guarantee repayment. At the time of the repayment, the defendant would issue cheques in his favour and take back the promissory notes.

For this loan amount, the



borrower had also issued a cheque in his favour. But when the plaintiff deposited it for encashment in his bank, it was rejected with the comment that the account of the issuer of the cheque did not have sufficient money to make the payment.

Thereafter, he served a legal notice on him but he did not bother to return the money. Then, he filed a recovery suit.

In his defence, the defen-

dant submitted that the cheque the plaintiff presented to the bank was actually a stolen one.

But Additional Sessions Judge Brijesh Kumar Garg dismissed his defence, saying that though he lodged a complaint regarding the loss of the cheque, he failed to inform about it to his bank.

"The defendant has failed to produce on record any written information or instructions issued by him to his banker for stopping the payment of the missing cheques. The defendant has failed to give any such intimation or instruction to his banker till 23.02.2009 or thereafter, when the cheque was returned by his banker for insufficiency of funds," Mr. Garg said allowing the suit.

For this loan amount, the

plaintiff presented the back of the cheque to the bank, which rejected it.

Justice Garg held that the plaintiff had failed to prove that the defendant had issued the cheque in his favour.

He directed the defendant to hand over the cheque to the plaintiff within six months to some other buyer.

Justice Garg held that the plaintiff had failed to prove that the defendant had issued the cheque in his favour.

He directed the defendant to hand over the house to the Jains for the market price as on date of the order.

The apex court, however, left it to the Delhi High Court to determine the

market value of the property.

The High Court has now determined the market value of the property, as on December 3, 2012, to be ₹130 crore, since the Rushdies said they had a buyer to purchase the house at that price.

Justice Rajiv Sahai Endlaw said, however, that if the Jains are unable to purchase at that price, the Rushdies will have to sell the house for ₹130 crore within six months to some other buyer.

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ED probe into PF money in DHFL

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate has started money laundering probe into investments of the Uttar Pradesh Power Corporation Limited (UPPCL) employees' provident fund to the tune of ₹4,100 crore in the Deewani Housing Finance Corporation Limited (DHFL).

The ED investigation is based on the findings of the Uttar Pradesh police, which have arrested more than a dozen accused persons in its case so far.

Among them are then UPPCL Managing Director A. P. Mishra, besides two other officials, Praveen Kumar Gupta and Sudhanshu Dwivedi. The funds were invested in the DHFL between 2017-18, allegedly through brokerage firms.

Power sector gets a boost in Rajasthan

Additional production of 946 MW

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

JAIPUR

With the production of an additional 946 MW of electricity in the last one year, the power sector has got a boost in Rajasthan. The State government also plans to obtain solar power, produced by farmers in the plants set up in their fields, for the Grid.

Energy Minister B.D. Kalla said while inaugurating a 33 KV Grid sub-station at Padasoli village in Jaipur district earlier this week that a 660 MW unit of the Suratgarh Super Thermal Power

Western U.P. peaceful amid tight vigil

District administrations issue notices to those who allegedly vandalised public property last week

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

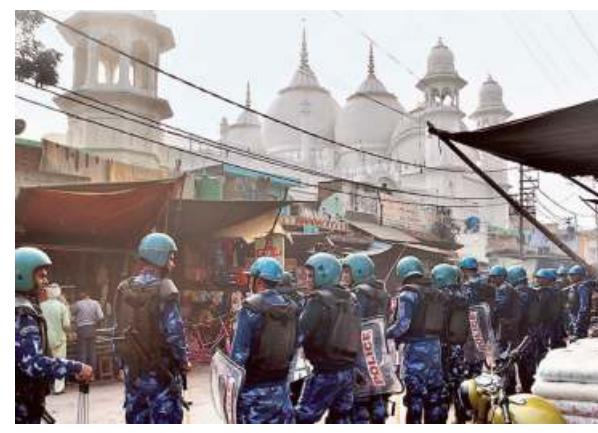
GHAZIABAD

Western Uttar Pradesh, placed under an unprecedented security cover, witnessed a peaceful Friday.

Ahead of Friday prayers and apprehensive about violent protests against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, sensitive areas of Aligarh city were put under the lens of a web of CCTV cameras.

"We added 20-25 cameras in sensitive areas such as Shah Jamal which acted as a deterrent. There are more than 125 CCTV cameras in the Muslim-dominated Upper Court area of the city," said Abhishek, SP (City), Aligarh.

"We also reached out to maulanas and senior religious leaders as last week a rumour was spread that the water and electricity supply



Tight security in Aligarh on Friday. ■ MANOJ ALIGADI

of Muslim areas would be cut. In community meeting we made it amply clear that we are not against peaceful protest as long as law and order was not disturbed," said Mr. Abhishek.

A local requesting anonymity said every activity of

theirs was being watched. "There is no privacy left," he complained.

Ashutosh Upadhyay, who works with a private company that helps the police in placing cameras and recording the footage in Kotwali, said there was no intent to

disturb people. "It is just to keep an eye on any unlawful activity. The footage gets deleted after 20 days," he said.

In Aligarh Muslim University, some non-resident students kept fast to protest against the CAA and copies of the Act were torn.

In Meerut, the police made public announcements reminding residents of areas such as Hapur Road – where violent protests erupted last week – that it was their city and maintaining public order was their responsibility.

People were not allowed to assemble at one place after the Friday prayers. Local religious leaders were roped in to make an appeal for peace.

In Ghaziabad's sensitive Loni area, posters were put up by the district administration explaining that the CAA didn't discriminate against any particular religion.

Like Meerut, the Bijnor and Rampur district administrations have also issued notices to those who allegedly vandalised public property last Friday.

Week's time to reply

In Rampur, the District Magistrate has issued notices to 28 people for the recovery of around ₹15 lakh. "They have been given a week to reply to the notice," said an official.

In Bijnor, locals complained that the police has arbitrarily put photos of those who allegedly destroyed public property on December 20. Official sources said people were being given time to clear their names.

Kota hospital orders probe into infant deaths

Ten died in two days this week

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

JAIPUR

The government-run J.K. Lon Children's Hospital in Rajasthan's Kota town has ordered an investigation into the death of 10 infants in two days earlier this week. Aged between one day and one year, six infants died on December 23 and four on December 24.

J.K. Lon Hospital Superintendent H.L. Meena said on Friday that though the death of 10 infants in two days was high, it was "not unusual".

Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot told reporters on the sidelines of a function here that he would wait for the investigation report before taking action in the matter.

from Jaipur to Kota.

The hospital has maintained that since the children are mostly referred from private hospitals in the nearby districts to the government health facility at the terminal stage of their illness, an average of one to three infants die every day.

The hospital administration has appointed a three-member committee, headed by Paediatrics Department's chief Amrit Lal Bairwa, to probe into the deaths.

The State government has asked Medical Education Secretary Vaibhav Galriya to look into the matter and sent a team of doctors

up over the years around it have been brought down," he added.

Tear gas used

As villagers gathered around the blocked roads, foresters fired tear gas shells at them, claimed Mr. Singh. "Especially on Sundays, there are people from Bhopal and elsewhere who visit the spot for picnics. And residents of 20 villages around come to pray here."

Recently, a panel set up by the State government had finalised the contours of a proposed tiger reserve, the seventh for the State, to be carved out of the sanctuary.

Missing students rescued

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

CHANDIGARH

Three students, who had gone missing in Jhajjar town in Haryana, were rescued, police said on Friday. Two girls and a boy had gone missing on December 25 and 26 respectively, they said.

The parents of the girls filed a missing complaint with the police, a Haryana Police spokesman said here. "The girls had gone to a coaching centre on December 25 but did not return home," he added. The Class 8 boy went out for a morning walk on December 26 and did not return, the spokesman said.

The police traced the boy to his maternal uncle's house in Delhi, while the girls were traced from Jhajjar, the spokesman said.

Timings

DELHI

SATURDAY, DEC. 28

RISE 07:13 SET 17:33

RISE 08:54 SET 19:34

SUNDAY, DEC. 29

RISE 07:13 SET 17:34

RISE 09:39 SET 20:30

MONDAY, DEC. 30

RISE 07:13 SET 17:34

RISE 10:19 SET 21:26

Delhi Weather max min
Delhi City 14 04
Safdarjung 14 04
Palam 13 04

Delhi Palam Today
14°C Morning will remain chilly with moderate to dense fog.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow

15°C A cold morning with dense fog is likely. A comfortable day with partly cloudy sky is expected.

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THE HINDU

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Modi lying about detention camps, says Tarun Gogoi

The Central govt. sanctioned ₹46 cr. for one in Assam in 2018'

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
GUWAHATI**
Senior Congress leader Tarun Gogoi on Friday called Prime Minister Narendra Modi a "liar" for saying that there is no detention camp in the country and claimed that the BJP-led government at the Centre had sanctioned ₹46 crore for one in Assam's Goalpara district.

On Gauhati HC order

Mr. Gogoi said his government in Assam had set up detention camps in the State as per a Gauhati High Court order. Former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee had suggested such camps for illegal immigrants, he said.

"Mr. Modi is a liar," Mr. Gogoi said at a press conference here referring to a rally by the Prime Minister in the national capital in which he had said that there is no detention camp in the country.

"In 2018, the Narendra Modi government had sanctioned



Congress leaders Tarun Gogoi (right) and Harish Rawat with Assam Congress chief Ripun Bora at a press conference on CAA, at Rajiv Bhawan in Guwahati on Friday. ■ PTI

₹46 crore for the largest detention centre at Matia in Goalpara district of Assam for housing 3,000 illegal immigrants. Suddenly he says there is no detention camp," Mr. Gogoi said.

"Why did the BJP government in 2018 sanction ₹46 crore? This shows Mr. Modi is a liar," he added.

He said the Congress government which he helmed in the State had set up detention camps in Assam as per the directions of the Gauhati High Court in 2008.

reactions of the Gauhati High Court in 2008.

Mr. Gogoi had led three consecutive governments in the State from 2001 to 2016.

Foreigners' Tribunal

"They (BJP) say these (detention) camps were set up by the Congress. We set them up as per the order of the High Court to detain people who were declared 'foreigners' by the Foreigners' Tribunal," he added.

The ceremony will be



Mamata Banerjee.
■ FILE PHOTO

Mamata to attend Soren's swearing-in

It will be a show of strength: TMC

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
KOLKATA**

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee is likely to attend the swearing-in ceremony of Hemant Soren as Jharkhand Chief Minister in Ranchi on December 29, Trinamool Congress sources said.

With top Opposition leaders of the country scheduled to attend the programme, Mr. Soren's swearing-in ceremony is likely to be a "show of unity" in the wake of country-wide protests against the amended Citizenship Act and the proposed pan-India NRC.

"We share a very good relationship with Jharkhand Mukti Morcha and Hemant Soren. So far, it has been decided that our party chief along with some senior leaders would attend Mr. Soren's swearing-in ceremony on December 29," a senior TMC leader said.

The ceremony will be

more of a "show of strength and unity of Opposition leaders", he said.

"This would send out a very crucial political message in the wake of ongoing unrest across the country over the Citizenship (Amendment) Act," another TMC leader said.

Ms. Banerjee, earlier this week, had written to all Opposition leaders and the Chief Ministers to unite and fight the amended Citizenship Act and the proposed NRC.

Odisha orders action against onion hoarders

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
BHUBANESWAR**

The Odisha government has instructed all district authorities to keep a close watch on stocking of onions and potatoes by unscrupulous traders and take stringent action against them to check the rising prices.

In letters to the District Collectors, the Food and Consumer Welfare Department asked them to carry out raids on business premises to track the wholesale and retail prices by verifying bills, vouchers and stock limits.

Mentioning that the Odisha Potato and Onion (Storage Control) Amendment Order, 2019, will now be strictly enforced, the letter said that stock limit of the tuber and the bulb would be fixed for the traders.

BJP workers attacking Left leaders: Sarkar

**INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE
AGARTALA**

CPI(M) Polit Bureau member and former Tripura CM Manik Sarkar on Friday alleged that whenever the Left leaders and members protest against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act and the National Register of Citizens, they are attacked by BJP workers while the police stand inactive.

In a letter to the Director General of Police, Mr. Sarkar said that BJP workers attacked the Left Front leaders at Belonia and Udaipur in southern Tripura.

Prof. Lal inaugurated the plant as Vice-President M. Venkiah Naidu, who was scheduled to inaugurate the facility, could not reach Bolangir due to inclement weather.

LPG bottling plant inaugurated in Odisha

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BHUBANESWAR**

A new LPG bottling plant of the Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited was inaugurated by Odisha Governor Ganeshi Lal in Bolangir district on Friday.

Prof. Lal inaugurated the plant as Vice-President M. Venkiah Naidu, who was scheduled to inaugurate the facility, could not reach Bolangir due to inclement weather.

The Vice-President expressed regret for not being able to attend the programme. He was also scheduled to attend the platinum jubilee celebrations of Rajendra College at Bolangir.

In a voice message, Mr. Naidu wished success for the project which was completed three months ahead of schedule. "It will help women and provide employment to the local youths," he said.

State Agriculture Minister Arun Kumar Sahoo, Lok Sabha MP from Bolangir Sangeeta Kumari Singh Deo and local MLA Narasingha Mishra were present.

Do not agree with Bhagwat's 'all are Hindus' view, says Athawale

'Hindus are the majority, but there are also Buddhists, Muslims, Christians, Jains'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

MUMBAI

Union Minister Ramdas Athawale on Friday said he disagreed with Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) chief Mohan Bhagwat's assertion that all 130 crore people living in India are Hindus.

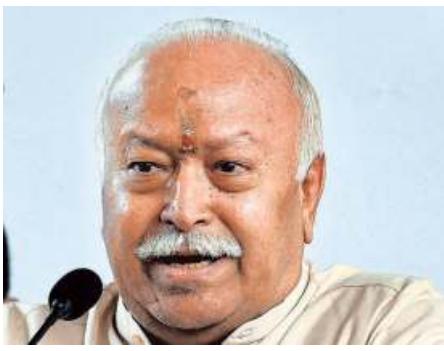
Speaking in Hyderabad on Thursday, Mr. Bhagwat had said that the RSS considered the entire population of India as Hindu society, irrespective of people's individual religions and culture.

Mr. Athawale, a Dalit leader who heads the Republican Party of India, a constituent of the NDA, told PTI that he did not agree with Mr. Bhagwat. "If it is said that the RSS considers everyone Indian (instead of Hindu) and we are all united, I can understand. Hindus are the majority community, but there are also Buddhists, Muslims, Christians, Jains, Dalits, and Backward Classes. All of us are one and united as Indians," he said.

At one time Buddhism was a dominant religion in many countries, including India, he said, adding, "Should we (then) say all of us are Buddhists?"



Ramdas Athawale



Mohan Bhagwat

Need to preserve democratic values: Thorat

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

AMRAVATI

State minister and Congress leader Balasaheb Thorat on Friday said the need of the hour was to preserve democratic values in the country as enshrined in the Constitution.

He was speaking at a function on the 121st birth anniversary of social activist and farmers' leader Panjabrao Deshmukh. He was the Union agriculture minister in the first cabinet of Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru in 1952.

"There is a need to take Deshmukh's thoughts on preserving democratic values to the current genera-



Balasaheb Thorat

tion. He was on the committee that drafted the Constitution. The essence of democracy is mentioned in the preamble and the need of the hour is to preserve it in the country," Mr. Thorat said.

Minister Nitin Raut said Deshmukh worked for the betterment of society while nuclear scientist and former chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission Anil Kakodkar said the legendary leader's contribution to education and agriculture was immense.

Mr. Kakodkar inaugurated Dr. Panjabrao Deshmukh Science and Innovative Activity Centre, and said it would inculcate an attitude of research and innovation in students.

Mr. Thorat inaugurated a library of literature, souvenirs, and other articles of Deshmukh.

Aaditya hits out at BJP, says trolls need to be ignored

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

MUMBAI

Shiv Sena MLA Aaditya Thackeray on Friday said social media trolls need to be ignored, and in a swipe at erstwhile ally BJP, claimed "those who did not fulfil promises are not in power now".

The reference was apparently to criticism of Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray by former CM Devendra Fadnavis's wife Amruta on the Sena chief equating the De-

cember 15 police action on Jamia Millia Islamia students protesting the Citizenship Amendment Act to 1919's Jallianwala Bagh massacre.

Ms. Fadnavis had tweeted, "One cannot be a Thackeray by just putting Thackeray surname. One needs to be true, principled and should think for betterment of people and party members above his own family and power dynamics."

In another Twitter dig ov-

er Sena's women workers opposing her for the comments, she had said, "you dont lead people by hitting people over the head, thats assault - not leadership."

Speaking to reporters on Friday, Aaditya Thackeray said, "Social media trolls need to be ignored and focus should be on development work. Those who did not fulfil promises are not in power now. We should understand their plight."

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IN BRIEF



Mandalam festival ends in Sabarimala

PATHANAMTHITTA
The auspicious Mandalapuja, marking culmination of the 41-day annual Mandalam festival at the Lord Ayyappa temple in Sabarimala, was held with ritualistic fervour on Friday. The holy hillock of Sabarimala Sanndidhaman witnessed moderate rush of pilgrims from different parts of the country who have turned up to witness the auspicious Mandalapuja held between 10 a.m. and 10.40 a.m.

Govt. receives panel's report on Tipu lessons

BENGALURU
Primary and Secondary Education Minister of Karnataka S. Suresh Kumar, on Friday said a decision on the experts' report on whether to drop, retain or modify the lessons on Tipu Sultan in textbooks would be taken after consulting Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa. Mr. Kumar told reporters here that he received the report from the experts' committee on Thursday. "I am going through the report," he said, and added that a decision would be taken after consultation with the CM.

CPI alleges that Sangh was behind office attack

BENGALURU
Alleging that the Sangh Parivar is behind the recent attempt to set its Bengaluru office on fire, Communist Party of India (CPI) national general secretary D. Raja on Friday demanded the Karnataka Home Department to take action against those involved. The CPI State headquarters situated at Vyalikaval in the city was attacked on Wednesday by a group of men who set fire to six bikes parked on the office premises. Party posters stocked in the godown were also reduced to ashes.

No plan to set up detention centre: Kerala

Chief Minister's Office says the move was initiated by the previous government in 2012

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

KOCHI
The Kerala government has decided to stop all proceedings related to the setting up of a Foreigners' Detention Centre in view of the "present circumstances." It also maintained that the move to set up the centre "was initiated in 2012 during the term of the previous government."

Following the letter, the Home Department convened a meeting on November 4, 2015. The Social Welfare Department was entrusted with the task of setting up the centres immediately outside the police department and jail premises.

On February 29, 2016, the Director of Social Justice was asked to submit a recommendation for setting up the detention centre and a managing committee, consisting of the district social justice officer and a District Police Superintendent, was given the responsibility.

The Social Justice wing of the Secretariat sought information on the likely number of inmates from the Director of Social Justice and from the State Crimes Record Bureau. However, the SCRB did not give any information. The Centre had been sending reminders to the State departments regarding the letter that was issued, it said.

The Centre had asked all State governments in August 2012 to set up detention centres for housing foreigners who had illegally entered the country, or those who overstayed after the expiry of passport and visa documents. It was meant for those who were to be deported.

The government is considering banning the Popular Front of India (PFI) and the Social Democratic Party of India (SDPI) over the violence in Mangaluru during protests against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act that

not received any official communication on allotment of land at Kadakampally village, near the Veli tourism village, since the decision was made on February 18, 2016.

He was also peeved at the formation of the society for managing the institute. The society's governing body comprises Mr. Khan, his wife and sons, bureaucrats and others.

Mr. Khan told *The Hindu* on Friday that so far he had

not received any official communication on allotment of land at Kadakampally village, near the Veli tourism village, since the decision was made on February 18, 2016.

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Mr. Khan had expressed his desire to settle down in

the institute, and so he decided to opt out.

"Till date I haven't received an official letter on land allocation, but only a message to create an organisation consisting of my family members and bureaucrats, among others. If the government was keen on floating an organisation, it could have opted for Sarod Ghar, a registered organisation in Delhi," he said.

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IN BRIEF



Actor Kushal Punjabi found dead

MUMBAI
Actor Kushal Punjabi, 42, was found dead in his Bandra residence in Mumbai on Thursday night. He left a note saying that no one should be held responsible for his extreme step, said the police. (BMC Mental Health Helpline: 022-24131212)

IPS officer Rajeev Kumar shifted to IT Dept.

KOLKATA
The West Bengal government has posted IPS officer Rajeev Kumar as Principal Secretary of the Information Technology and Electronics Department. Mr. Kumar, who was posted as Additional Director General, CID, West Bengal Police, will replace IAS officer Debasish Sen. Mr. Kumar has held key posts in the West Bengal police and the Kolkata police.

PMC scam: police file chargesheet against 5

MUMBAI
The Mumbai police on Friday filed a 32,000-page chargesheet in the Punjab and Maharashtra Cooperative (PMC) Bank scam. It has named former MD Joy Thomas, former chairman Waryam Singh, former director Surjit Singh Arora, and Housing Development and Infrastructure Limited promoters Rakesh Wadhawan and Sarang Wadhawan.

Centre to restore pension commutation

NEW DELHI
The Labour Ministry will enforce the retirement fund body EPFO's decision to restore pension commutation from January 1, 2020 – a move which will benefit 6.3 lakh pensioners, a source said. These pensioners had opted for commutation and got a lump sum amount at the time of retirement from their pension accumulations before 2009. PTI

MiG-27 flies into the sunset in Jodhpur

With this, the IAF's combat strength has fallen to 28 fighter squadrons, way below the authorised 42

DINAKAR PERI

NEW DELHI

adrenaline rush."

"She was a great teacher so long as you respected her. She would talk to you - little sounds, indications, et al. and she appreciated a thoughtful response," Sqn Ldr (retd.) Anshuman Manikar fondly recalls his experience of flying the MiG-27 swing-wing fighter jet. He was at the Jodhpur Air Force station on Friday for the ceremony of de-induction of the last squadron of the aircraft with the Indian Air Force (IAF).

This also means that the IAF's combat strength has now fallen to 28 fighter squadrons, way below the authorised strength of 42.

Sqn Ldr Manikar said his best recollection of the fighter jet was low-level, high-speed runs over range, "optimum mix of fun and watchfulness and a complete



Last flight: The MiG-27 fighter jet at the de-induction ceremony in Jodhpur on Friday. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

The squadron is now slated to be number-plated on March 31, 2020, with December 27, 2019 being its last flying day, thereby making the swing wing fleet a part of the IAF's glorious past," the IAF stated.

"MiG 27 swing-wing fighter aircraft has been the backbone of the ground attack fleet of the IAF for the past four decades," the Air Force said in a statement.

The fleet earned its glory in the historic Kargil conflict,

when it delivered rockets and bombs with accuracy on enemy positions, it added.

From 1985 onwards, the IAF has flown about 165 MiG-27 fighters, licence-manufactured by the Hindustan Aeronautics Limited.

This marks the end of another Russian MiG series in the Indian inventory. All the other MiG-variants, such as MiG-23 BN & MiG-23 MF and the pure MiG 27 have already been retired from the IAF. The upgraded MiG-21 Bisons and MiG-29s now remain in service of which the MiG-21s are scheduled to be phased out very soon.

The IAF will continue to operate three squadrons of the upgraded MiG-29UPG for sometime, while it is also negotiating for another squadron from Russia.

The Navy operates two squadrons of the MiG-29K/KUB off its aircraft carriers.

Negatives of 'lost' 1985 Somali epic found at NFAI

'The Somali Dervish' is a masterpiece by Said Salah Ahmed and was last seen in 1985

SHOUMOJIT BANERJEE

PUNE

In an event of great import to the preservation of African cinematic heritage, the negatives of an epic Somali film thought to have been lost were "discovered" in the vaults of the Pune-based National Film Archive of India (NFAI).

The Somali Dervish, a four-hour-long 1985 masterpiece by eminent Somali poet, playwright and filmmaker Said Salah Ahmed, chronicles the revolutionary Somali Dervish movement under the leadership of the legendary anti-colonial fighter Mohamed Abdullah Hassan.

Hassan is revered as the 'Father of Somali National-



Lost treasure: Film-maker Said Salah Ahmed, centre, with NFAI director Prakash Magdum. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

ism' and known by the sobriquet 'Mad Mullah'.

The India connect

It chronicles Hassan's two-decade struggle against British colonialism in the late 19th and early 20th centuries till his death in 1920.

Shooting of the 280-minute film (also known as *The Somalia Dervishes*) began in 1983 and was completed in 1985. It was produced by an Indian company.

In fact, the film is believed to be the only feature-length narrative motion picture pro-

duced in the country as Somalia's cinematic heritage was buried under the ravages of a bitter civil war, which commenced in the 1980s.

"The importance of the 'discovery' of this film in the NFAI vaults is hard to overstate, given that there is precious little information on Somali film heritage," said Prakash Magdum, Director, NFAI, speaking to *The Hindu*.

Mr. Ahmed, who moved to the United States as the Somalia Civil War raged across his country in the 1980s, had last seen the film in 1985 in Abu Dhabi, after which it was considered "lost".

Subsequently, he made a string of inquiries in film archives across the globe, in-

cluding the Washington-based Library of Congress and film vaults in Paris.

Director delighted

Mr. Ahmed was speechless on learning that the NFAI did have the negatives.

"It is like finding your own child back after so many years," said the 74-year-old Mr. Ahmed, following his visit to the NFAI on Thursday, where Mr. Magdum, along with Ujwal Nirgudkar, consultant, NFAI, handed the reels to him.

Another Somali film, an hour-long documentary titled *A future for Somalia* (1978), too, was found in the

NFAI vaults during the search for *The Somali Dervish*.

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 Saturday: Severe cold day conditions and fog likely in most pockets over Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh, Delhi, north Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh. Dense fog likely in isolated pockets over north Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, sub-Himalayan West Bengal, Sikkim, Odisha, Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram and Tripura.

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	3.5...	18.0...	14.0	Kozhikode	—	34.0...	25.0
Ahmedabad	—	26.0...	9.0	Kurnool	—	32.0...	21.0
Aizawl	3.0...	19.0...	9.0	Lucknow	—	15.0...	7.0
Althababad	—	17.0...	6.0	Madurai	—	32.0...	21.0
Bengaluru	—	29.0...	18.0	Mangaluru	—	35.0...	24.0
Bhopal	—	22.0...	5.0	Mumbai	—	30.0...	19.0
Bhubaneswar	—	24.0...	12.0	Mysuru	—	29.0...	18.0
Chandigarh	—	10.0...	7.0	New Delhi	—	14.0...	4.0
Chennai	—	30.0...	21.0	Patna	—	16.0...	9.0
Coimbatore	6.5...	30.0...	22.0	Port Blair	—	29.0...	21.0
Dehradun	—	19.0...	7.0	Puducherry	—	30.0...	20.0
Gangtok	—	10.0...	2.0	Pune	—	28.0...	18.0
Goa	—	33.0...	24.0	Raipur	0.5...	25.0...	16.0
Guwahati	—	24.0...	11.0	Ranchi	1.0...	17.0...	5.0
Hubballi	—	30.0...	22.0	Shillong	—	14.0...	6.0
Hyderabad	—	29.0...	20.0	Shimla	—	13.0...	3.0
Imphal	0.1...	21.0...	5.0	Srinagar	—	9.0...	-6.0
Jaipur	—	22.0...	4.0	Thiruvananthapuram	—	33.0...	24.0
Kochi	—	31.0...	25.0	Tiruchi	—	30.0...	22.0
Kohima	—	16.0...	5.0	Vijayawada	—	30.0...	22.0
Kolkata	11.8...	19.0...	11.0	Visakhapatnam	—	29.0...	23.0

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Yesterday

CITIES	SO ₂	NO _x	CO	PM _{2.5}	PM ₁₀	CODE
Ahmedabad	55	61	27	...85	...86	■■■
Bengaluru	12	66	50	...78	...98	■■■
Chennai	58	41	20	...85	...85	■■■
Delhi	13	14	56	414	350	■■■
Hyderabad	.2	68	48	128	113	■■■
Kolkata	13	57	44	211	136	■■■
Lucknow	.4	29	47	312	—	■■■
Mumbai	14	49	58	227	172	■■■
Pune	69	16	105	154	116	■■■
Visakhapatnam	10	59	45	103	—	■■■

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Noida, Uttar Pradesh recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 496, indicating severe level of pollution. In contrast, Tirupati, Andhra Pradesh recorded a healthy AQI score of 50.

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

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

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

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

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



Fuel to the fire

The burden of proof must not be on the people to prove their citizenship

The Union Cabinet announcement on Tuesday that the National Population Register (NPR) would be updated across the country, barring Assam, at an expense of over ₹3,941.35 crore, would have been considered a routine administrative measure but for the myriad concerns among the public about the government's intentions. The announcement on the NPR came amid continuing protests against the recent Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA), 2019, in many parts of the country and lingering uncertainty regarding the National Register of Indian Citizens (NRIC), on which senior government functionaries have given conflicting statements. Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Sunday that the NRIC had not been discussed in the government, but that did not mean that it would not be taken up. His assurance that no Indian of any religion will be adversely affected by the controversial CAA rings hollow, when the government has not cleared the air in unambiguous terms that it has no plans for an elaborate plan to tabulate citizens. The NRC, as it was rolled out in Assam, puts the burden of proof on citizens to establish that they are indeed citizens. The undocumented and the poor will bear the brunt of this approach. The proposed format for enumerating the NPR only exacerbates this concern and adds a third axis to the ongoing confusion and turmoil. It is correct that the NPR is not about citizenship but only about residency. However, when additional questions such as "place of birth of father and mother", etc are being proposed for the forthcoming exercise, the concern that this may be a prelude to the NRIC is logical.

Instead of coming clean and reassuring the public on its plans, the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has sought to muddle the debate further by pointing out that the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance (UPA) had prepared the NPR in 2010. It is nobody's argument that the state should not enumerate the population or collect data on the people – which are all essential for providing good governance. Never in the past, including when a part of India broke away as Pakistan on the basis of religion, did the prospects of a religious test for citizenship appear even remotely in this country. In 2014, the BJP election manifesto explicitly stated that India was a natural homeland for "persecuted Hindus", and Mr. Modi made the now-familiar, and extremely problematic, distinction between "infiltrators" and "refugees". With the passage of the CAA, and the announcement of the NRIC, there is enough factual basis for doubting the government's claim that the NPR has nothing to do with the NRIC. In the current climate of panic among a significant section of the country's poor and the Muslim minorities, the government, at the highest levels must speak up to bolster their confidence in India's constitutional democracy. Equivocation, and polarising grandstanding on the CAA, the NRIC, and now the NPR, may yield political dividends for the government but at a very high cost to the nation. This is the time to douse the fire, not add fuel to it.

Decisive shift

The Chief of Defence Staff could finally bring about unison among the armed forces

The government has acted with reasonable alacrity to create the post of the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS), who will head the Department of Military Affairs (DMA). It was only four months ago, on August 15, that the Prime Minister stressed the importance of creating this post, whereas two Defence Ministers came and went after Manohar Parrikar promised that this move was very much on the government's agenda. To be fair, the delay has been more a result of fears in the minds of the three services – the Indian Army, Indian Navy and Indian Air Force – of how such a development could impact on the role and functioning of the three arms of the armed forces, in terms of curtailing or inflating their importance. There must have been a parallel thought in the bureaucracy how such a shift would affect them too. This move will install the CDS, in the rank of a four star general, as Secretary, DMA.

There is no doubt that the job of the CDS will be exceedingly challenging, a task which is easier set than done. The job calls for total transformation of traditional military mindset. The CDS has to restructure the military commands into appropriate theatre or joint commands for which a critical prerequisite is 'jointness' – a term that envisions the various arms of the armed forces working in unison towards a goal. This is a very tall order, considering India's experience. Since Independence, the armed forces have been working separately, with no concept of jointness. The only jointness that comes into play effectively is when officers of the various services go to courses in, say, Wellington, at the Defence Services Staff College, or at the National Defence College, Delhi. All that will have to change, and change quickly, for a variety of reasons, not least the security environment in the region, with the Americans preparing to move out of Afghanistan and the restiveness consequent to the dilution of Article 370. According to the cabinet release, the new incumbent will have three years to achieve this. It flows from this urgency therefore that the name of the next CDS will have to be soon announced. It is also necessary that the first incumbent is given a term of three years so as to be able to carry the ambitious vision laid out in the cabinet note through to its conclusion. The job is strategic, requires personal supervision, and cannot be left unfinished for the successor to finish. Given the challenges and the limited time-frame within which to accomplish it, allowances will have to be made for attendant hiccups.

In CAA narrative, finding the judiciary's lost voice

This is a watershed moment for the judiciary not to falter and for judges to undo the wrongs of the past



AJIT PRAKASH SHAH

The recent enactment of the amendments to the Citizenship Act have left many, and certainly myself, very disturbed. The legislation itself is undoubtedly problematic and is compounded by the linkages with the National Register of Citizens (NRC). I was a part of a People's Tribunal on the deployment of the NRC in Assam, and we found that even though it was conducted under the aegis of the court, it was a disastrous exercise with terrifying consequences.

The protests that have followed the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA), 2019, were not surprising, but the manner in which the protesters were treated certainly is. The reaction of the law and order machinery to what were essentially student-led peaceful protests has led to incidents of violence and loss of property across the country, which is terribly unfortunate. This is a reflection of the times we live in and signals that the youth in our country have to spend the next significant amount of time battling a leadership that comes across, at once, as communal and authoritarian.

Subdued judiciary

At such times, empathy is but a natural reaction, particularly from a generation that has lived through and seen the worst of the authoritarian regime that was the Emergency. In this context, what I personally feel worse about is that the voice of the judiciary in this narrative is either almost entirely absent or has been overwhelmed by a strong executive.

The CAA is touted as a "fast-track" means of granting citizenship by naturalisation to what it identifies as persecuted minorities (Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis and Christians) from three neighbouring countries (Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan). Those belonging to these communities from these countries will not, as per the law, be regarded as "illegal immigrants".

Restrictive definition

Since the Bill was proposed, and after it was eventually enacted, we have seen multiple perspectives emerge that offer frameworks of different kinds to explain the legislation and the politics surrounding it. The primary, and arguably, the most important view is that the legislation is unconstitutional. It is so for many reasons, not least that it is arbitrary and violates the right to equality before the law enshrined in Article 14 of the Indian Constitution. It deliberately marginalises Muslims as a minority community, and uses religious identity as the basis for granting citizenship. In doing so, it erodes the spirit of the Constitution. There is no legislative basis for singling out persecution of religious minorities as the basis for granting Indian citizenship, just as there is no logic in restricting "fast track" naturalisation to persons from three countries alone. Surely, persecution of any kind ought to be the sole criterion for granting citizenship to immigrants. Restricting the definition of persecution in this manner erodes the premise on the basis of which the republic of India was constructed, and ignores the historical realities of the freedom struggle (founded on principles of equality and diversity) which brought us Independence.

Alternative perspectives exist too, on the opposite side of the spectrum, fuelling a narrative that

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the CAA is not harmful at all and is intended merely to offer amnesty and a speedy route for legitimate migration. Arguably, this narrative – that the CAA is not harmful – is a more important issue than the question of constitutionality, for it tries to sweep under the carpet the grand design that this legislation forms a small part of.

Of a religious nationalism

What is the grand design, you may well ask. On the face of it, the implications of the CAA is to isolate individuals who identify as belonging to the Muslim community. If you restrict the understanding of the law, as the government would have it, to applying it only to immigrants, then this law automatically makes Muslim immigrants second class priorities when they are on Indian soil, even though they may have made the long trek to India for the same reasons (poverty, political persecution, etc.) that drove their Hindu or Christian neighbours out. If you expand the understanding of this law, as the government has overtly done (by linking the NRC to the CAA), it has implications of making all Muslims in India second class citizens. In doing so, this law and policy subverts and even destroys fundamental constitutional principles of secularism, fraternity, and humanity.

The roots of this lie in the ideology of cultural and religious na-

tionalism propagated by Hindutva icons, i.e., Vinayak Damodar Savarkar and his ilk, with Savarkar propounding that the ideal was the "Hindu Rashtra (state), Hindu Jati (race) and Hindu Sanskriti (culture)". In the form of religious nationalism, this ideology envisages a nation under Hindu rule, a Hindu rashtra in Akhand Bharat (a United India), premised on the belief that only Hindus can claim the territory of British India as the land of their ancestry, i.e. pitribhumi, and the land of their religion, i.e. the punyabhumi. In this context, Muslims and Christians are viewed as foreigners who are not indigenous to the territory of India, and whose religion originated in a separate land.

Because the CAA is immoral, a people's movement is inevitable and necessary, for otherwise the fundamental principles on which the constitutional idea of India rests will be destroyed for something that can render deep wounds forever.

A turning point

In the wake of the CAA protests, the Chief Justice of India reportedly said that if people/protesters wanted to "take to the streets", then they need not approach the courts. Some could read this statement as a sort of warning that good behaviour was a prerequisite for obtaining justice. In any event, in a democracy, protest and a recourse to the judiciary are options that are legitimately available to the people. Indeed, to dissent or protest is the lifeline of a democracy. But, what is the judiciary supposed to do when society as a whole is protesting? In such a scenario, as is playing out now, there is no clear line that can be drawn between declaring protesters as good or bad.

Historically, Indian courts have had a chequered history in tackling circumstances where they are the final arbiter. Especially when faced with a powerful executive, courts have tended to falter, the Emergency being a case in point. This is a watershed moment for this generation of judges to undo the wrongs done by their predecessors 40 years ago to the people of India. We eagerly await these reparations.

Ajit Prakash Shah is a former Chief Justice of the Delhi High Court and former Chairperson of the Law Commission of India

How not to counter economic stagnation

The government has to garner resources and give a boost to the economy by increasing its investments



ARUN KUMAR

The Centre and the States are so short of resources that their fiscal deficit is burgeoning. The Prime Minister, at a function of the Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India recently, was optimistic but the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor was less positive, admitting that the country's economic problems are also structural. The government has argued that its structural reforms would pay dividends in the long run. Whether or not that happens, action is needed now. So, what should the government do?

Impact on tax revenues

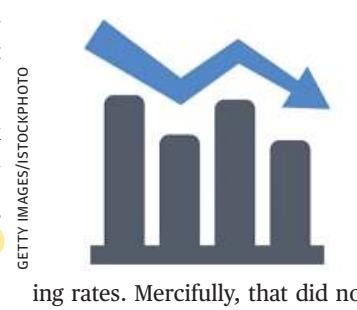
It has to give lead to the economy since the private sector, in its reaction to the slowdown, has lost confidence and is investing less, which is only aggravating the economic crisis. An RBI report suggests that business confidence, consumer confidence and capacity utilisation are down. So, there is no escaping the fact that the government has to garner resources

and give a boost to the economy by increasing its investments. But the slowdown has adversely impacted growth of tax revenues.

The government calculated tax revenues on the assumption of a 12% nominal growth. But, it has been around 9%, both last and this year. So, in 2018-19, tax revenue was short by about ₹1.5 lakh crore. But this was not reflected in the planning for the 2019-20 Budget. Therefore, given that the base for calculating tax revenue this year was wrong and the rate of growth is incorrect, the revenue shortfall for the Centre will be even larger than last year – around ₹2 lakh crore.

The States get 42% of this revenue so they will get ₹84,000 crore less. Further, the concessions in corporate taxation of ₹1.45 lakh crore will also mean ₹58,000 crore less revenue for the States. While the Centre has obtained ₹1.76 lakh crore from the RBI's reserves, no such succour is available to the States. The Centre will also get the proceeds of disinvestment but that is not shared with the States. In brief, the States will have a larger shortfall in resources than the Centre. So, what can they do?

The Goods and Services Tax (GST) Council met on December 18, where it was expected to help raise more indirect taxes by rais-



ing rates. Mercifully, that did not occur. So, revenue from indirect taxes cannot fill the resource gap. The States have also been complaining that they are not getting the funds that are due to them from the Centre. The Centre has partly responded to this by transferring more, but that raises its deficit.

The Centre is required to give the States: their share of Integrated Goods and Services Tax (IGST) and compensate them if the revenue growth of State Goods and Services Tax is less than 14%. This last is to come from the cess collected on sin goods and luxury goods. One of the big contributors to GST has been the auto sector, but with sales falling over the last 10 months collections have declined. The Centre is apparently holding back the States' share of IGST and arguing that the cess collection is inadequate to compensate the States for their shortfall.

The dilemma is that if the GST rates are increased, prices would

rise and demand would further slump, further aggravating the slowdown and shortfall in revenues. One of the suggestions has been to raise the 5% slab to 6% or 10%. It has also been suggested that taxes on petro goods and liquor for human consumption are under the purview of the States, and they can raise tax rates on these items. But these will be inflationary moves and demand would fall.

The problem is compounded by the shortfall in direct tax collections. This is both the result of corporate tax concessions and the slowing economy. Income-tax rates cannot be raised now since that would be seen as inequitable – rich corporates will pay a lower tax rate than the middle classes, who pay income-tax.

Effect of I-T reduction

There is pressure to reduce income-tax rates to boost demand in the economy. But a cut in income-tax rates will largely benefit less than 2% of the citizens who pay a significant amount of income-tax. They are well-to-do and unlikely to increase consumption. Similarly, the cut in corporate tax rates will not boost demand since neither investment nor consumption will rise. Investment will rise only when capacity utilisation improves. Much store is being laid at the doors of multi-national corpo-

rations relocating their factories from China to India but this will be too small to arrest the current declining trend in investment in India.

Unorganised sector missed

The problem has been that government has been in denial and delayed action till after the Budget in July 2019. Even then it catered to the corporate sector slowdown and not where the problem originated from: the unorganised sector. The concessions to the corporate sector have narrowed the fiscal space available without raising demand.

If the unorganised sector is separately accounted for, the economy is in a recession – it is not just a slowdown as official data based only on the organised sector indicates. The fiscal deficit at all levels of government is already high so a policy decision is needed on how much more it can be. If the fiscal deficit is allowed to rise further, extra resources can be used to boost incomes in the unorganised sectors through greater public investments. In the 150th year of Gandhiji, his talisman, "last person first" is the need of the hour.

Arun Kumar is Malcolm Adiseshiah Chair Professor, Institute of Social Sciences, New Delhi, and the author of 'Ground Scorching Tax'

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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

Army chief's remarks

It is unbecoming of an Army chief, now outgoing, to make a political statement while still in service (Page 1, "Army Chief: leading crowds for arson is not leadership", December 27). As an individual, everyone has the liberty to hold or have their opinion on everything, but one cannot claim liberty to ventilate all one's opinions while holding a responsible position in an organisation. Unfortunately, the Army's chief's tone and tenor only strengthen the perception that such statements made at the fag end of the person's tenure are in order to seek a post-retirement posting. The government must strive to uphold the glory and the strict discipline the Indian Army is known for.

A.G. RAJMOHAN,
Anantapur, Andhra Pradesh

With his sweeping remarks, the Army chief has not only overstepped the much important line held in high esteem in a constitutional democracy (the division of the polity from the military and the very supremacy of civilian leadership over the military) but also done great damage to his reputation and the office he holds. His publicly expressed conviction could only add impetus to the attempts by Central government to criminalise the protests against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019. M. JAYARAM,
Sholavandan, Tamil Nadu

Perhaps the Army chief is being criticised a bit too unfairly. The context was about leading people in the right direction and it would be incorrect to interpret this as interference by the Indian Army in civilian affairs. The 'democratic leaders' should

realise that the patience of the Army cannot and should not be tested through despicable acts or deeds that endanger the smooth conduct of democracy.

B. VEERAKUMAR THAMPI,
Thiruvananthapuram

Labelling protesters

It is unfortunate that the Home Minister, Amit Shah, has chosen to call those protesting against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019, and the National Population Register as the "tukde tukde" gang ("splintering group") under the leadership of the Congress and that they should be punished in the coming elections' (Page 1, December 27). The unseemly and divisive nature of the Act is very obvious in its wording. There were some who said in Parliament before the introduction of the Bill that even though the law was bound to raise a

controversy, the government did not want to procrastinate on the issue. Hence the Minister cannot claim that the protests by students and others are at the instigation of the Opposition parties. Instead of continuing to adopt a belligerent stand, the government should initiate a consultative process with all stakeholders.

K. NATARAJAN,
Madurai

Confrontationist

The ruling party's unclear stance on the controversial Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019, and the National Population Register despite the clamour and uproar across the country is jarring. A civilised government always pays heed to the needs of its citizens and ensures their welfare. But the government's almost ruthless stance against the minority communities is disappointing and is

spreading an air of melancholy everywhere. It is an act that spells India's retreat from secularism.

Secularism, which is deeply rooted in our Indian nationalism, now hangs on a precipice. The temporary abatement of public anger should not be taken as a seal of approval for the CAA. Instead of prolonging the agony, it is necessary that the government puts a lid on the controversy and adopts a humanitarian approach.

R.G. ATHIRA,
Coimbatore

The high and the low

The Tamil Nadu government is accorded wide publicity to the all-India ranks announced and obtained by the State in social and economic indicators (Tamil Nadu pages, "Tamil Nadu takes the top spot in Good Governance Index", December 27). While the government feels elated

about higher ranks (within 10) in a few sectors, it should also feel ashamed about the shocking rank for commerce and industries which is responsible for contributing higher per capita income, savings and further investment. This also reflects on job generation and higher growth rate. A low rank in ease of doing business – there must be an investigation of its reasons – is a prime factor for the obstruction of investment flows to Tamil Nadu and the diversion of the course of investments to neighbouring States. Poor performance of the secondary sector is a matter of grave concern and will affect the present and future of many educated and trained youth through continued jobless growth.

RAMEEZA A. RASHEED,
Chennai

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A divided State's capital conundrum

After 5 years of planning on using 33,000 acres of pooled land for an unfinished mega capital, Andhra Pradesh is now exploring newer options. **Appaji Reddem** recounts the promises and realities of Amaravati, and the impact the new government's three-capital proposal has had on the region's farmers



An under-construction road in Nelapadu village in Amaravati, with the temporary High Court in the backdrop • V. RAJU

The Andhra Pradesh (A.P.) government's three-capital proposal has stirred a hornet's nest and rattled the 25,000-odd farmers who parted with their land, totalling more than 33,000 acres, for a world-class 'Amaravati capital city'.

Speaking on December 16, the last day of the Legislative Assembly's winter session, Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy said the idea of one flamboyant capital with nine cities, as mooted by his predecessor N. Chandrababu Naidu, was not financially viable and the State could instead have three capitals, which could enable decentralised development. "Visakhapatnam may be the executive capital; Amaravati the legislative capital; and we may have High Court in Kurnool," he said, adding that a mega capital would require an investment of over ₹1 lakh crore which neither the State nor the Central government could afford. "The past (Telugu Desam Party) government spent ₹5,800 crore in five years. The money was sourced through Central funding, Amaravati Bonds and other sources and we are paying a ₹7,000-crore annual interest on that," he claimed.

In the last 10 days, many villages in Amaravati have witnessed protests and rallies by farmers over the government's suggestion to shift the Secretariat and High Court out of Amaravati. On the other hand, the atmosphere in the districts of North-Coastal Andhra and Rayalaseema has been one of jubilation, as the people there feel that they are finally getting their due.

The present insecurities of the Amaravati farmers have their roots in certain unkept promises of the previous government.

Owing to multiple issues, the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) government's 'capital efforts' did not progress beyond building temporary structures of the Assembly, the Secretariat, the High Court and permanent residential apartments for bureaucrats and other government staff. Further, the TDP's humiliating loss to Reddy's YSR Congress Party in the 2019 Assembly elections left the farmers high and dry.

Five years since they parted with the lands after being promised the heaven, the farmers now stare at uncertainty. What was once touted to be a world-class capital city now presents a disappointing picture.

What went wrong?

Multiple factors have contributed to Amaravati's slow growth. One, the Naidu government went against the Sivaramakrishnan Committee's Report. Two, it picked multiple partners for planning and made frequent changes to the plans. Three, there was a delay in the World Bank loan process. And, four, firms from Singapore did not show enough interest in the 'Start-up Area' project two-and-a-half years after they signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the government.

Following the bifurcation in 2014, the A.P. government pooled in over 33,000 acres of land from farmers in 29 villages

of the Amaravati region, promising a world-class mega capital. It was planned that Amaravati would have nine other 'cities', including a 'knowledge city' a 'government city' and a 'justice city'. The exercise was initiated to develop the region and pass on the benefits to the farmers.

Unkept promises

Farmers were promised a variety of benefits, including rent of up to ₹50,000 per acre for 10 years; jobs for family members; reimbursement of children's education fees; residential and commercial plots; all major infrastructure facilities like roads, power-lines and drains; and free health cards. However, most farmers complain that the promises were not kept.

Sudharani Boyapati, a farmer from the Krishnayapalem village, regrets not following her instincts while giving away her one-acre land for a capital.

While most farmers of her village were willing to part with their land, Boyapati made news by strongly resisting the land-pooling exercise. Though she ultimately had to yield to pressure from the police, revenue and peer groups, she remained sceptical of the government's development promises. Speaking to *The Hindu*, tears in her eyes, she says: "Today, I feel like crying out loud to my heart's content for my past mistakes. The day I gave away my land was the saddest day of my life. The doubts I raised five years ago have come true today. The undeveloped plots that government gave in return for our land are less valuable compared to the price of our fertile agricultural land."

Penumaka-based farmer K.S. Reddy was one of the farmers who refused to give away their land and, as a result, were made to suffer the state's high-handedness. "Our names were erased from revenue records. We were pressured by the police and revenue personnel. Ultimately, we approached the High Court and got a stay order," he says. Koti Reddy, who belongs to the same village, says the government did not fulfil its promises. "The demand for land has now decreased. On top of all these, freeze on cultivation in the 34,000 acres is a disappointing sight for all farmers," he says.

The TDP government was also accused of major manipulations while conducting the land-pooling exercise. It was alleged that political leaders and people close to the government bought land at cheaper prices much before the announcement of Amaravati as the location of the capital. The present government is planning a probe into such accusations of insider trading. Speaking



suffering from lifestyle diseases, he says. "My father was administered a stent in the heart last year. I'm becoming lazy as well. Earlier, agriculture had kept us fit."

He adds: "We are also struggling to find for our children's school fees. This was not the case earlier. The land-pooling exercise has caused us a lot of mental turmoil as there has been no development here."

On the other side are farmers from the Undavalli, Penumaka and Nidamarlu villages, where land is considered more fertile, who did not want to part with their land. While some farmers demanded more compensation, the others simply did not want to lose their primary source of income.

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about the issue in the Assembly, Finance Minister B. Rajendranath Reddy said, "People close to Mr. Chandrababu Naidu, other Ministers and their relatives bought over 4,000 acres much before the announcement of Amaravati. These people came from different parts of the State and bought the land. It is some kind of insider trading worth probing."

"What transpired in A.P. was that decisions were taken according to the whims and fancies of a few influential persons ruling the State. There was no consultation with the other political parties. The people of the other regions were kept in the dark. The voices of those who opposed the capital city being located in Guntur-Krishna region were gagged or ignored," wrote I.Y.R Krishna Rao, former A.P. Chief Secretary, in his book *Whose Capital Amaravati?* back in 2018.

'Not another Hyderabad'

Following A.P.'s bifurcation in 2014, the Union Home Ministry constituted a committee to study the alternatives for a new State capital. The committee, headed by former Urban Development Secretary K.C. Sivaramakrishnan, recommended one major administrative city and several other cities focused on investment, technology and industry. Most importantly, the committee warned the government against building a capital in the Vijayawada-Guntur-Tenali-Mangalagiri (VGTM) region. It stated that the fertile land in the region was essential to ensure food security and agriculture. It instead recommended Donakonda, where ample government land was available, as a suitable location for a new capital.

In contrast to the wishes of the TDP government, which wanted a humongous and world-class capital city, the committee wanted a smaller one to avoid concentration of development and wealth. "The committee is strongly of the view that locating several governmental offices within the VGTM area is both unfeasible for financial reasons and undesirable for decentralised development. It will significantly add to the 'honey pot' character, similar to Hyderabad, which in turn will detract from the potential and growth prospects of

other centres in Andhra. It is questionable whether the existing government offices in particular commissionnerates, directorates etc. however numerous they are, will be able to facilitate or generate economic development or employment by themselves."

The committee further added that it did not consider a single large capital city a feasible option available to A.P. The concentration in Hyderabad of the legislature, the courts and the executive had happened over several years and was a major bone of contention in the bifurcation process, it said.

The committee also spoke of the possible environmental impact of densifying the urban area in the VGTM region. It said there should be least possible dislocation to existing agriculture systems as the districts of Krishna, Guntur and West Godavari comprise some of the best agricultural lands in the country. Also, Guntur and Krishna districts are among the State's most populated areas. "Any attempt to convert agricultural land into non-agricultural use will seriously displace this workforce, rendering [it] unemployed; loss of valuable agricultural land and disappearance of small holdings [will] benefit only... the real estate operators," the committee stated.

Further, the committee also made a specific mention of the high water table in the region and the related vulnerabilities. Quoting the reports of the Geological Survey of India (GSI), it stated that the high water table and vulnerable soil types may together lead to severe problems. "Any invitation to government offices and institutions to locate within the VGTM urban area may lead to a construction boom and haphazard development which may, however, seriously strain the existing infrastructure and aggravate the vulnerability of the area," the report pointed out.

Suggesting a decentralised development across the State, the committee indicated that Vizag region in Uttarandhra; the Rayalaseema Arc comprising Kurnool, Anantapur, Tirupathi, Kadapa and Chittoor; and the 'Kalahasti-Nadiku-dipine' could be considered for distributed development. Expansion of all existing cities was also another option, said the committee.

Naidu's greenfield capital vision

However, ignoring the committee's suggestions, the TDP government went ahead with its plan to build a huge greenfield capital. As the exercise of land pooling progressed, a grand ceremony was arranged for laying the foundation of the proposed capital. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on October 22, 2015, laid the foundation stone for the Amaravati capital city, in the presence of several other dignitaries, including Japan State Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry Youseki Takagi.

On the same day, Singapore's Minister for Trade and Industry S. Eswaran offered the city-state's support. Japanese Minister Takagi and Chief Minister Naidu signed an MoU. Noriko Nasu, Di-

I wanted to send my daughter for civil services coaching but had to marry her off as the rent paid by the government was nowhere near the income from our fertile land

SUDHARANI BOYAPATI,
Farmer at Amaravati

rector General of the Japan Bank for International Cooperation, also signed an MoU with the AP government for facilitating foreign investments in the new capital and region. Later, in 2017, following the Swiss Challenge method, the Ascendas-Singbridge Pvt Ltd and Sembcorp Development Ltd signed an MoU with the A.P. government's Amaravati Development Corporation to construct the start-up area in about 1,691 acres in the core capital region, abutting the riverbanks of Krishna in Amaravati. Further, a special purpose vehicle was floated for the development of a start-up area in which the Singapore consortium was expected to invest about ₹306 crore for a 58%-equity partnership with the ADP.

The State government also sent around 125 farmers, out of the total 25,000, to Singapore to give them some exposure on dealing in real estate and other sectors. The idea was to train farmers for multiple business opportunities. The farmers were also explained in detail how Singapore, which was once a colony of fishing communities, emerged as an economic city.

It also took an inordinately long time of three years for the past government to conceptualise designs for the capital. The government involved multiple firms – like Foster and Partners, a British Architecture firm; Japanese design firm Maki and Associates; the Singapore-government owned Sembcorp Jurong; and China's Guizhou International Investment Corporation. In addition, the government also involved film directors S.S. Rajamouli and Boyapati Srinu add value to the designs. However, ultimately, there was no official announcement by the government on whether any one design had been finalised.

More than five years since the bifurcation, all structures built in Amaravati – like the secretariat complex, State legislature and the High Court complex – remain temporary. The failure of the Amaravati vision was possibly one of the factors that contributed to TDP's massive loss in the Assembly election.

The YSRCP government decided to entrust two panels with the task of providing proposals on a new capital. The report by one of them, the G.N. Rao Committee, which gave the three-capital idea, is currently being analysed by a high-level committee consisting of Ministers and top officials. The second committee, having officials from the Boston Consulting Group, will submit its report in the first week of January.

A final call on the three-capital proposal will be taken only after these two reports are studied.



High rises abutting an under-construction road at the Nelapadu village. • V. RAJU

C Visakhapatnam may be the executive capital; Amaravati the legislative capital; and we may have High Court in Kurnool

Y.S. JAGAN MOHAN REDDY,
Chief Minister, Andhra Pradesh

FROM PAGE ONE

Prove allegations on CAA, Shah dares Rahul

"I want to tell every citizen of the country that in this Act there's no provision to take away the citizenship of anyone, not even minorities. The Act aims to give citizenship to minorities who have come from Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh and not snatch it [citizenship]," he said.

"You [the Congress] please do not mislead people. Don't try to destroy the country's peace. If you have the facts, then present them before people," he said.

It was Mahatma Gandhi's desire that after Partition, all non-Muslims who did not

wish to live in Pakistan should be allowed to come to India. In 1950, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru entered into an agreement with his Pakistan counterpart, Liaqat Ali – known as the Jawahar-Liaquat accord – in which both agreed to protect the rights of minorities in both countries.

People had fled these countries to escape religious persecution and seek refuge in India. Through the CAA, citizenship was being given to them and it would not be snatched away from anyone in the country, Mr. Shah said.

Rahul equates NRC, NPR with demonetisation

The Congress has maintained that the NPR, for which the government approved a budget last week, is a precursor to the NRC. More so after key changes were made in the questionnaire prepared by the Home Ministry for the NPR. The Congress had also started the NPR but it is claiming that its NPR was limited to enumerating 'usual residents' and didn't tackle the citizenship question, which the present NPR allegedly would, with intrusive questions.

Mr. Gandhi said, "Poor people will have to go to officers and show their documents and give bribe. They will have to give a bribe if there is a slight mistake in their names. Crores of rupees will be pulled out of the pockets of the poor and will be given to the same 15 people. This is the truth. It is an attack on people."

He also attacked the government for the economic slowdown. The rate of growth had declined from nine % to nearly four % as per the changed technique to assessing the GDP. "But if we measure the growth rate through the old method, then it will just be 2.50 %. Poor people are asking that after robbing them of their entire money, what have they got [in return]," he said.

Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Bhagel said the State, which had 32% tribal population, had many unique traditions and cultures. "It's our duty to protect their cultures and we have done that. On the one hand, we have won the confidence of farmers and on the other, we have successfully won the hearts of tribal people," he added.

Flag marches by Cong. today

Party ties its foundation day celebration with protests against citizenship law

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Congress will take out flag marches under the slogan "Save Constitution, save India" across the country on Saturday to mark its foundation day.

Congress general secretary (organisation) K.C. Venugopal announced on Friday that other than the usual flag-hoisting ceremonies in Congress offices in the State capitals and the Delhi headquarters, the party would hold marches and read the preamble to the Constitution in various languages at the public meetings.

The Youth Congress is planning to send copies of the preamble to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and

G The PM and the Home Minister have indulged in characteristic doublespeak, and are now attempting to covertly undertake the exercise through the National Population Register

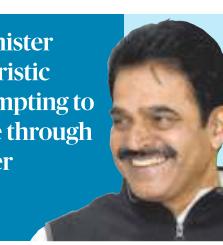
K.C. VENUGOPAL
Congress general secretary (organisation)

the Ministers, asking them to read it and understand the spirit of the Constitution.

Rahul's itinerary

Former Congress President Rahul Gandhi will join the programme in Guwahati on Saturday. Guwahati was chosen as the venue for Mr. Gandhi's speech because protests against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act began there.

The Youth Congress is



vertly undertake the exercise through the National Population Register," Mr. Venugopal said.

He accused the police in BJP-ruled States such as Uttar Pradesh of attacking protesters.

"There were cases of deaths due to police firing at many places. The government has put itself in a bind on these issues with the PM, the Home Minister and the Defence Minister making contradictory statements on different occasions. The CAA proposes to violate the guarantees of Article 14, in contravention of the Constitution of India," he said, adding that the NPR was only a way to implement the NRC.

Compulsory renewal of OCI cards goes

No need for a certain age group to do so on renewal of their passports

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Union Home Ministry has relaxed the provisions for Overseas Citizens of India (OCI) card holders that made it compulsory for those aged above 50 and below 20 to renew their cards on renewal of their passports.

Several OCI card holders were not able to travel to India due to this and many

were stopped by airlines and immigration authorities at various airports due to the mismatch.

According to a recent Home Ministry order, an OCI card holder is required to re-register each time a new passport is issued till 20 years of age and once after 50 years of age but reissuance of OCI registration is not mandatory each time a

new passport is issued between the ages of 21 and 50.

"In order to facilitate OCI card holders, this requirement has been relaxed till 30th June 2020 as per MHA instructions dated December 17. The OCI cardholder should carry existing OCI card along with Old and New passport," the Ministry spokesperson tweeted.

OCI cardholders are given

benefits on a par with non-Resident Indians in financial, economic and educational fields, except in the acquisition of agricultural or plantation properties.

OCI cardholders are given free multiple entry and multi-purpose life-long visa to visit India and are also exempted from reporting to police authorities for any length of stay in India.

Techies write to govt. against citizenship law

Statement posted on social media

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

In an open letter, several Indian-origin engineers, researchers, analysts, and designers working with global companies such as Google and Facebook have condemned the Citizenship (Amendment) Act.

The letter, issued "in solidarity with the Indian democracy", was posted through the "TechAgainstFascism" handle on medium.com.

It called upon technology leaders like Sundar Pichai (Alphabet), Satya Nadella (Microsoft), Mark Zuckerberg (Facebook), Jack Dorsey (Twitter), Dara Khosrowshahi (Uber), Mukesh Ambani (Jio), Gopal Vittal (Bharti Airtel), Kalyan Krishnamurthy (Flipkart) and Shantanu Narayen (Adobe) to take a stance and publicly denounce the "fascist acts by the Indian government".

"We call upon the leaders to use technology as a force for good, to refuse to share user details with the government, refuse to shut off the Internet at the government's whim, provide tools for citizen mobilization, and ensure that content moderation is not skewing pro-government," it said.

The Citizenship Amendment Act, combined with the National Register for Citizens, is a deeply anti-Muslim scheme that will create statelessness and global disparity for Muslims, growing worse with India's economic decline and climate change, said the letter.

The signatories opined that the Act was political and electoral towards building a "Hindu Rashtra". Many signatories remained anonymous "in the face of recent retaliation from tech companies against protesting employees... and from the Indian government on family and loved ones..."

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"We call upon the leaders

All for Azad



Age no bar: Supporters of the Bhim Army Sena demanding the release of Chandrasekhar Azad during a protest against the CAA, the NRC and the NPR in New Delhi on Friday. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

Personal queries directly linked to establishing citizenship: SC

It said this in 2005 order on a plea by present Assam CM

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL
NEW DELHI

Questions about a person's place and date of birth, his parents' names and their place of birth are meant to ascertain citizenship, the Supreme Court has held.

The court, in a 2005 judgment on a writ petition filed by present Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal, has clearly held that these personal questions are directly associated with "establishing citizenship".

"In order to establish one's citizenship, normally he may be required to give evidence of (i) his date of birth (ii) place of birth (iii) name of his parents (iv) their place of birth and citizenship," the judgment, authored by Justice G.P. Mathur for a three-judge Bench of the court, on July 12, 2005 held. Moreover, the court explained that these facts figured specially in the context of establishing citizenship because they "would necessarily be within the personal knowledge of the person concerned and not of the authorities of the



State". In case of doubts about a person's citizenship, the burden of proving that these facts were true was on the person concerned.

The government has so far denied any link between the National Population Register (NPR), which is to establish usual residency, and the National Register of Citizens (NRC), meant to establish citizenship. In fact, the NPR takes into account foreign citizens too. However, if the NPR form of 2020 carries these personal questions highlighted in the judgment, apprehensions raised in the public mind that the NPR is a stepping stone for a nationwide NRC become justified.

The 2005 judgment came just over a year after the Cri-

zenship (Registration of Citizens and Issue of National Identity Cards) Rules of 2003 was notified in December 2003. The Rules clearly linked the NPR and the NRC. Rule 4(3) of the Citizenship Rules states that personal details collected for the 'Population Register' would be used in the preparation of the National Register of Indian Citizens.

The Citizenship Rules define 'Population Register' as a "register containing details of persons usually residing in a village or rural area or town or ward or demarcated area [demarcated by the Registrar General of Citizen Registration] within a ward in a town or urban area". Rule 4(3) mandates that for "preparation and inclusion in the Local Register of Indian Citizens, the particulars collected of every family and individual in the Population Register shall be verified and scrutinised by the Local Registrar, who may be assisted by one or more persons as specified by the Registrar General of Citizen Registration".

Mr. Madhav said people from across the region had welcomed the bold step to remove Articles 370 and 35(A). "The whole region of J&K has remained most peaceful in these five months, reducing civilian casualties to almost nil. There also fewer incidents of stone-throwing this year giving an impression of a

J&K will get statehood soon, says Ram Madhav

'Rights of locals will be protected'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
SRINAGAR

With protests from people in the Jammu region, BJP national general secretary Ram Madhav on Friday said the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir "will be granted statehood in the near future".

"The BJP is in favour of granting statehood to J&K as early as the conditions permit. The rights of local people will be preserved in the region," said Mr. Madhav. "Delimitation will be started soon in the region."

He said Pakistan could not alter the legal status of occupied regions. "Our forces are fully equipped on the border and all the containing activities are being done as necessary," the BJP leader said.

Mr. Madhav said people from across the region had welcomed the bold step to remove Articles 370 and 35(A). "The whole region of J&K has remained most peaceful in these five months, reducing civilian casualties to almost nil. There also fewer incidents of stone-throwing this year giving an impression of a

Mobile Internet is back in Kargil

'Rights of locals will be protected'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
SRINAGAR

Hundreds of people in the Union Territory (UT) of Ladakh's Kargil district were able to video call their relatives living outside the snowbound region after 145 days of Internet shutdown as the authorities restored the service but with riders.

Haji Asgar Ali Karbalai, who had served as chief executive councillor of the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council, Kargil (LAHDC-K), said, "The lack of Internet impacted students and business community immensely."

modified mindset among the youth," he said.

The BJP is also in favour of resumption of political activity in the region soon," he added.

Mr. Madhav also met Lieutenant-Governor Girish Chandra Murmu at the Raj Bhavan in Jammu.

Income Tax officials pursuing Ambani money trail overseas

'Notice served on the family over hidden foreign assets'

SHARAD VYAS
PIYUSH PANDEY
MUMBAI

The Income Tax Department has said that it 'exchanged' information regarding "members of the Mukesh Ambani family" over alleged "undisclosed foreign income and assets" in a quarterly meet this month at Ukraine, with seven countries India has pacts with.

Under the Double Tax Avoidance Agreements and Anti-Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism pacts, the tax department can expect a response within 90 days from its counterparts in seven countries – Switzerland, St. Lucia, Mauritius, Luxembourg, the U.S., the U.K. and Belgium.

I-T Department officials said even if the response shared under the common reporting system agreed upon by countries as part of the recently signed Automatic Exchange of Information (AEOI) pact, it may take a long time before a 'Letter Rogatory' (LR) could be initiated by the department to



We have rarely received a response from these seven countries in less than 90 days

approach authorities in old tax havens.

"We have rarely received a response from these same seven countries in less than 90 days as prescribed, and agreed upon under the two pacts. It will take a long time for us to move ahead in this particular case," said an official, referring to the overseas accounts linked to the Ambani family.

The department reportedly served a notice on March 28, 2019 to the Ambani family under the provisions of the Black Money (Undisclosed Foreign

come and Assets) and Impression of Tax Act of 2015, regarding holdings in the Capital Investment Trust.

E-mailed queries to Mukesh Ambani's flagship firm Reliance Industries on the issue, didn't elicit a response till the time of going to press. A RIL source told *The Hindu*, "The company has not received any letter."

A media report had claimed the notice also included names of the three children of Ambani.

The report had claimed the Ambanis had failed to disclose details and holdings in the Cayman Islands-based Infrastructure Company Limited, of which they were also "ultimate beneficiaries."

The Swiss Leaks, in 2015, had named 1,195 Indian accounts, including 14 holdings connected to Capital Investment Trust, found connected to 628 Indians who had accounts in HSBC Private Bank, including the Ambanis.

The collective worth of these accounts was estimated to be ₹25,000 crore in 2006-07.

Rahul is 'liar of the year', says BJP

Javadekar picks on his NPR comment

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI



It's the Congress's old game of allowing illegal immigration

PRAKASH JAVADEKAR
I&B Minister

The BJP said here on Friday that Congress leader Rahul Gandhi should be awarded the title of "liar of the year" for his claim that the National Population Register (NPR) was a "tax" on the poor.

Accusing the Congress of trying to fan instability in the country, Information and Broadcasting Minister Prakash Javadekar said the people were with the government on the new citizenship law and NPR.

"The NPR does not involve any monetary transaction and its data is used to identify the poor so that government welfare schemes could reach the targeted people," the BJP leader said at a press conference at the party headquarters, adding that a similar exercise had been undertaken in 2010 as well. "It's the Congress's old game of allowing illegal immigration into the country for political profit. Their own leader Kiran Bedi had said that former Assam Chief Minister Hiteswar Saikia had fostered illegal immigration to build vote banks," Mr. Javadekar said.

He called on Chief Ministers Pinarayi Vijayan of Kerala and Mamata Banerjee of West Bengal for issuing notifications to suspend work

ELSEWHERE



Musharraf challenges verdict in treason case

Pakistan's former military dictator General Pervez Musharraf (ret'd.) has filed a petition against the special court's verdict convicting him of high treason and sentencing him to death, according to media reports. The petition highlighted that the "judgment contained a mix of anomalies and contradictory statements". PTI

Indonesian Muslims rally for China's Uighurs

More than a thousand Muslims marched to the heavily guarded Chinese Embassy in Indonesia's capital on Friday to protest China's treatment of its Uighur Muslims. The protesters, many wearing blue headbands reading "Save Uighurs," unfurled Indonesian and Uighur flags as they marched to the Embassy in downtown Jakarta. AP

S. Korean court dismisses 'comfort women' plea

South Korea's Constitutional Court on Friday rejected a petition seeking the repeal of a 2015 deal with Japan, settling a bitter dispute over "comfort women" – Korean women enslaved for sex by the Japanese military during the Second World War.

Brazil police probe attack on actors of film on Jesus

The Rio de Janeiro police said on Thursday they are investigating a video by a far-right group that claimed to have carried out an attack on a group of actors who had depicted Jesus as gay. The attack took place on Tuesday at the studio of the actors, whose film *Christ's First Temptation* began streaming on Netflix on December 3. AFP

12 killed in Kazakhstan plane crash

Nearly 100 people were on board the aircraft that came down soon after take-off and slammed into a house

REUTERS
ALMATY

Twelve people were killed and dozens injured when a plane with nearly 100 passengers and crew on board crashed soon after take-off in Kazakhstan on Friday.

The Bek Air Fokker 100 got into trouble shortly after departing from Almaty, the Central Asian country's commercial centre, on a pre-dawn flight to the capital Nur-Sultan.

It lost altitude during take-off and broke through a concrete fence before hitting a two-storey building, Kazakhstan's Civil Aviation Committee said. It was not immediately clear what caused the crash.

"The plane tilted to the left, then to the right, then it started shaking while still trying to gain altitude," said businessman Aslan Nazaraliyev, who survived the crash.

Investigators found scratch marks on the runway.

"Before crashing, the aircraft touched the runway with its tail twice, the gear was retracted," Deputy Prime Minister Roman



Gone in seconds: Police and rescuers working on the site of the plane crash near Almaty International Airport in Kazakhstan on Friday. AP

Skytar told reporters. "A commission ... will establish whether this was pilot error or technical issues. The runway was in an ideal condition."

A survivor told a news website that she heard a "terrifying sound" before the plane started losing altitude.

"The plane was flying at a tilt. Everything was like in a movie: screaming, shouting, people crying," she said.

Authorities initially put the death toll at 15 or more but later revised the figure to 12. They said 49 people were in hospitals, some of them in a serious condition.

Breach of rules'

The plane had been carrying 93 passengers and five crew, and the Interior Ministry said the captain was among those killed.

The Ministry said it was in-

vestigating a possible breach of flight operation and safety rules, a standard legal procedure. Kazakhstan's aviation committee said it was suspending all flights by carrier Bek Air and those of Fokker 100 aircraft pending the results of the investigation.

Mr. Nazaraliyev said he had been seated next to an emergency exit in row 15 and all the rows in front of him were torn off when the plane

broke in half on impact.

"We got out through the emergency exit ... I and other men started getting people out and away from the plane. Some were trapped by concrete debris from the building. There were moans and screams and it was dark," he said.

At the airport at Nur-Sultan, relatives of the passengers – some of whom were going to join their families for the holidays – were being briefed on their fate and offered flights to Almaty.

"Those responsible will face tough punishment in accordance with the law," Kazakhstan President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev tweeted, expressing condolences to the victims and their families. He also ordered an audit of all Kazakh airlines.

Mr. Tokayev declared December 28 a national day of mourning and appointed Prime Minister Askar Mamin to head a commission to investigate the crash.

The crashed plane was built in 1996, the government said, and its most recent flight certificate was issued in May 2019.

IS claims it executed 11 Christians in Nigeria

IS claims it executed 11 Christians in Nigeria

The killings were in reprisal for the death of former chief Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi and his spokesman

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
KANO

Jihadists aligned to the Islamic State group have released a video claiming to show the execution of 11 Christians in restive northeast Nigeria.

He claimed the killings were in reprisal for the death of IS chief Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi and his spokesman.

IS leader Baghadi committed suicide in October to avoid capture during a U.S. special forces raid on his hideout in northwest Syria.

(ISWAP) at an undisclosed location. "This is a message to Christians all over the world," said a masked man in the one-minute video.

In recent months, ISWAP has intensified its attacks on Christians, security personnel and aid staff, setting up roadblocks on highways and conducting searches.

Targeting civilians
The UN had on Tuesday condemned the "increasing practice by armed groups to set up checkpoints targeting civilians" in the northeast of Nigeria. On Sunday, the jihadi

dists killed six people and abducted five others, including two aid workers, when they intercepted vehicles on a highway on the outskirts of Maiduguri, the Borno state capital.

In a similar attack on December 5, ISWAP fighters disguised as Nigerian soldiers stopped and searched vehicles at a checkpoint near Maiduguri. The group claimed in a statement that

six soldiers and eight civilians, including two Red Cross workers, were among those abducted.

Last week, the group released a video showing 11 alleged hostages.

One of the detainees in the video who identified himself as a school teacher said all the 11 hostages were Christians and appealed to the Nigerian government to secure their release.

+ 'Climate change caused 15 disasters this year'

Calamities cost \$1 bn each, says a charity

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
PARIS

At least 15 natural disasters linked to climate change this year caused damage of over \$1 billion each and seven of them cost at least \$10 billion, British charity Christian Aid said on Friday.

This year is set to be the second hottest year in history and each of the disasters in the report has a link with climate change, Christian Aid said. "From Southern Africa to North America and from Australia and Asia to Europe, floods, storms and fires brought chaos and destruction," it said.

Assembling its report from official figures, estimates by NGOs and aid bo-

dies, scientific studies and media reports, the charity said the disasters displaced millions and caused widespread deaths. These included the floods that ravaged north India, typhoon Lekima in China, Hurricane Dorian in the U.S., floods in China, floods in the Midwest and southern U.S., typhoon Hagibis in Japan and the California wildfires, the costliest tragedy at \$25 billion.

The charity said the majority of deaths were caused by just two events, in India and southern Africa, which called it "a reflection of how the world's poorest people pay the heaviest price for the consequences of climate change.

5 al-Qaeda terrorists held in Pakistan

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
LAHORE

Five "important" al-Qaeda operatives were arrested in a raid in Pakistan's Punjab province, averting a "major terror attack" on offices of intelligence agencies and sensitive installations in the area, officials said on Friday.

The Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) of the Punjab police said the operation smashed the media cell and the terrorism financing network of the Al-Qaeda Indian Subcontinent (AQIS). The CTD and the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) on Thursday night arrested the terrorists from Gujranwala city, some 80 km from Lahore.

FARNAZ FASSIHI

Forty days after the first protesters were killed in Iran's worst unrest in decades, Iranians took their grievances against the government to cemeteries on Thursday, marking both the end of the traditional mourning period and their determination not to back down.

Over four days of protests in November, security forces shot and killed up to 450 people, human rights organisations estimate, and in the weeks leading up to Thursday, some of their survivors called on the public to join them in yet another act of defiance: at the graveyards of their loved ones.

Iran's leadership was not

having it. Even before the end of the mourning period, the authorities began cracking down, beefing up security in cities across the country, renewing their disruption of the internet and conducting waves of pre-emptive arrests.

Then on Thursday, uniformed security forces and plainclothes militia deployed en masse across the country to keep people off the streets. They lined up on foot in riot gear at squares, and paraded through residential and commercial neighbour-

Israel's Netanyahu sweeps party poll

Vows to win March general election

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
JERUSALEM

Emboldened Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu told supporters on Friday he would win a March general election after scoring a landslide victory in the leadership primary of his right-wing Likud party.

Israel's longest-serving premier, who faces a corruption indictment as well as a third general election in 12 months, was expected to beat rival Gideon Saar in the leadership primary.



Benjamin Netanyahu

prime minister for fraud, bribery and breach of trust over a series of corruption allegations he denies.

Blue and White leader Benny Gantz also used Friday's primary result as a rallying call for the general election.

He said Mr. Netanyahu's victory showed Likud members had "elected a leader facing three indictments, who is seeking to unravel the rule of law and secure personal immunity".

"These elections demand that we place a mirror in front of the Netanyahu party and make the choice for unity, dignity and internal reconciliation."

Third shot

Ofer Zalberg, Israel analyst with the International Crisis Group think tank, said the result kickstarted the election campaign.

"Netanyahu is going for a third shot, hoping the next election will prove more successful," he said.

"This strengthens his position within the right wing who saw he is still able to achieve victories but it doesn't fundamentally change the arithmetic for the next election."

Early polls indicate that the March 2020 election could again result in stalemate.

+ 'Climate change caused 15 disasters this year'

Calamities cost \$1 bn each, says a charity

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
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Assembling its report from official figures, estimates by NGOs and aid bo-

Iranians laud protesters and vow to fight on

Many take their grievances against the govt. to cemeteries where the killed protesters are buried



A grim picture: A file photo of people walking near a burnt bank after protests against increased fuel prices in Tehran. AP

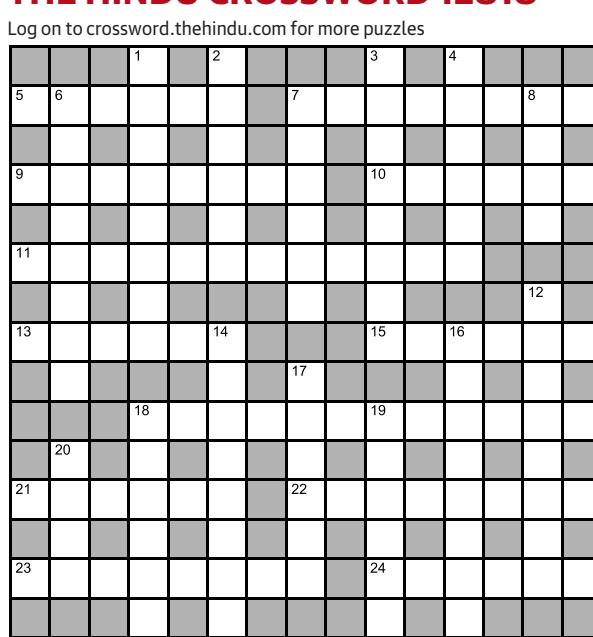
including Karaj, Isfahan, Mashhad, Behbahan, Maelard, Najafabad, Yazdan Shahr and Shahriar. There were unconfirmed reports of 50 arrests. They gathered to honour the dead, and as they did so, some chanted slogans against Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, calling him a "murderer".

The protests, which began on November 15, broke out hours after the government raised gasoline prices by 200%.

Already struggling under the burden of economic sanctions imposed by the U.S., Iranians took to the streets in what became the broadest unrest seen in the country in decades. NY TIMES

THE HINDU CROSSWORD 12818

Log on to crossword.thehindu.com for more puzzles



ACROSS

- 5 Corrupt – owning houses at residential part of city (6)
- 7 Tries to join in the middle of unrestrained leaderless practice (8)
- 9 Complete stop by noted criminal (3-2-3)
- 10 Mistakes made by God starting to take long time to cover (6)

- 1 When Jesus returned from undersea stay, mysteriously (6,6)
- 13 California politician on American grounds (6)
- 15 Trouble as Academy's place in draw is taken by University (6)
- 18 Home on Big-Sur's outskirts owned by crook – Queen's agent (6,6)
- 21 Wrong to get behind net & counter in this game? (6)
- 22 Sick man with enteric disease starts to be awkward (3-5)
- 23 Same problem seen in misshapen part of house (8)
- 24 Draft from flowing inlets (6)
- 26 Tread of pedestrian was loud, household animals also rose up (8)
- 27 Get close to listener please... (6)
- 28 Device with silver-tip's hot, gets more glowing (8)

(set by Bruno)

- 4 Quite nonchalantly, setter slipped out to chase female (6)
- 6 Police cruiser with air conditioner's normal to be seen around (5,3)
- 7 Spoke of Darius' organisation (6)
- 8 Loud landmark spot (4)
- 12 Unaware what I would do with a 5x5 grid? (8)
- 14 Minarets in Islamabad rising around – leaning to the left (8)
- 16 Store displaying many a set of crafts (8)
- 17 This is worn? Right! (1-5)
- 18 Long and hot cargo vessel with prow missing (6)
- 19 Job of Gates perhaps, encourage technology leaders? (6)
- 20 An immature version of North Indian boy? (4)

SUDOKU

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

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

Solution to puzzle 12817

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

P	V	H	R	A	C	H	E

<tbl_r cells="8"

MARKET WATCH

	27-12-2019	% CHANGE
Sensex	41,575	1.00
US Dollar	71.35	-0.05
Gold	39,731	0.11
Brent oil	67.8	0.35

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	363.70	0.05
Asian Paints	1812.25	2.65
Axist Bank	760.15	23.65
Bajaj Auto	3241.95	11.90
Bajaj Finserv	9443.15	93.05
Bajaj Finance	4252.65	65.55
Bharti Airtel	455.10	7.55
BPCL	490.95	13.75
Britannia Ind	3042.10	-20.20
Cipla	481.10	6.95
Coal India	203.50	6.20
Dr Reddys Lab	2897.60	32.00
Ficher Motors	22222.35	176.65
GAIL (India)	118.55	0.45
Grosim Ind	739.75	3.00
HCL Tech	567.55	7.05
HDFC	2444.15	30.05
HDFC Bank	1275.00	4.55
Hero MotoCorp	2442.45	3.80
Hindalco	215.45	0.45
Hind Unilever	1949.90	4.95
ICICI Bank	549.40	10.65
IndusInd Bank	1524.90	9.50
Bharti Infratel	255.70	-0.50
Infosys	736.95	8.00
Indian Oil Corp	127.30	2.20
ITC	236.90	0.10
JSW Steel	268.90	-0.25
Kotak Bank	1685.60	-8.65
L&T	1299.60	20.30
M&M	530.15	1.80
Maruti Suzuki	7344.90	104.00
Nestle India Ltd.	14664.15	64.90
NTPC	116.85	0.45
ONGC	128.40	0.40
PowerGrid Corp	189.05	4.20
Reliance Ind	1542.35	26.95
State Bank	337.25	7.40
Sun Pharma	426.00	3.85
Tata Motors	176.15	1.55
Tata Steel	469.50	1.60
TCS	2198.50	-3.45
Tech Mahindra	780.20	9.80
Titan	1191.45	-1.05
UltraTech Cement	4055.60	-7.15
UPL	580.25	10.80
Vedanta	151.75	1.05
Wipro	247.55	-2.75
YES Bank	48.00	-0.65
Zee Entertainment	299.00	17.32

EXCHANGE RATES		
Indicative direct rates in rupees a unit except yen at 4 p.m. on December 27		
CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	71.16	71.48
Euro	79.30	79.66
British Pound	93.02	93.45
Japanese Yen (100)	64.98	65.27
Chinese Yuan	10.17	10.22
Swiss Franc	72.88	73.21
Singapore Dollar	52.60	52.85
Canadian Dollar	54.34	54.60
Malaysian Ringgit	17.24	17.32

Source: Indian Bank

BULLION RATES CHENNAI		
December 27 rates in rupees with previous rates in parentheses		
Retail Silver (1g)	50.2	(50.4)
22 ct gold (1g)	3714	(3697)

Gross NPAs may rise to 9.9% by next Sept., says RBI report

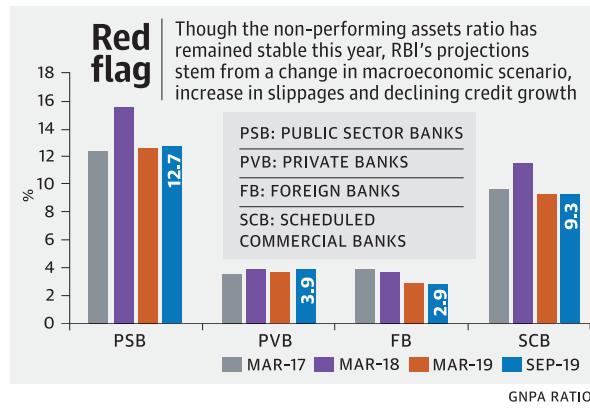
Reviving twin engines of consumption and investment remains the key challenge, according to Governor Shaktikanta Das

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI

The gross non-performing asset (GNPA) ratio of banks may increase to 9.9% by September 2020 from 9.3% in September 2019, according to an RBI report.

"Stress tests indicate that under the baseline scenario, the GNPA ratios of banks may increase to 9.9% by September 2020 due to change in macroeconomic scenario, marginal increase in slippages and the denominator effect of declining credit growth," the RBI said in its Financial Stability Report.

The report said state-run banks' GNPA ratios may increase to 13.2% by September



Though the non-performing assets ratio has remained stable this year, RBI's projections stem from a change in macroeconomic scenario, increase in slippages and declining credit growth

ber 2020 from 12.7% in September 2019, whereas for private banks it may climb to 4.2% from 3.9%, under the stress scenario. Foreign banks' gross bad loans may increase to 3.1% from 2.9% in September 2019.

The report said banks' net non-performing assets (NNPA) ratio declined in September 2019 to 3.7%.

The aggregate provision coverage ratio (PCR) of all banks rose to 61.5% in September 2019 from 60.5% in March 2019. "Following the recapitalisation of state-run banks by the government, [all] banks' capital to risk-

weighted assets ratio (CRAR) improved to 15.1% in September 2019 from 14.3% in March 2019," the report said.

The state-run banks' CRAR improved to 13.5% from 12.2% during the same period. Bank-wise distribution of asset quality showed while 24 banks had GNPA ratios of under 5%, four banks had GNPA ratios higher than 20% in September 2019.

Agriculture, services

The asset quality of agriculture and services sectors, as measured by their GNPA ratios, deteriorated to 10.1% in September 2019 from about 8% in March 2019. For industry, slippages during the period declined to 3.79% from about 5% in March 2019.

The report showed that the share of large borrowers

in banks' total loan portfolios and their share in GNPs was at 51.8% and 79.3%, respectively, in September 2019 compared to the 53% and 82.2%, respectively in March 2019. The top 100 large borrowers accounted for 16.4% of banks' gross advances and 16.3% of GNPs.

Amid rising macroeconomic concerns reflected in falling growth numbers across spectrum, RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das flagged corporate governance concerns across India Inc., including banks, to lift the efficiency of the economy to its full potential. He also said reviving the twin engines of consumption and investment remains the key challenge even while remaining vigilant about spillovers from global financial markets.

Financial system stable despite slow growth

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI

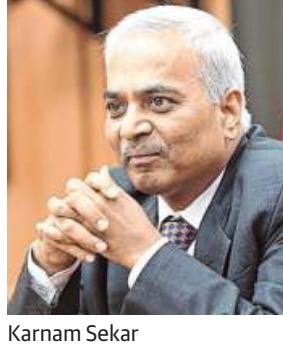
said in the Financial Stability Report.

The report said all major risk groups such as "global risks, risk perceptions on macroeconomic conditions, financial market risks and institutional positions" were perceived as medium risks affecting the financial system. However, the perception of risks on various fronts like domestic growth, fiscal, corporate sector and banks' asset quality increased between April and October 2019, it said.

IOB to get ₹4,360 cr. in capital, Allahabad Bank raises ₹1,500 cr.

With second tranche, Centre's stake in IOB to cross 95%

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI



The Centre will infuse fresh capital of ₹4,360 crore in the loss-making Indian Overseas Bank. This would be the second tranche of fund infusion from the Centre. With this, the government stake in IOB is set to cross the 95% mark, said a senior official.

The Centre now holds 94.56% stake. It rose from 92.52% after capital infusion of ₹3,857 crore in October 2019. For the second quarter, IOB had reported net loss of ₹2,253.64 crore, compared with a net loss ₹487.26 crore a year earlier, following a rise in operating ex-

penses and provisions.

The gross non-performing assets of the bank came down to ₹28,673.95 crore compared with ₹37,109.96 crore, and net NPAs to ₹12,507.97 crore from

In H1, bank frauds rise to ₹1.13 lakh cr.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI

Frauds reported by banks during the first half of the current fiscal touched an all-time high of ₹1.13 lakh crore, owing to delay in detection by lenders, according to RBI's FSR report.

Another public sector lender, Allahabad Bank, has raised ₹1,500 crore through private placement of Basel III-compliant tier-2 bonds with a 10-year tenor.

In an earlier statement, Allahabad Bank had said the Centre had agreed to infuse ₹2,153 crore via preferential allotment of equity shares by the bank during financial year 2019-20. The fresh capital would help the bank in regulatory compliance.

Falling revenue risks fiscal parameters: RBI

GST mop-up grows by just 2.5%

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI

mainstay of the government, have grown just 2.5% so far this year against a budgeted 14%, while massive corporate tax cuts have given away ₹1.45 lakh crore of budgeted revenue even as advance tax collections from corporates slipped 5.2% as of the third quarter.

The silver lining was the personal income tax collection which grew to ₹33,000 crore from ₹24,000 crore. Cumulative advance tax collection till the third quarter stood at ₹2.51 lakh crore against ₹7.96 lakh crore year on year. Direct tax collections, net of refunds, for this fiscal grew a mere 0.7% till December.

Co-op banks to report large exposures

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) directed large cooperative banks to report all exposures of ₹5 crore and more to the Central Repository of Information on Large Credits (CRILC), a move aimed at early recognition of financial distress.

Separately, non-banking financial companies saw stress in asset quality in the first half of the current fiscal, with gross NPA ratio rising to 6.3% in September 2019 from 6.1% in March. RBI's FSR report said. However, net NPA ratio remained steady at 3.4% between end-March 2019 and end-September 2019

Credit growth may plunge to 58-year low'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI

As the GDP growth has plunged to an over six-year low of 4.5% in the second quarter of the ongoing fiscal, credit expansion may plummet to a six-decade low of 6.5-7% in FY20, says a report. Credit growth was a high 13.3% in the previous fiscal, says rating agency ICRA in a report.

This could well be the lowest credit growth in 58 years. The figure stood at a low 5.4% in FY62, according to RBI's annual credit growth data.

Till end-November, credit growth had been at under 8%. "Factors such as muted economic growth, lower working capital requirements and risk-aversion among lenders will compress the incremental credit growth in FY20," the report said.

Vistara fliers can soon access mobile data

Airline has secured Dot approval

YUTHIKA BHARGAVA
NEW DELHI



Passengers flying over Indian territory on Vistara will soon be able to access mobile data services on board. The airline has become the first in the country to secure necessary approvals from the Department of Telecom (DoT).

Vistara, which has partnered with Tata Group company Nelco for inflight data services, is likely to be the first domestic carrier to provide the service within India.

Holy Trinity scored half a century

The Khans hit the golden jubilee in 2015; Aamir in March, Shah Rukh in November and Salman in December. Aamir didn't just consolidate his sway in India with biggies like *PK*, *Dangal*, *Dhoom 3* and *Secret Superstar* but won over China as well. With *Dabangg* at the start of the decade, the massy Salman managed to reach out to the multiple audiences and even found critical acclaim with the pacifist politics of *Bajrangi Bhaijaan*. SRK started with a bang with *My Name is Khan* but has been floundering in the latter half of the decade, despite some well-intentioned experiments like *Fan* and *Raees*.

**Decade's child**

Ranveer Singh made an electric débüt as the likeable, endearing Bittoo in *Band Baaja Baaraat* in 2010 and at the close of the decade hit it out of the park as rapper Murad in *Gully Boy*. In between there have been *Lootera*, *Goliyon ki Raasleela Ram-Leela*, *Dil Dhadakne Do*, *Bajirao Mastani*, *Padmaavat* and much talk of his quirky sense of fashion and styling. The next decade is promising to start with a bang with him becoming Kapil Dev in 83.

Akshay Kumar's patriot act

From *Padman* to *Mission Mangal* via *Kesari* and not to forget the omniscient No Smoking ad, Kumar emerged as shining India's Neo Mr Bharat. The long interview – about mangoes and little else – with Narendra Modi, in the run up to the elections, also showcased him as the one with the mightiest political clout in Bollywood, his Canadian visa notwithstanding.

Badass ladies

They may not have been dealing in as many multiples of crores as their male colleagues, but they had a better spread of films and roles. In the largely male-skewed universe, this decade saw a far bigger chunk of women-led and focussed films than ever before, be it Vidya Balan in *The Dirty Picture* and *Kahaani*, Sridevi in *English Vinglish*, Kangana Ranaut in *Queen* and *Tanu Weds Manu*, Rani Mukherji in *Mardaani* 1 and 2, Deepika Padukone in *Piku*, Priyanka Chopra in *Mary Kom* or Alia Bhatt in *Raazi*. Most of these films grew steadily successful, through word of mouth, than bringing all the bums to the seats on the first weekend itself.

The ₹100 crore club, women-led films and the rise of OTT. We track cinematic milestones over the last decade

BOLLYWOOD: 2010 2020

NAMRATA JOSHI

The past decade marked a century in Indian cinema (Dadasaheb Phalke's *Raja Harishchandra*, released in 1913). This slice of history aside, the decade has had several turning points of its own: the Baahubalisation of Bollywood, with the Hindi dubbed version of the Telugu-Tamil bilingual, *Baahubali 2*, beating it in its home turf, Ranveer Singh taking centre stage and the #MeToo movement. We look at these and other big and small mileposts in this ten-year journey...

BMKJ (Bharat Mata Ki Jai) cinema

From vigilante dramas to story lines that take off on government schemes ('Swachh Bharat Abhiyan' became the theme for *Toilet: Ek Prem Katha*) to the rise of the new, aggressive, nationalist hero who wears his patriotism on his sleeve, as portrayed by Akshay Kumar, Ajay Devgn, John Abraham and Vicky Kaushal, the on-screen notion of patriotism took on a life of its own and peaked with the compelling propaganda and celebration of the "surgical strikes" and "New India" in *Uri*. The Modi makeover was complete before the elections with Vivek Oberoi playing him in *PM Narendra Modi*.

**#MeToo**

As the #MeToo movement swept the nation in 2018, 10 men from the Hindi film industry were accused by women of sexual misconduct. Even as Bollywood women took a lead – it started with Tamashree Dutta's 10-year-old sexual harassment claims against Nana Patekar – a misogynistic hero in *Kabir Singh* became the favourite of the masses. Others who made headlines for all the wrong reasons included Sajid Khan, Vikas Bahl, Alok Nath, Subhash Ghai, Rajat Kapoor, Anu Malik, Kailash Kher, Soumik Sen and Raj Kumar Hirani.

Director's chair

Women filmmakers like Meghna Gulzar and Zoya Akhtar breached the much-coveted ₹100 crore tag at the turnstiles. Vikramaditya Motwane debuted with *Udaan* in 2010 and has kept the viewers satiated with an eclectic set of films: *Lootera*, *Trapped*, *Bhavesh Joshi Superhero*, Nitesh Tiwari kicked off with *Chillar Party* in 2011 and now has two of the biggest blockbusters of the decade to his credit – *Dangal* and *Chhichhore*.

Getting noticed

Showstoppers who rocked on the side included Pankaj Tripathi, Mohd Zeeshan Ayyub, Vineet Singh, Neena Gupta, Gajraj Rao, Surekha Sikri, Manoj and Seema Pahwa, Vikrant Massey, Ratna Pathak Shah, Swara Bhaskar, Vijay Varma... Right casting became the buzzword and casting directors came into their own.

Embracing the rainbow...

Has only just begun in the mainstream, uneasily and gingerly at that, with *Ek Ladki Ko Dekha To Aisa Laga*, *Kapoor and Sons* and Karan Johar's short in *Bombay Talkies*. And we are not even talking about the relatively offbeat *I Am* and *Margarita with a Straw* here... Delhi Sultanate ruler Alauddin Khilji (Ranveer Singh) in the bathtub with his *ghulam* (slave) Malik Kafur (Jim Sarbh) in *Padmaavat* and Tiger Shroff looking longingly at Hrithik Roshan in *War*. Male bonding got a homoerotic touch. There was pathbreaking bromance in *Sonu Ke Titu Ki Sweety* with the grandfather (Alok Nath) almost joined at the hip with his bachelor buddy (Virendra Saxena) while the grandmother just couldn't be bothered. A same sex love story with Ayushmann Khurrana – *Shubh Mangal Zyada Saavdhan* – early in 2020 might hopefully push the envelope further in the right direction.

Polarisation and spirit of resistance

As with the rest of the world, Bollywood has been heavily polarised when it comes to politics. As we close the decade the industry is divided on the politics of protest. While Anubhab Sinha, Anurag Kashyap, Sushant Singh, Richa Chadha and Huma Qureshi are vehemently opposing CAA-NRC, even joining the rallies, Vivek Agnihotri and Ashok Pandit have been expectedly favouring it. The royalty has maintained an uneasy silence and others like Ayushmann and Vicky are being diplomatic in their templated statements.

Buttons up

Péro takes a deep-dive into its decade-long history, with this humble detail that holds it all together

ANAHITA PANICKER

In a year of 'designer' anniversaries, Péro has kept it simple. To celebrate 10 years of her label, Aneeth Arora recently showcased 50 limited-edition jackets from their past 20 seasons. However, what has captured hearts is their Instagram recap, which details how the individuality of their garments is mirrored even in the tiniest of details – from pins and tassels to detailed trims.

The young label has been meticulously documenting and sharing the ways they've built their fun vocabulary, and this includes their 1,043 varieties of buttons. "I think we've crossed 2,000 now," says Delhi-based Arora, 36, over a phone call, counting the ones that will be displayed next year. Each post is ac-

panied by engaging details and anecdotes, like why Péro has horizontal buttonholes.

Turns out, their first handcrafted buttons were so tiny they'd slip out of a vertical buttonhole. Maker videos – of Afghani women crocheting buttons, for instance – have the most engagement, often raking up over 26,000 views. Looking back at the journey, Arora picks five handmade buttons that stand out.

The basic Péro button: "With two holes, and [the word] Péro debossed on the surface, this silver button was developed for our first season [2010]. The garments were all white with red stitching, and the buttons were a humble colour [against the fabric]," says Arora, who sought out a jeweller in Udaipur's Old City to make the tiny, ir-



regularly-shaped, hand-beaten drops of silver. Since then, she's begun using white metal – "because silver is costly and turns black with time" – and has also developed "brass buttons to use against warmer colours".

Heart buttons: These are rooted in the label's tradition of embroi-

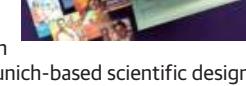
dering hearts into their clothes. "We realised not everybody likes a [prominent] heart on their garments. So, with this, we ensure there's a subtle variation present," she explains.

Crochet buttons: "We made crochet buttons in collaboration with Afghan refugees," she shares,

adding that the story behind the designs makes them special to the brand. "The women made borders and faces for us. For [a particular] season we didn't use it, but they were dependent on us for work. So we developed these buttons."

Enamel buttons: For their 2015 Autumn/Winter collection, Péro was inspired by military uniforms. "We tried to simulate the insignia of military badges on buttons, and used *meenakari* techniques," says Arora, "The enamel-style buttons are very impactful because of their graphic quality."

Millefiori: The brand is currently crafting buttons out of polymer using *millefiori* (meaning "a thousand flowers" in Italian), a technique also used to embellish luxury watches. "You inlay a pattern using polymer clay and cut it", and then arrange the slices together to multiply the pattern. These buttons are being designed for the upcoming season, where the clothes are inspired by florals. "We've used a variety of flowers, such as woven flowers from Banaras, and printed and embroidered flowers of various kinds," she concludes.

**PRODUCTS****Save the day**

Illustrations, self-care suggestions and DIY pages – planners and calendars get more personal this year

Indian Women in Science

Have you heard of Dr Asima Chatterjee, an organic chemist whose work resulted in many anti-epileptic drugs? Or Suniti Solomon, who pioneered HIV-AIDS treatment and research in India? These inspiring women in science feature in a wall calendar with artwork by Sci Illustrate, a Munich-based scientific design consultancy, founded by Dr Radhika Patnala. The box set of postcards has stories of 30 inspiring 'Women in Science', through art.

Approximately ₹3,900, on Sci-illustrate.com.

The Ink Bucket

Vidhi Khandelwal's botanical illustrations liven up the cover of this 'Live your Dream' planner. Her artwork makes its presence felt in between the pages as well, highlighting spaces for monthly reflections, weekly affirmations and daily reminders.



₹1,799, on TheInkBucket.in.

Contact us at delhimetro@thehindu.co.in

5 EVENTS WORTH YOUR WHILE**PERFORMANCE****Kathak dance**

This Sunday, IHC is hosting Saheb-e-Aalam... Touching The Soul, a Kathak presentation by Gurmeet Malhotra Productions. The show seeks to spread the message of faith and togetherness in society. Performing artistes include Raghu Monga, Megha Sharma, Sanjam Malhotra, Archana Diwedhi, and Ashish Bharadwaj.

VENUE: Stein Auditorium, India Habitat Centre

TIME: 7 p.m.

**ART****Mixed-media**

An ongoing exhibition titled Maraasim, showcases paintings and drawings by Saumya S. Vaishnav and Vipin Singh Rajput. Saumya's paintings are related to the elements of nature and explore the dynamics of landscape. Vipin creates mixed-media artworks, which try to engage with a wide variety of subjects.

VENUE: Triveni Kala Sangam, Mandi House

TIME: 11 a.m. - 8 p.m.

**FOOD****Festive menu**

Foxtrot, a multi-cuisine restaurant and bar, has introduced an exclusive festive menu for New Year's. On 31st January, the menu, paired with winter cocktails, offers Liver Pâté, Pot Roast vegetables, Smoked and Charred Pumpkin Risotto, Tenderloin Wellington, and Rum and Raisin Cakes with Berry Ice Cream.

VENUE: Khan Market & Cyber Hub outlets

TIME: 11 a.m. - 12 midnight

**AWARENESS****Education and employment**

Aawaaz Education Services, a company that works towards bettering classroom learning, is hosting an educational event called Aawaaz Conclave. Organised with the aim to help students transition into a new phase of their lives, it will feature sessions on emerging sectors of employment.

VENUE: India International Centre, Lodhi Road

TIME: 8:30 a.m. onwards

**CARNIVAL****Pet show**

The sixth edition of the annual pet festival, Pet Fed Delhi, a carnival for pets and pet lovers begins today. This two-day festival will feature pet-adoption camps, as well as activities like a Police Dog Show, Cat Show and Fashion Show. More than 400 products and services from the pet care sector will also be exhibited.

VENUE: NSIC Ground, Okhla

TIME: 11 a.m. - 8 p.m.

FILM REVIEWS

Merriment with a dollop of manipulation

Akshay Kumar reclaims his sense of humour even as the sprightly *Good Newwz* turns sentimental

NAMRATA JOSHI

Akshay Kumar has had an interesting funny bone. Wicked, keeling towards the rude, the bawdy and the incorrect; and distinctly his own. His brand of humour has been harnessed well in the past in a *Hera Pheri* or *Bhagam Bhag* and more recently in *Jolly LLB2*. However, over the last few years, it has largely fallen victim to Kumar's own insistence on playing the self-righteous conscience keeper of the nation – be it *Padman*, *Kesari*, or *Mission Mangal* – or opting to do the brain dead *Housefull* series.

The good thing about *Good Newwz* then is that the film gives Kumar a much needed opportunity to shed the boring nobility, let his hair down, and play a normal man-next-door, one who can be despicable and offensive but not irredeemably so.

Kumar is the Mumbai cityslicker Varun Batra, who has it all in life but for a child. While he doesn't have an



Barely balanced The cast at a promotion of the film in Mumbai ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

ounce of paternal instinct, his wife Deepika aka Deepu (Kareena Kapoor Khan) and his family are bent on him tasting the joys of parenthood. When nothing works, in vitro fertilisation is sought as the way out. All is well; except for a couple from Chandigarh – Honey and Monika (Diljit Dosanjh and Kiara Advani) – with the same surname, who also decide to use the same fertility clinic. Inevitably, all hell breaks loose when the two sets of sperms get interchanged. Kumar goes about his role with a good mix of poker-faced zing and rakish bluster. Kapoor Khan is a perfect foil to him with her refinement, cussedness, and a very defined sense of purpose. Dosanjh and Advani amplify the boisterous, kitschy Punjabi stereotype but they play it with an infectious cheer. The disparate worlds collide but eventually come to co-exist. And then there is the third couple, the doctors, underplayed with great relish by

Good Newwz

DIRECTOR: Raj Mehta
CAST: Akshay Kumar, Kareena Kapoor Khan, Diljit Dosanjh, Kiara Advani, Adil Hussain, Tisca Chopra

RUN TIME: 133.53 minutes

STORYLINE: All hell breaks loose for two couples with the same surname, Batra, trying hard to have children through in vitro fertilisation, when the sperms get interchanged

logistic way of dealing with the unconventional fulcrum of the story – sperm – as *Vicky Donor* had done earlier. On the other is the inability to take a clear stand on issues – it almost walks into a minefield when it comes to ideas of motherhood, abortion, and adoption. Are women incomplete if they have chosen not to become moms? Is the birth of a child always a joyous thing for a woman? What about the postpartum blues?

Adil Hussain and Tisca Chopra. The sharp lines, clever wordplay and repartee (writers Jyoti Kapoor, Raj Mehta and Rishabh Sharma) and actors' on-point comic timing, all feed off each other, and keep things playful for the most part.

It's the soppy sentimentality towards the end that's a wet blanket. Also, the film tries hard to balance itself between the progressive and the conservative and is not able to be either. On the one hand is the easy and unapologetic draw for her.

'It is a great time to be an actor'

Gul Panag on playing a character on the wrong side of the law, and being content with work

SUCHETA CHAKRABORTY

Rangbaaz Phirse is a show inspired by true events and marks the second season of ZEE5's original series *Rangbaaz*. The series, which released last week, stars Gul Panag who plays the "right-hand woman", the "second in command" to Jimmy Sheirgill's Amarpal Singh.

In a short telephonic conversation, Gul says that while she knew of the first season's popularity, it was the prospect of playing a lady don that turned out to be the real draw for her.

"I hadn't played a part where I operate on the other side of the law," she said.

Character-driven

Gul's character in the series, Anupriya Tiwari, hails from a broken background. She is a stockbroker who finds herself in a sticky situation and is forced to reach out to gangster Amarpal Singh for protection.

From then on, she slowly gets involved in his operations and soon begins to change the way

methodical, intelligent and level-headed woman, Gul's character lends shrewdness to a process that had until then been dictated primarily by violence.

Challenging roles

Gul recently appeared in Amazon Prime Video's spy series *The Family Man*. Looking back on her experiences working in the new medium, she observed that for actors, the approach remains largely unchanged across cinema, television and the digital format. The new medium, she feels,

poses a challenge, especially for writers and directors who compete with an abundance of impressive web content while striving to keep audiences engaged over several episodes.

"It is a great time to be an actor," she admits. Reflecting on the choices she has made in a career where she has juggled various interests, Gul points that she has managed to play diverse characters in a variety of genres over the years.

"Acting has been one of the things that I have pursued in my life, and to that end, I cannot complain either about the quality or quantity of work. I am very content with the kind of work I am doing," she asserted.

Rangbaaz Phirse is currently airing on ZEE5

Law and order
Gul Panag ■ AFP

Weird is beautiful

A family film for the holiday season, *Spies in Disguise* is a fun mash-up of comedy and action complete with a emotional wallop

NAMRATA JOSHI

There's this thing about even the most mediocre of animation films: the story might be simple, the arc entirely foreseeable, and you know for sure that all will eventually turn out well; but the bunch of animated characters, their inner compulsions, quirks and relationships, somehow manage to strike a chord. Then there are the myriad life-lessons, which can easily

lapse into cheesiness but turn out exalting. *Spies in Disguise* is one such film – simple rather than spectacular – that, despite the predictability, sports a good-hearted gentleness, and an old-fashioned cheer.

It is about the young misfit genius Walter Beckett (Tom Holland) who could edit the human genome while still in middle school, and graduated from MIT at the tender age of 15. Walter is into de-



What the world needs A still from the film ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

signing gadgets to keep the world safe. No one understands him better than his cop mom, who knows that the, "world needs weird", like him. Pitched against the geekiness of Beckett is the cool quotient of the world's greatest spy, Lance Sterling. It's a clash of principles – kitty glitter against grenades; one believes in fighting fire with fire, other is all for extinguishing it with glitter; one thinks of blowing up evil, other is for bringing eve-

Spies in Disguise

DIRECTOR: Troy Quane, Nick Bruno

STARRING: Computer animation with voices of Will Smith, Tom Holland, Rashida Jones, Ben Mendelsohn

RUN TIME: 102 minutes

STORYLINE: Cool super-spy Lance Sterling forms an odd team with young, bumbling, gadget-making genius Walter Beckett, to take on the villain Killian, who, with a left bionic arm and an army of weaponised drones, is threatening to destroy the world

rone together. And they are thrown together as a team – Sterling's Bond to Beckett's Q – to save the world from the form-shifting villain, Killian, who is armed with a bionic

hand as well as an army of weaponised drones to end the world.

There are nice action set-pieces, fights, and chases. But the real fun lies in Beckett's "biodynamic concealment" experiment which misfires and turns Sterling into a pigeon, or "flying mouse" as he hatefully calls them. "Unbird me," he booms and you can't help but laugh out loud. The character and the voice meld to great effect with Will Smith as Sterling, and Holland as Beckett. Ultimately it's non-violence and the device of a "hug" that wins the day, something the world needs in good measure today.

The film "Walterizes" the most cynical of souls and makes us see that weird is indeed beautiful.

POOCH CAFE



HAGAR THE HORRIBLE



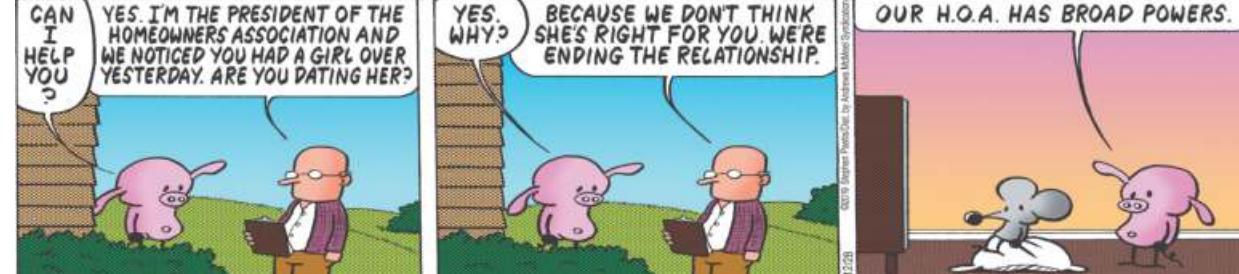
TIGER



WUMO



PEARLS BEFORE SWINE



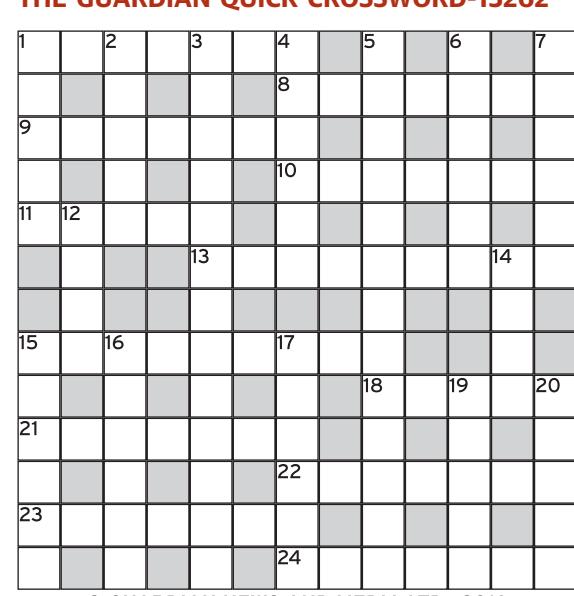
PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBES



THE GUARDIAN QUICK CROSSWORD-13262

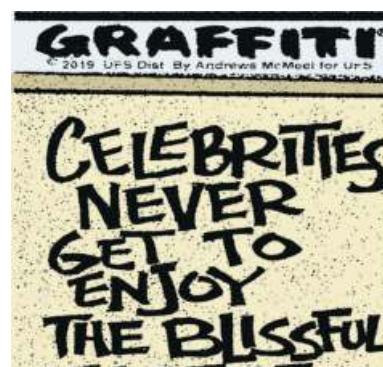


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- 6 Address aggressively (6)
- 7 Liquefied by heat (6)
- 12 Old Testament book and rabbi (4)
- 14 Greek equivalent of Cupid (4)
- 15 Female organ of a flower (6)
- 16 American friend via correspondence (6)
- 17 Gentle breeze (6)
- 19 US 1944 D-Day landing beach (5)
- 20 Substantial (5)

Solution will appear on December 30, 2019.

Solution No. 13261



GRAFFITI
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CELEBRITIES NEVER GET TO ENJOY THE BLISSFUL PEACE OF OBSCURITY
BY MEGAN GOGOMICS.COM/GRAFFITI
HEALTH CAPSULES by Bron Smith
SHOULD I TAKE LOW DOSE ASPIRIN TO LOWER MY HEART ATTACK RISK?
THIS NEW GUIDELINE DOESN'T APPLY TO THOSE WHO HAVE ALREADY HAD A STROKE OR HEART ATTACK.
NEW GUIDELINES BY THE AMA RECOMMEND THAT LOW-DOSE ASPIRIN SHOULD NOT BE TAKEN TO PREVENT A HEART ATTACK. TAKING ASPIRIN ROUTINELY HAS BEEN FOUND TO INCREASE THE RISK OF SEVERE INTESTINAL BLEEDING AND HEMORRHAGING. CONSULT WITH YOUR DOCTOR BEFORE STOPPING ANY MEDICATION.
Health Capsules is not intended to be a diagnostic resource.

- Across
1 Checker of accounts (7)
22 Capacious bag (7)
23 Vivid written or oral descriptions (7)
24 Traditional name for a fox (7)
■ Down
1 Extra (5)
2 Star in Cygnus (5)
3 Personification of death (3,4,6)
4 Scamp (6)
5 Flatly (13)

E	N	T	R	C	O	T	E	G	D
E	O	O	E	E	R	G	O	E	C
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T	A	D	E	O	D	R	A		



GETTY IMAGES

'Kohli a complete batsman, but Richards the greatest ever'

Brian Lara also thinks he hasn't 'seen a pace attack like the Indians have at present — in my time or even before my time'

RAKESH RAO

Brian Lara is best remembered for the numbers he stacked up. Knocks of 375 and 400 not out came 10 years apart and saw him set, and regain, the world record for the highest Test score. He remains the only batsman to score 500 runs in a First Class innings. But here comes a contradiction. Lara never looked at numbers. The evidence lies in the fact that he retired from international cricket when just 47 short of 12,000 Test runs and after having played 299 One-Day Internationals! In this interview, the legendary left-hander, now 50, reflects on various aspects of cricket, past and present. Excerpts:

First of all, Brian, how did you manage to bat on and on?

■ I remember when I scored my first hundred in Australia, there was a rain-break and I came off the field. My coach at the time was Rohan Kanhai and he said to me, "Set your score." And I asked,

Kohli is cricket's version of Cristiano Ronaldo. I think he's taken fitness to another level. He is leading the charge, not just in India but around the world. His mental strength is unbelievable

"What do you mean by that?" And he said, "Your next innings starts at zero." So what he meant was, he wanted me to make full use of the opportunity, when I was out there, while I was in form, the bowling team was tired. So, I fell in love with playing the big innings. I never felt 50 or 100 were enough. I wanted to bat, as they say in the West Indies, till the cows come home!

While on the subject of scoring lots of runs, anything you recall about the unbeaten knock of 50?

■ Well, that was 25 years ago, in 1994. I remember [playing for Warwickshire against Durham at Birmingham], when I was on 18, I

was dropped. The guy who dropped me was wicketkeeper Chris Scott. Easy catch dropped! And one of the fielders said, "Gosh! Now he is going to score a hundred." And I scored 500!

What was your secret to succeeding on difficult pitches?

■ Batting a lot at the non-striker's end (laughs). But on a serious note, I learnt that from Desmond Haynes. When I first got an opportunity to open the batting with him, he was the main batsman. So when I asked him this same question, he said, you know, Brian, try to spend a lot of time at the non-striker's end, run singles. In any sort of situation, good or bad pitches, you have to have great respect for the bowler. You have to understand what he's doing. You have to appreciate that there's not just a skill war. There is a mental war going on. And sometimes if you win the mental war, you know, you sort of win the battle. Some guys crumble under the pressure. So, I feel for me, whenever I went to bat, I tried to win that war. I felt I was vulnerable at the very beginning, but as time went on, I played better.

How did you deal with a bad

phase or a loss of form?

■ For me, when I was succeeding, I wanted to make that period as long as possible. When I wasn't doing well, I truly tried to minimise it... [but] I would always appreciate the fact that things are not going to go well all the time. And I was definitely no Bradman, but I felt that I needed to keep a level head. My favourite saying is from Rudyard Kipling: *If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster/ And treat those two impostors just the same*. I love this because they are impostors. When you succeed, you can get swell-headed or you can be failing and then you are all down in the doldrums. So, I try, as much as possible, to keep an even keel.

And was it difficult being Brian Lara?

■ The problem is the fact that I grew up in an invincible West Indies era of the 1970s and the 1980s. Thereafter, things, sort of, went on the decline. I spent most of my career on the losing side when playing against Australia, against England, against India. And that was much more hurtful than actually playing the game when I got out there to play the game. But I was always having fun. I was always in a place where I wanted to be.

You were just 47 short of 12,000 Test runs and you called it

a day. Did you not look at the numbers at any point?

■ Never looked at the numbers. People said I looked at the numbers. People felt that I targeted 400, I targeted 500. That's all nonsense. It didn't matter to me when I retired after 299 One-day Internationals. I just felt it was the right time to do so.

From your playing days, how much has international cricket changed?

■ Obviously, there is a push towards the shortest version of the game. And you have to appreciate the fact that even sponsors are willing to dive into a cricket game for three hours, instead of five days. And so do the spectators. We've created through T20 a lot of new spectators. Now,

Test cricket has got a boost in terms of creating a league. I always felt that, you know, whenever I played Test cricket and jumped from country to country, you rack up the numbers and you win a series or lose a series, there was nothing really added onto it. So having something that culminates in a Test Championship, I think is amazing.

Any changes that you suggest?

■ I think that the

ICC will have to do a little bit of brushing up. After all, it's the first year of the cycle. I think, you can't play two Test matches, have 120 points available and play five Test matches and still have 120 points!

And I also believe that in any league that you play, you know, all the participants play an equal amount of games. So they must find a way of doing so. Maybe, if England is playing Australia in a series, you pick three of the Tests that carry points. That should even out a few things.

Is it fair to say that the bowling standards have declined in international cricket?

■ I think it's a seesaw. In some countries, yes. In some countries, no. I think I've never seen a pace attack like the Indians have at present — in my time or even before my time.

Also, nothing can take anything away from the young West Indies bowlers. I know they try their best. But how difficult is it to fill the shoes of a Joel Garner, a Malcolm Marshall or a Courtney Walsh? So, I think, in some scenarios, it has sort of weakened, but in other scenarios, it has strengthened. Saying that cricket was tougher long ago, I don't buy into that all the time. I don't think it's fair to say that to the present-day cricketers. I think that they have their challenges.

What do you think of private leagues mushrooming in the cricketing world?

■ It is a bit worrying because, you know, a player can play five, six different leagues around the world and have no care about playing for

his country. I don't know what position the ICC is in. And I would be wrong to have a major opinion on it, but it is worrying. That's what I would say.

Do you think money has helped the game grow?

■ It has trickled down. It does trickle down to the players, which is great. But money in sport is very good. You get to develop infrastructure, you get to develop young talent when you have the funds to do so. I think it's done India very well, Australia very well and maybe England to a lesser extent.

C My favourite saying is from Rudyard Kipling: *If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster/ And treat those two impostors just the same*. I love this because they are impostors. So, I try, as much as possible, to keep an even keel

Before we wind up, your take on Virat Kohli's versatility in all three forms?

■ It's unbelievable. He's cricket's version of Cristiano Ronaldo. I think he's taken fitness to another level. When you see guys in the '70s and the fun that they were having, the fitness level wasn't that great. In 2019, fitness is a major part of the game and Kohli is leading the charge, not just in India but around the world. His mental strength is unbelievable.

Finally, just curious to know if there ever was, or is, a complete batsman in your view.

■ Yes. Virat Kohli. And if you ask me the greatest batsman ever, it's Viv Richards.

GAME THEORY

The winter leaders

MOST GOALS

LaLiga	Serie A
Lionel Messi (Barcelona)	Ciro Immobile (Lazio)
13 (1.08 goals/90 min)	17 (1.18 goals/90 min)
Karim Benzema (Real Madrid)	Robert Lewandowski (Bayern)
12 (0.73 goals/90 min)	19 (1.14 goals/90 min)
Luis Suarez (Barcelona)	Romelu Lukaku (Inter)
10 (0.76 goals/90 min)	12 (0.75 goals/90 min)

While the Premier League's fixtures pile up, the Spanish, Italian and German top divisions take time off as the year ends. A look at the footballers leading the attacking charts in these three leagues, heading into the winter break:

MOST ASSISTS

LaLiga	Serie A
Lionel Messi (Barcelona)	Luis Alberto (Lazio)
6 (0.50 assists/90 min)	11 (0.71 assists/90 min)
Rodrigo Moreno (Valencia)	Thomas Muller (Bayern)
6 (0.47 assists/90 min)	11 (1.03 assists/90 min)
Dejan Kulusevski (Parma)	Jadon Sancho (Dortmund)
7 (0.44 assists/90 min)	9 (0.69 assists/90 min)
Luis Suarez (Barcelona)	Christopher Nkunku (Leipzig)
6 (0.45 assists/90 min)	6 (0.57 assists/90 min)
Ever Banega (Sevilla)	Alejandro Gomez (Atalanta)
6 (0.38 assists/90 min)	6 (0.43 assists/90 min)

Source: whoscored.com



Lionel Messi



Ciro Immobile



Robert Lewandowski



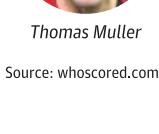
Romelu Lukaku



Luis Alberto



Christopher Nkunku



Alejandro Gomez

MOST DRIBBLES PER GAME

LaLiga

Lionel Messi (Barcelona)

5.5

Andre-Frank Zambo Anguissa (Villarreal)

3.5

Serie A

Rouwen Hennings (Dusseldorf)

2.9

Bundesliga

Robert Lewandowski (Bayern)

4.1

Top Indians ▶

Thomas Muller (Bayern)

3.3

Bundesliga

Filip Kostic (Frankfurt)

3.4

Top Indians ▶

Thomas Muller (Bayern)

3

ATP Men's Top 15

#	PLAYER	AGE	POINTS	EVENTS
1	Rafael Nadal	33	9,985	17
2	Novak Djokovic	32	9,145	17
3	Roger Federer	38	6,590	17
4	Dominic Thiem	26	5,825	22
5	Daniil Medvedev	23	5,705	24
6	Stefanos Tsitsipas	21	5,300	27
7	Alexander Zverev	22	3,345	24
8	Matteo Berrettini	23	2,870	26
9	Roberto Bautista Agut	31	2,540	23
10	Gael Monfils	33	2,530	21
11	David Goffin	29	2,335	27
12	Fabio Fognini	32	2,290	24
13	Kei Nishikori	29	2,180	16
14	Diego Schwartzman	27	2,125	25
15	Denis Shapovalov	20	2,050	26

WTA Women's Top 15

#	PLAYER	AGE	POINTS	EVENTS
1	Ashleigh Barty	23	7,851	15
2	Karolina Pliskova	27	5,940	19
3	Naomi Osaka	22	5,496	17
4	Simona Halep	28	5,462	17
5	Bianca Andreescu	19		

Tanmay, Mehdi lead Hyderabad's fightback

Delhi requires another 60 runs to complete an outright win

RAKESH RAO
NEW DELHI

Skipper Tanmay Agarwal and Mehdi Hasan led Hyderabad's fightback to restore some pride and make Delhi bat again. However, the result of the visitor's Ranji Trophy match remains tilted in favour of the host.

Tanmay scored a century and Mehdi, coming in at No. 8 contributed a fighting unbeaten 71, as Hyderabad lifted itself from 97 for six to 298 on Friday. This left Delhi a target of 84 for its first win of the season.

Bad light stops play

When bad light stopped play 76 minutes before the scheduled close, Delhi was 24 for no loss and stayed in the hunt for a bonus point.

The story of the third day was how Hyderabad's last four wickets added 201 runs and ensured the team lived to fight another day.

Delhi, ahead by 215 runs on the first innings, was eyeing an innings victory after reducing Hyderabad to 97 for six. But what followed was Hyderabad's finest phase in the match.

Tanmay batted much like his opposite number and opener Shikhar Dhawan did in Delhi's first innings. He instilled confidence in the incoming batsmen en route to a century.

His patient knock, including a six and 13 boundaries, frustrated Delhi no end.

Useful partnerships

With Tanay Thyagarajan, Tanmay added 93 runs for the seventh wicket, and another 60 with Mehdi for the eighth, before being run out.

Mehdi, a handy late-order batsman, was far more flamboyant in his approach. His



Captain's knock: Tanmay Agarwal's century helped Hyderabad avoid an innings defeat against Delhi. ■ SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

unbeaten knock was studded with four sixes, seven boundaries and came off just 62 deliveries.

Tanmay and Mehdi exposed the inadequacy of the Delhi attack that had the services of just two specialist fast bowlers – Ishant Sharma and Simarjeet Singh.

Groin-injury to Pawan Suyal, who left the field during Hyderabad's first innings, further exposed Delhi's limited bowling options.

Ishant scalps four

Like in the first innings, Ishant took four wickets and Simarjeet scalped three.

The host needs to win by 10 wickets to get seven points, including the bonus point.

The scores:

Delhi – 1st innings: 284.

Hyderabad – 1st innings: 69.

Hyderabad – 2nd innings: Tanmay Agarwal run out 103, Akshath Reddy c Rawat b Bidhuri 2, Chaitanya Reddy b Bidhuri 0, Himalay Agarwal lbw b Ishant 11, B. Sandeep b Ishant 8, K. Sumanth c Lalit b Simarjeet 32, C.V. Milind lbw b Simarjeet 0, Tanay Thyagarajan lbw b Ishant 34, Mehdi Hasan (not out) 71, Ravi Kiran lbw b Ishant 12, Mohammed Siraj c Lalit b Simarjeet 10; Extras (b-5, lb-10); Total (in 70.2 overs): 298.

Fall of wickets: 1-10, 2-12, 3-29, 4-43, 5-97, 6-97, 7-190, 8-250, 9-284.

Delhi bowling: Ishant 19-1-89-4, Simarjeet 19-2-80-3, Bidhuri 14-3-48-2, Rana 10-3-24-0, Lalit Yadav 8-1-42-0.

Delhi – 2nd innings: Kunal Chandela (batting) 6, Shikhar Dhawan (batting) 15; Extras (lb-3): 3; Total (for no loss in seven overs): 24.

Hyderabad bowling: Siraj 4-1-12-0, Ravi Kiran 3-0-9-0.

RANJI TROPHY SCORES: ROUND 3, DAY 3

GROUP A

Kolkata: Bengal 289 vs Andhra 110/7 in 46 overs (C.R. Ganeswar 45 batting).

New Delhi: Delhi 284 & 24/0 in 7 overs vs Hyderabad 69 & 298 in 70.2 overs (Tanmay Agarwal 103, Mehdi Hasan 71 n.o., Ishant Sharma 4/89).

Surat: Gujarat 127 & 210 bt Kerala 70 & 177 in 50.3 overs (Sanju Samson 78, Axar Patel 4/50).

Points: **Gujarat 6, Kerala 0.**

Nagpur: Vidarbha 338 in 118.2 overs (Ganesh Satish 145, Aditya Sarwate 48) vs Punjab 132/0 in 40.1 overs (Sanvi Singh 56 batting, Shubman Gill 70 batting).

GROUP B

Mysore: Karnataka 166 & 191/3 in 67 overs (Devdutt Padikkal 69 batting, Karun Nair 62 batting) vs Himachal 280 in 107.4

GROUP C

Jammu: Jammu & Kashmir 460/5 decl. in 94 overs (Suryansh Raina 73, Shubham Kha-

overs (Priyanshu Khanduri 69, Nikhil Gangta 46, Rishi Dhawan 93, V. Koushik 4/59).

Indore: Tamil Nadu 149 & 177/4 in 67 overs (Ankit Kumar 54, J. Kousik 66 batting) vs Madhya Pradesh 333 in 97.3 overs (Rameez Khan 87, Venkatesh Iyer 88, Ashish Kumar 4/69) vs Jharkhand 194/2 in 57 overs (Kumar Deobrat 97 batting, Utkarsh Singh 48).

Mumbai: Mumbai 114 & 198 in 63 overs (Suryakumar Yadav 65, Himanshu Sangwan 5/60) lost to Railways 266 & 47/0 in 11.4 overs. **Railways 7, Mumbai 0.**

Rajkot: Saurashtra 331 vs Uttar Pradesh 523 in 167.2 overs (Aryan Jugal 52, Akshdeep Nath 95, Mohammad Saif 165, Rinku Singh 71).

GROUP D

Pune: Maharashtra 289 & 39/1 in 13 overs vs Chhattisgarh 286 in 111 overs (Harpreet Singh 90, Armandeep Khare 40).

Cuttack: Uttarakhand 117 & 54/4 in 22 overs vs Odisha 253 in 83.5 overs (Shantanu Mishra 110).

New Delhi: Tripura 126 & 84 in 43.5 overs (Poonam Poonia 5/26, incl. a hat-trick) lost to Services 173 & 41/2 in 11.1 overs. **Services 6, Tripura 0.**

PLATE

Dibrugarh: Manipur 196 & 215 in 75 overs (Sagatpam Singh 60, K. Priyojit 60 n.o., Techi Neri 5/28, incl. a hat-trick) vs Arunachal Pradesh 143 & 137/1 in 49.5 overs (Rahul Dalal 45 batting, Rex Singh 5/36).

Patna: Bihar 326 vs Goa 386/6 in 110 overs (Aditya Kaushik 73, Amulya Pandrekar 42, Amit Verma 89, Suyash Prabhudeessai 108 batting).

Kolkata: Mizoram 73 & 30/4 in 11 overs vs Pondicherry 458/5 dec.

Bhubaneswar: Sikkim 269 vs Nagaland 71/3 in 21 overs.

Mangaldoi (Assam): Day 2: Chandigarh 455/9 decl. in 121.1 overs (Manan Vohra 90, Raman Bishnoi 126, Ankit Kaushik 148 n.o.) vs Meghalaya 15/1 in 11 overs.

Railways, Kerala in final

SPORTS BUREAU

LUDHIANA

Defending champion Railways will take on Kerala in the women's final of the 70th National senior basketball championship here on Sunday.

In Saturday's semifinals Railways eased past Madhya Pradesh 106-37, while Kerala fought hard to down Punjab 73-62.

Meanwhile Punjab defeated Uttarakhand 79-67 and entered the men's final.

Later, Tamil Nadu defeated Railways 65-63 and entered the men's final.

DDCA members object to 'autocratic' functioning

VIJAY LOKAPALLY
NEW DELHI

Some key members of the Delhi and District Cricket Association (DDCA) Apex Council have sought immediate intervention from Ombudsman Justice (Retd.) Badar Durrez Ahmed on the "autocratic" decisions taken in recent times. In fact, one of the directors, Sudhir Kumar Agarwal, has shot off a mail to the Ombudsman and the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) highlighting the irregularities related to the Annual General Meeting (AGM) scheduled for December 29.

No notice

"As per Section 101 (3) of Companies Act, 2013, Notice should have been given to every Director of the Company. I must have received the Notice of the AGM 21 days before the (AGM) but there was no intimation of the same."

"In absence of proper compliance of the law the forthcoming AGM should be postponed," Agarwal wrote in his complaint, which has been marked to the Registrar of Companies and BCCI.

According to a member of the Apex Council, "Things have gone out of control at the DDCA where the left hand doesn't know what the right is doing. Selectors and coaches are being appointed in an arbitrary manner. Support staff is being increased without any justification and proper process of appointment."

"Strange things are happening. A left-arm spinner has been handed the responsibility of an opening batsman."

DDCA joint-secretary Rajan Manchanda conceded all was not well with Delhi cricket. "I have made repeated complaints to the Ombudsman on the functioning of the DDCA," he said.

In another unpleasant development, connected with the Delhi (under-23) team, two players were sent back from Kolkata on disciplinary grounds ahead of the CK Nayudu Trophy match against Bengal that commenced on Friday. "We were neither informed of the incident nor the process followed for picking the replacements," said an Apex Council member.

Attorney General looks good for a repeat

BENGALURU: Attorney General, who maintains form, may score an encore in the Stewards Cup (0,200m), the feature event of the races to be held here on Saturday (Dec. 28). False rails (width about 8.5m from 1,600m to the winning post) will be in position.

1 BUGS BUNNY PLATE (1,200m), 1 maiden 2-y-o only, (Terms), 1-45 p.m.: I. Al Buraaq (4) A. Vishwanathan 55, 2. Gallic (6) Srinath 55, 3. Golden Oaks (3) Nathan Evans 55, 4. Stone House (1) Vaibhav 55, 5. Capital Gain (8) Darshan 53.5, 6. Drusilla (5) I. Chisty 53.5, 7. Forest Flame (7) David Egan 53.5 and 8. Livisilla (2) T.S. Jodha 53.5.

1 FOREST FLAME, 2. GOLDEN OAKS

2 AMATHOS PLATE (DIV. II), 1 (1,00m), rated 15 to 35, 2-15. 1. Smile Around (5) M. Naveen 60, 2. Cadillac Sky (9) A. Veli 59.5, 3. Anakin (12) Bhantu Singh 58.5, 4. Bella Mamma (11) A. Vishwanath 58.5, 5. Country's Spirit (7) Nazerul 58.5, 6. Orogenesis (10) Chetan K 58.5, 7. Radiant Beauty (6) Chetan G 58.5, 8. Temple Dancer (3) Nathan Evans 58.5, 9. Up Front (4) S. Shareef 58.5, 10. Santorini Secret (1) Khurshan Alam 58, 11. Zafrina (2) Irvan 57.5 and 12. Mayurana (8) R. Manish 55.

1. TEMPLE DANCER, 2. GOLDEN OAKS

3 AGUMBE PLATE (1,200m), 3 rated 00 to 20, 2-45: 1. Daring Sweetheart (7) Chetan K 60, 2. Desert Gilt (8) K. Raghu 60, 3. Above The Rest (6) Chandrashekhar 59, 4. Bazinga (9) I. Chisty 58.5, 5. Rancho (4) Ar-

shad 57, 6. Kanthaka (1) Sai Kiran 55, 7. Show Girl (3) Vaibhav 55, 8. Emerald Green (5) Rayan 54, 9. Turf Prospector (10) Darshan 52.5 and 10. High Tide (2) Irvan 50.

1. DARING SWEETHEART, 2. TURF PROSPECTOR, 3. BAZINGA

4 KUNIGAL STUD PLATE (1,400m), rated 45 to 65, 4-y-o & over, 3-15: 1. Blue Moon (4) I. Chisty 60, 2. Bernardini (8) C. Umesh 58, 4. Amazing Angel (1) Chetan K 56, 5. Azeemki Princess (8) Arvind Kumar 55.5, 6. Hidden Soldier (3) R. Anand 55.5, 7. Unifier (10) S. Shareef 55, 8. Smile Of Peace (5) Naveen Kumar 53.5, 9. Turf Spirit (4) Nazerul 53.5 and 10. Fierce Fighter (6) Arshad 53.

1. ZHU ZHU ZEST, 2. WHIZZO, 3. UNIFIER

5 S. RANGARAJAN MEMORIAL TROPHY (2,000m), rated 30 to 30, 3-45: 1. Game Changer (4) A. Imran 59.5, 2. Crack Of Dawn (1) Sadaqat (10) Vinod Shinde 57.5, 3. Altair (1) Irvan 57, 4. Bahurupah (6) S.K. Paswan 57, 6. Flt Captain (7) C. Umesh 57, 7. It's My Country (4) Darshan 57, 8. Sandarina (2) J.H. Arul 57, 9. Star Citizen (9) Chetan G 57, 10. Tazamour (12) I. Chisty 57, 11. The Preacher (3) R. Pradeep 57 and 12. Bold Runner (11) A. Ramu 56.5.

1. SANDARINA, 2. DRAGON MOUNTAIN, 3. SADAQAT

Day's best: CRACK OF DAWN

Double: FOREST FLAME – TEMPLE DANCER

Jkt: 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8; Tr (i): 3, 4 and 5; (ii): 6, 7 and 8.