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NEARBY



Congress ropes in
 architect of 2016 strikes

NEW DELHI
 Former Northern Army
 commander, Lieutenant
 General (Retd) D.S. Hooda,
 considered the chief architect
 of the 2016 surgical strikes in
 Pakistan Occupied Kashmir,
 will head the Congress' task
 force on national security.
 The party on Thursday issued
 a statement and released
 photographs of Lt. Gen.
 Hooda's meeting with party
 president Rahul Gandhi.

NEWS ▶ PAGE 11

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

BSP to contest 38 seats in U.P. as SP settles for 37; RLD to get 3

Will not field candidates in Amethi and Rae Bareli, held by Rahul & Sonia Gandhi

OMAR RASHID
 LUCKNOW

The Samajwadi Party (SP) and Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) on Thursday announced that they will contest 75 out of the 80 Lok Sabha seats in Uttar Pradesh in the 2019 general election, practically ruling out any possibility of the Congress joining the anti-BJP alliance in the State.

While the SP will contest 37, the BSP will fight it out in 38 seats, the presidents of the two parties, Akhilesh Yadav and Mayawati, said in a joint statement.

The names of the candidates have not been announced.

Out of the remaining five seats, three will go to the Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD). The RLD brushed aside all speculation of being in talks with the Congress, and affirmed that it was a part of the SP-

Parcelled out

The SP and the BSP have formulated a seat-sharing agreement in which the latter will contest 38 Lok Sabha seats and the former will contest 37. The combine will not contest in five seats, including Congress strongholds of Amethi and Rae Bareli and three RLD bastions in western U.P.

BSP
 SP
 RLD STRONGHOLD
 CONGRESS STRONGHOLD

BSP alliance. The three seats for the RLD are Muzaffarnagar, Baghpat and Mathura. RLD chief Ajit Singh is expected to fight from Muzaffarnagar while vice-president Jayant Chaudhary is likely to contest from Baghpat, considered the pocket borough of the family.

The alliance has decided

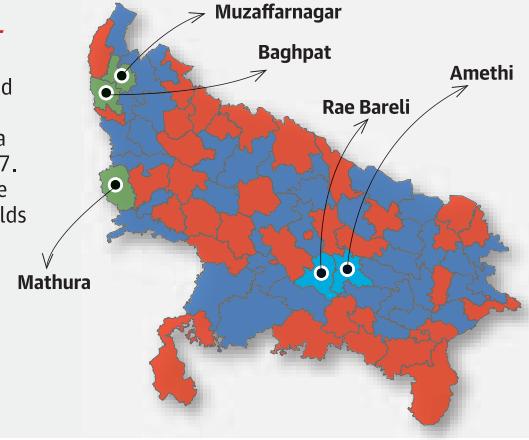
to not field any candidates in Rae Bareli and Amethi, currently held by Sonia Gandhi and Congress president Rahul Gandhi.

Some key constituencies, held by high-profile BJP leaders, including Varanasi, Lucknow, Gorakhpur, Kairana, Phulpur, Allahabad, Azamgarh and Faizabad,

have been allotted to the SP.

While Varanasi is the constituency of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Gorakhpur is the bastion of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and Lucknow is currently held by Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 10



Assam Rifles granted power to arrest anyone in the Northeast

Can also search a place without warrant, says notification



A contingent of the Assam Rifles in New Delhi. ■ AFP

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
 NEW DELHI

Exactly one week after the Pulwama suicide bombing, the Congress on Thursday launched a blistering attack on Prime Minister Narendra Modi, asking him to explain why he had continued participating in a documentary film shoot at the Corbett National Park in Uttarakhand even after the terror strike.

The Congress also alleged that the government 'forgot' to mention Pakistan as the main source of terror in the joint statement that Prime Minister Modi and Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman had issued on Wednesday.

"What is unpardonable is that when the entire nation was stunned by the Pulwama terror attack last Thursday, Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi was busy picnicking in Corbett National Park and was participating in a photo shoot of Discovery Channel," Congress's chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala told a press conference.

DETAILS ON ▶ PAGE 10

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
 NEW DELHI

Assam Rifles, deployed along the Myanmar border, has been empowered by the Centre to arrest anyone and search a place without warrant in the border districts of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Nagaland and Mizoram.

According to a Home Ministry notification, "an officer of the rank corresponding to that of the lowest rank of members of the Assam Rifles" has been given these powers under the Code of Criminal Procedure.

Earlier, Assam Rifles was making arrests only in areas where the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act was in effect. "They were finding it difficult to make seizures and arrest in Mizoram, which doesn't have AFSPA. This is to basically correct that anomaly. As per law, they have to hand over the suspects to the local police within 24 hours," said a government official.

The MHA had lifted AF-

SPA from some areas of Arunachal Pradesh last year.

Assam Rifles personnel will exercise these powers and discharge their duties "under sub-section(I) of section 41, sections 47, 48, 49, 51, 53, 54, 149, 150, 151 and 152 of the CrPC within the local limits of the area comprised within the border districts of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Nagaland and Mizoram," the notification said.

Section 41 of the CrPC states that any police officer may, without an order from a magistrate and without a warrant, arrest any person. Section 47 gives powers for search of place entered by person sought to be arrested.

Section 48 says a police officer may, for the purpose of arresting without warrant any person, pursue such person into any place in India. According to Section 49, the person arrested shall not be subjected to more restraint than is necessary to prevent his escape.

SAFETY LAPSES ▶ PAGE 12

Sack Meghalaya Governor: CPI(M)

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
 NEW DELHI

The CPI(M) on Thursday called for the sacking of Meghalaya Governor Tathagata Roy for his support for boycotting Kashmiri products in the wake of the Pulwama attack.

The CPI(M)'s Polit Bureau in a statement said, "The

Governor holds a constitutional office. As a representative of the President, he is expected to be a custodian of the Indian Constitution. This is not the first time he has made public comments which disgrace the post he holds and violate the fundamentals of the Indian Constitution."

[Tathagata Roy] hold constitutional positions is a disgrace to our secular democratic ethos," said Mr. Gujral.

He elaborated on what he termed a dangerous trend of singling out ordinary

Naresh Gujral recalls attacks on Sikhs in 1980s



militancy in Punjab, should not be repeated today. "There may be some members of the Kashmiri community who are involved in terrorism, and the government should go after them. This does not mean that the

Kashmiris after the Pulwama attack.

Proxy war

"The proxy war waged by Pakistan on India started with Punjab. It went on for a decade and a half, and over 40,000 innocent lives were lost, but the greater tragedy was that after 1984, the entire Sikh community came under suspicion, a community that has sacrificed the most for India's freedom and the country's democratic rights during Emergency. During the Asian Games, even Sikh Lieutenant-Generals were stopped at the Delhi border for checks and frisking and it served to alienate the entire community," Mr. Gujral said.

Will hear review pleas on Rafale: SC

CJI cites change in members of Bench

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL
 NEW DELHI

Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi on Thursday assured petitioners that the Supreme Court would hear the pending review pleas against the December 14 judgment in the Rafale deal case, even as he observed that one difficulty in scheduling the hearing was the fact that the members of the Bench were sitting, as of now, in a different combination.

"We will do something about it," Justice Gogoi told advocate Prashant Bhushan.

"We are sitting in a different combination [of judges]. It is difficult to change it," he added.

Mr. Bhushan had sought an urgent hearing on the review petitions and a plea seeking perjury proceedings against government officials who had "misled" the court, through unsigned confidential notes, about



Advocate Prashant Bhushan had sought an urgent hearing on the review pleas.

the facts in the case concerning the deal for the purchase of 36 Rafale jets.

Recently, the Chief Justice had revealed in court that the government's application to modify the Rafale judgment and the separate pleas by petitioners seeking a review of the court's December 14 verdict were lying dormant in the court registry, waiting for lawyers to correct defects in the documents filed.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 10

Now, all CAPF personnel can avail flights

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
 NEW DELHI

All ranks of Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) deployed in the Kashmir Valley will be entitled to commercial flight services to either join duty or while proceeding on leave, an order by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) said.

Only officers in the rank of inspectors and above enjoyed this facility, but from now on all personnel in the ranks of constable, head constable and assistant sub-inspectors will be eligible. The order comes in the wake of the Pulwama terrorist attack, in which 40 CRPF personnel died when a car-borne suicide bomber rammed into a convoy, on way to Srinagar from Jammu on February 14.

The Hindu reported on Monday that the MHA had approved an extensive plan to provide air transport for the CAPF personnel.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 10

SC to hear plea for protection to Kashmiris from attacks

Petition to be taken up for consideration today

REUTERS
 DHAKA

As many as 70 people died

and 50 were injured in a major fire that engulfed several buildings in a centuries-old neighbourhood of the Bangladesh capital, a fire official said on Thursday, warning the death toll could climb.

The city's worst fire since 2012 broke out on Wednesday night in a five-storey building, before spreading to others nearby in the Chawkbazar precinct, parts of which date back more than 300 years to the Mughal period.

"So far, 70 bodies have been recovered," Julfikar Rahman, a director of the Fire Service and Civil Defence, said. At least a dozen of the injured people taken to hospital were in a critical condition, he said.

Hundreds of distraught relatives thronged the Dhaka Medical College and Hospital to seek missing relatives, witnesses said.



The petitioner sought a direction to "forthwith take steps to prevent threats, as

saults, violent attacks, social boycotts, ostracism, evictions and other coercive acts committed by groups and mobs against Kashmiris and other minorities, particularly in the wake of the Pulwama attack."

At least 300 students studying in colleges in Uttarakhand fled to Jammu and Delhi following large-scale evictions from campuses and hostels, The Hindu reported.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 10

ForumIAS Current Affairs Complete Preparation Course for Prelims 2019 – March 25th, 2019

15 CLASSES + PRINTED NOTES + ADDITIONAL CONTENT IN CLASS + 5 CURRENT AFFAIRS TESTS + POST TEST DISCUSSIONS

What is the program?

The Current Affairs Complete Preparation Course for Prelims 2019 will commence from March 25th. Classes will be held 3 days in a week.

The Course shall have 12-15 classes of 2-2.5 hours duration and shall cover Prelims of past two years.

The timings of the classes will be 5 PM to 7 PM and classes will be held from Monday to Wednesday.

What is the goal of the program?

The goal of the program will be:

- Ensure complete coverage of past two-year Current Affairs from PIB, Hindustan Times, Times of India, and magazines such as EPW, Frontline

- Ensure that candidates who are preparing for Prelims and are likely to write Mains build a robust Current Affairs Base so that Current Affairs is a strong area for them for both Prelims and Mains.

- Ensure that there no topic, Event or news item is left out which is important and relevant from Prelims point of view.

- Ensure that an experienced mind is applied to filter out irrelevant content from the plethora of Current Affairs to reduce the amount of clutter in Preparation.

- Build over and above the ForumIAS Factly to provide a

Beyond words

Meet Veeramani Sekar from Chennai, a speech and hearing impaired mime artist,



who creates awareness on traffic rules and road safety measures.

"I am a part of a trust called 'Thozha' that was established in 2005. In 2013, our trust decided to engage in creating awareness about traffic rules and road safety since road accidents were becoming common. From 2014 to 2016, we managed to cover one hundred signals to create awareness on road safety. It was in one such campaign where I met Veeramani," says Ganesh, Veeramani's friend.

Veeramani had met with a minor accident along with his daughter and has completely stopped driving since. He took up the initiative to educate people about traffic rules and road safety measures.

"Veeramani wanted to create awareness too, since he is speech impaired, he uses mimes to educate people on the roads. We gave him five basic

Brand connect initiative

traffic rules to be presented as a mime and wanted to see if he could do it. He aced it and since then, he has become a regular part of our awareness campaigns," adds Ganesh.

Mimes are an effective way to communicate as it garners more attention from the people compared to a regular awareness campaigns. He resides in Ambattur and takes mimes to the streets every Sunday to create awareness about traffic rules. In a few weeks time, there was a visible impact in his area, where



people had started following the safety measures and rules.

Veeramani is also invited to many schools and colleges to perform and create awareness amongst students. He even trains people

in the art of mime. Veeramani continues to try and safe-guard travelers on the road because actions always speak louder than words.

Under My Watch is an initiative by *The Hindu* that celebrates conscious and responsible citizens who make India better, one small act at a time. Tell us your story and get a chance to be featured in *The Hindu*.

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DELHI DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

E-TENDERING PRESS NOTICE No.31/F0 to CEO&CWG/DDA/2018-19 PART-C

Online item/percentage rate tender for the following work is invited on behalf of DDA by EEE/Flyover Division No. 2, DDA, Seedbed Park, Shakarpur, Delhi-110092, EEE/Sports Division No. 2, DDA, Seedbed Park, Shakarpur, Delhi-110092, EEE/Sports Management Cell, 1st Floor, Squash & Badminton Stadium, Siri Fort Road New Delhi-110049, EEE/Sports Divn. 1, DDA, Siri Fort Sports Complex, New Delhi-110049 and EEE/Electrical Division No. 3, DDA, Siri Fort, Behind Gargi College, New Delhi-110049. Date of uploading of tender along with schedule of quantity is on or before 25.02.2019. Last date of download/submission of tender is 05.03.2019 upto 3.00 PM.

1. NIT No.: 55/EE/Sports Divn.2/DDA/2018-19. Name of Work: Upgradation of Various Sports Complexes. **SH:** Stone lining of water bodies at BGC. **Estimated Cost:** Rs. 21,12,296/- **Ernest Money:** Rs. 42,246/- **Time Allowed:** 30 days.

2. NIT No.: 120/AE(P)/EE/SMC/DDA/2018-19. Name of Work: M/o Various Sports Complexes/Golf Courses. (A/R & M/o works at BGNSC for the year of 2018-19). **SH:** Renovation of multi-gym at Baba Gang Nath Sports Complex. **Estimated Cost:** Rs. 11,02,957/- **Ernest Money:** Rs. 22,059/- **Time Allowed:** 30 days.

3. NIT No.: 124/AE(P)/EE/SMC/DDA/2018-19. Name of Work: -do- (A/R & M/O works at YSC for the year of 2018-19). **SH:** Providing and installation anti bird net, PVC grating & benches at swimming pool Yamura Sports Complex. **Estimated Cost:** Rs. 7,38,270/- **Ernest Money:** Rs. 14,765/- **Time Allowed:** 30 days.

4. NIT No.: 127/AE(P)/EE/SMC/DDA/2018-19. Name of Work: -do- (A/R & M/O works at SBS for the year of 2018-19). **SH:** Replacement of unserviceable/non-functioning existing toilet fittings & fixtures at Squash & Badminton Stadium. **Estimated Cost:** Rs. 20,17,516/- **Ernest Money:** Rs. 40,350/- **Time Allowed:** 30 days.

5. NIT No.: 67/E(P)/EE/Sports Divn.1/DDA/2018-19. Name of Work: -do- (A/R & M/O work at Siri Fort Sports Complex for the year 2018-19). **SH:** Providing and laying Ultra tile around Basket Ball Courts at Siri Fort Sports Complex. **Estimated Cost:** Rs. 6,61,457/- **Ernest Money:** Rs. 13,229/- **Time Allowed:** 30 days.

6. NIT No.: 66/E(P)/EE/Sports Divn.1/DDA/2018-19. Name of Work: -do- (A/R & M/O work at Saket Sports Complex for the year 2018-19). **SH:** Repair of boundary wall and swimming pool at Saket Sports Complex. **Estimated Cost:** Rs. 7,35,272/- **Ernest Money:** Rs. 14,705/- **Time Allowed:** 60 days.

7. NIT No.: 65/AE(P)/EE/Sports Divn.1/DDA/2018-19. Name of Work: -do- (A/R & M/O works at Paschim Vihar Sports Complex for the year 2018-19). **SH:** Miscellaneous civil works at Paschim Vihar Sports Complex. **Estimated Cost:** Rs. 11,69,674/- **Ernest Money:** Rs. 23,394/- **Time Allowed:** 180 days.

8. NIT No.: 42/AE(P)/EE/FOD-2/DDA/2018-19. Name of Work: M/o completed schemes under Flyover. **SH:** Repair of path and parks over covered nullah from culvert near Police Station Lajpat Nagar to Ramlal Lajpat Nagar. **Estimated Cost:** Rs. 14,81,793/- **Ernest Money:** Rs. 29,635/- **Time Allowed:** 60 days.

9. NIT No.: 33/EE/ELD-3/DDA/2018-19 (Re-invited). Name of Work: Maintenance of Stadium for Badminton & Squash Courts at Siri Fort Sports Complex. **SH:** Comprehensive Maintenance of PLC/SCADA system for Sports Lighting at Competition Venue of Siri Fort Sports Complex. **Estimated Cost:** Rs. 6,84,000/- **Ernest Money:** Rs. 13,680/- **Time Allowed:** 12 months. (**Specialized work**).

10. NIT No.: 42/EE/ELD-3/DDA/2018-19. Name of Work: -do-. **SH:** Running Maintenance and Operation of Fire Fighting System and Fire Alarm System at Indoor Stadium, SFSC. **Estimated Cost:** Rs. 23,30,265/- **Ernest Money:** Rs. 46,605/- **Time Allowed:** 12 months. (**Specialized work**).

Note: For details, please visit the website <http://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app> or www.dda.org.in For technical assistance regarding portal during uploading of tender: capp-nic@nic.in or 24x7 helpline number 0120-4001002, 0120-4001005 and 0120-4200462.

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Odisha says it will be part of PM-Kisan scheme

State launch on Feb. 24; farmers' body holds strike demanding pension, fair price

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
BHUBANESWAR

Shedding its initial hesitation, the Odisha government on Thursday decided to be a part of the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nihi scheme, the Odisha government had not shown any interest and dubbed it inferior to its own Krushak Assistance for Livelihood and Income Augmentation (KALIA), also meant for providing financial assistance to farmers.

The announcement was made on a day when a leading farmers' body – Navnirman Krushak Sangathan – called for dawn-to-dusk protest against the State government's "lack of concern" towards its demands.

Chief Secretary A.P. Padhi said the Central scheme (PM-Kisan), which promises to provide ₹6,000 per annum to small and marginal farmers having cultivable land up to two hectares (about five acres), will be launched in

Odisha on February 24, along with the other States.

Earlier, after receiving a formal communication from the Centre about the mega farmers' welfare scheme, the Odisha government had not shown any interest and dubbed it inferior to its own Krushak Assistance for Livelihood and Income Augmentation (KALIA), also meant for providing financial assistance to farmers.

Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan had said that the State was not implementing the Centre's scheme for farmers over fears that all credit would go to Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Agriculture and Farmers Empowerment Secretary Saurabh Garg said a list of around 12.45 lakh first-phase beneficiaries of the State go-

vernment's KALIA scheme will be given to the Centre for inclusion in PM-Kisan.

Peaceful protest

Normal life across Odisha was affected on Thursday due to the farmers' strike. Though the protest – backed by the Congress as well as the BJP – continued peacefully,

the police picked up about 200 protesters from different parts of the State, including 70 from Bhubaneswar.

NNKS leader Akshya Kumar alleged that the State government did not pay heed to their demands for fair price, pension and prestige to cultivators, forcing them to call the strike.

Naveen wants assistance to be hiked from ₹6K to ₹10K

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BHUBANESWAR

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik on Thursday demanded that the Centre should enhance cash assistance under the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nihi scheme from ₹6,000 to ₹10,000.

Mr. Patnaik had earlier written a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi seeking enhancement of cash incentive under PM-Kisan and inclusion of landless farmers, sharecroppers and farmers in distress in the scheme as was done under the KALIA scheme launched by his government.

The Chief Minister slammed the farmers' body that called for Statewide

bandh on Thursday saying "no one can stop the KALIA scheme, which aims to improve agricultural prosperity and reduce poverty".

At the rally, Mr. Patnaik released a sum of ₹700 crore that was transferred to the bank accounts of 14 lakh farmers of the State under the KALIA scheme. Earlier, financial assistance was released for over 12 lakh farmers at the first conclave held at Puri, and for 3.5 lakh farmers at the meeting held at Kendrapara.

Mr. Patnaik said that he was monitoring the implementation of the scheme to ensure that no one was deprived of the benefits under KALIA.

Matriculation exams in Odisha to begin today

Over six lakh students to write test

CORRESPONDENT
CUTTACK

Over six lakh students of Odisha will write the State Matriculation Examination - 2019, which is beginning on Friday and will continue till March 8. The Board of Secondary Education, Odisha, is conducting the examination in four streams – Regular, Ex-Regular, Madhyama for Sanskrit students and Open School Certificate for school dropouts.

BSE controller of examination Nihar Ranjan Mohanty informed that the Board has already dispatched ques-

tion-cum-answer booklets of first three papers to all the 304 nodal centres across the State. "The booklets will be sent to various examination centres from the designated nodal centres only on the day of the examination between 6 a.m. and 8 a.m. and the examinations will be held from 9 a.m. to 11.30 a.m.," Mr. Mohanty said.

Education Secretary Pradeepa Mohapatra said the question-cum-answer booklets are kept at the nodal centres which are provided with round-the-clock security by armed guards.

During the Question Hour, eight questions were jumped because of the ab-

Missing MLAs leave Speaker fuming in Assam

Eight questions left out as members not present to raise them in Assembly

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
GUWAHATI

The Assam Assembly on Thursday witnessed an embarrassing situation because of huge number of absentee MLAs, with as many as eight questions being left out and quorum bell being rung thrice to invite the members into the House.

Speaker Hitendra Nath Goswami expressed his dissatisfaction over such a huge number of MLAs from all political parties being absent during the ongoing Budget Session of the Assembly.

During the Question Hour, eight questions were jumped because of the ab-

sence of the members who had to ask them. This included four from the Congress and two each from the BJP and the All India United Democratic Front.

The Leader of the Opposition, Debabrata Saikia, had also asked a question but was not present to raise it in the House. "What is the use [of the question]? You give

What is the use [of the question]? You give questions and then you are not present. It is not a good sign

HITENDRA NATH GOSWAMI
Assam Assembly Speaker

questions and then you are not present. It is not a good sign," Mr. Goswami said expressing his displeasure.

The House reached the 13th query of the day, which is rare, as it has not reached even the 10th question in a day in the last several years, said an Assembly official.

While the members were speaking during the discussion, the House fell short of quorum thrice within a span of two hours. Every time the bell was rung to ask the members present in the Assembly complex to attend the ongoing session. In the Assam Assembly, the quorum is one-sixth of the total number of members of the House i.e. 21 of 126 MLAs.

'Corruption in paddy procurement in Bengal'

BJP leader demands CBI inquiry

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
KOLKATA

BJP national secretary Rahul Sinha on Thursday alleged that there was corruption in West Bengal in procurement of paddy from farmers and demanded a CBI investigation into it.

Farmers are committing suicide in many parts of the State as they are not receiving proper price of their produce, Mr. Sinha claimed. While, the MSP of paddy was set at ₹1,750 by the Centre, in Bengal, in many places, the farmers were getting ₹1,350 and were forced to sign receipts stating that they were receiving ₹1,750, he alleged.

BJP national secretary Rahul Sinha. ■ FILE PHOTO

"We demand a CBI inquiry into it," Mr. Sinha said.

He announced that the BJP will organise a massive agitation across West Bengal on the issue on February 27.

State Food Supplies Minister Jyotipriyo Mullick said the BJP should not level allegations without any proof.

Secret Maoist camp busted in Odisha; no arrests made

STAFF REPORTER
BERHAMPUR

A secret Maoist camp was busted by Central Reserve Police Force personnel in Niyamgiri hills region under Kalyan Singhpur police station limits of Odisha's Rayagada district on Thursday.

According to police sources, 15 gelatin sticks, 15 detonators, one Improvised Explosive Device in the form of a 'tiffin box', batteries and wires were seized from the spot.

The Maoists using the camp could not be traced as they had managed to escape taking advantage of the hilly jungle terrain, said the sources.

During their continuing anti-Maoist search operation, the CRPF personnel had unearthed this secret Maoist camp inside the jungle near Tulubla village in Niyamgiri hills region.

The explosives seized from the spot suggested that the Maoists were planning to plant them to target security forces.

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IN BRIEF



Karnataka MLA remanded in judicial custody

BENGALURU
After over four hours of questioning, the Bidadi police on Thursday produced Kampli MLA J.N. Ganesh before the Ramanagaram court. Though Mr. Ganesh pleaded for leniency citing health conditions, the court remanded him in judicial custody till March 6. He was on the run since January 20 after allegedly assaulting fellow legislator Anand Singh and was nabbed in Gujarat on Wednesday.

Seat sharing based on winnability: Siddaramaiah

HUBBALLI
Former Karnataka Chief Minister and head of the coordination committee Siddaramaiah has said that the issue of seat sharing with coalition partner JD(S) would be sorted out based on the winnability of candidates of the two parties. He told presspersons at Hubballi airport, that the issue of having an alliance for the Lok Sabha election was not about fixing number of seats for each. "It is decided on basis of the winnability of the candidate," he said.

Plot to kill Cong. men hatched in readers' club

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM
The Kerala police have said the conspiracy to murder Youth Congress workers Sarah Lal and Kripesh in Kasaragod was hatched at a readers' club near Periyar. Kannur Range IGP Balaram Kumar Upadhyaya told *The Hindu* that the police were also looking into the money trail. He said the functioning of certain quarries in the locality had been a subject of violent disagreement between the accused and the victims for long and the matter was also a subject of investigation.

90% assurances given in A.P. Reorganisation Act met: Shah

TDP, YSRCP promote their families and not the State, BJP president says

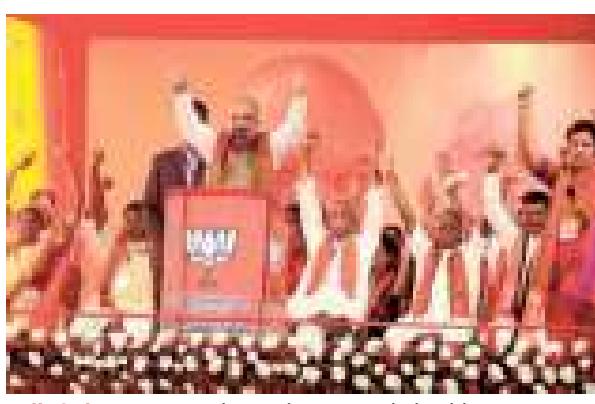
STAFF REPORTER
RAJAHMENDRARAM

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) national president Amit Shah on Thursday said the Centre had fulfilled about 90% of the assurances given in the Reorganisation Act to the State.

"Only the BJP can render justice to Andhra Pradesh but not family parties such as the TDP (Telugu Desam Party) and the YSR Congress Party. They are working for the benefit of their families, whereas the BJP is striving to improve the living conditions of the general public," he said, addressing party workers here.

Amid protests from TDP activists, Mr. Shah inaugurated the party's city office and interacted with the beneficiaries of the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY), before interacting with party workers here.

TDP workers staged protests en route, denouncing the Centre and the Prime Minister, while the police cleared the path for Mr. Shah



Poll pitch: BJP national president Amit Shah addressing party workers in Rajahmundry on Thursday. ■ S. RAMBABU

by taking the protesters into custody and shifting them to police stations.

"Neither the Congress nor Mr. Naidu have any right to question the BJP's patriotism. Kashmir became problematic only because of the Congress and now the same party is trying to politicise the terrorist attack on our soldiers. Unfortunately, Mr. Naidu too is levelling charges against Mr. Modi and supporting Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan," Mr. Shah alleged, after paying

homage to soldiers who lost their lives in Kashmir.

A.P. failed in using funds' Wondering how Mr. Naidu joined hands with the Congress that divided Andhra Pradesh, Mr. Shah said he [Mr. Naidu] had no right to criticise the Centre and the Prime Minister.

"The Centre has allocated 20 educational institutions to the State in the last five years, besides releasing adequate funds for the construction of Amaravati and

BJP chief to visit Kerala today

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Amidst internal dissensions in the Kerala BJP, national president Amit Shah is visiting the State on Friday to review the poll preparedness. The party's main focus will be on Palakkad and Thiruvananthapuram.

the Polavaram project. We have allocated the maximum number of houses to this State under the Centre's programme.

The State government failed in spending the funds in the right manner and is now accusing the Centre of injustice," he said.

Mr. Shah said that the Centre had spent ₹55,475 crore to develop Andhra Pradesh in the last five years, and had developed the Rajahmundry airport and the Kakinada port with modern facilities.

Special status: Rahul to pick up where Modi left off

Cong. chief to stress on the issue at Tirupati public meeting



All set: Arrangements are apace on Thursday for the public meeting of AICC president Rahul Gandhi in Tirupati. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Cong. chief to trek the hill

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
TIRUPATI

With Andhra Pradesh politics revolving around the Special Category Status (SCS) and the issue poised to become decisive in the general election, political parties are leaving no stone unturned to take a firm stand.

After the BJP made the promise in 2014 and allegedly drifted away, the Congress now promises to accord the status.

thrice, Mr. Gandhi will reach Alipiri from the airport, trek up the hills like a common devotee, offer prayers at Sri Venkateswara temple, and reach the public meeting venue a couple of hours later, according to party sources.

iversity Stadium, the venue where the then prime ministerial candidate Narendra Modi, flanked by TDP president Chandrababu Naidu and Jana Sena founder Pawan Kalyan, had offered to confer the SCS on coming to power in 2014.

And the party is keen on adding the religious sentiment surrounding Tirupati to it.

'It is about sentiment' It has already cornered the BJP and touched a raw nerve by recalling how it had gone back on its promise made at the holy abode of Lord Venkateswara.

Mr. Gandhi is scheduled to arrive at the Tirupati airport on Friday, offer prayers at Sri Venkateswara temple and address a public meeting at Sri Venkateswara Un

tached a lot of significance to the tag for ensuring long-term development, whether they know its advantages or not is another matter. The demand is here to stay and our party is committed to it," said former Union Minister and former MP (Tirupati) Chinta Mohan told mediapersons.

"We are mobilising 25,000 people, a sizeable chunk of them students who can connect with the status demand," said PCC general secretary Penubala Chandrasekhar.

The venue is being spruced up and banners are being erected on all the roads leading to the stadium.

Telangana Budget to cross ₹2 lakh cr. mark

Cabinet approves Vote-on-Account Budget for 2019-20 to be presented today

M.L.MELLY MAITREYI
HYDERABAD

The Telangana Cabinet, chaired by Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao, approved the Vote-on-Account Budget for 2019-20 here on Thursday, ahead of the Budget session beginning on Friday. This Budget is close to the heart of the Chief Minister because it will reflect the party's major electoral promises, such as doubling the

'Asara' pensions and bringing more beneficiaries under the scheme as the eligibility age has been reduced to 57 years, enhancing the 'Rythu Bandhu' investment assistance from ₹4,000 to ₹5,000 an acre for each of the kharif and rabi seasons.

In preparatory meetings with officials, Mr. Rao made it clear that agriculture, irrigation and welfare schemes

would continue to get priority. The Budget outlay for the financial year 2018-19 was ₹1.74 lakh crore and, given the impressive growth rate of the State's own tax and non-tax revenue, the outlay for 2019-20 is expected to go up by 20%, around ₹2.10 lakh crore. A milestone, as the Telangana's Budget for the first time will be crossing ₹2 lakh crore mark, a reflection of its buoyant revenue growth.

The allocations for the welfare schemes, which were around ₹40,000 crore in 2018-19, are expected to go up by 50% at least, given the enhanced allocations to various schemes — about ₹15,000 crore for 'Rythu Bandhu', ₹12,500 crore to 'Asara' pensions, ₹1,500 crore for 'Rythu Bheema', crop loan waiver up to ₹1 lakh in four instalments and other welfare schemes.

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Shri Suresh Prabhu
Minister of Commerce & Industry, Government of India

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IN BRIEF

**HC asks Shibu Soren to pay ₹2,500 to petitioner**

RANCHI The Jharkhand High Court on Thursday asked Shibu Soren to pay ₹2,500 to Sunil Soren, who filed a petition challenging the JMM president's election from Dumka in the 2014 Lok Sabha polls. The JMM chief was asked to pay for failing to cross-examine the petitioner, who had to come to Ranchi from Dumka again in connection with the case. PTI

No dearth of funds for Namami Gange: Gadkari

HARIDWAR Union Minister for Water Resources Nitin Gadkari on Thursday said there is no dearth of funds for the implementation of projects under Namami Gange. "The Ban Ganga in Laksar will be revived to add to the flow of water in the Ganga," he said. PTI

Fresh snowfall in Manali, hailstorm in Shimla

SHIMLA A fresh bout of snowfall in Manali and hailstorm in Shimla and other parts have intensified cold wave conditions in Himachal Pradesh, the Meteorological Department said on Thursday. Manali in Kullu district received 11 cm of snowfall, it said. PTI

10 fall sick after having tea in U.P.; shop sealed

SHAHJAHANPUR (U.P.) Ten people were hospitalised after having tea at a stall outside a community health centre here on Thursday, officials said. Chief Medical Officer R.P. Rawat said district officials have reached the spot and sealed the tea shop, 35 km from the district headquarters. PTI

CBI to probe charge against UPPSC officials

PE registered for alleged nepotism during Mayawati rule

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Central Bureau of Investigation on Thursday said that it had instituted a preliminary enquiry against unknown officials of the Uttar Pradesh Public Service Commission (UPPSC) to ascertain if any undue favour was extended to undeserving candidates in an examination for the recruitment of 250 Additional Private Secretaries in 2010.

Information about the preliminary enquiry came on the day when the Bahujan Samaj Party and its ally Samajwadi Party announced details of seat sharing for the upcoming Lok Sabha election in the State.

BSP supremo Mayawati was the Chief Minister during the period in question.



tives" of then U.P. government officials.

Marks changed'

According to the complaint, the UPPSC officials allegedly conspired with the examiners to change marks of such candidates to ensure that they cleared the examination.

When asked, the officials said the definition of public servants includes elected representatives who have taken oath of office. But they did reveal if the "close relatives" were of elected representatives in the government or not.

"These are allegations in the complaint from the State government. We have registered a preliminary enquiry," an official said.

(With PTI inputs)

"There has been an on-

Gegong Apang joins JD(S)

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
ITANAGAR

Ahead of the Assembly elections in Arunachal Pradesh, former Chief Minister Gegong Apang has joined the Janata Dal (Secular), the party headed by former Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda.

The formal joining of Apang was held in Pasighat, the headquarters of East Siang district, on Wednesday in the presence of Mr. Deve Gowda, sources close to the former CM said here on Thursday.

After joining the party, Mr. Apang said: "The JD(S) has a secular outlook and therefore we have decided now we will be together."

Mr. Apang, who ruled the State for 23 years in the past,



Gegong Apang

resigned from the BJP on January 15 this year accusing the party leadership of using every dirty trick to get to power. Mr. Apang was elected as MLA seven times.

The veteran politician was seen at West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's January 19 opposition parties' rally as well in the recent anti-BJP conclave in Delhi hosted by AAP convener and CM Arvind Kejriwal.

4 more succumb to swine flu in Gujarat

Toll rises to 79; 118 new cases registered across State

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
AHMEDABAD

With rising cases of swine flu in Gujarat where more than 2,000 people have tested positive for H1N1 virus since January 1, 79 people have died while 727 are undergoing treatment in various hospitals across the State.

As per the Gujarat Health Department's release, four persons died on Thursday, taking the toll to 79 while as many as 118 new cases were registered across the State.

"Since January 1, 1,497 people have fully recovered and have been discharged from hospitals," the release

said.

"Gujarat is among the worst-affected States due to higher number of cases and mortality," a State government official said.

HC directive

On Tuesday, the Gujarat High Court had directed the State government to form a high-level committee comprising bureaucrats and Health Department staff to plan and take the necessary measures for the control of swine flu.

The direction came from a Division Bench of Acting Chief Justice A.S. Dave and Justice Biren Vaishnavi hear-

Campaign on to prove Gumnnami baba as Netaji

Release all IB files, says grand-nephew

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
KOLKATA

Some family members of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose on Thursday alleged that a "sinister campaign" is on by certain sections in the country to prove that 'Gumnnami Baba' was the nationalist leader and urged the Centre to release all Intelligence Bureau files on the recluse.

The "sinister campaign" is an attempt to damage the image and legacy of Netaji in the eyes of the present and future generations, he said and demanded that the IB files on Gumnnami Baba be declassified to bring out the truth. "That the so-called 'Gumnnami Baba', who reportedly died in 1985 leaving his teeth among his trunk load of personal belongings, was not Netaji was established in a scientific DNA test," he said.

WEATHER WATCH

RAINFALL, TEMPERATURE & AIR QUALITY IN SELECT METROS YESTERDAY



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

Forecast for Friday: No weather warnings

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	—	31.2...	17.9	Kozhikode	—	34.7...	25.4
Ahmedabad	—	32.2...	19.4	Kurnool	—	36.9...	22.2
Aizawl	—	30.9...	—	Lucknow	—	29.6...	14.0
Allahabad	—	31.8...	14.8	Madurai	—	35.5...	23.1
Bengaluru	—	31.3...	18.2	Mangaluru	—	34.9...	21.3
Bhopal	—	35.8...	19.8	Mumbai	—	29.5...	20.0
Bhubaneswar	—	36.3...	22.5	Myisuru	—	33.0...	16.4
Chandigarh	0.7...	25.5...	14.2	New Delhi	0.8...	28.1...	13.2
Chennai	—	31.9...	24.4	Patna	—	30.0...	14.5
Coimbatore	—	34.3...	21.8	Puducherry	—	31.1...	24.7
Dehradun	2.3...	25.9...	13.1	Pune	—	36.4...	17.5
Gangtok	0.2...	—	8.7	Raipur	—	34.1...	19.8
Goa	—	32.5...	22.0	Ranchi	—	32.2...	14.2
Guwahati	—	26.0...	15.3	Shillong	—	17.0...	6.7
Hubballi	—	34.0...	22.0	Shimla	3...	9.7...	4.2
Hyderabad	—	34.6...	21.2	Imphal	24.7...	7.7	5.6...
Jaipur	—	27.0...	16.2	Srinagar	3.3...	5.5...	0.6
Kochi	—	33.0...	25.8	Trivandrum	—	37.2...	24.2
Kohima	—	18.5...	7.2	Tiruchi	—	34.9...	23.6
Kolkata	—	33.3...	20.1	Vijayawada	—	34.1...	22.0
Visakhapatnam	18...	43.32...	9.9	Visakhapatnam	—	31.5...	23.6

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

Yesterday

CITIES	SO ₂	NO _x	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	36	.54	26	.90	—	■
Bengaluru	7	.55	71	—	.141	■
Chennai	68	.14	56	.98	—	■
Delhi	27	.95	58	.210	.224	■
Hyderabad	3	.97	27	.89	.101	■
Kolkata	28	.18	36	.362	.304	■
Lucknow	14	.57	37	.323	—	■
Mumbai	21	.26	75	.58	.86	■
Pune	33	.16	.9	.102	.101	■
Visakhapatnam	18	.43	32	.97	.99	■

In observation made at 4.00 pm, Gay, BI

Recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 353 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Mandi Gobindgarh, Punjab recorded a healthy AQI score of 42

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.
PM2.5 & PM10: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease



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अल्पकालीन ई-निविदा सूचना

पाटलीपुत्र चिकित्सा महाविद्यालय अस्पताल, धनबाद में वित्तीय वर्ष 2018-19 के लिए मानक स्तर के निर्माताओं अथवा उनके अनुभवी वितरक से 6 bedded PICU and 12 bedded NICU Machine के क्रम एवं अधिकारीय वर्ष हेतु 2-बोली व्यवस्था (2-bid system) के अन्तर्गत निर्मानित शर्तों के अधीन ONLINE निविदा आमंत्रित किया जाता है। निविदा अपलोड करने की



Healing touch

Kashmiri students elsewhere must be reassured of their personal safety

The Supreme Court has agreed to hear a petition seeking directions to educational institutions to protect Kashmiris in the face of harassment and intimidation in various parts of the country after the ghastly terror attack in Pulwama on February 14. Hundreds of Kashmiri students, primarily from Dehradun in Uttarakhand, have already returned home or moved to Delhi or Jammu seeking safety. Amid these reports, the Union Home Ministry had on Saturday issued an advisory to all States and Union Territories to ensure the safety of Kashmiris. The Jammu and Kashmir police too have set up helplines. It is to be hoped that these measures will be strengthened, especially with the Supreme Court now hearing the issue. It needs to be made clear by the State and Central governments that there will be no compromise on the State's responsibility to ensure the well-being of citizens. Equally, there needs to be stern action against the mobs that harassed and tried to frighten Kashmiris. The Uttarakhand police arrested 22 students on Tuesday for trying to have Kashmiri students expelled from their college, but there have been other similar instances. It will be a cause for lasting shame if young people studying in different parts of the country were sought to be isolated, and their ethnic identity headlined to make them targets of majoritarian mobs looking to avenge a terrorist attack. Law and order must prevail, and the students must be given enough confidence that they can return to their educational institutions and studies without fear.

However, occurrences such as these, of communally charged attacks, cannot be forgotten with the mere return to a semblance of normalcy. No group of Indians should be allowed to be isolated by blame-calling mobs, and the situation demands a strong, politically-led initiative to end the intimidation and reassure the victims. Given this, it is regrettable that members of the Narendra Modi Cabinet have either been in denial or have infused ambiguity into their statements of reassurance. Union Human Resource Development Minister Prakash Javadekar, for instance, on Wednesday said outright that there had been no such harassment. Equally disturbing, he prefaced his remarks with a reference to "a tremendous reaction of anger in the country about the Pulwama incident". The fact is that many Kashmiris have already fled Dehradun, and some of them have shared their stories. Mr. Javadekar, as HRD Minister, should address their feeling of insecurity, instead of being dismissive about it, and in the process allowing the mobs a free pass. Moreover, the fact that anti-Pakistan sloganeering can so easily slip into anti-Kashmiri rhetoric must bother civil society and politicians of all hues. Even if the attacks are isolated, the counter-argument must come from across the political spectrum, and in one voice: that all Kashmiris enjoy all protections and rights available to them as Indian citizens.

Half-measures

It is good the 'angel tax' has been moderated, but its arbitrary nature remains intact

After the uproar among start-up investors in the last few weeks, the Centre on Tuesday decided to ease the conditions under which investments in start-ups will be taxed by the government. According to the new rules, investments up to ₹25 crore in companies that are less than 10 years old and with a total turnover of less than ₹100 crore will be exempted from the new angel tax. Further, investments made by listed companies with a net worth of at least ₹100 crore or a total turnover of at least ₹250 crore will be fully exempt from the tax; so will investments made by non-resident Indians. When it was first proposed by the Centre in 2012, the angel tax was justified as an emergency measure to prevent the laundering of illegal wealth by means of investments in the shares of unlisted private companies at extraordinary valuations. But the adverse effect that it has had on investor confidence has forced the government to ease the stringent rules. The easing of the outdated angel tax rules will definitely make life easier for start-ups, which are in desperate need for capital to fund their growth and other business requirements. Further, since the new rules are set to be applied retrospectively, many young companies that have received notices from the Income Tax Department in the last few years will be relieved by the latest tweak in the rules.

There are, however, a few other issues with the new rules that could still cause unnecessary headaches to young start-ups. Companies wishing to make use of the latest exemption, for instance, will first need to be registered with the government as start-ups. To be classified as one, a company needs to attest to conditions such as that it has not invested in any land unrelated to the business, vehicles worth over ₹10 lakh, or jewellery. These requirements, while probably aimed to prevent money-laundering, can lead to considerable bureaucratic delays and rent-seeking. Also, the new rules for the angel tax, though less stringent than before, can cause the same old problem of arbitrary tax demands for companies that do not fall under the defined category of start-ups. The taxes to be paid are still supposed to be calculated by the authorities based on how much the sale price of a company's unlisted share exceeds its fair market value. It is impossible to know the market value, let alone the fair market value, of shares that are not openly traded in the marketplace. So tax authorities with ulterior motives will still possess enough leeway to harass start-ups with unreasonable tax demands. Unless the government can address the arbitrary nature of the angel tax, the damage to investor confidence may remain.

The great Indian political shift

The Ambedkarite, Lohiaite and Dravidian parties are visibly moving to a politics without 'othering'



SAJJAN KUMAR

The 2019 general election is being seen as a test of the parties opposed to the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led National Democratic Alliance in forging workable pre-election fronts, and of the BJP in deepening its electoral coalitions. But it is interesting to scan the changing political landscape before the campaign for the Lok Sabha gets truly underway for changes in the 'politics of othering' that has so far defined most Indian parties. Or in other words, are non-BJP, non-Congress parties adopting Congressism?

Episodic othering

The enumeration exercise by the colonial ethnographic state since the late 19th century brought to the fore the politics of 'numbers', thereby reshaping society into the binary of 'minority-majority' along caste, religion and ethnic lines. By the 1920s, the political discourse in India, barring that of the Indian National Congress, inhaled the politics of 'numbers', which seamlessly metamorphosed into the politics of 'othering'. This took various forms under parties such as the All-India Muslim League, the Akhil Bharat Hindu Mahasabha, the Justice Party, etc.

By the 1950s, against the backdrop of the domineering discourse of Congressism, which was a politics without 'othering', India witnessed the emergence of four dominant political threads: Lohiaite, Ambedkarite, Hindutva and Dravidian, championing the fault-lines of caste, religion and ethnicity, thereby practising the politics of 'numbers and othering'.

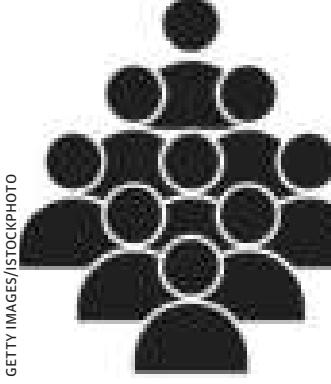
The constitution of the 'other'

happened at three levels. First, at the symbolic level, wherein the founding fathers were pitted against each other. Second, at the societal level, wherein the socio-economic interest of one section was shown as being unaligned with that of sections signifying the 'other'.

Third, at the political level, wherein idiom, metaphor, popular slogan and appeal were deliberately sectarian, exhibiting a 'friend-enemy' simile. It was argued that popular politics was about speaking for different shades of subalterns, who constituted the majority, thereby projecting the politics of 'numbers and othering' as necessary to serve the ideals of equality and freedom. However, this mode of politics infused a great deal of bitterness in the societal realm by treating the ideals of 'fraternity' as subservient to 'equality and freedom'.

The manifestation of this three-fold othering was seen in the political culture across India since 1990s in an entrenched way. The popularity of slogans in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, emanating from Ambedkarite and Lohiaite discourse, while championing an egalitarian quest took recourse to caste-based 'othering' that competed with the religious 'othering' of Hindutva.

This entrenchment of 'othering' could be seen most clearly in post-2000 Uttar Pradesh when the acidic political rivalry between the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) and the Samajwadi Party (SP) manifested itself in their governments' policies as they pitted two social justice icons, R.M. Lohia and B.R. Ambedkar, against each other. For instance, the BSP government by 2012 had brought almost 19,000 most backward villages under the Ambedkar Village Scheme. The official signboard designated them as 'Ambedkar villages' qualified for special developmental funds.



However, when the SP government came to power in 2012, it selected another set of villages under a new village development scheme, Ram Manohar Lohia Samagra Gram Vikas Yojana, and officially labelled them as 'Lohia villages'. The replacing of Ambedkar by Lohia had another dimension. While the Ambedkar villages were inhabited by significantly large numbers of Dalits, the Lohia villages had a majority of non-Dalits, particularly the Other Backward Classes.

This three-fold othering had its parallel in the southern and Northeastern States, which was reflected in the BJP's slogan 'Jati-Mati-Vetti' (identity, land and resource) in 2016 during the Assembly election in Assam, privileging ethnic identity, and in the controversy over the separate flag during the Karnataka election in 2018.

Besides, going against the ideals of fraternity, the fact that any politics of 'othering' becomes a politics of exclusion by default underlines the need for a politics without 'othering'. Therefore, the question is, can India witness a 'politics of numbers' (pragmatic electoral compulsions) that doesn't necessarily metamorphose into a 'politics of othering'?

Something may be changing. The frequency of 'othering' in the political discourses of Lohiaite, Ambedkarite and Dravidian politics is declining, and is now at the

most episodic. In fact, the tone and tenor of the Mahagathbandhan in Uttar Pradesh, particularly regarding the SP (Lohiaite) and the BSP (Ambedkarite), signify the beginning of a phase of 'politics without othering' at the normative level. In their formal press conference announcing the grand alliance, both Mayawati of the BSP and Akhilesh Yadav of the SP referred overwhelmingly to class and occupational identities, and only a passing reference was made to Other Backward Classes and Dalit identities. In marked contrast to their position during the Mandal phase of the early 1990s, they welcomed the 10% reservation announced for economically weaker sections.

Whether these shifts indicate the return of Congressism – a mode of politics without any 'othering' – is yet to be seen, but certainly it indicates a process wherein the Congress does not seem to be the only claimant of the discourse of Congressism. Rather, more and more parties which rose on the plank of anti-Congressism are adopting the discourse of 'non-othering'.

The BJP exception

However, there is one radical contrast to this emerging trend. While Lohiaite, Ambedkarite and Dravidian politics are embracing the framework of non-othering, the Hindutva discourse led by the BJP is still caught in the old-mode of 'othering' even though its electoral slogan appears to be all-inclusive.

In fact, it is BJP that has taken the politics of 'othering' from the old episodic level to the incessant level. By dint of a disproportionate investment in an army of dedicated team pollsters indulging in hair-splitting profiling of the electorate contingent to pre-existing prejudice, anxiety and aspirations, the party has seamlessly employed multiple modes of 'othering' simultaneously to trounce its politi-

cal rivals. The BJP has single-handedly taken the politics of 'othering' from the episodic to incessant level wherein the everyday life of the people is systematically fused with the constitution of the 'other' and its perpetuation. This has taken the form of communalisation of everyday lives, as reflected in the instances of cow-vigilantism and mob-lynching. Besides, the demonisation of Nehru by pitting him against other founding fathers has reached a hysterical level.

At a time when the emerging centrality of agrarian issues has led to the shrinking cultural space for privileging religious identity in southern, western, central and some parts of northern India, the BJP as a compensatory move is shifting its politics of othering eastward, in West Bengal and the Northeastern States. In essence, this is an attempt to shift the core space for communal othering to east and Northeast India, as seen, for instance, with the politics over the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill. This explains why a party that championed the ethnic sentiment of 'Jati-Mati-Vetti' in Assam was desperate to pass the Citizenship Bill that privileges the religious identity.

A litmus test

Barring Hindutva, the emerging trend of parties that emerged from the Dravidian, Ambedkarite and Lohiaite discourse moving to the politics of 'non-othering' is a moment of celebration. A liberal democracy needs competing and contested politics along differentiated socio-economic interests without letting it slip into the 'politics of othering'. The 2019 election will be a litmus test of how far Indian democracy has come in this regard.

Sajjan Kumar is a political analyst. He is associated with Peoples Pulse, a research organisation that specialises in fieldwork-based political study

Picking sides in West Asia

India could find it difficult to maintain a 'balancing' approach between different West Asian powers



HARSH V. PANT &
HASAN ALHASAN

Over the past few years, the course of India's relations with Israel, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) suggests that under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, India finally appears to be moving away from its traditional "balancing" approach to West Asia. The Modi government has in practice demonstrated a preference for working with the three regional powers rather than Iran, a trend likely to be reinforced after the visit of Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman (MBS) and the proposed trip by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to New Delhi.

Regional realities

Since the 1990-91 Gulf War, India has officially adopted a "balancing" approach to West Asia, which some view as a legacy of non-alignment. Although this approach has allowed India to eschew involvement in regional disputes and de-hyphenate relations with regional rivals including Iran, Israel and Saudi Arabia, the policy has also constrained India's ability to press

its geopolitical interests in the region.

Geopolitically, MBS and Abu Dhabi's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed (MBZ) have over the past few years escalated their battle against political Islamist groups, including the Muslim Brotherhood. Most notably, this materialised in their support for Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi's takeover of power in Egypt from the Muslim Brotherhood in 2013, and in their dispute with Qatar, a key regional backer of the group. Naturally, this brings them closer to Israel, which faces a growing threat from Islamist militant groups, including Hamas, Hezbollah, and Iranian-backed forces in Syria.

The campaign by Saudi Arabia and the UAE to curtail the influence of political Islamist groups also draws them closer to India. During his visit to New Delhi, the Saudi Crown Prince hinted at the attack by vowing to "cooperate in every way, including intelligence sharing". In recent months, the UAE has also ramped up its security cooperation with India, extraditing at least three suspects wanted in relation to the AgustaWestland case.

Defence and energy needs

Meanwhile, India's defence and security partnership with Israel has already proven useful to its security and military modernisation drive. In 1998, Israel provided In-



dia with valuable intelligence on Pakistani positions during the Kargil war. More recently, India and Israel have collaborated on a \$77 million project to develop a maritime version of the Barak-8, a surface-to-air missile that India successfully tested in January. India has also reportedly agreed to purchase 54 HAROP attack drones for the Indian Air Force and two airborne warning and control systems (AWACS) worth over \$800 million from Israel. Due to its technological sophistication and warm relations, Israel has become one of India's top suppliers of military technology.

Economically, the ability of Saudi Arabia and the UAE to mobilise investments despite low oil prices is a huge asset in their relations with India. Investments have included a \$44 billion oil refinery in India by Saudi Aramco and the Abu Dhabi National Oil Company in partnership with an Indian consortium. During his visit to New Delhi, MBS said he foresaw up to \$100 billion worth of Saudi invest-

ments in India over the next few years, including a plan by the Saudi Basic Industries Corp. to acquire two LNG plants.

Iran's stake

In contrast, Iran's support for Islamist militancy, not least by transferring advanced missile technology to Islamist groups and militias in Lebanon and Syria, has led to an increase in tensions with Israel, which responded by conducting air strikes against Iranian targets on Syrian soil in January. Although the simultaneous attacks that claimed the lives of 27 members of Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps and 40 members of India's Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) are likely to bring India and Iran closer together against Pakistan, it is doubtful that the occasion would generate much momentum in bilateral relations.

From an economic perspective, U.S. sanctions have turned Iran into an unreliable economic partner. Despite obtaining a six-month waiver from the U.S. in November on energy imports from Iran, India is shoring up plans to find alternative sources as the waiver reaches its term. Meanwhile, Indian investments in Iran, including the Shahid Beheshti complex at Chabahar and the Farzad B gas field, have languished for years, reflecting the severe constraints on doing business with Iran.

However, India's tilt towards Is-

rael, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE is not a risk-free move. Iran continues to exercise much influence in West Asia and can help shape events in Afghanistan by shoring up the Taliban against the U.S. Moreover, Iran's Chabahar port represents a strategic investment for India which hopes to use the facility to connect with the International North-South Transit Corridor (INSTC) that extends to Central Asia and to bypass Pakistan en route to Afghanistan.

Yet, as tensions rise in West Asia, Israel, Saudi Arabia and the UAE have coalesced more closely against Iran under the U.S.-sponsored Middle East Security Alliance (MESA). Concurrently, recent escalation between Iran and Israel on the Syrian front suggests that tensions are unlikely to drop soon. Amid competing demands from West Asian powers for India to take sides, India might find it difficult to maintain a "balancing" approach even if it wanted to.

For now, the Modi government seems to have taken its pick. Having practically abandoned a "balancing" approach, the Modi government has, in effect, placed its bets on Israel and the Gulf monarchies, relegating relations with Iran to the side.

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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.

Employment test

The data on employment, or their lack, are there for all to see (Editorial page, "The employment test", February 22). Regular employment opportunities appear to be a thing of the past, with employment on a contractual basis and daily wages becoming common. The now infamous promise of the government, of the creation of two crore jobs every year, was an important reason why it came to power in 2014. Lakhs of jobs have been lost, mostly in the informal sector, and because of demonetisation. Thousands of youth from faraway parts of the north and Northeast are now working in the south as there are fewer opportunities in their

States. In the public sector, the pronounced tilt towards privatisation is cutting off opportunities for educated youth.

G.B. SIVANANDAM,
Coimbatore

Going by the growth trajectory in the past few decades, it is illusory to expect any government to "vacate the stage" if it has failed to generate employment. There has been little difference in the economic policies of the Congress and the BJP, which have remained pro-big business. The alleged fudging of official data may indicate that we have not lagged behind in graduating to a post-truth society.

R. SUBRAMANIAM,
Bengaluru

It is amusing that the writer has tried to link it to the Narendra Modi government. One wonders what the writer's line would be in the context of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, or 4IR, where technology use is

growing exponentially. A major aspect of the 4IR will be to change the way we work, as there will be the increased automation. Experts claim that automation will sound like a recipe for a worldwide disaster, as it will put people out of jobs, have labour unions, or what is left of them, striking and causing political upheaval. Is India prepared for this?

E.S. CHANDRASEKARAN,
Chennai

It is pathetic to note that those who take up teaching do so to escape unemployment, resulting in mediocrity in the educational system (OpEd page, February 21). That apart, the modern Ekalavya does not need to depend on

a teacher or the 'chalk-and-talk' method; Google is the guru and Skype has started replacing 'dreary' classroom learning. In this digital mayhem, passion towards teaching is rare. It is ironic that educational institutions are run by the rich who have political backing. 'Teaching is a service and not a transaction', is what the writer feels, but are there such teachers today?

G.T. SAMPATHKUMARACHAR,
Mysuru

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CORRECTIONS & CLARIFICATIONS:
In the story on resident certificate issue in Arunachal Pradesh (Feb. 21, 2019, some editions), there was a reference to a rally addressed by Deputy Chief Minister Chowna Mein. He is actually the Deputy Chief Minister of Arunachal Pradesh.

A report headlined "Vishnu Prasad ridicules Ramadas" (Feb. 21, 2019, some editions) talked about the incarnation of former PMK MLA Kaduvetti J. Guru in jail. It should have been "incarceration".

YES, NO, IT'S COMPLICATED

After the terrorist strike in Pulwama, is war even an option?

YES



GURMEET KANWAL
is former Director,
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Our conventional deterrence has failed. It is necessary to initiate strong military measures

The terrorist attacks in Pulwama, Pathankot, Uri and Nagrota, among others, are part of Pakistan's low-intensity limited war on the Line of Control (LoC) since 1947-48 and its 30-year-old proxy war to bleed India through a thousand cuts.

Proportionate reaction

India should resist a knee-jerk emotional reaction to this grave provocation, which unquestionably crossed its threshold of tolerance, to satisfy an enraged public. Instead, the response should be part of a comprehensive long-term, national-level strategy to counter Pa-

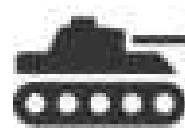
kistan's proxy war. The aim should be to raise the cost for Pakistan's deep state – the army and the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) – for waging its proxy war, with a view to eventually making the cost prohibitive. The response should be proportionate and multidisciplinary in approach, comprising diplomatic, economic and military measures. It should include overt and covert actions.

What if miscalculation on either side leads to war? Military theorist Carl von Clausewitz theorised that war is an instrument of state policy. Today, some analysts believe that,

because of the destructive power of modern weapons, war is no longer a viable option unless the most vital interests of a state are threatened.

The object of defence preparedness of an appropriate level is to deter war and, if deterrence breaks down, to fight and win. Since the victory over Pakistan in 1971, the Indian armed forces have succeeded in deterring a major war, with the exception of the localised Kargil conflict of 1999.

However, India's conventional deterrence has failed to deter Pakistan's proxy war and state-sponsored terrorism and it is now necessary to initiate strong military



measures to prevent future terrorist strikes being launched from Pakistani soil. These measures should be carefully calculated to minimise the risk of escalation and must avoid collateral damage to the extent possible.

The military's aim should be to inflict punishment on the Pakistan army deployed on the LoC and terrorist training camps and related infrastructure in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK). For each new act of state-sponsored terrorism, the scale and the intensity of the punishment inflicted should be increased by an order of magnitude.

Military operations should include artillery strikes with guns fir-

ing in the 'pistol gun' mode to destroy bunkers on Pakistani army posts on the LoC with minimum collateral damage; and Smerch and Pinaka rocket and missile strikes with precision-guided munitions (PGMs) on brigade and battalion HQ communications centres, logistics infrastructure, ammunition dumps and key bridges on major rivers.

Trans-LoC attacks by troops should be limited to raids by special forces and border action teams like the surgical strikes launched after the Uri military camp was hit in September 2016. Brigade-level attacks or larger infantry attacks must be avoided at least to begin with. The employment of fighter aircraft, particularly those armed

with PGMs, launched from a stand-off range on the Indian side of the LoC is also a viable military option. As long as the international boundary in Punjab, Rajasthan and Gujarat is not crossed by Indian Air Force aircraft, escalation by Pakistan is unlikely.

Covert operations

Counter-proxy war operations should be supplemented by covert operations. Since the remaining roots of militancy are now in Pakistan and PoK, and Pakistan is not inclined to bring to justice the leaders of terrorist organisations like the Lashkar-e-Taiba and the Jaish-e-Mohammed, terrorists they call 'strategic assets', they must be neutralised through covert operations.

NO



AJAI SAHNI
is Executive Director of
the Institute for
Conflict Management,
New Delhi

We have been spending next to nothing on strengthening our defence forces

The point is not the message which is to be sent, but whether we are capable of an effective and sustained campaign. You cannot wake up one fine morning and decide to go to war. You have to prepare for war.

State of preparedness

Last year, the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Defence noted that 68% of our equipment in the defence forces was in the 'vintage category'. It also pointed out that we do not have sufficient ammu-

nition to support 10 days of war with Pakistan. We are supposed to have 42 squadrons in the Air Force, but have 33 which are operational, of which there are nine that should already have been phased out, which means they are being pressed into service well beyond their shelf life. So, we have roughly 24 squadrons when we should have had 42. There are comparable deficits across the board in all the armed forces. That is the state of our preparedness. If we continually invested in the defence forces, the option of war

would have been real. But we have been spending next to nothing on strengthening our defence forces. We are in deficit in every aspect. Wars are not fought by men alone in the modern age. Of course, we have men out there who are willing to fight and are willing to take all the risks they are told to take. But that doesn't mean they will prevail.

Let's suppose we declare war. China is clearly with Pakistan and even if they just start massing troops on our eastern borders, what will we do? We have a two-front war doctrine on paper, but it



is not backed by anything. Despite boastful claims to the contrary, we do not have the material capacity to fight a two-front war. Not only must we be prepared to fight a two-front war, we must have the capacity to prevail in such a war. Only then does war become an option. You can't decide after a terrorist strike that you will go to war. You have to prepare for war. Then, if a situation like this arises, without boasting about it, you declare war.

Of course, there is this whole argument that Pakistan has a nuclear umbrella. But I don't think that is a

deterrent to war from our side. We also have a nuclear umbrella. I don't see China trembling and saying India is a nuclear country, we must not do anything to provoke it. The nuclear issue is not an issue.

The decision is political

The capacity to prevail in a confrontation is an issue. If that is absent, talking of going to war is a waste of breath. Political leaders are running an electoral campaign, and by striking many postures, they think they will win votes. But they are only going to be exposed. Nowhere in the world does the army decide to go to war. Political leaders do not say, we give the army

a free hand. War is an act of political intent. The army fights wars. It does not decide whether or not to go to war. That decision is a political one, and this has already been made for us. It is made every year when we announce our Budget and make miserly defence allocations.

Today, even where we talk about specific acquisitions, these would only partially meet our requirements of 15 or 20 years ago, not our requirements today. So, how is war even an option? Of course, if we are forced, the armed forces will fight, but they would have to do so with both hands tied.

As told to Anuradha Raman

IT'S COMPLICATED



MANMOHAN BAHADUR
is retired Air Vice
Marshal, and
Additional Director
General, Centre for Air
Power Studies

If we consider war, we must think rationally about its impact and the desired end result

Is the terrorist act in Pulwama an act of war? Is it akin to the 2001 attack on Parliament, which, being an attack on India's symbol of democracy, was considered as one and Operation Parakram was launched? In one sense, the attack in Pulwama may not be an act of war because, though the number of brave Indians lost was far too many (and even one life lost is one too many), Parliament carries an indelible significance of India's nationhood. However, the attack, if seen as a dare to India's military power and to the Indian government's

writ, could be termed an act of war because its sheer audacity makes it a strike on India's pride as a sovereign independent nation.

Nations cannot be reformed but managed. Germany and Japan are exceptions, but it took World War II, tens of thousands of lives, and trillions of dollars to make them democratic entities. The shrill cries for emasculating Pakistan so that it stops aiding terrorism from its soil are not grounded in reality. This also does not mean accepting the status quo of the past decades, with Pakistan-aided terrorists killing In-

dians on and off.

Issues to consider

Four basic issues have to be taken into account for taking a decision. First and foremost, what is the desired end state:



destruction of the Pakistan army, which yields real power, or an action that buys a greater duration of peace? Second, if war is the solution, what would be the economic and social impact on India? Third, India has international support now, but would that be the case in a long-drawn-out affair? China will never dump Pakistan due to its large economic and geopolitical stakes in Islamabad. The U.S.,

though it has professed its strategic partnership with India, has made its exit from Afghanistan its first priority. It needs Pakistan in its talks with the Taliban and hence there are limits to its support.

Russia, too, has its own interests in Kabul, especially after the American exit, and hence requires Pakistan as an intermediary. Thus, geopolitically, Pakistan has the upper hand in pulling the power strings. Finally, should cold, calculated logic decide the future course of action or should public pressure and electoral calculations be the catalysts?

The answer to the last question is simple, though vital: national inter-

ests override every other argument. The answers to the other questions are governed by the following facts. If escalation occurs through kinetic action, there would obviously be a loss of human lives – and India needs to be prepared for that. Here, the red herring of the nuclear factor needs to be removed. In terms of economic costs, the 1999 Kargil conflict made India poorer by many tens of thousands of crores (no official data are available and estimates vary greatly). More importantly, we lost 527 brave Indians trying to re-take those hills. Diversion of monies (and they would be substantial and long-drawn-out) towards fighting efforts would denude finance required for

addressing the economic and social realities of India.

Some years of peace
So, is war an option? Of course it is, with the above points rationally thought through. Once the government decides to go down the kinetic path, the armed forces are ready. The 'reformation' of Pakistan vis-à-vis India is not possible but this may get us some years of peace. The peace dividend can be elongated by managing our diplomacy with other countries so that subsequently their acceptance of India's just position serves as a deterrent to Pakistan's inimical stance towards India.

Views are personal

SINGLE FILE

Holding a mirror to war

The technology of warfare has evolved, but grief and loss remain

ANJALI THOMAS



In the aftermath of the suicide bombing in Pulwama district on February 14, which killed 40 Central Reserve Police Force personnel, war seems to be on the collective mind of the nation with some baying for blood and others cautioning restraint.

Few words in the English language evoke such powerful emotions: patriotism and glory, love and hate, fear and anger, hope and despair. For centuries, poets have borne witness to the strife that humans have inflicted upon themselves since the birth of civilisation. Just as the technology of warfare has evolved from spears to drones, the tenor of war poems has changed too.

The Iliad, one of the oldest war poems, glorifies heroes. It begins, not with the abduction of Helen that sparked the battle of Troy, but with the wrath of Achilles. It ends, not with the rape of Troy, but the death of another hero, Hector. In 'The Charge of the Light Brigade,' Alfred Tennyson flogs the motif of heroism in the 1854 Battle of Balaclava: as the cavalry rides into the valley of Death knowing that someone had blundered, theirs was not to reason why, "theirs but to do and die."

World War I poetry began on a patriotic note too, but soldier-poets – half buried in the trenches and witness to the slaughter that their generals had sent them to – began to revolt. Wilfred Owen upended the Roman poet Horace's view of patriotism: "My friend, you would not tell with such high zest/To children ardent for some desperate glory,/The old Lie: *Dulce et decorum est Pro patria mori* [It is sweet and fitting to die for one's country]."

Even for the triumphant, the battlefield is a place that births nightmares. In the poem, 'The King Speaks to the Scribe,' by Keki N. Daruwalla, Emperor Ashoka contemplates the cost of his victory at Kalinga: "The battlefield stank so that heaven/had to hold a cloth to its nose. I trod/this plain, dark and glutinous with gore,/my chariot-wheels squelching in the bloody mire."

By World War II, the instruments used in battle had changed. Planes and submarines provided distance from the violence, drowning out the agony of the dying. Today, drones have dehumanised war into video games. The heroism and horror in war poetry has given way to cynicism, satire, and alienation.

One emotion, however, remains unchanged: loss. Achilles mourned the death of his best friend. The World War I poets mourned the loss of innocence. Sarojini Naidu, in her 1915 poem, 'The Gift of India', gives voice to the motherland who grieves for the soldiers that have been torn from her breast to the "drum-beats of duty sabres." Hatred may fuel a war, but what remains loss and grief. Our failure to acknowledge this by allowing the narrative to be taken over by an army of trolls is a disservice to the nation. As Mr. Daruwalla writes in 'At War': "...haven't we enough on our plate/without having to think of war/and blood-stained jihad?"

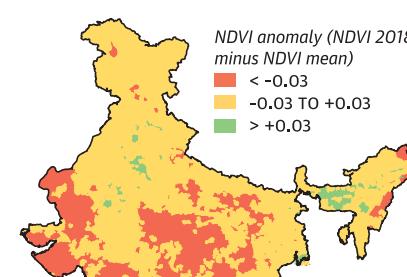


DATA POINT

Good crop, bad crop

No green shoots

The map depicts the change in vegetation in 2018 compared to the mean vegetation between 2010 and 2017, in 4,449 blocks across all districts in the country. This change is called NDVI anomaly. Blocks in red had sparser or weaker vegetation in 2018 than the mean. Blocks in green had thicker or healthier vegetation in 2018 than the mean. Blocks in yellow had negligible change in 2018 from the mean. Sparser vegetation means that the quantity of crops is affected. Weaker vegetation means that the quality of crops is affected.



The blocks with NDVI anomaly in red mostly match with those which had inferior soil moisture (see earlier data point on February 6).

The Normalised Difference Vegetation Index (NDVI) is used to measure the health and vitality of vegetation. Healthy or dense vegetation reflects more near-infrared light (NIR) but less red light (RED) as chlorophyll absorbs RED. On the other hand, if the vegetation is weak or sparse, the NIR reflection is less and the RED reflection is more. The NDVI combines these two reflections into one value using the following equation:

$$\text{NDVI} = \frac{\text{NIR} - \text{RED}}{\text{NIR} + \text{RED}}$$

This value will always be between +1 and -1. A positive value indicates healthy or dense vegetation and a negative value indicates the opposite.

We calculated the NDVI value for June to December 2018 (both the Kharif and Rabi seasons) and compared it with the mean NDVI value for the same months from 2010 to 2017.

Quantifying the difference

The higher the share of blocks with sparser or weaker vegetation in a State, the higher the possibility of farm distress. The table shows the percentage of blocks in each State which had sparser or weaker vegetation in 2018 compared to the 2010-2017 mean. For example, in Gujarat, 70% of blocks had sparser or weaker vegetation in 2018 than the mean. This shows that the crops in those blocks in 2018 either lacked the quality achieved or were lower in quantity compared to the mean period

State	%	State	%
Gujarat	70.2	Jharkhand	25.8
A.P.	66.8	U.P.	22.7
Chhattisgarh	64.6	Bihar	21.2
Maharashtra	56.2	Arunachal	18.8
Kerala	52.4	Rajasthan	15.1
M.P.	49.6	Tamil Nadu	9.7
Odisha	47.7	J&K	7.1
Manipur	40.0	Himachal	5.3
India avg.	38.2	Uttarakhand	5.0
Nagaland	36.4	West Bengal	4.0
Karnataka	26.0	Assam	1.2

Pinch of salt

While the lack of soil moisture is an accurate indicator of drought, NDVI anomaly is not. For example, 52% of the blocks in Kerala had sparser or weaker vegetation in 2018 than the mean despite heavy rains. This is because floods also affect vegetation as they reduce crop area.

Maps, data sourced from MODIS (NASA EOSDIS LP DAAC) and processed by Raj Bhagat Palanichamy

FROM The Hindu ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO FEBRUARY 22, 1969

President Ayub not to seek re-election

President Ayub Khan of Pakistan to-day [February 21, Rawalpindi] announced that he would not seek re-election as President when his present term expires this year-end. In an unscheduled broadcast from Radio Pakistan, he said his decision was final and irrevocable. President Ayub told his 100-million people that they would be free to elect a person of

FROM PAGE ONE

Now, all personnel of CAPF can avail flights

The MHA order said it "has approved the entitlement of air travel on Delhi-Srinagar, Srinagar-Delhi, Jammu-Srinagar and Srinagar-Jammu sectors to all the personnel of the CAPFs."

This includes their journey for joining duty, transfer, tour or going on leave.

As many as 65,000 Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) personnel are deployed in the State as part of 65 battalions, apart from units of the Border Security Force, Indo-Tibetan Border Police, Central Industrial Security Force, Sashastra Seema Bal and the National Security Guard. The MHA said the new facility is in addition to the existing air courier services for CAPFs where an entire aircraft is

booked for the force personnel from either Delhi or Jammu to Srinagar and back.

7.8 lakh personnel

A statement on Home Minister Rajnath Singh's official Twitter handle said the decision will "benefit approximately 7.8 lakh paramilitary personnel of the ranks of constable, head constable and assistant sub-inspector who were otherwise not eligible earlier."

The Ministry said that for the Jammu and Kashmir sector, an air courier service was already available for CAPF jawans and this was extended in December, 2017 to cover more routes: Delhi-Jammu, Jammu-Srinagar, Srinagar-Jammu and Jammu-Delhi.

SC to hear plea on J&K students' security

The Jammu and Kashmir administration confirmed that a large number of distress calls had been received from students in Uttarakhand.

The court may also hear, on Friday, a PIL plea filed by Vineet Dhanda seeking an independent probe led by a retired apex court judge into the Pulwama attack.

Investigate lapses

Mr. Dhanda wants the apex court to set up the judicial commission to investigate any lapses at the local level and probe the "role played

by Indian nationals in helping the terrorists from Pakistan in executing" the Pulwama attack.

The petitioner has also sought an appropriate direction to the Centre to submit a "detailed report regarding the action taken against the All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) leaders who are actively involved in anti-national activities."

The plea also wants a direction to freeze the accounts belonging to the APHC and its leaders and submit an action taken report before the apex court.

Will hear review pleas on Rafale verdict: SC

The CJI made it clear at the time that the delay in listing the case was not the court's doing but that of the lawyers concerned. It has been over a month since the review pleas were filed in the court.

There is also no word about the government's application filed on December 15, 2018, seeking a correction in the Rafale judgment, with the government so far not having made any oral mention before the court for an early hearing of its application.

This belies the alacrity with which the government had returned to the apex court with its application on December 15 – the very next day after the judgment was pronounced.

In the application, the government claimed that the court's judgment had erred in English grammar to "misinterpret" information submitted to it in a sealed cover about the pricing of the 36 Rafale jets.

The review petitions filed by Yashwant Sinha, Arun Shourie, Prashant Bhushan and Aam Admi party MP Sanjay Singh also lies in wait in court. These petitions

contend that the apex court's judgment is riddled with 'fault lines'.

'Non-existent report'

The petitioners want the court to reconsider its "erroneous" judgment, which relies on a "non-existent" CAG report to uphold the Rafale deal. The petitioners assert that the judgment based on a hypothetical CAG report was not merely a "clerical or arithmetical slip" but a substantial error and have therefore sought a "recall" of the verdict.

Observing that the CAG was an independent constitutional body accountable only to the Parliament, the petitioners said the government's claim that the CAG's final report on Rafale would be in a redacted form was simply untrue.

The government could not dictate to the CAG what should or should not be redacted, they argued.

The petitioners have also questioned the judgment's dismissal of the lack of a sovereign guarantee from the French government's side in the deal as being a "minor deviation".

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BSP to contest 38 seats in U.P. as SP settles for 37

However, in 2018, the SP wrested Phulpur and Gorakhpur with the support of the BSP and the Nishad Party in a by-poll, while in Kairana the RLD defeated the BJP as a united Opposition experimented in poll management.

The SP's seats include Kannauj, where Mr. Akhilesh Yadav is expected to contest, and Mainpuri, considered a stronghold of SP founder Mulayam Singh.

Mulayam's poser
Moments before the list was released, however, SP chief Akhilesh Yadav was once again embarrassed by his father Mulayam Singh, who questioned the distribution of seats, saying it would weaken the SP.

"On what basis were half

the seats given (to the BSP)," the SP patriarch asked, while addressing party workers at the party headquarters. The seats in the BSP's list of 38 include Saharanpur, Meerut, Aligarh, Bijnor, and Bulandshahr. Out of the 17 reserved (SC) seats in the State, the BSP is contesting 10 while the SP has got seven. The reserved seats include Agra, Nagina, and Bulandshahr.

While the BSP has no members in the current Lok Sabha, the SP has seven. The RLD holds the Kairana seat.

RJD vice-president Jayant Chaudhary said his party was regularly working for an "effective opposition unity" against the anti-farmer, anti-youth and anti-Dalit policies of the BJP government.

"On what basis were half

UN Security Council condemns Pulwama attack

Terming terrorism in all its forms as one of the most serious threats to international peace, it offers condolences

SRIRAM LAKSHMAN
NEW YORK

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) on Thursday issued a statement, which *The Hindu* had early access to, condemning the Pulwama attack and underlining the need to hold those responsible accountable. Significantly Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) has been named on the statement as having taken responsibility for the attack.

"The members of the Security Council condemned in the strongest terms the heinous and cowardly suicide bombing in Jammu and Kashmir, which resulted in

over 40 Indian paramilitary forces dead and dozens wounded on February 14, 2019, for which Jaish-e-Mohammed has claimed responsibility," the statement said.

Prolonged negotiations

Sources at the UN said the UNSC statement was released after prolonged Security Council negotiations. China had wanted additional time to think through as it had some concerns, they said. France is also working, in parallel, to sanction JeM chief Masood Azhar at the UNSC. Similar action against



Condemning terrorism in all its forms as one of the most serious threats to international peace, the UNSC offered its condolences to those impacted by the attack.

"The members of the Security Council expressed their deepest sympathy and condolences to the families of the victims, as well as to the Indian people and the government of India, and wished a speedy and full recovery to those who were injured," the statement said.

In what appears to be a thinly veiled reference to Pakistan, the Council has asked

countries to cooperate actively with the Government of India.

"The members of the Security Council underlined the need to hold perpetrators, organizers, financiers and sponsors of these reprehensible acts of terrorism accountable and bring them to justice, and urged all States, in accordance with their obligations under international law and relevant Security Council resolutions, to cooperate actively with the Government of India and all other relevant authorities in this regard," the statement read.

"The members of the Security Council reiterated that any acts of terrorism are criminal and unjustifiable, regardless of their motivation, wherever, whenever and by whomsoever committed. They reaffirmed the need for all States to combat by all means, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and other obligations under international law, including international human rights law, international refugee law and international humanitarian law, threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts," it said.

As terror hit Pulwama, Modi shot film in Corbett, says Cong.

'He was staring at gharials up to 6.30 p.m. Is there any PM in the world like this?"

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI



War of words: Congress spokesperson Randeep Singh Surjewala, right, in New Delhi on Thursday. ■ R.V. MOORTHY

Exactly one week after the Pulwama suicide bombing, the Congress on Thursday launched a blistering attack on Prime Minister Narendra Modi, asking him to explain why he had continued participating in a documentary film shoot at the Corbett National Park in Uttarakhand even after the terror strike.

The Congress also alleged that the government "forgot" to mention Pakistan as the main source of terror in the joint statement that Prime Minister Modi and Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman had issued on Wednesday.

Busy picnicking'
"What is unpardonable is that when the entire nation was stunned by the Pulwama terror attack last Thursday, Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi was busy picnicking in Corbett National Park, Ramnagar, Nainital and was

participating in a photo shoot of Discovery Channel," Congress's chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala told a press conference. "He was staring at gharials [crocodiles] up to 6.30 p.m. Is there any PM in the world like this?" asked Mr. Surjewala, releasing a photo showing Mr. Modi at Corbett.

"He [Mr. Modi] had tea and snacks in the Circuit House till 6.45 p.m. Not only this, PM Modi was enjoying a boat ride from Kalagarh dam

to Dikhal along with Discovery Channel head and the camera crew who were filming Shri Narendra Modi," Mr. Surjewala said. "While the country was picking up the remains of our soldiers, the Prime Minister was busy with his propaganda and publicity," he added.

The Congress also alleged that the government didn't declare national mourning because the Prime Minister didn't want to cancel his public events. Asserting that

the government spent ₹5,000 crore on publicity, Mr. Surjewala charged the government with not spending a few lakh rupees on air-lifting the jawans, which could have saved their lives.

"Modiji didn't announce national mourning so that political rallies and inauguration sprees at the expense of the public exchequer by the Prime Minister would not be cancelled. He came an hour late at Delhi airport to offer homage to the Pulwama martyrs as he was busy politicking in Jhansi," alleged Mr. Surjewala.

The Congress also posed a series of questions.

"Why has PM Modi, the National Security Adviser and the Home Minister not owned responsibility for the unpardonable failure of national security and intelligence apparatus? Why was Jaish-e-Mohammed's video threat issued 48 hours before the Pulwama attack ignored by the government?"

'Surjewala's speech is similar to that of Imran'

Law Minister makes countercharge

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI



Ravi Shankar Prasad

The BJP responded to the Congress' allegations on the government's conduct over the Pulwama attack by accusing the latter of trying to undermine the morale of the armed forces at a time when the world was "firmly standing" with India.

The party fielded Union Law Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad to counter the Congress' statement accusing the government of intelligence failure.

"After maintaining a facade for five days that it stands by the government and armed forces, the true face of the Congress has been exposed. When the country is united, morale of security forces is high, the Congress is exposing its true face," said Mr. Prasad.

"The style maybe different, but the content of the speeches of the Congress spokesperson and that of Imran Khan [Pakistan Prime Minister] bears a striking resemblance," the Law Minister said.

Withdrawing security a retrograde step: Omar

'Will weaken political activity in Valley'

PEERZADA ASHIQ
SRINAGAR

president and former Chief Minister Omar Abdullah.

The administration on Wednesday withdrew security of 155 political persons and activists, including IAS topper Shah Faesal and PDP's Waheed Parra. Around 18 separatists' security was also withdrawn.

Mr. Abdullah said he has no doubt this step was taken without taking into consideration inputs from Central and State intelligence agencies, "which can only mean it's been done for political purposes and there is an element of pick and choose at play here".

"Withdrawal of security to mainstream political workers and office-bearers is a retrograde step that will only weaken political activity in the Valley. This is regardless of the fact that no one from NC has had their security withdrawn in yesterday's list," said NC vice-

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IN BRIEF



'Gandhi's lifestyle did not leave a carbon footprint'

SEOUL

Mahatma Gandhi's lifestyle is a lesson for the world facing the challenge of global warming, as he lived such a life that he did not leave any carbon footprint, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Thursday. He unveiled a bust of Mahatma Gandhi at the Yonsei University here along with South Korean President Moon Jae-in and former U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. PTI

By booth loot, I meant managing votes: Azad

PATNA

The suspended BJP MP Kirti Azad, who on February 18 joined the Congress, told *The Hindu* on Thursday that by the "booth loot" remark he had meant "managing votes" but the media got him "wrong." Mr. Azad, on February 19, said there was a time in Bihar when Congress workers used to "loot polling booths" and he and his father had benefited from it.

NIA searches 10 locations in Jharkhand, Bengal

NEW DELHI

The NIA conducted searches at 10 locations in Jharkhand and West Bengal on Thursday in connection with a terror funding case involving the banned People's Liberation Front of India. The residences and offices of close aides and companies associated with PLFI chief Dinesh Gope in Ranchi, Gumla, Khunti and Kolkata were searched for their alleged role in the financing of the PLFI, said an NIA spokesperson.

Triple talaq ordinance repromulgated

NEW DELHI

The ordinance making the practice of instant triple talaq a penal offence for Muslim men was issued for the third time on Thursday. The Law Ministry said President Ram Nath Kovind has signed the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Second Ordinance, 2019. On Tuesday, the Cabinet gave its nod to re-issuing of the contentious triple talaq ordinance. It has been reissued for the third time in less than a year.

Lakhs of forest dwellers face eviction

People across 21 States may be affected by the Supreme Court order that rejected their claim

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL

NEW DELHI

A recent Supreme Court order may lead to the eviction of lakhs of persons belonging to the Scheduled Tribes (STs) and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (OTFDs) categories across 21 States – their claim as forest dwellers have been rejected under the Forest Rights Act of 2006.

A three-judge Bench of Justices Arun Mishra, Navin Sinha and Indira Banerjee on February 13 had ordered the Chief Secretaries of many of these States to evict those whose claims as forest dwellers have been finally rejected under the law. The court directed that the eviction should be carried out on or before July 24, 2019, that is, the next date of hearing.

File affidavits by July 12'

The Bench, in a 19-page order, cautioned the States that if the evictions are not carried out within the stipulated time, "the matter would be viewed seriously."

The court ordered the States' Chief Secretaries to also file affidavits by July 12,



In case eviction is not carried out, the matter would be viewed seriously by this Court

SUPREME COURT BENCH

explaining why the rejected claimants were not evicted even after their claims were junked.

The court ordered the Forest Survey of India (FSI) to make a satellite survey and place on record the "encroachment positions." It directed FSI to also place on record the position "after the eviction as far as possible."

Section 6 of the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act of 2006 shows a multi-layered and hierarchical procedure for recognition or rejection of forest-dweller claims starting at the gram sabha level with multiple appellate committees at the State level.

The Act is intended to pro-

Talking tough

Some of the directions given by the Supreme Court to the Chief Secretaries of 21 States

1 Give a lowdown on how many claims of Scheduled Tribes (STs) and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (OTFDs) have been adjudicated under the Forest Rights Act, 2006

2 Give the status of eviction of people whose claims have been rejected under the Act

3 Explain in affidavits why even after attaining finality, eviction was not done

4 The Chief Secretaries should ensure that eviction of rejected claimants are carried out. They have to file compliance reports on or before July 24, 2019, which is the next date of hearing

gle order of eviction has been complied though 66,351 claims across 1,14,400 acres of forest land have been rejected. "Once orders of eviction have been passed, the eviction ought to have taken place," the Supreme Court said. Likewise in Assam, 22,398 claims of STs and 5,136 claims of OTFDs across 10,128 hectares and 561.4 hectares, respectively, were rejected.

In Tamil Nadu, 7,148 claims of STs and 1,881 claims of OTFDs were rejected. In Karnataka, the number of rejected claims of OTFDs far surpass that of STs at 1.42 lakh to 35,521. Over 82,000 claims of STs were rejected in Telangana alone. Kerala's statistics show that out of 39,999 claims, 894 were rejected. West Bengal records the rejection of 50,288 claims of STs and 35,856 claims of OTFDs. Other States under the spotlight are Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Tripura, Jharkhand, Himachal Pradesh, Goa, Chhattisgarh, Bihar and Gujarat.

'A significant and successful visit'

Saudi Prince showed sensitivity: sources

SUHASINI HAIDAR

NEW DELHI

Saudi crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman showed "considerable sensitivity to India's terror concerns" during his one-day visit to Delhi, sources said here on Thursday. Among the highlights of the Crown Prince's visit, they said, was the structure it gave the India-KSA (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia) strategic partnership signed in 2010, substantial enhancement of cooperation on maritime security and intelligence sharing, and a commitment to invest in projects of up to \$100 billion in India.

In come for sharp criticism from the Opposition for not ensuring stronger language on terrorism in the Crown Prince's statement on Wednesday, which did not refer to the Pulwama attack on a CRPF convoy of February 14 that left 40 soldiers dead, and made no references to Pakistan and the Jaish-e-Mohammed group that claimed responsibility for the attack. However, the joint statement issued later in the day contained a "strong condemnation" by both Prince Mohammad Bin Salman and Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

"Both sides called on all states to reject the use of terrorism against other countries; dismantle terrorism



Saudi crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman

infrastructures where they happen to exist and to cut off any kind of support and financing to the terrorists perpetrating terrorism from all territories against other states; and bring perpetrators of acts of terrorism to justice," the statement added, with a new reference on condemning "state sponsorship of terror."

According to the new structures agreed upon, three Ministerial groups will now be set up between the two governments and will meet regularly as a part of the new Strategic Partnership Council.

"This was a significant and successful visit," the sources said. "The enhanced focus on the relationship is due to the personal rapport which [Prince Mohammad Bin Salman] has had with Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

"Both sides called on all states to reject the use of terrorism against other countries; dismantle terrorism

Tens of thousands to be affected in Odisha

SATYASUNDAR BARIK

BHUBANESWAR

Lakhs of people residing in Odisha's forested regions are worried over possible eviction from their homeland in the wake of the Supreme Court's recent order on the Forest Rights Act. A total of 1,45,524 applications seeking recognition of Individual Forest Rights (IFR) have been rejected in the State by the Supreme Court.

"The State government must come to our rescue and help review our applications immediately," said Khageswar Majhi of Gadajore village under Nuapada district, whose application has been rejected.

Activists, however, felt that four months may be too little time to complete verifi-

cation, re-verification or review process pending with the State government.

"Lack of sufficient evidence has been found to be the cause of rejection in 50,492 applications. People residing in forest areas belong to the lowest strata of society. They have no knowledge of documenting their properties. Under this circumstance, considerate view should be taken while reviewing their claims," said Y. Giri Rao, a leading activist for people's right on forest resources.

He said the statutory time frame provided under the FRA for the review of rejected applications at the gram sabha, sub-divisional and district levels would take around 200 days.

Activists, however, felt that four months may be too little time to complete verifi-

CPI(M) demands ordinance to protect adivasis after SC order

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The CPI(M) on Thursday demanded that the Centre enact an ordinance to protect all adivasis and traditional forest dwellers in the wake of a Supreme Court order directing States to ensure the eviction of forest dwellers whose claims had been rejected.

"Adivasis are being punished for no fault of theirs but because of the utter failure of Central and State governments to implement the law," the CPI(M) Politburo said in a statement here.

According to latest figures from December 2018, out of a total of 42.19 lakh claims received across the country, only 18.89 lakh or just over

40% of the claims had been accepted. The CPI(M) contended that the rejections were often arbitrary, against the recommendations of the gram sabha and driven by lobbies, who want to handover the forests to private parties and businesses.

The party also alleged that the Central govern-

ment's legal counsel was "deliberately" absent on the critical date of hearing.

"It will be highly unjust to adivasis and traditional forest dwellers if an ordinance is not passed immediately to protect them from eviction," Politburo member Brinda Karat wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

These six communities – Adivasi, Deori, Gorkha, Misling, Moran, and Sonowal



Kachari – mostly inhabit Namsai and Changlang districts of Arunachal Pradesh on the border with Assam.

The 18 organisations have alleged that the joint high power committee, led by Environment and Forest Minister Nabam Rebia, to look into the matter had submitted its report without proper verification of facts.

The protesters have called for the report to be rectified before it is tabled in the Assembly.

EC allots symbols to 27 unrecognised parties

Chappals, tea filter, chapati roller, gas stove and phone charger are among the newly-allotted ones

DEVESH K. PANDEY

NEW DELHI

Twenty-seven registered unrecognised political parties have been allotted symbols ranging from chappals, tea filter and chapati roller to gas stove and phone charger, for the coming Lok Sabha election.

The applications of the 27 parties for concession in the allotment of a common symbol to their candidates in the general elections had been accepted by the Commiss-

sion, says an EC order.

Of these, 12 parties propose to field their candidates in Uttar Pradesh. Rashtriya Janshanti Party, which wants to contest all the 80 seats in the State, has been allotted the Stool as its election symbol.

Swabhimani Paksha has been allotted Bat as the symbol for six parliamentary constituencies in Maharashtra.

Kruppa Party has got Chappals as its symbol for 21 constituencies in Odisha; All-India Pasumpon Munnetra Kazhagam and All-India Makal Naivalu Katchi in Tamil

Nadu get Hat and Bottle respectively; Rashtriya Janvika Party and Apna Adhikar Party in Bihar have been given Flute and Brush respectively.

HHP gets Bread In Gujarat, Vyavastha Parivartan Party has been allotted the Phone Charger as the symbol for 24 constituencies.

Hindustan Hamara Party (HH) alone gets a common symbol, Bread, for all the 543 parliamentary constituencies it is fielding candidates in.

"However, the said symbol shall be available for allotment as free symbol to other candidates in the constituencies where the aforesaid party does not actually set up its candidates. In the event of the above said party failing to meet the requirement of the minimum number of candidates...then the said common symbol shall not be available to its candidates," the order says.

The meeting, originally meant to be held in Mohali (Punjab) along with a public rally, will now be a closed-door meeting where leaders will also brainstorm on a common strategy. Left parties are unlikely to attend, given the presence of the Trinamool Congress (TMC).

Apart from senior Congress leaders including party chief Rahul Gandhi and Sonia Gandhi, TMC chief Mamata Banerjee, Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) chief Arvind Kejriwal and RJD's Tejaswi Yadav are likely to attend.

also coincides with the Congress party's sharp attack on the Modi government, questioning the security lapses in the Pulwama suicide attack.

The move comes amid the opposition's assessment that the ruling party may seek to take electoral advantage of the prevailing mood in the country. "The government may go for military action and arouse a heightened sense of nationalism to win the elections," said a senior Opposition requesting anonymity.

Lt. Gen. D.S. Hooda's appointment

cited by the government and the BJP as a proof of its 'muscular' approach to terrorism as opposed to Congress' 'soft approach'.

In response, the Congress' official Twitter handle put out two graphs claiming that militancy in J&K had seen a dramatic increase under the NDA. It claimed that while the number of terror strikes in the State in 2013 was 170, it went up to 614 in 2018, a rise of 260%.

The 2016 surgical strike was cited by the government and the BJP as a proof of its 'muscular' approach to terrorism as opposed to Congress' 'soft approach'.

The move comes amid the opposition's assessment that the ruling party may seek to take electoral advantage of the prevailing mood in the country.

"The government may go for military action and arouse a heightened sense of nationalism to win the elections," said a senior Oppo-

Opposition meet to decide CMP

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Opposition leaders will meet in Delhi on February 26 to discuss the current political situation and work on a common minimum programme (CMP) of the anti-BJP front.

The meeting, originally meant to be held in Mohali (Punjab) along with a public rally, will now be a closed-door meeting where leaders will also brainstorm on a common strategy. Left parties are unlikely to attend, given the presence of the Trinamool Congress (TMC).

Apart from senior Congress leaders including party chief Rahul Gandhi and Sonia Gandhi, TMC chief Mamata Banerjee, Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) chief Arvind Kejriwal and RJD's Tejaswi Yadav are likely to attend.

KERALA STATE SPORTS COUNCIL THIRUVANANTHAPURAM 14.02.2019

E Tenders are invited for the purchase of sports kit for coaches of Kerala State Sports Council, Thiruvananthapuram.

For more details please visit www.etenders.kerala.gov.in

Sd/- Secretary

(3263919/D3/18/I&PR)

Name of the work : Flare Connected PSVs & PICs/Leak Survey at CPCL, Manali.

Download start date : 22.02.2019

Pref Bid Meeting : 10.00 Hrs. on 04.03.2019

Date of submission : 11.00 Hrs. on 25.03.2019

NIT No. : CC 0008 19

Name of the work : Annual Rate Contract (ARC) for Operation & Maintenance (O&M) of CPCL's Desalination Plant at Kattupalli near Minjur, Chennai for a Period of Three Years (2019-22).

Download start date : 22.02.2019

Pref Bid Meeting : 10.00 Hrs. on 05.03.2019

Date of submission : 11.00 Hrs. on 25.03.2019

Notice Inviting E-Tender (Domestic)

Dhaka fire shows lapses in development

Illegal shops and overcrowding in Chawkbazar impeded firefighters' ability to put out the blaze

ASSOCIATED PRESS

A fire in Bangladesh that killed at least 70 people in the oldest part of the capital shows the lapses in public safety that continue to plague the South Asian country despite its rapid economic growth.

While the government of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina touts the garment factories and gleaming office towers in Dhaka's north side as signs of progress, illegal shops and overcrowding in Chawkbazar, one of the city's many warren-like southern districts, impeded firefighters' ability to put out Wednesday night's blaze, illustrating the country's uneven development.

Zoning laws

The government has zoning laws and regulations on the books, but has met public resistance when it tried to enforce them, Bangladesh planning experts said on Thursday.

Business owners in old Dhaka routinely bribe government employees responsible for building oversight, they said.

Mueller could submit report to Attorney-General next week

REUTERS
WASHINGTON

The U.S. Department of Justice may announce as early as next week that Special Counsel Robert Mueller has given the Attorney-General his report on the federal Russia investigation, CNN said on Wednesday, citing unnamed sources.

After the expected announcement, U.S. Attorney General William Barr will review Mr. Mueller's findings and submit his own sum-



Heritage lost: Firefighters trying to douse the blaze in Dhaka, Bangladesh, on Thursday. ■ AP

After a warehouse storing flammable material caught fire in 2010 in Nimtoli, a district near Chawkbazar, killing at least 123 people, authorities promised to bring the area into compliance with building codes, and evict chemical warehouses from buildings where people lived.

Industrial facilities can't legally exist in areas that are

zoned residential, said Mohammed Manjur Morshed, an assistant professor of urban planning at Khulna University of Engineering and Technology.

Laws being flouted

"This type of thing happens, there's a big initiative to move everything out, and then after some time people forget about it and the go-

vernment is really not interested any more. It's like that," Mr. Morshed said.

In 2014, three people were killed and three others severely burned when a perfume warehouse on the third floor of a building in Chawkbazar caught fire. The following year, a fire gutted eight plastic factories. Mr. Morshed said government regulations are sufficient,

but are routinely flouted in Chawkbazar. The contrast between new and old Dhaka, the city's north and south sides, is stark, said Shafiq-Ur Rahman, an urban planning professor at Jahangirnagar University in Dhaka.

"As the area was developed continuously, there is very high population density and haphazard growth," he said. "You need to consider preservation to maintain the heritage, but this is not the first time. We have an unfortunate history, and we need to figure how to provide services, like access for firefighters."

A government eviction drive in 400-year-old Chawkbazar and other areas of old Dhaka to clear makeshift stalls from walkways was met with protests last May on the eve of Ramzan by business owners and residents.

According to local reports, some 500 illegal stands were evicted from the narrow streets. In response, hundreds of legal shops closed in protest. It was not immediately clear whether the death toll from Wednesday's blaze would affect the status quo in old Dhaka.

U.S. sanctions Indian man, parents over drug trafficking

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
WASHINGTON

The U.S. authorities imposed sanctions on Wednesday on an Indian man and his parents for their roles in an alleged global smuggling network for heroin, opioids and other drugs.

The U.S. Treasury Department said Jasmeet Hakimzada, who lives in the United Arab Emirates, is a "significant foreign narcotics traf-

ficker", who since 2008 has laundered hundreds of millions of dollars.

"Hakimzada's global drug trafficking and money laundering network has been involved in smuggling heroin and synthetic opioids around the world," Sigal Mandelker, the Treasury's Undersecretary for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence, said. Treasury designated Hakimzada's parents,

who also live in the UAE, as traffickers, describing the father as his "primary" trafficking and laundering partner and the mother as an officer for two front companies in India.

Hakimzada has allegedly smuggled heroin, cocaine, ephedrine, ketamine and synthetic opioids into the United States, Australia, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom, Treasury said.

Trump bars woman who joined IS from returning

Pompeo says Hoda Muthana is not an American citizen

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
WASHINGTON

President Donald Trump said on Wednesday he is barring a U.S.-born former Islamic State (IS) propagandist from returning home, making the highly unusual case that she is not a U.S. citizen.

Mr. Trump's refusal to admit 24-year-old Hoda Muthana will likely face legal challenges, with U.S. citizenship generally extremely difficult to lose.

Mr. Trump said on Twitter that he has "instructed" Secretary of State Mike Pompeo "not to allow Hoda Muthana back into the country" – a break with usual U.S. protocol not to comment on individuals' immigration issues.



Hoda Muthana. ■ NYT

orate on the legal rationale for not considering the Alabama native, who travelled to Syria on her U.S. passport, a citizen. But in a loophole that could boost the government case, Ms. Muthana's father had been an envoy from Yemen, and children of diplomats are not automatically granted citizenship.

Ms. Muthana's lawyer, Hassan Shibly, showed a birth certificate that demonstrated that she was born in New Jersey in 1994 and said her father had ceased being an envoy "months" before her birth. "She is a U.S. citizen. She had a valid passport. She may have broken the law and, if she has, she's willing to pay the price," Mr. Shibly said.

Anti-Zionism is a modern form of anti-Semitism, says Macron

France to adopt Holocaust remembrance group's definition

REUTERS
PARIS

France will adopt an international definition of anti-Semitism and look on anti-Zionism as one form of the hate crime, President Emmanuel Macron said.



French President Emmanuel Macron. ■ REUTERS

Welcoming Mr. Macron's actions, the World Jewish Congress said: "This is just the beginning of a long road ahead. Adopting this definition of anti-Semitism must be followed by concrete steps to encode into law and ensure that this is enforced."

The IHRA definition is not legally binding but does serve as an international guideline. Germany and Britain adopted the definition in texts in 2016, though the European Union in 2018 adopted a softer tone, calling the IHRA definition a "guidance tool" amid concern from some members that it could make criticism of Israeli policy, particularly with regards to Palestinians, difficult.

Speaking at a dinner attended by Jewish leaders on Wednesday, Mr. Macron said a surge in anti-Semitic attacks in France was unprecedented since the Second World War and promised a crackdown, including a new law to tackle hate speech on the Internet.

France will adopt the definition of anti-Semitism set by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA), he said, adding: "Anti-

Zionism is one of the modern forms of anti-Semitism."

The IHRA definition does not use the phrase "anti-Zionism" but does say denying the Jewish people their right to self-determination, "e.g., by claiming that the existence of a State of Israel is a racist endeavour", is anti-Semitic.

+ 'Pak. has a robust reconsideration system'

Islamabad's counsel in Jadhav case seeks dismissal of India's claim for relief

VIDYA RAM
THE HAGUE

Pakistan's counsel Khawar Qureshi and Attorney-General Anwar Mansoor Khan concluded the Kulbhushan Jadhav hearings at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) on Thursday, by calling for India's claim for relief to be dismissed or declared inadmissible, on the basis of the appeal options being available to him in Pakistan. The two cited an FIR that had been filed at a civilian court in Pakistan.

"India seeks relief which they cannot receive from the court," insisted Mr. Khan.

The legal team also launched a wider attack on India, invoking the Kathua rape case, the Samjhauta Express bombing, the Gujarat

riots and the use of pellet guns in Kashmir as instances of failures of India's judicial system and human rights record. Mr. Qureshi began with a personal attack on India and a number of its senior figures, including National Security Adviser Ajit Doval and India's counsel Harish Salve, accusing New Delhi of inhabiting a "wonderland" in "desperation and total disregard for the truth".

Revision system
"Pakistan has a very robust revision and reconsideration system," Mr. Khan told the court. In Pakistan – as is the case in other countries – military court proceedings are sometimes subject to state security considerations and therefore secrecy is

maintained, he said.

"We want cooperation with India, we want peaceful coexistence with India but that will not [happen] until India stops sending serving officers across the border for espionage and sabotage," Foreign Office spokesperson Mohammad Faisal said following the hearing.

"India's position is that of a wonderland. Indeed it is of a round character with a fragile cranium. Pakistan is not the one who brought him into this court," Mr. Qureshi said, in an apparent reference to Mr. Salve, who had on Wednesday slammed the language and tone of Mr. Qureshi's opening arguments.

Judgments by the ICJ are made on an average within six months of the hearings concluding, though this can vary from a shorter period to a couple of years.

Decision is binding

The decision of the court is binding, and non-appealable, though it is possible to make a request for interpretation if there is a dispute between the two sides as to what the judgment means or what its scope is.

There is also a possibility to request a review of the judgment if a "matter comes to light" that the court was previously unaware of and which could be a "decisive factor".

While requests for interpretation have on occasion been accepted, no requests for review have been successful to date.

'Study Xi' app is an instant hit

It has been downloaded 44 million times since January

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
BEIJING

A propaganda app that puts China's President Xi Jinping in anyone's pockets has become a hit in the country – with a helpful nudge from Communist Party officials.

Millions have downloaded the app, which tracks the amount of time users spend browsing inspirational quotes from the Chinese leader and watching short videos of his speeches and travels.

Pressure to install
Some people say they felt pressured to download it, others hope it can help their careers, and local government officials have been heavily promoting it.

The app's name – 'Xuexi Qiangguo' or 'study to make China strong' – is a pun as the Chinese word for studying, Xuexi, can also be read as "study Xi".

It has been downloaded nearly 44 million times on Apple and Android devices since its launch in January.



The app is being promoted by dozens of provincial governments. ■ AFP

according to the Beijing-based statistics provider Qimai Technology.

"It's a perfect example of propaganda in the Xi era... that appeals to China's large online population," said Maanya Koetsier, who tracks social trends in China as editor of 'What's on Weibo'. Users must register with their mobile phone number and name their employer. An employee at a state media company said she posts her scores on her WeChat social media account because she is in line for a promotion and

hopes her bosses will see she has "the right mindset". One state worker said she felt under pressure to use the app, although it was not officially mandatory for civil servants.

'Xi cult'
Li Xin, who works for a state-run oil company, said it promotes a "Xi cult".

Dozens of provincial and county governments across the country have held workshops to promote the app in recent weeks, local media reports showed.

Even China's e-commerce giant Alibaba, whose founder Jack Ma is a Communist Party member, is making a contribution: job ads on the company's website shows it has been hiring software developers to work on the app. While "Study Xi" became the top app in Apple's China app store last month, it only managed to get an average rating of 2.4 stars out of five. Ratings and reviews for the app were disabled last week.

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MARKET WATCH

	21-2-2019	% CHANGE
Sensex	35,898	0.40
US Dollar	71.24	-0.18
Gold	34,830	1.04
Brent oil	67.03	0.22

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	355.75	1.00
Asian Paints	1397.80	0.90
Axist Bank	697.20	-3.15
Bajaj Auto	2813.95	39.25
Bajaj Finserv	6169.10	170.65
Bajaj Finance	2654.70	48.55
Bharti Airtel	309.90	0.90
BPCL	335.30	-5.80
Cipla	545.50	4.40
Coal India	213.70	-1.25
Dr Reddy's Lab	2586.30	61.15
Eicher Motors	20447.45	-81.10
GAIL (India)	331.70	2.00
Grasim Ind	747.80	17.10
HCL Tech.	1053.40	-4.55
HDFC	1891.45	20.95
HDFC Bank	2115.90	7.55
Hero MotoCorp	2641.25	17.50
Hindalco	194.40	1.40
HPLC	222.95	2.00
Hind Unilever	1754.70	21.20
Indiabulls HFL	683.95	38.75
ICICI Bank	351.30	6.10
IndusInd Bank	1471.55	-9.25
Bharti Infratech	312.55	-5.65
Infosys	733.45	-7.25
Indian Oil Corp	131.10	1.80
ITC	275.05	-0.80
JSW Steel	277.05	3.00
Kotak Bank	1289.15	-0.60
L&T	1284.10	7.55
M&M	634.20	0.65
Maurti Suzuki	6801.55	-48.35
NTPC	136.45	-0.75
ONGC	146.95	2.90
PowerGrid Corp	181.80	0.00
Reliance Ind	1246.90	12.55
State Bank	268.00	0.30
Sun Pharma	429.70	7.35
Tata Motors	169.70	4.90
Tata Steel	498.85	7.70
TCS	1914.20	-0.55
Tech Mahindra	820.65	8.25
Titan	1042.50	9.75
UltraTech Cement	3631.25	57.90
Welspun	826.25	3.50
Vedanta	164.60	4.35
Wipro	374.55	2.35
ZEE Bank	215.15	-2.70
Zee Entertainment	446.50	1.45

EXCHANGE RATES

Indicative direct rates in rupees a unit except yen at 4 p.m. on February 21
CURRENCY TT BUY TT SELL
US Dollar.....71.05.....71.37
Euro.....80.64.....81.03
British Pound.....92.75.....93.20
Japanese Yen (100).....64.15.....64.45
Chinese Yuan.....10.58.....10.63
Swiss Franc.....70.98.....71.31
Singapore Dollar.....52.54.....52.78
Canadian Dollar.....53.89.....54.14
Malaysian Ringgit.....17.42.....17.51

Source: Indian Bank

BULLION RATES CHENNAI

February 21 rates in rupees with previous rates in parentheses
Retail Silver (1g).....43.5.....(44.1)
22 ct gold (1 g).....3206.....(3226)

PSBs funding may not solve legacy loan issues'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI

The government's decision to infuse ₹48,200 crore in public sector banks (PSBs) will improve the provision levels for non-performing assets and boost loan growth, but may not address the legacy loan problems, ratings agency Moody's Investors Service said.

"The capital infusions will help the PSBs meet regulatory capital requirements and improve provisioning coverage," said Alka Anbarasu, a VP and senior credit officer with Moody's. "However, many weaker banks will continue to find it difficult to generate sufficient capital internally to meet their capital needs," Ms. Anbarasu said.

Moody's estimates that PSBs will require a total of about ₹20,000 crore to ₹25,000 crore in external capital in fiscal 2020 to maintain common equity tier-1 ratios of about 8.5% under Basel III.

Will try to pass on rate cut: banks

Post MPC meet, only SBI reduced interest rate on home loans of up to ₹30 lakh

MANOJ SAHA MUMBAI

Banks are set to reduce interest rates, particularly on retail loans like home and automobiles, following an interaction with the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) top brass on Thursday.

Commercial banks have been reluctant to lower interest rates even after the central bank had reduced the key policy rate or the repo rate by 25 bps to 6.25% earlier this month. RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das met the chief executives of banks on Thursday to discuss transmission of the monetary policy rates.

"The central bank is expecting monetary transmission to happen. We have told them we will look into it," said a banker who was present at the meeting.

While banks have been reluctant to reduce the lending rate after RBI rate cut, during the rate hike cycle of 2018 – when the RBI had hiked interest rates by 50 bps – banks responded by increasing their benchmark



Breathing easy: The government's capital infusion into public sector banks could help lenders cut rates. ■ REUTERS

C Bankers said lack of liquidity is not allowing them to reduce deposit rates

lending rate by at least 60 bps.

After the central bank cut rate earlier this month, only the State Bank of India has reduced the interest rate by 5 bps on home loans of up to ₹30 lakh.

Bankers said while there is not much scope to reduce the benchmark rate – that is

marginal cost of fund based lending rate (MCLR) – the spread between the benchmark rate and the actual lending rate could be narrowed.

Banks typically add a spread over MCLR while pricing the interest rate for a particular loan.

Liquidity deficit
At the same time, the bank chiefs have expressed concern on the liquidity deficit in the system and said the lack of liquidity is not allowing

them to reduce deposit rates. Deposit rates are an important component of the cost of funds of banks to which the benchmark rate is linked.

Higher cash holding

Banks have also highlighted increase in cash holding with the public, due to the general elections, which is also causing liquidity shortfall.

Analysts said with the government announcing capital infusion of ₹48,200 crore in public sector banks, the move would also help the lenders to reduce interest rates.

"We grow more confident of our call of lending rates coming off with the MoF (Ministry of Finance) yesterday recapitalising PSU banks by additional ₹482 billion...we expect banks to cut lending rates by 50bp by March 2020," Bank of America Merrill Lynch report said, adding the central bank may further reduce interest rate in the next monetary policy review due in April.

RCom asks lenders to release ₹260 cr. to Ericsson

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI

Reliance Communications has sought an 'urgent' approval from its lenders to release approximately ₹260 crore received from I-T refunds, lying in its bank account, directly to Swedish telecom equipment maker Ericsson.

A sum of ₹118 crore (net of tax) had already been deposited with the Supreme Court registry, which would be given to Ericsson within a week.

"RCom is confident of raising the balance, approximately ₹200 crore for payment to Ericsson, in order to ensure that the entire ₹550 crore, plus interest thereon, stands paid to Ericsson, well within the time of four weeks allowed by the Hon'ble Supreme Court," the company said in a statement.

Reliance Communications shares closed at ₹6.33, or 9.14% higher, on the BSE.

EPFO proposes hike in interest rate to 8.65%

Trustees batted for 10 bps increase

C The 8.65% rate is higher than what is available on government small savings schemes

same level as it was in 2016-17, after a decline to a five-year low of 8.55% in 2017-18.

ESIC cuts contribution

In another decision that is likely to benefit workers in the election year, the Employees State Insurance Corporation's Central Board of Trustees decided to recommend a rate hike of 10 basis points, according to an official statement.

The recommendation will go to the Finance Ministry for the final approval. The increased payout is expected to leave EPFO with a surplus of ₹151 crore for the year, in comparison to a surplus of ₹586 crore the previous year.

The 8.65% rate is higher than what is available on government small savings schemes. This hike returns the rate of interest to the ₹5,000 to ₹9000.

Reliance Capital invites Nippon Life to buy out its stake in MF

Move comes amid steps by Anil Ambani Group to cut debt

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI

Reliance Capital has invited Nippon Life to make an offer to acquire up to 42.88% held by Reliance Capital in Reliance Nippon Life Asset Management, the mutual fund business of the Anil Ambani Group.

According to a stock exchange statement, the Japanese major, which manages assets worth more than \$700 billion globally, already holds 42.88% stake in the entity. About 14% of the stake is held by the public.

While it could not be independently ascertained if Nippon Life is currently interested in increasing its stake in the Indian fund house, an open offer would be triggered if the proposed



Anil Ambani

cases at the Supreme Court and the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT).

On Thursday, shares of Reliance Nippon Life Asset Management gained almost 20%, or ₹31.15, to close at ₹187.05. The total market capitalisation of the fund house is pegged at ₹11,447.46 crore.

While the sale of its 42.88% stake would net Reliance Capital about ₹5,000 crore at Thursday's closing price, the actual realisation could be higher if the acquirer paid a premium for getting control of the listed entity.

The mutual fund company, which got listed on the bourses in November 2017, is currently trading way below its issue price of ₹252.

transaction goes through. Incidentally, if the transaction goes through, then the entity would also become the largest wholly foreign-owned mutual fund house in India.

The development comes amidst various attempts by Mr. Ambani to reduce the huge overall debt of his business group, which is facing

Jet EGM takes shareholders' nod for majority stake acquisition by banks

No discussion on exact financial status or the way forward, at hour-long meeting

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI

The extraordinary general meeting (EGM) of troubled airline Jet Airways on Thursday failed to discuss its exact financial condition or the way forward and merely restricted itself to discussing and passing resolutions allowing banks to acquire majority stake.

The airline is saddled with a bank debt of ₹8,200 crore and other dues to vendors, lessors and senior employees. Till the time of going to press, the airline did not inform the outcome of the meeting to the exchanges. Jet Airways chairman Naresh Goyal did not chair the EGM. Rather, whole-time director Gaurav Shetty com-

ducted the meeting held at the airline's headquarters in Andheri, Mumbai.

Arvind Gupta, a Jet Airways minority shareholder and whistle-blower in the ICI Bank and Jet Airways cases, said the EGM only discussed and passed enabling resolutions, allowing banks to acquire majority stake for

₹1 and allow them to induct their nominees into the board. He said no discussion was held on the exact financial condition of the airline and the way forward. The meeting ended in about an hour. Mr. Gupta said, "There is no clarity as to what is happening in the company and how will it be run. There is no clarity on its future."

Banks' role questioned

Speaking to reporters outside the Jet Airways headquarters soon after the EGM, Mr. Gupta questioned the rationale behind bankers taking a leading role to resolve the issue.

"It is unusual on the part of the banks to act like this and why is the government

taking so much interest in saving a private airline. The government should have allowed Jet Airways to go through the IBC route like any other bankrupt company. This could have helped the banks and minority shareholders to get the best value," he said.

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IN BRIEF



TechM to buy back shares at ₹950 apiece

NEW DELHI
IT firm Tech Mahindra (TechM) on Thursday announced a ₹1,956-crore buy-back of its shares at ₹950 apiece, a 15.7% premium over Thursday's closing price of ₹820.40. The proposal had been approved by the company's board. The firm has set March 6 as the record date for the purpose of ascertaining the eligibility of shareholders to participate in the buy-back, it said in a regulatory filing. PTI

AstraZeneca, Nasscom tie up to help start-ups

NEW DELHI
Global biopharmaceutical major AstraZeneca and IT industry body Nasscom have joined hands to set up an accelerator programme to support Indian start-ups in healthcare. AstraZeneca and Nasscom will incubate start-ups in bringing solutions that can help in the management of non-communicable diseases. AstraZeneca PLC Chairman of the Board Leif Johansson said the firm was committed to strengthening innovation in healthcare. PTI

Alstom bags contract for Bangalore Metro

BENGALURU
Alstom has been awarded a ₹580 crore contract by Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Limited to provide power supply and traction electrification for the 33-kilometre extension to Bangalore Metro under Phase II. It is Alstom's largest third-rail electrification contract in India, the company said. Phase II encompasses extension of Bangalore Metro's existing north-south and east-west corridors. PTI

An open offer 16 years in the making

Acquirers of little-known Polo Hotels were engaged in a legal battle with SEBI

ASHISH RUKHAIYAR
MUMBAI

Investors of a little-known company, Polo Hotels, may finally see the open offer that they have been waiting for almost 16 years. The capital markets regulator and the acquirers had differed on the manner and the price of the offer and were engaged in legal battles at various fora.

Last week, the Securities Appellate Tribunal (SAT) dismissed an appeal by the acquirers Abbey Dahiya and Amardeep Dahiya and imposed costs of ₹50,000 for not complying with the 2003 order issued by the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI). The acquirers were ordered to make an open offer at almost three times the price at which the offer was actually announced.



Battle royal: SEBI had directed acquirers to pay investors ₹23.75 per share along with 15% interest. • GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

"... we do not find any merit in the appeal and the same is dismissed with costs... since we find that the order of SEBI dated August 1, 2003, has not been complied with for almost 15 years," SAT said in the order.

In April 1999, the Dahiya entered into a memorandum

of understanding with the erstwhile promoters of Polo Hotels to buy 28.09% stake at ₹8.50 per share. Thereafter, the acquirers made an open offer for another 20% stake from the public shareholders at ₹8.75 per share.

Meanwhile, the SEBI received some complaints

based on which a show-cause notice was issued to the acquirers in 2001 and an order issued in August 2003.

The regulator directed the acquirers to pay the shareholders, who tendered their shares under the offer, made in 1999, at ₹23.75 per share along with an interest of 15% per annum for the period from November 1999 till the actual date of the payment.

SLP at apex court

The acquirers challenged the order at SAT, which dismissed the appeal in April 2006. A special leave petition was filed in the Supreme Court, which was dismissed in November 2015, followed by the dismissal of another review petition in July 2016.

Thereafter, a curative petition was filed that got dismissed in March 2017. Post these

developments, on August 3, 2017, the SEBI directed the acquirers and their merchant banker to comply with the SEBI order of August 2003 within seven days.

Based on the SEBI letter, the banker informed the acquirers that the open offer size would be 44.75 lakh shares, which led to the acquirers again filing an appeal at the tribunal. This was dismissed in August 2017.

In November 2017, the merchant banker filed a draft letter of offer but for acquiring only 6.80 lakh shares.

When the SEBI reiterated that the acquirers had to acquire 20% shares, or 44.75 lakh shares, the latter filed an appeal at SAT that dismissed it on February 15. Shares of Polo Hotels closed at ₹4.65, or 4.97% higher, on the BSE on Thursday.

Big win for Piramal as SC lifts ban on Saridon

Exempted from list of banned FDCs

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

The Supreme Court has ruled in favour of Saridon, a heritage brand from the healthcare product portfolio of Piramal Enterprises Ltd. (PEL), exempting its formulation from the list of banned FDCs (fixed dose combinations).

In September 2018, Piramal had obtained a stay order from the Supreme Court on the ban, which allowed it to continue manufacturing, distribution and sale of the fixed dose combination.

Commenting on the Supreme Court ruling, Nandini Piramal, executive director, Piramal Enterprises Ltd., said, "We are pleased with the Supreme Court ruling, as it is an affirmation to our commitment to provide



effective and safe healthcare solutions that address unique needs of Indian consumers. We were confident that the law would prevail in our favour. Saridon is a heritage brand trusted by customers for the last 50 years in India."

Saridon is a ₹100-crore brand, and it is so popular that it is estimated that 31 tablets are sold every second in India.

ReNew Power gets \$350 mn debt funding

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI
Clean energy producer ReNew Power on Thursday said it had secured a fresh debt financing of up to \$350 million from the U.S. government's development finance institution Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC).

This follows an earlier round of financing when OPIC granted a loan of \$250 million to ReNew Power in March 2016, according to a company statement.

The funds will be utilised by ReNew Power to support construction of new wind and solar power plants in India, the statement added.

'Green' food wrapper may boost Kesoram turnover

Kesophane' eyes B2C, B2B segments

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

KOLKATA

Cygent Industries Ltd., a wholly-owned subsidiary of B.K. Birla Group company Kesoram Industries Ltd., is eyeing a 10% boost to its turnover through B2C and B2B sales of its newly-launched biodegradable food wrapper.

Called 'Kesophane,' the company is targeting the retail consumer. The product is positioned as a substitute for the existing food packaging options like foils and plastics. It would be introduced in Bengaluru and Mumbai markets soon.

Already being sold institutionally (to incense stick makers and the fireworks in-

dstry), Kesophane is manufactured from wood pulp.

It allows moisture permeability while minimising oxidation, making it an ideal green packaging option for the industries. "We are looking at a big way at the B2C segment and B2B segment in FMCG, food industry and the pharma sector for selling Kesophane," said H. K. Kandoi, financial controller of the company.

"We are getting enquiries from FMCG players and also expecting demand from institutions like hospitals and hotels. Tea packers and exporters are also looking for biodegradable cellulose transparent papers with value addition," he said.

ONGC, OIL asked to sell 66 fields

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI

The Centre has asked Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) and Oil India Ltd. (OIL) to sell 66 of their small oil and gas fields to private firms as it brought in a new policy to boost domestic production and cut imports, Petroleum Minister Dharmendra Pradhan said on Thursday. ONGC and OIL have a total of 184 fields.

They have been asked to provide enhanced production profile for 66 of these fields, which contribute 95% of the 36 million tonne of annual oil production in the country, and given freedom to induct private and foreign partners.

NIIT Tech, Microsoft in cloud pact

Firms to deliver spectrum of technology solutions to clients

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI

NIIT Technologies has announced a global collaboration with Microsoft, to accelerate the 'cloudification' of its enterprise clients.

The collaboration would focus on the comprehensive cloud needs of enterprises – from infrastructure to business applications.

CSP agreement

Both the companies have concluded a strategic cloud solution provider (CSP) agreement that enables NIIT Technologies to directly manage the entire life cycle for its enterprise customers including, commercials and support and deliver integrated end-to-end solutions as a managed service on Azure

platform.

Commenting on the collaboration, Sudhir Singh, CEO, NIIT Technologies, said, "We believe our collaboration with Microsoft can yield substantial and material benefits to our clients.

"This symbiotic relationship brings together our deep domain vertical expertise along with our differentiated intellectual property built on emerging Microsoft technologies such as AI, predictive analytics to accelerate the digital ambition of our clients."

Together, NIIT Technologies and Microsoft would develop and deliver a spectrum of technology solutions for customers globally across banking and financial services, travel and transportation, and insurance segments and also help them migrate to Azure.

Gavriella Schuster, corporate vice-president, One Commercial Partner (OCP) at Microsoft Corp. said, "Microsoft's focus is to not only integrate AI capabilities into its products and cloud services but also enable its partners leverage these AI capabilities to build AI-powered solutions, which empower employees, engage customers, optimise operations and transform products."

NORTHERN RAILWAY
OPEN E-TENDER NOTICE
Invitation of Tender through E-tendering (E-Procurement Systems)
The Sr. Divisional Engineer-I-V, Northern Railway, Delhi Division for and on behalf of President of India invites E-Tender on prescribed form for the following work.

1. Name of work & its location	Provision of 2.44 mtr wide FOB from Line par Basti to Pt No. 2/3 and 1 at BGZ station under ADEN/ROK.
2. Approx. cost of work	Rs. 93,54,47,192
3. Earnest money	Rs. 1,87,100.00
4. Date and time of submission of tender and opening of tender	Up to 15:00 hrs. on 15.03.2019 opening of e-Tender at 15:00 hrs. on 15.03.2019
5. Website particulars, published e-tender, notice location etc., complete details of tender can be seen and web site where the tender form can be downloaded	Above tender available on IREPS site i.e., www.ireps.gov.in

No. 128-W/260/Tender Notice/56/18-19/W-V Dated: 21.02.2019 550/19
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

NEW DELHI MUNICIPAL COUNCIL
BM-PK DIVISION, CIVIL ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT
ROOM NO. 1615, 16TH FLOOR, PALIKA KENDRA, NEW DELHI

e-PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTICE
e-TENDERING NOTICE

- Name of work:- A/R & M/O Building in BM-PK Division during 2018-19
Sub-Head:- Miscellaneous Repair and Finishing Walls with Acrylic Smooth Exterior paint and White Wash at Lok Nayak Bhawan
E.C.: Rs.11,28,837/- Tender ID No.: 2019_NDMC_169424_1
- Name of work:- A/R & MO in Various Complex under Sub-Division AE-IV (BM-PK) during 2018-19
Sub-Head:- Miscellaneous Repair/Renovation work during Occupation and Vacantation of Flats at Sangamitra Service Centre.
E.C.: Rs.12,93,800/- Tender ID No.: 2019_NDMC_169418_1
- Name of work:- Improvement work in BM-PK (NDCC-II) Building.
Sub-Head:- Guniting work in basement of NDCC-II Building.
E.C.: Rs. 16,12,821/- Tender ID No.: 2019_NDMC_169422_1

Date of release of tender through e-procurement solution is: 21.02.2019
Date and time for Pre-Bid Meeting is : NA
Last date/time for receipt of tender through e-procurement solution : 06.03.2019 upto 04:00 P.M.
Further details can be seen at [>](https://govtprocurement.delhi.gov.in/nicgp) & www.ndmc.gov.in (e-Tendering System Government of NCT of Delhi).
Note :- To participate in e-tender in NDMC, registration with e Tendering System Government of NCT of Delhi is mandatory.
The tender shall be read only through e-Procurement procedure and this supercedes all conditions of NIT for issue/receipt of tender in normal tendering process for the purpose.

Sd/- EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (BM-PK)

To be The Global Benchmark for a Capital City

SARVA SHIKSHA ABHIYAN
STATE PROJECT OFFICE, K.B.C. Boys High School Campus,
Opp. Ratu Bazar, Patanata, Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh.

Open Tender
SSA, Amaravati is inviting Open Tenders for Supply of Digital interactive boards through Open Tender approximately for 100 Model Primary Schools across 13 districts of Andhra Pradesh. The details specifications are placed in the website www.ssa.ap.gov.in. Tender can be uploaded in the e-procurement site <https://tender.approcurement.gov.in>. Eligible bidders shall submit the tenders in the prescribed format before 5.00 PM on 08.03.2019. SPD, SSA has all the rights to withdraw/cancel the notification at any point of time.

Sd/- State Project Director, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, Andhra Pradesh.

SOUTH DELHI MUNICIPAL CORPORATION
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (Project South-I,
Under Bhisham Pitamah Fly Over Sewa Nagar, New Delhi-110003
**PRESS NOTICE FOR NOTICE INVITING
TENDER-CUM-REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL**
FOR ONLINE TENDERING TIME TABLE PLEASE REFER www.mcdonline.gov.in NIT No. EE-Project South-I/SZ/TC/2018-19/14 Date:-18.02.2019. **Name of work:-** (1) Improvement and modification of the existing crematorium for conversion of electric crematorium to C.N.G. based crematorium at Green Park Extension. **Estimated Amount Rs. 1,81,19,200/- Earnest Money Rs. 3,62,500/- Time of Completion:** 9 months **Tender Cost Rs. 5,000/- H/A: XL-IX-E.** (2) Establishment of CNG based Crematorium at Subhash Nagar, West Zone, Sub head:-Tender for Design, Supply, Installation, Testing Commissioning and Maintenance of Compressed Natural Gas (C.N.G.) Based Crematorium. **Estimated Amount Rs.: 1,36,45,000/- Earnest Money Rs.: 2,72,900/- Time of Completion:** 9 months **Tender Cost Rs.: 5,000/- H/A: LI(M)/CSR.** **Last Date of Download/Purchase Tender Document:** 05.03.2019 02:00. All details of Revision, Clarification, Corrigendum/Addendum, Time Extension etc., if any, respect of above tender(s) will be uploaded on the above mentioned website. Bidders should regularly visit the website to keep themselves updated in respect of these tenders.
RO No. 207/DPI/S/2018-19 Ex.Engineer (Project)-I South Zone

NORTHERN RAILWAY
TENDER NOTICE (through e-tendering)
Name of work with its location : Comprehensive AMC of OMNI-230 Exchanges installed at DRM Office New Delhi, Meerut, PWLND Jind for one year. App. Cost of work (₹) : ₹ 17,31,962.40 only. Tender Document Fee (₹) : ₹ 2,360 only. Earnest Money Deposit (₹) : ₹ 34,600/- only. Address of the office : Senior Divisional Signal & Telecom Engineer, Northern Railway, 3rd Floor, Annexe-1, DRM office, New Delhi-110055. Date & Time for upload the tender / closing of tender: Tender uploading / closing date & time : 27.03.2019 up to 15.00 hrs. Website particular & notice board location where complete details of the tender can be seen etc. : See the Northern Railway website www.ireps.gov.in & Notice board at S&T branch, 3rd Floor, DRM Office, State Entry Road, New Delhi-110055. Tender No. 558-Sig-16-Tele-AMC-548. Dated : 21.02.2019. 553/2019
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

New Okhla Industrial Development Authority
Main Administrative Building, Sector-6, Noida, G.B. Nagar, (U.P.)
Website: www.noidaauthorityonline.com

SHORT TERM NOTICE INVITING TENDER
Sealed Tenders Are Invited on behalf of Chief Executive Officer, NOIDA for the following furniture supply in NOIDA, (U.P.) from Manufactures/Authorised Dealers / Traders in the prescribed tender document under two-bid system as per the following details. Tender document shall be available for sale at Vijaya Bank, Sec-6, NOIDA, on all working days during banking hours. The tender shall be on two bid system, where Techno-commercial details shall be put into envelop No. (1) and price bid shall be put in to the envelop No. (2). Both these envelopes after being sealed properly shall be put into envelop No. (3) which should be properly sealed before it is put into the tender box. Envelop No.(1) shall contain all details documents as Trade Tax Registration Certificate, experience, latest income tax return, G.S.T. Registration, Bank Solvency & earnest money in the shape of F.D.R. / C.D.R. of any schedule Bank as required. Tenderer / contractors who do not qualify the pre-qualification shall be summarily rejected and their price bid shall not be opened. Authority can reject any or all tenders without assigning any reason. If the date of receipt / opening of tender is declared as holiday, the same shall be received / opened on the next working day.

Sl. No.	Job No./ Name of Work	Estimated Cost of Tender Earnest Money	Period of Sale	Date/Time receipt of Tender	Date/Time opening of bid	Place of Opening Tender
1.	Job No. 09/ SPO/2018-19, Supply of furniture for office use (Full Specification given in Tender Form).	Rs. 6,58,465.00 1000/- + G.S.T. Rs.13200.00	25.02.2019 To 05.03.2019	06.03.2019 3:00 P.M.	06.03.2019 3:30 P.M.	SPO Secto- 39, Noida

Store Purchase Officer
Central Store, Secto-39, NOIDA.

CLEAN, GREEN, SAFE & SECURE NOIDA

TV PICKS

India vs England: 1st ODI, Star Sports 1 (SD & HD), 8.45 a.m.
West Indies v England: 2nd ODI, Sony Ten 1 (SD & HD), 8.30 p.m.
South Africa v Sri Lanka: 2nd Test, Sony ESPN (SD & HD), 1.30 p.m.
Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy: Star Sports 2 (SD & HD), 8.45 a.m. & 1.15 p.m.
ISL: Star Sports 1, 7.15 p.m.
NBA: Sony Ten 1 (SD & HD), 6.30 a.m. & 9 a.m.
PVL: Sony Ten 3 & Six (SD & HD), 7 p.m.

IN BRIEF

**Alyssa Healy sets new World record**

MELBOURNE
Australia wicketkeeper-batswoman Alyssa Healy has set a new World record for the 'highest catch' of a cricket ball. She achieved the feat at the MCG while promoting the women's World T20 to be held next year. Healy caught a ball dropped from a drone 80 metres above the MCG surface to break the previous record of 62m set by England's Kristian Baumgartner in 2016. ANI

Shammi Silva is new SLC president

COLOMBO
Arjuna Ranatunga suffered a comprehensive defeat in his bid to take control of Sri Lanka's crisis-ridden national cricket board on Thursday. His ally Jayantha Dharmadasa also failed in his bid to become Sri Lanka Cricket president, losing to Shammi Silva — a loyalist of former SLC chief Thilanga Sumathipala and Ranatunga's archrival. PTI

Nabi guides Afghanistan past Ireland

DEHRADUN
Mohammad Nabi (two for 16 and 49 n.o.) guided Afghanistan to a six-wicket win over Ireland in the first T20I on Thursday.
The scores: Ireland 132 for six in 20 overs (G. Dockrell 34, M. Nabi two for 16, Rashid Khan two for 21) lost to Afghanistan 136 for five in 19.2 overs (M. Nabi 49 n.o., N. Zadran 40 n.o.). PTI

SC appoints former judge Jain as BCCI ombudsman

Lt. Gen. Ravi Thodge is the third member of the Committee of Administrators

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL
NEW DELHI

Justice Bobde asked the lawyers representing the parties in the courtroom.

The court had to intervene after State associations, represented by Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta and senior advocate Kapil Sibal, said they would not have a BCCI run by the CoA "foist an ombudsman on us". They initially said the appointment of ombudsman could wait until after the BCCI election.

But when the court passed on to them a list of six names, all retired apex court judges, they unanimously agreed on Justice Jain.

Justice Jain was requested by the court to take over as ombudsman "as soon as possible".

A CoA report filed recently in the Supreme Court pushed home the advantage of having an ombudsman — who should either be a retired Supreme Court judge or a former Chief Justice of a High Court to be appointed

for a year — to resolve internal disputes.



Lt. Gen. Ravi Thodge. ■ COURTESY: TWITTER

One of Justice Jain's first

jobs would be to look into allegations of sexual assault against BCCI CEO Rahul Johri. The CoA had also pointed out how the controversy over the sexist remarks made

by cricketers Hardik Pandya and K.L. Rahul on a TV chat show could have been placed before the ombudsman for effective resolution.

Meanwhile, Justice Bobde asked Mr. Narasimha to advise the two members of the CoA — Vinod Rai and Diana Edulji — to not make public their differences of opinion.

"We heard there is some sparring going on between the members of the CoA... Please ask them not to go public with their rifts," Justice Bobde told Narasimha.

In-chamber discussion
On the issue of appointing a third member to the CoA, the court said it had "someone in mind" (Lt. Gen. Thodge) and decided to discuss the issue in the judicial chambers.

Once the CoA is re-constituted with a new member, it could seek the advice of the amicus curiae on the release of funds, etc, the court said.

SC to examine Thakur's plea

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday agreed to examine a plea by Anurag Thakur for a recall of its order of January 2, 2017, stripping him of his position as BCCI president and to "forthwith cease and desist" from associating with Indian cricket's most powerful body.

A Bench of Justices S.A. Bobde and A.M. Sapre issued notice on the application filed by Thakur.

Thakur submitted that the remarks made by the court in the January 2 order had become a matter of public discussion and debate which had affected his public image.

Play against Pakistan in WC: Gavaskar

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

India stands to lose by boycotting Pakistan in the upcoming World Cup, feels former captain Sunil Gavaskar, who said the country can continue to "hurt them" by shunning bilateral ties.

Led by Harbhajan Singh, calls for a complete cricketing boycott of Pakistan have grown ever since the terror attack in Pulwama. India is scheduled to play Pakistan on June 16 during the World Cup.

"Who wins if India decide against playing Pakistan in the World Cup? And I am not even talking about the semis and the finals. Who wins? Pakistan win because they get two points," Gavaskar told India Today.

"India have so far beaten Pakistan every time in a World Cup, so we are actually conceding two points when by beating Pakistan, we could make sure that they don't advance. (But) whatever the government decides, I am with it totally," he said.

Bencic knocks out Halep

DUBAI: Belinda Bencic of Switzerland shocked Simona Halep 4-6, 6-4, 6-2 in the quarterfinals of the WTA Dubai tennis championships here on Thursday.

The results: Quarterfinals: Hsieh Su-Wei bt Karolina Pliskova 6-4, 1-6, 7-5; Petra Kvitova bt Viktoriya Kuzmova 6-4, 6-0; Belinda Bencic bt Simona Halep 4-6, 6-4, 6-2.

Late wickets swing the day in India's favour

UNDER-19 TEST

M.R. PRAVEEN CHANDRAN
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

India under-19 medium pacers' burst with the new ball in the final session swung the day in favour of the host in the unofficial Test against South Africa under-19 at the KCA-St. Xavier's College ground here on Thursday.

Anshul Kamboj and Raj Vardhan Hangarkar took three quick wickets, including that of captain Mathew Montgomery to reduce

South Africa to seven for three. However, Andile Mngakane (16 batting) and Bonza Makhakha (11 batting) survived a tense last hour to add 27 runs for the fourth wicket as South Africa closed the second day at 34 for three. South Africa resumed the second innings, 133 in deficit, after Indian opener Divyaansh Saxena compiled a well grafted century (122) to top score in host's first-innings total of 330.

Left-arm spinner Bryce Parsons was the standout bowler for the Proteas as he stuck to the virtues of good line and length and teased the Indian batsmen to scalp six for 77. Parson's accurate spell stymied the Indian progress as the host slid from 200 for three to 283 for eight. It required some enterprising batting from tailender Hangarkar (41) to take the score past 300.

Disciplined effort
A disciplined effort from the South African bowlers in the first session dried up the scoring opportunities for the Indian batsmen. There

wasn't any help from the pitch, but the bowlers kept a tidy line and it nearly brought in rewards before lunch.

Divyaansh, on 68, top-edged a sweep off Parson but Kgaudise Molife dropped a dolly at fine leg. That was the only blemish in Divyaansh's innings until he nudged a catch to the 'keeper Luke Beaufort off Parson after completing his century.

The fourth-wicket stand between Divyaansh and captain Suraj Ahuja (57) yielded 105 runs.

After lunch, India lost wickets regularly to Parson as the lower-order batsmen didn't show the patience to graft and threw away their wickets.

However, Hangarkar struck eight fours in his quickfire knock of 41 which came off 26 balls as India reached 330.

The scores:

South Africa Under-19 197 & 34 for three in 15 overs vs India Under-19 330 in 92.3 overs (Divyaansh Saxena 122, Suraj Ahuja 57, Raj Vardhan Hangarkar 41, Bryce Parsons six for 77).

Roy, Root star in England's record chase

Gayle's pyrotechnics not enough for the West Indies



Deadly duo: Root and Roy were unstoppable as England chased down 360 with ease. ■ GARETH COPELY/GETTY IMAGES

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
BRIDGETOWN

Contrasting centuries by Jason Roy and Joe Root paced England to a comfortable six-wicket victory over the West Indies with its record ODI run chase in a high-scoring opening game of a five-match series on Wednesday.

Set what looked a daunting

target after Chris Gayle's 24th ODI hundred anchored the home side to 360 for eight, Roy blazed 123 off 85 balls at the top of the order.

Root cruised to 102 off 97 balls to take England home with eight balls to spare in the highest-ever ODI run chase in the Caribbean and the third-highest overall.

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16 SPORT

Atletico wins battle of attrition with Juventus

Manchester City survives a scare at Schalke



Goalmouth scramble: Atletico's Jose Maria Gimenez slides to the floor and bundles the ball in past the Juventus defence. ■ AP

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

REUTERS
MADRID

Atletico Madrid took a huge advantage in its heavyweight Champions League last-16 tie with Juventus, earning a 2-0 home win thanks to late goals from Uruguayan defenders Jose Gimenez and Diego Godin in a tense, incident-packed game on Wednesday.

Gimenez slid to the floor in a crowded penalty box to bundle the ball into the net from close range in the 87th minute, after former Juve forward Alvaro Morata had had a goal ruled out following a VAR review.

Atletico also had a penalty awarded to them taken away by the technology earlier in the game but only grew in determination and captain Godin grabbed a vital second goal in the 83rd minute to take it to the return leg in Turin.

The veteran defender appeared at the near post to

knock a loose ball into the net after Atletico wreaked havoc again from a set-piece.

The meeting of two European juggernauts, who have reached four of the last five finals between them without lifting the trophy, was as bruising and tight a match as could be expected between sides renowned for their intimidating defences.

Cristiano Ronaldo tested Atleti keeper Jan Oblak early on with a scorching free kick and as his side chased an away goal in stoppage time he headed over the bar, prompting gleeful whistles from the home supporters.

Must improve
At Kelso Kirchen, Germany, Manchester City coach Pep Guardiola was far from happy after his 10-man team earned a last-gasp 3-2 victory over Schalke 04.

City scored twice in the last four minutes to turn the game around after leading 1-0 but then conceded two

penalties in seven minutes.

"It was a great result. We gave the first penalty, we gave the second penalty, we gave the red card, so that is not good," Guardiola told reporters.

"So still we are not ready to fight for the final stages (of the competition). That is the reality."

City looked in complete control when Sergio Aguero put it ahead in the 18th minute but by the end of the first half it was inexplicably trailing 2-1 after conceding the penalties, both converted by Nabil Bentaleb.

Guardiola's players had to dig deep at the end of game to score twice through Leroy Sane's sublime free kick in the 86th minute and Raheem Sterling's winner four minutes later.

The results: Atletico Madrid 2 (Gimenez 78, Godin 83) bt Juventus 0; Schalke 04 2 (Bentaleb 38-pen, 45-pen) lost to Manchester City 3 (Aguero 19, Sane 85, Sterling 90).

Bengaluru FC in ominous form ahead of play-offs

Makes light of playing a man down to hammer FC Goa, moves to the top of the table

ISL

SHREEDUTTA CHIDANANDA
BENGALURU

Bengaluru FC had endured a slight dip in form going into Thursday's clash at the Sree Kanteerava Stadium, but there will now be hardly any question marks over the team's preparedness for the ISL playoffs.

Carles Cuadrat's men delivered a stunning performance against FC Goa, rebounding from a first-half red card to flatten the opponent 3-0.

Nishu Kumar's dismissal in the 42nd minute – when the tie was still goalless – appeared to have tilted the balance in Goa's favour, but BFC hammered three second-half goals, playing with aggression, control and a fighting spirit.

Cuadrat was incensed by Nishu's sending off, and made his feelings known to the referee, Pranjal Banerjee, in no uncertain terms.

It did, but just not how most people may have imagined. A free-kick into the box from the left flank was flicked on by Miku, and Juanan controlled the ball on his chest before drilling it past the goalkeeper in emphatic fashion. Sunil Chhetri, who was watching from the stands, exploded in delight.

Goa pushed higher up the pitch in search of the equaliser, but minutes later, Sergio Lobera's men were carved open on the counter-attack.

Dimas Delgado sent a delightful ball over the top for Udanta Singh and the latter

stormed through on goal to thrash home BFC's second. The two players were in sublime form on the night, and were arguably the home side's finest.

Goa was guilty of some poor finishing, and has itself to blame for wasting a number of chances. Brandon Fernandes hit the bar from close range and Hugo Boumous inexplicably fired over when he had the goal at his mercy.

BFC was not complaining. Miku, who had not scored since he returned from injury, put the result beyond doubt with a fine strike. The Venezuelan gathered the ball, drifted past his marker, and found the net from 25 yards out with a shot that nestled in the top right corner.

BFC moved to the top of the table with the win, but this result will mean a lot more than just three points.

The result: Bengaluru FC 3 (Juanan 50, Udanta Singh 58, Miku 69) bt FC Goa 0.



Cool finish: BFC's Juanan is over the moon after scoring the opener against FC Goa. ■ K MURALI KUMAR

War Hammer in fine fettle

BENGALURU: War Hammer, who is in fine fettle, may score in the Bangalore Juvenile Million (1,400m), the chief event of the races to be held here on Friday (Feb 22).

There will be no false rails.

FLASHING STAR PLATE (Div. II), 1 (2,000m), rated 15 to 35, 2.15. Vail (7) Antony 60, 2. Kashkha (9) Trevor 59.5, 3. Prince Charmer (4) Md. Asif Khan 59, 4. Annalesse (8) M. Naveen 58, 5. Fierce Fighter (5) L. Chisty 57, 6. Memorite (II) Akshay K 56, 7. Proudprince (I) Tauseef 55.5, 8. Aleef (12) Rayan 54.5, 9. Ekalaya (2) David Allan 54, 10. Three Wishes (6) Darshan 53.5, 11. Smile of Joy (3) T.S. Jodha 53 and 12. Kings Kid (10) Arshad 50.

1. DUTY CALL, 2. CAPSTONE, 3. BOLD MOVE

2. GAGANACHUKKI PLATE (2,000m), rated 15 to 35, 2.15. Vail (7) Antony 60, 2. Kashkha (9) Trevor 59.5, 3. Prince Charmer (4) Md. Asif Khan 59, 4. Annalesse (8) M. Naveen 58, 5. Fierce Fighter (5) L. Chisty 57, 6. Memorite (II) Akshay K 56, 7. Proudprince (I) Tauseef 55.5, 8. Aleef (12) Rayan 54.5, 9. Ekalaya (2) David Allan 54, 10. Three Wishes (6) Darshan 53.5, 11. Smile of Joy (3) T.S. Jodha 53 and 12. Kings Kid (10) Arshad 50.

1. KASHKHA, 2. MEMORITER, 3. SMILE OF JOY

3. HAVERI PLATE (Div. II), 3 (1,400m), rated 30 to 50, 5-y-o & over, 2.45; 1. Call Me Maybe (10) T.S. Jodha 60, 2. Amazonite (II) S. Shareef 59.5, 3. Dagobert (7) Kiran Rai 58.5, 4. Helenka (4) Arshad 58.5, 5. Royal Rein (6) Md. Asif Khan 58.5, 6. Emidio (-) 57.5, 7. Secret Dimension (8) K. Raghu 56.5, 8. Shamsadas Girl (5) Sai Kiran 56.5, 9. Ultimate Power (2) Darshan 56, 10. Admiral One (3) R. Manish 55.5, 11. Mahanati (I) Chetan K 55.5 and 12. Summer Dawn (9) M. Naveen 55.

1. CALL ME MAYBE, 2. HELENKA, 3. ULTIMATE POWER

4. BLACK CAVIAR STAKES (1,200m), maiden 3-y-o only, (Terms), 3.15; 1. Corona Del Corsi (1), 4.15; 2. Debonair (6) I. Chisty 55, 3. Defender (3) T.S. Jodha 55, 4. Impavid (5) Sandesh 55, 5. Indian Star (4) Kiran Rai 55, 6. Olympia Mons (9) Srinath 55, 7. Roman Senator (2) David Allan 55, 8. Stroke Of Genius (7) Irvan 55 and 9. Oh Pada (8) Vivek 53.5.

1. IMPAVID, 2. OLYMPIA MONS, 3. CORONA DEL CORSI

5. GALLONAGE ACRES STUD PLATE (1,200m), rated 45 to 65, 4.45; 1. Navelrock (9) Arshad 60, 2. Blue Blazer (8) Darshan 59, 3. Castaway (12) Trevor 58.5, 4. Good Time Indeed (5) Dhebe 58, 5. Turf Magik (4) Ashok R 58, 6. Venus Bay (3) Akshay K 57, 7. Aaron The Baron (2) N. Rajesh 56, 8. Miniver Rose (1) R. Manish 54.5, 9. Angel Kiss (7) Antony 54, 10. Madame Sultan (6) Irvan 52, 11. Panama (II) I. Chisty 51.5 and 12. Charmed Life (10) Sandesh 51.

1. IDEALIST, 2. PIPER REGINA, 3. BLUEJACK

7. GALLANO JUVENILE MILLION (1,400m), 3-y-o only, (Terms), 4.15; 1. Star Cavalry (4) David Allan 55, 2. War Hammer (5) Srinath 55, 3. Desert Rose (1) Akshay K 53.5, 4. Kirkwood (2) Sandesh 53.5 and 5. Star Appearance (3) Arshad 53.5.

1. SO MI DAR, 2. BLARNEY STONE, 3. SAN BERNARDINO

9. HAVERI PLATE (Div. D), 1 (1,400m), rated 30 to 50, 5-y-o & over, 5.45; 1. Piper Regina (II) Srinath 60, 2. Deepalika (3) R. Pradeep 59.5, 3. Idealist (12) Akshay K 59.5, 4. Reczai (7) M. Naveen 59, 5. Lawrence Of Arabia (9) Srinath 58.5, 6. Alberetta (2) I. Chisty 58, 7. Raw Gold (5) Vivek 58, 8. Reference (1) Arshad 57.9. Wild Wild Angels (4) Praveen Shinde 57, 10. Bluejack (8) T.S. Jodha 55.5, 11. Brooklyn Supreme (10) Chetan K 55 and 12. Hidden Soldier (6) K. Raghu 55.

1. BRAVE HUNTER PLATE (1,400m), Cl. IV, rated 20 to 46; **ABERLOUR** (S. Amit 1, Strong Storm (Trevor) 2, Sullivan (Zervan) 4, 1/2, 1/4, 3/4, 3/4. Im 25.80s, ₹96 (w), 27, 14 and 12 (p). SHP: 38, FP: 1,366, Q: 373, Tanala: 1,212 and 485. Favourite: Sullivan. M. Narredu trains the winner. Jockey A. Sandesh rode four winners today.

1. NOBLE OPINION PLATE (1,400m), Cl. IV, rated 20 to 46; **ABERLOUR** (S. Amit 1, Strong Storm (Trevor) 2, Sullivan (Zervan) 4, 1/2, 1/4, 3/4, 3/4. Im 25.80s, ₹96 (w), 27, 14 and 12 (p). SHP: 38, FP: 1,366, Q: 373, Tanala: 1,212 and 485. Favourite: Sullivan. Sullivan (2,727 w), 30, 25 and 29 (p). SHP: 12,147, FP: 607, Q: 338, Tanala: 2,588 and 1,016. Favourite: Transform.

2. DW REID PLATE (1,600m), Cl. III, rated 40 to 66; **SPITFIRE** (Trevor) 1, Flying Visit (R. Downey) 2, Questionable (Chouhan) 3 and Khartoum (Akshay) 4. 2-1/4, 1, 3/4, 1-1/2, Im 37.33s, ₹20 (w), 14 and 20 (p). SHP: 36, FP: 53, Q: 29, Tanala: 90 and 71. Favourite: Spitfire.

3. RED BUTTONS PLATE (1,000m), Cl. IV, rated 20 to 46; **UNTITLED** (Hanumant 1, Adele (Trevor) 2, Slam Dunk (Zervan) 3 and Ridgewood Star (Sandesh) 4. 1-3/4, 3/2, 1/2, 3/4, 58.86s, ₹28 (w), 14, 21 and 16 (p). SHP: 35, FP: 184, Q: 107, Tanala: 466 and 173. Favourite: Untitled.

7. BLURR PLATE DIV.I (1,200m), Cl. V, rated 4 to 30; **ANGELS HARMONY** (Sandesh) 1, Isinit (Zervan) 2, Ebony (Peter) 3 and Transform (Chouhan) 4. 1-3/4, 1/2, 1-1/2, Im 12.71s, ₹72 (w), 25 and 29 (p). SHP: 12,147, FP: 607, Q: 338, Tanala: 2,588 and 1,016. Favourite: Transform.

5. RED NOTCH PLATE (1,400m), Cl. IV, rated 4 to 30; **MANJARI** (Sandesh) 1, Isinit (Zervan) 2, Ebony (Peter) 3 and Transform (Chouhan) 4. 1-3/4, 1/2, 1-1/2, Im 12.71s, ₹72 (w), 25 and 29 (p). SHP: 12,147, FP: 607, Q: 338, Tanala: 2,588 and 1,016. Favourite: Untitled.

6. FALCON PLATE (1,200m), Cl. V, rated 4 to 30; **ANGELS HARMONY** (Sandesh) 1, Isinit (Zervan) 2, Ebony (Peter) 3 and Transform (Chouhan) 4. 1-3/4, 1/2, 1-1/2, Im 12.71s, ₹72 (w), 25 and 29 (p). SHP: 12,147, FP: 607, Q: 338, Tanala: 2,588 and 1,016. Favourite: Transform.

7. BLURR PLATE DIV.I (1,200m), Cl. V, rated 4 to 30; **ANGELS HARMONY** (Sandesh) 1, Isinit (Zervan) 2, Ebony (Peter) 3 and Transform (Chouhan) 4. 1-3/4, 1/2, 1-1/2, Im 12.71s, ₹72 (w), 25 and 29 (p). SHP: 12,147, FP: 607, Q: 338, Tanala: 2,588 and 1,016. Favourite: Transform.

8. FAIRY PLATE (1,200m), Cl. V, rated 4 to 30; **ANGELS HARMONY** (Sandesh) 1, Isinit (Zervan) 2, Ebony (Peter) 3 and Transform (Chouhan) 4. 1-3/4, 1/2, 1-1/2, Im 12.71s, ₹72 (w), 25 and 29 (p). SHP: 12,147, FP: 607, Q: 338, Tanala: 2,588 and 1,016. Favourite: Transform.

9. FAIRY PLATE (1,200m), Cl. V, rated 4 to 30; **ANGELS HARMONY** (Sandesh) 1, Isinit (Zervan) 2, Ebony (Peter) 3 and Transform (Chouhan) 4. 1-3/4, 1/2, 1-1/2, Im 12.71s, ₹72 (w), 25 and 29 (p). SHP: 12,147, FP: 607, Q: 338, Tanala: 2,588 and 1,016. Favourite: Transform.

10. FAIRY PLATE (1,200m), Cl. V, rated 4 to 30; **ANGELS HARMONY** (Sandesh) 1, Isinit (Zervan) 2, Ebony (Peter) 3 and Transform (Chouhan) 4. 1-3/4, 1/2, 1-1/2, Im 12.71s, ₹72 (w), 25 and 29 (p). SHP: 12,147, FP: 607, Q: 338, Tanala: 2,588 and 1,016. Favourite: Transform.

11. FAIRY PLATE (1,200m), Cl. V, rated 4 to 30; **ANGELS HARMONY** (Sandesh) 1, Isinit (Zervan) 2, Ebony (Peter) 3 and Transform (Chouhan) 4. 1-3/4, 1/2, 1-1/2, Im 12.71s, ₹72 (w), 25 and 29 (p). SHP: 12,147, FP: 607, Q: 338, Tanala: 2,588 and 1,016. Favourite: Transform.

12. FAIRY PLATE (1,200m), Cl. V, rated 4 to 30; **ANGELS HARMONY** (Sandesh) 1, Isinit (Zervan) 2, Ebony (Peter) 3 and Transform (Chouhan) 4. 1-3/4, 1/2, 1-1/2, Im 12.71s, ₹72 (w), 25 and 29 (p). SHP: 12,147, FP: 607, Q: 338, Tanala: 2,588 and 1,016. Favourite: Transform.

13. FAIRY PLATE (1,200m), Cl. V, rated 4 to

IN BRIEF



McIlroy to skip Irish, focus on British Open

LONDON
Rory McIlroy confirmed that he will miss the Irish Open to focus on his preparations for the British Open, which takes place in his native Northern Ireland in July. The four-time major winner said skipping the tournament in Lahinch, in the Republic of Ireland, would give him a better chance of winning the Open, which is returning to Northern Ireland for the first time since 1951. "If there is ever a year when I feel I can miss this Irish Open, it's this," said McIlroy. AFP



del Piero recalls 'great' time in India

MONACO
Former Italy and Juventus great Alessandro del Piero has ruled out a coaching role in the foreseeable future, including a stint in the Indian Super League, where he played last as a professional. "I have been to India a couple of times for different reasons after my ISL stint. I am following what is happening in the league. I had a great time there, short time, just three months but happy that the league has grown. I quite like how things are moving," he said. PTI

Rajputana Rifles to meet Pran Nath Club

NEW DELHI:
Rajputana Rifles beat Pran Nath Club 25-22, 25-23, 25-23 to set up a title clash with host YMCA in the YMCA volleyball tournament here on Thursday. In the women's final, Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) will be challenged by Jaunti Club. **The results (semifinals):**
Men: Rajputana Rifles bt Pran Nath Club 25-22, 25-23, 25-23; YMCA bt Master Academy 25-19, 25-16, 25-21. **Women:** CRPF bt Indraprastha College 25-18, 25-15, 25-10; Jaunti Club bt Master Academy 25-13, 25-14, 25-21.

Prithviraj denied permission to carry gun by Indigo

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

National championship silver medallist in trap, Prithviraj Tondaiman, was denied permission to carry his shotgun in the flight for the championship in Doha in the early hours of Thursday.

"I had all the documents and had talked to the airlines customer care beforehand and was assured that it would be smooth," said Prithviraj.

The Ministry of Youth Affairs and the National Rifle Association of India (NRAI) tried their best to ensure Prithviraj's travel, but the airlines staff would not entertain any argument, Prithviraj said.

"This is the first time it has happened to me. I have been taking many flights in the last few weeks, by Indigo too," said

Jharkhand wins a thriller

Baby's knock sets up Kerala's emphatic win over Manipur

MUSHTAQ ALI

V.V. SUBRAHMANYAM
VIJAYAWADA

Jharkhand pulled off a thrilling three-run win over Delhi in the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy T20 cricket championship Group-A first round at the Mulapadu Cricket Complex here on Thursday.

Virat hits half-century

Jharkhand, put in by Delhi captain Ishant Sharma, scored 158 for four in 20 overs thanks to Anand Singh (37, 32b, 6x4) and southpaw Virat Singh (70 not out, 49b, 8x4, 1x6).

In reply, Delhi seemed to be in the race at one stage with opener Unmukt Chand (33, 35b, 1x4) and Dhruv Shorey (70, 55b, 7x4, 2x6)

- At one stage Delhi was in the race when opener Unmukt was around
- Monu conceded just four runs when eight were needed for Delhi to win the game.

adding 93 for the second wicket.

Losing the script

But, it lost the script once Unmukt swung left-arm spinner Shahbaz Nadeem straight to the fielder in the deep and in the 17th over Dhruv was dismissed by pacer Rahul Shukla to leave Delhi at 123 for four.

The other Delhi batsmen failed to rise to the occasion.

Monu Kumar bowled a ti-

dy final over conceding just four runs when eight were needed for Delhi to win the game.

In another match, Sachin Baby's impressive unbeaten 75 (46b, 10x4) helped Kerala score an emphatic 83-run win over Manipur.

The scores:

Jharkhand 158 for four in 20 overs (Anand Singh 37, Virat Singh 70 n.o.) bt Delhi 155 for five in 20 overs (Unmukt Chand 33, Dhruv Shorey 70).

Nagaland 136 for six in 20 overs (K.B. Pawan 53 n.o.) lost to J&K 142 for one in 15.5 overs (Abdul Salad 76 n.o., Jatin Wadhwan 62).

Kerala 186 for five in 20 overs (Vishnu Vinod 34, Sachin Baby 75 n.o., Mohammed Azharuddeen 47) bt Manipur 103 for seven in 20 overs (Mayank Raghav 32, Yashpal Singh 40 n.o.).



In vain: Dhruv Shorey's fighting half-century was not enough to take Delhi past the finish line. • V. RAJU

WHAT HAPPENED ON THE OPENING DAY

Group A (at Mulapadu): Nagaland 136 for six in 20 overs (Rongsen Jonathan 31, K.B. Pawan 53 n.o.) lost to J&K 142 for one in 15.5 overs (Abdul Samad 76 n.o., Jatin Wadhwan 62).

Jharkhand 158 for four in 20 overs (Anand Singh 37, Virat Singh 70 n.o.) bt Delhi 155 for five in 20 overs (Unmukt Chand 33, Dhruv Shorey 70).

Kerala 186 for five in 20 overs (Vishnu Vinod 34, Sachin Baby 75 n.o., Mohammed Azharuddeen 47) bt Manipur 103 for seven in 20 overs (Mayank Raghav 32, Yashpal Singh 40 n.o.).

Group B (at Surat): Rajasthan 181 for four in 20 overs (Aditya N.Garhwal 30, Mahipal Lomror 78 n.o., Chetan Bist 28, Tajinder Singh Dhillion 38 n.o.) bt Tamil Nadu 128 in 19.5 overs (Deepak Chahar three for 30, Khaleel Ahmed three for 14).

Gujarat 146 for eight in 20 overs (Axar Patel 48, Abhay Negi three for 30) bt Meghalaya 133 for eight in 20 overs (Puneth Bisht 56, Piyush Chawla three for 17).

Himachal Pradesh 167 for eight in 20 overs (Ekant Sen 52, Nitin Sharma 36, Shrikant Wagh three for 32) lost to Vidarbha 171 for seven in 20 overs (Atharva Taide 43, Jitesh Sharma 37, Faiz Fazal 27, Ravi Jangid 25 n.o.).

Group C (at Indore): Saurashtra 188 for three in 20 overs (Harvik Desai 34, Cheteshwar Pujara 100 n.o., Robin Uthappa 46) lost to Railways 190 for five in 19.4 overs (Mrunal Devdar 49, Pratham Singh 40, Abhinav

Dixit 37 n.o.). Mumbai 258 for four in 20 overs (Shreyas Iyer 147, Suryakumar Yadav 63) bt Sikkim 104 for seven in 20 overs (Bipul Sharma 32).

Madhya Pradesh 199 for four in 20 overs (Parth Sahani 90, Abhishek Bhandari 54 n.o.) bt Punjab 165 for nine in 20 overs (Mandeep Singh 64, Gurkeerat 46, Ishwar Pandey three for 17).

Group D (at Cuttack): Karnataka 169 for six in 20 overs (Rohan Kadam 26, Manish Pandey 74, K.V. Siddhart 27) bt Assam 165 for seven in 19.5 overs (Karanveer Kaushal 58, Raturi 49, Vikas Yadav five for nine).

Friday's fixtures

- Group A (at Mulapadu): Delhi vs Manipur; Jharkhand vs J&K; Nagaland vs Andhra.

- Group B (at Surat): Gujarat vs Rajasthan; Vidarbha vs Bihar; Meghalaya vs Himachal.

- Group C (at Indore): Punjab vs Mumbai; Sikkim vs Goa; Madhya Pradesh vs Saurashtra.

- Group D (at Cuttack): Bengal vs Karnataka; Haryana vs Odisha; Chhattisgarh vs Arunachal Pradesh; Assam vs Mizoram.

- Group E (at New Delhi): Baroda vs Uttarakhand; Services vs Tripura; Hyderabad vs Uttar Pradesh; Maharashtra vs Puducherry.

Madhya Pradesh sweeps the podium

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Madhya Pradesh swept the top of the podium on day one of the 29th senior National canoe sprint & para canoe championship 2019 here on Thursday.

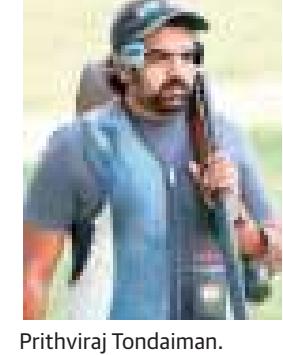
700 participants

The four-day competition, from February 21-24, is being organised by the Delhi Kayaking & Canoeing Association on the Yamuna at Sonia Vihar with more than 700 participants from 26 teams.

The results: Women:
1000m C-2: Inaocha Devi & Thaza Manvi (MP), Kirti Kevat & N. Minika Devi (Del), Dev Kumari & Mama Pradhan (Man).

1000m C-1: Anjali Basist (MP), Shivani (UP), Jasmit Kaur (Utk).

1000m K-1: Sonia Devi (MP), Rajina Kiro (Aandman & Nicobar), Koshal Nandini (Chhattisgarh).



Prithviraj Tondaiman.
FILE PHOTO

Prithviraj. By the time the top officials of the airlines responded, the boarding gate had closed for the flight. "I have missed a day's training already. I hope to travel tonight. There is no confirmation yet," said Prithviraj.

The rest of the Indian shotgun shooters scheduled to compete in Doha, travelled from Delhi without any hassle.

Delhi World Cup – no Olympic quota places

ISSF cites non-issue of visa to Pakistanis as the reason

KAMESH SRINIVASAN
NEW DELHI

It was an evening meant to welcome the shooters for the World Cup here with a fine cultural function, but ISSF president Vladimir Lisin's announcement that the Olympic quotas were taken away from the host at the behest of the International Olympic Committee (IOC), took the sheen away.

He quoted the issue of Pakistan's shooters not getting visas to compete in the World Cup as the reason for IOC's move.

The results: Women:
1000m C-2: Inaocha Devi & Thaza Manvi (MP), Kirti Kevat & N. Minika Devi (Del), Dev Kumari & Mama Pradhan (Man).

1000m C-1: Anjali Basist (MP), Shivani (UP), Jasmit Kaur (Utk).

1000m K-1: Sonia Devi (MP), Rajina Kiro (Aandman & Nicobar), Koshal Nandini (Chhattisgarh).

"It was no fault of the organising committee, or the ISSF. It is political interference of sport."

"No athlete can be discriminated, as per the Olympic charter. So, the IOC has said no Olympic Quota places in this World Cup."

"The quota places will be distributed in another World Cup," said Lisin even as he declared the World Cup open.

"It is disheartening. But, we can prepare better for winning the Olympic quota places in other World Cups,"

Raninder Singh, president National Rifle Association of India (NRAI) and vice president ISSF, put up a brave face saying that nothing had been decided as yet with re-

spond Sanjeev Rajput, who took the oath of honour, along with Heena Sidhu, at the opening ceremony.

"Ironically, India had hosted the Olympic qualifying event for the Rio Games, when the IOC took the Olympic quota places from the Asian Championships hosted by Kuwait, citing a similar case of political interference."

Raninder Singh, president National Rifle Association of India (NRAI) and vice president ISSF, put up a brave face saying that nothing had been decided as yet with re-

gard to the Olympic quota places.

The Union Sports Minister Col. Rajiv Singh Rathore was scheduled to be part of the opening ceremony, but did not make it to the shooting range.

For the first time, the World Cup in shooting will be broadcast world wide, as the ISSF has signed a deal to that effect, starting with this event.

There will be official pre-event training on Friday, and the World Cup will start on Saturday.

Karan, Rakesh make the grade

GURUGRAM: Karan Khaitan and Rakesh Anand qualified from the Gurugram Leg

for the National Finals of 2019 Mercedes Trophy 2019 on Thursday. The two carded a net score of 73 and 72.8 in Category A and B respectively.

The National Finals will be held at the Oxford Golf Resort in Pune from March 27 to 29. The next leg will be played from February 27 to 29 at Noida. The top three winners at the National Finals would be competing in the World Final in Stuttgart.

PKL Future Stars programme

The third edition of the Future Kabaddi Heroes (FKH) programme for the ProKabaddi League (PKL) saw 460 aspirants participating in the two-day trials here under former India coach L. Srinivas Reddy and BPCL coach Pratap Shetty in New Delhi.

Those shortlisted will be selected for Phase II and Phase III for training before being drafted in the auction pool for PKL Season 7.

Jeevan & Purav bow out in quarterfinals

INDIANS ABROAD

SPORT BUREAU
MARSEILLE (FRANCE)

Jeevan Nedunchezhiyan and Purav Raja went down guns blazing as they lost 7-6(4), 6-6, [10-8] by Austrians Jurgen Melzer and Philipp Oswald (Aut) bt Jeevan Nedunchezhiyan & Purav Raja 7-6(4), 6-7(6), [10-8].

Top seed Prajesh Gunneswaran beat Kwon Soonwoo (Kor) 7-6(5), 6-4. The results: € 744,010 ATP, Marseille, France: Quarterfinals: Jurgen Melzer & Philipp Oswald (Aut) bt Jeevan Nedunchezhiyan & Purav Raja 7-6(4), 6-7(6), [10-8]. \$54,160 Challenger, Bangkok, Thailand: Second round: Praj-

nesh Gunneswaran bt Kwon Soonwoo (Kor) 7-6(5), 6-4.

\$15,000 ITF women, Nan-chang, China: Quarterfinals: Siqi Cao & Wushuang Zheng (Chn) bt Si Qi Liu (Chn) & Natasha Palha 6-1, 6-3.

Eudice Chong (Hkg) & Kim Dabin (Kor) bt Izabela Gabriela Novac (Rou) & Saumya Vig 6-2, 6-0.

Arrives on Sunday.
Stays all week long.
Stay tuned for a fresh reading experience this Sunday.

THE HINDU

Magazine

THE HINDU GROUP

IN BRIEF



Empire actor arrested for faking racist attack

CHICAGO Actor Jussie Smollett said he claimed to be the victim of a racist and homophobic attack because he was dissatisfied with his salary on the TV drama Empire, Chicago police said on Thursday. Mr. Smollett, 36, a black and openly gay actor, has been arrested after he was charged with lying to police in connection with the alleged attack on January 29. REUTERS



Robot sensor diagnoses reproductive problems

LONDON Scientists have developed a robotic sensor technology that can be used to measure hormones which affect fertility, sexual development and menstruation more quickly and cheaply than current methods. The technology, described in the journal Nature Communications, was tested in patients in the U.K. PTI



Neptune's moon may be result of cosmic collision

WASHINGTON Neptune's tiny, mysterious moon may be a 'chipped-off piece' from a larger moon as a result of collision with a comet that took place billions of years ago, scientists say. NASA's Hubble Space Telescope had discovered HippoCamp in 2013. PTI

WHO prescribes 'aerobics 150' to stay fit

Inactivity in many countries is rising, posing higher risk of non-communicable diseases

BINDU SHAJAN PERAPPADAN
NEW DELHI



In good shape: The WHO says vigorous-intensity activities strengthen muscle and bone. GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

Reiterating the need for physical activity to reduce the incidence of non-communicable diseases (NCD), the World Health Organisation (WHO) has prescribed 150 minutes of weekly physical activity, and stating that physical inactivity is now identified as the fourth leading risk factor for global mortality.

The WHO warned that physical inactivity levels are rising in many countries with major implications for the prevalence of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) and the general health of the population worldwide.

Health benefits

Physical inactivity is estimated to be the main cause for approximately 21%-25% of breast and colon cancers, 27% of diabetes and approximately 30% of ischaemic heart disease burden.

"Regular and adequate le-

vels of physical activity in adults reduces the risk of hypertension, coronary heart disease, stroke, diabetes, breast and colon cancer, depression and the risk of falls; improve bone and functional health; and are a key determinant of energy expenditure, and thus fundamental to energy balance and weight control," noted the WHO.

tensity activity.

"Aerobic activity should be performed in bouts of at least 10 minutes duration. For additional health benefits, adults should increase their moderate-intensity aerobic physical activity to 300 minutes per week, or engage in 150 minutes of vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity per week, or an equivalent combination of moderate- and vigorous-intensity activity. Muscle-strengthening activities should be done involving major muscle groups on two or more days a week," it said.

Children and youth aged 5-17 years should accumulate at least 60 minutes of moderate-to vigorous-intensity physical activity daily. Amounts of physical activity greater than 60 minutes provide additional health benefits.

Most of the daily physical activity should be aerobic. Vigorous-intensity activities should be incorporated, in-

cluding those that strengthen muscle and bone at least three times per week. For this age group, bone-loading activities can be performed as part of playing games, running, turning or jumping, the Organisation recommends.

Psychological benefits

Doctors explain that physical activity has also been associated with psychological benefits in young people by improving their control over symptoms of anxiety and depression.

The WHO noted that physical activity provides young people opportunities for self-expression, building self-confidence, social interaction and integration.

It has also been suggested that physically active young people more readily adopt healthy behaviours (For example, avoidance of tobacco, alcohol and drug use) and demonstrate higher academic performance.

No more pop songs in my praise: Tajik President

'Highlight people, achievements instead'

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
DUSHANBE

Tajikistan's authoritarian leader has called for an end to pop songs praising him, State television said on Thursday, as the leadership cult surrounding the 66-year-old gathers strength.

The long-reigning strongman Emomali Rakhmon had "expressed concern" at "excessive advertising of the President's personality through music videos," it said.

"The President instructed the leadership of the Committee on Television and Radio Broadcasting instead to highlight the tireless work of the population, the country's significant achievements, the unique nature of this ancient land," it said.

Presidential personality cults are the norm in ex-Soviet Central Asia, where leaders face little political opposition or independent



Emomali Rakhmon. AP

media.

In neighbouring Uzbekistan, authorities have also cautioned against music praising President Shavkat Mirziyoyev.

The head of the State agency responsible for regulating the pop industry said this week that Mr. Mirziyoyev "does not need an advert from artists" after one singer released a song Selfie with my President.

In Turkmenistan, President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov implored officials and media not to praise him after coming to power in 2006.

Jaipur physicist solves puzzles on interactions of nature

MOHAMMED IQBAL
JAIPUR

The work of a Jaipur physicist on the standard model of particle physics, explaining new aspects of dark matter, dark energy and disappearance of anti-matter in the Universe, has been recognised by Belle Collaboration, an international body of more than 400 physicists and engineers, headquartered at the High Energy Accelerator Research Organisation, Tsukuba, Japan.

Physicist Dinesh Kumar and his team has provided "tantalising hints" of laws of nature beyond the current theory of Higgs boson, also referred to as the elusive God particle. Dr. Kumar has made measurements that cannot be explained by the standard model and are related to the decay of a subatomic particle known as "beauty meson".

earlier published in the journal Physical Review-D.

Dr. Kumar told The Hindu from Warsaw that his work has helped solve "puzzles on new interactions of nature" by seeking to explain the disappearance of anti-matter in the universe. He said this decay could not be explained by the standard model.

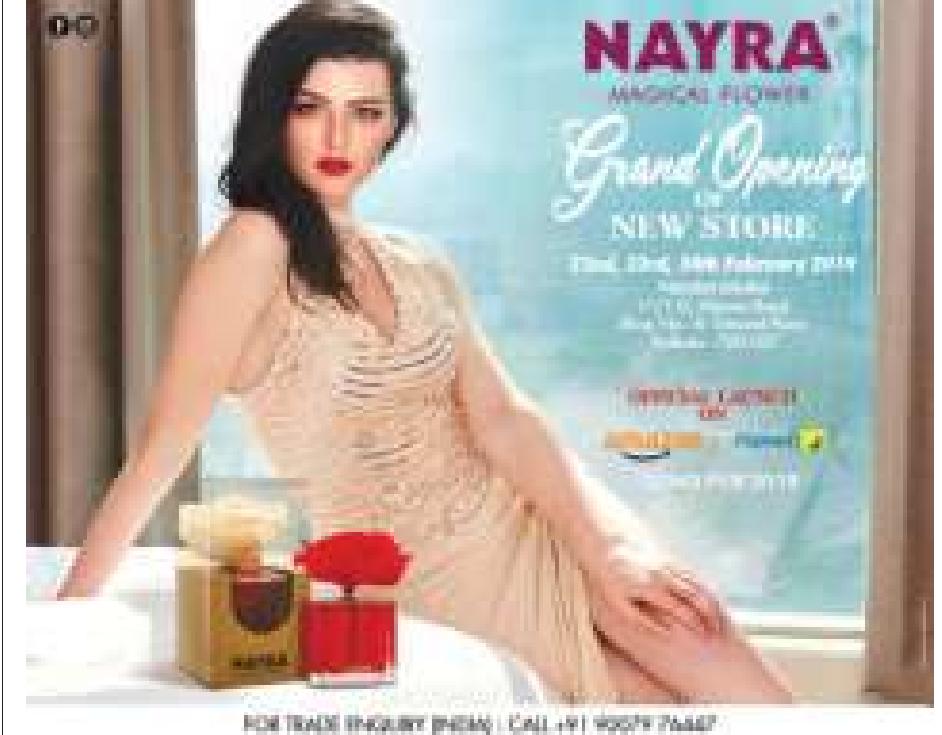
"A breakthrough has been achieved in our experiments, which have found that these new interactions can be confirmed or ruled out if we are able to measure the charmed meson's polarization," he said.

Samsung unveils foldable smartphone

REUTERS
SAN FRANCISCO/SEOUL

Samsung Electronics Co Ltd has wowed the smartphone industry with the first foldable screen, basking in its innovation credentials, banishing "fast follower" criticism and, at nearly \$2,000, setting a new standard in premium pricing.

The tech giant's Galaxy Fold resembles a conventional smartphone but opens like a book to reveal a second display the size of a small tablet at 7.3 inches (18.5 cm). It will go on sale from April 26.



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EXCHANGE THROUGH
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**'Will take AAP govt to task'**

Virender Gupta says BJP will take AAP govt to task on its "support" to JNU students accused of sedition **Page 2**

**Murder over son's affair**

A 55-year-old man has been killed by the family of a minor girl over his son's relationship with the girl **Page 3**

**'Over-the-top comedy'**

Madhuri Dixit and Indra Kumar on recreating their '90s box office magic with *Total Dhamaal* **Page 5**

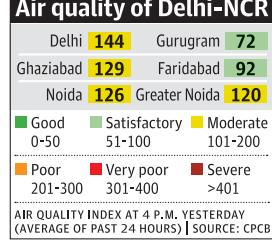
**Plating comes last**

There's more to food photography than table settings and ambient lighting. It's part of a larger story. **Page 6**

IN BRIEF**'Haryana govt killing people to make money'**

NEW DELHI
The NGT on Thursday came down heavily on the Haryana government over delay in adopting a brick kiln technology and said that the government's decision to extend the time limit for adoption of the technology was "killing people".

CITY ▶ PAGE 4



Man reports threat to blow up Rashtrapati Bhavan

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI
A 30-year-old man, preparing for CA, has alleged that a woman he was in touch with on a dating app threatened to blow up the Rashtrapati Bhavan and warned of a nuclear attack on Delhi, the police said on Thursday.

The man was jointly interrogated by the Intelligence Bureau, Delhi Police Special Cell and officers of the local police station. The man, a resident of Laxmi Nagar, had a fight with the woman on Wednesday. The woman allegedly told him, "You will get to know who I am when there will be a nuclear attack on Delhi and the Rashtrapati Bhavan will be blown up with a bomb."

The man informed the police regarding the threat around 10.30 p.m. He was interrogated the entire night and let off on Thursday morning. He suffers from obsessive-compulsive disorder and is undergoing treatment, the police said, adding that they suspect the threat to be a hoax and are on the lookout for the woman.

Wonderland

An illuminated replica of the Taj Mahal at 'Waste to Wonder' park in Sarai Kale Khan. The park, which comprises replicas of the seven wonders of the world, was inaugurated by Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh on Thursday. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

155 waterbodies across Capital encroached upon, panel tells NGT

Says authorities will be given nine months to clear the encroachments

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

A committee, headed by a former Delhi High Court Judge has informed the National Green Tribunal (NGT) that approximately 155 waterbodies have been identified across the national Capital that have been encroached upon.

The committee, which had been constituted by the NGT to monitor the groundwater situation in the Capital, said the waterbodies are under the jurisdiction of the State government and the Delhi Development Authority.

The green panel was also informed that the authorities will be given nine months to clear the encroachments from the waterbodies.

The committee, comprising

ADARSH KUMAR GOEL
NGT chairperson

The committee may consider if shorter time limit can be fixed for some of the waterbodies where encroachment was negligible, for 51 waterbodies to be taken up in the first phase

ing representatives from the Delhi Jal Board, Central Pollution Control Board and Central Ground Water Authority, has suggested that of the 155 waterbodies, 51 may be identified for removing encroachments in the first phase.

Following the suggestions put forth by the committee,

a Bench headed by NGT chairperson Justice Adarsh Kumar Goel said, "As regards the timeline of nine months, the committee may consider whether shorter time limit can be fixed for some of the identified waterbodies where encroachment was negligible, for 51 waterbodies to be taken up in first phase."

"The committee also considered the issue of recycling of water for which revised guidelines had been issued. The NITI Aayog had warned against over-exploitation of groundwater. Unless it is checked, the groundwater may be exhausted by 2020, as in more than 15% of the Delhi areas the groundwater is below 40 metres," the Bench observed.

Additionally, the commit-

tee noted the Tribunal's direction to levy a compensation of ₹5 lakh on schools and colleges that do not have functional rainwater harvesting systems.

The Delhi Development Authority has also been directed to ensure that the waterbodies are maintained and that no domestic sewage or industrial effluent is permitted to flow into them.

Pilferage and leakages
"The authorities would be directed to plug pilferage and leakages. Presently, 40% water is lost before being supplied. Comprehensive plan will be chalked out to prevent illegal use of groundwater by industries and big institutions, resorts, hotels and motels in Delhi," the committee said in its report.

Rahul Gandhi to take final call on poll candidates, says Sheila

Screening committee to study applications, narrow down names

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Delhi Pradesh Congress Committee president Sheila Dikshit on Thursday said that the election committee of the party has decided that Congress president Rahul Gandhi will take a final call on candidates for the seven Lok Sabha seats in Delhi, for which 70 leaders have filed applications.



Sheila Dikshit

A screening committee – comprising Ms. Dikshit, AICC in-charge of Delhi unit P.C. Chacko, AICC secretary Kujit Nagra and AICC general secretary (organisation) K.C. Venugopal – will study the applications and narrow down the list, which will be presented to Mr. Gandhi.

Ms. Dikshit also said that she was never approached by Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal to forge an alliance for the upcoming Lok Sabha polls, as claimed by him, and asserted that the AAP leader has reached the "stage of frustration".

The former Chief Minister was referring to a speech made by Mr. Kejriwal on Wednesday in which he had claimed that AAP leaders were tired of trying to convince the Congress to form an alliance with the party.

Delhi CEO urges voters to check electoral rolls for confirmation

Special camps to be conducted in city on February 23, 24

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) of Delhi, Ranbir Singh, on Thursday said that in order to provide opportunities to all left-out/unenrolled, eligible voters to get their names on the electoral rolls ahead of the Lok Sabha polls, special camps will be organised on February 23 and February 24 at all the polling station locations across Delhi.

Special camps
"All those who have attained the age of 18 [as on January 1, 2019] and have not enrolled themselves in the electoral rolls of Delhi can apply by filling up forms at these special camps," the CEO said.

Mr. Singh said that the general public is also informed that mere holding of a voter identity card does not entitle a voter to cast his/her vote during the election as the name of the person has to be there in the electoral rolls. Therefore, each person holding a voter iden-

tity card has been asked to check if his or her name is on the electoral rolls.

The CEO also asked people to be aware of "misleading" phone calls claiming deletion of their names from the voter list.

Mr. Singh said that his office had received 25 complaints of "misleading" calls, adding that the complaints have been forwarded to the police.

Mr. Singh also said that the focus of the special camps will be on getting more names added to the electoral rolls. "Surprisingly, the number of voters in the

RANBIR SINGH
Chief Electoral Officer of Delhi

age group of 18-19 in Delhi is around one lakh, which is very low. It should be about 3-4% of the total population of Delhi that comes to six lakh

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IN BRIEF



DU admission for foreign nationals to begin today

NEW DELHI The University of Delhi on Thursday announced that the admission process for foreign nationals will begin on February 22. The registration process for applying to all programmes will be online through the Foreign Students' Registry website www.fsr.du.ac.in, the university said in a statement. The university said that it offers over 500 programmes for foreign students and they do not have to take any entrance test to be admitted in the programme. STAFF REPORTER

Cong alliance: Kejriwal king of U-turns, says BJP

NEW DELHI Delhi BJP chief Manoj Tiwari on Thursday termed AAP national convener and Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal the "king of U-turns", which, he said, was evident by the ruling party's "entreaties" to the Congress for an alliance for the upcoming general elections. PTI

Delhi govt explores robotic solution to manual scavenging

Holds stakeholders' meeting to study feasibility of project

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Delhi government on Thursday organised a meeting of all stakeholders which included expert engineers to study the feasibility of a robotic solution to fully eradicate manual scavenging from the city.

The government said that it had already taken up various efforts to stop the inhuman practice of manual scavenging, and would soon introduce fully mechanised system to clean the sewage system and septic tanks but emphasised on the need to introduce robotic solutions that were needed to be used for smaller lanes and by-lanes that cannot be accessed by machines.

Bandicoot robot

Minister Rajendra Pal Gautam said that recently in Kerala, a robot named 'Bandicoot' had been developed by Genrobotics, Thiruvananthapuram and represen-

Will take govt to task on JNU sedition case: BJP

Assembly budget session likely to begin on a stormy note

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

On the eve of Delhi Assembly's budget session, Leader of the Opposition Vijender Gupta said that the BJP will take the AAP government to task on its "support" to the JNU students by delaying the sanction for prosecution.

He said that that the party will also expose the fake claims of deletion of 30 lakh names from the voters list and highlight the way the government has been depriving Delhiites of the benefits of Ayushman Bharat scheme and other initiatives.

"We will expose Kejriwal government's utter misgovernance, failures, unconstitutional acts, and betrayal of trust of Delhi citizens in the House," the Leader of the Opposition said.

'Will raise our voice' He added that the AAP government would do its best to suppress the voice of the Opposition and forcibly march out BJP MLAs, but they



would continue to raise their voice against misdeeds and mismanagement of the AAP government.

The leader added that the BJP would strongly oppose Delhi government's efforts to "dramatise" the issue of statehood.

"The Supreme Court has commented that statehood is not viable for Delhi. In place of honouring the court, the AAP is unnecessarily raking up the issue. If need arises, we shall bring adjournment motion on this issue and other such issues under Rule 59 of the Delhi

We will expose Kejriwal government's utter misgovernance, failures, unconstitutional acts, and betrayal of trust of Delhi citizens in the House

VIJENDER GUPTA
Leader of the Opposition

Assembly Rules," he said.

The BJP said that several of the promises that the Kejriwal government had made before coming to power were yet to be delivered.

Pending projects

"It is yet to build 500 new schools, add 30,000 additional beds, open 900 primary health centres, 20 new degree colleges, build 2 lakh public toilets, install sewage treatment plants to stop 100% flow of sewage into Yamuna, provide free Wi-Fi, procure 10,000 DTC buses and several others," he said.

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A semi-automatic robot only requires a human operator to stand on the street near the manhole. The machine with its many cameras, a robotic arm with 360 degree mobility and a handy bucket to collect the waste does the rest

GOVERNMENT STATEMENT tatives from the start-up made a presentation about the robot.

"Bandicoot, a semi-automatic robot only requires a human operator to stand on the street near the manhole. The machine with its many cameras, a robotic arm with 360 degree mobility and a handy bucket to collect the waste does the rest.

The government said that DJB will be constituting a committee comprising experts from IIT-D, Delhi Technological University, Netaji Subhas Institute of Technology for implementation of various methods to use robot or other type of technology.

Censors in manholes

It was suggested by experts in the meeting that feasibility of using censors in the manholes may also be examined that will report on the status of toxic gases in the manhole prior to opening it.

The government said that DJB will be constituting a committee comprising experts from IIT-D, Delhi Technological University, Netaji Subhas Institute of Technology for implementation of various methods to use robot or other type of technology.

Mr. Sisodia said that the Delhi government must have authority over the Services Department not only

for correct responses and deducted for incorrect responses.

Following this, the doctors approached the authorities and also sent various representations requesting to look into the matter and consider re-evaluation or publish question papers with answer keys.

Denied queries

The NBE also denied the queries posted by some of the candidates under the Right to Information Act, 2005.

The plea has asked for publishing of question papers – with answer keys and response sheet of petitioners who had appeared in the exam.

The High Court has posted the case for further hearing on March 19.

Consider re-evaluation

In some cases, individual score is much less than estimated after tallying the questions attempted with standard textbooks, the plea said, while in other cases, there appears to be serious contradiction and probable error in marks awarded to them".

Exam was held on Jan 6

It is a qualifying-cum-ranking examination for admission to MD, MS, postgrad-

uate diploma courses in medical colleges across the country. The examination for the forthcoming academic session was held on January 6, 2019.

The plea said that upon declaration of result and release of individual marks they "found serious discrepancy in marks awarded to them".

Bharatashree

Bharatashree, a resident of Yellapur in Karnataka, along with 16 other doctors from across India moved the High Court claiming that there was "serious contradiction and probable error in marks awarded to students" in the NEET postgraduate examination 2019.

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IN BRIEF



Child-centric initiative Naazuk launched

NEW DELHI

Commissioner of Police Amulya Patnaik launched a new child-centric initiative "Naazuk" as a pilot project from Bharat Nagar of North-West District. It will soon be extended to other parts of Delhi. The purpose behind the programme is to generate awareness about child sexual abuse, and particularly crimes against children of the smaller age group. STAFF REPORTER

Furniture worth lakhs of rupees gutted in fire

NEW DELHI

Furniture worth lakhs of rupees was gutted in a fire that broke out in a showroom on Jail Road in west Delhi's Tilak Nagar in the early hours on Thursday, an official of the Delhi Fire Services said. No injuries or casualties have been reported.

A call regarding the blaze was received around 1.30 a.m., following which four fire tenders were rushed to the spot, the official said. The fire was brought under control by 2.50 a.m. The cause of the blaze is yet to be ascertained, the official further said. PTI

Asees Chadha gets bail in accident case

STAFF REPORTER

The Delhi High Court on Thursday granted bail to Asees Singh Chadha, nephew of late Ponty Chadha, who allegedly killed a 51-year-old woman from Turkmenistan in a road accident, on Thursday. Asees is the only son of Wave Group chairman.

The accused managed to evade judicial custody and got himself admitted at a hospital after complaining of 'chest pain'. He was admitted to RML Hospital after he complained of congestion in the chest. He was referred to the hospital by jail authorities, said a police officer.

On Wednesday, Metropolitan Magistrate at Patiala House court dismissed his bail plea. His lawyers applied for bail in session court.

Asees has been asked by Additional Sessions Judge to furnish a personal bond of ₹2 lakh and two surety of the like amount.

Police said that he was arrested and produced before a magistrate after the accident and was sent to a one-day police custody. On Tuesday, he was sent to judicial custody, but he complained of chest pain and was referred to RML hospital for treatment by jail authorities.

Asees was arrested and charged with rash driving and culpable homicide not amounting to murder after he allegedly killed Alajanova Gulsat, a tourist from Turkmenistan, by ramming his luxury car into an autorickshaw in which she was travelling in along with two of her relatives.

"The injured are undergoing treatment at a hospital," said the police.

DELHI TODAY

Exhibition: "Fabulous", a solo show of paintings by Mahesh Kumar at Roop Chand Institute of Fine Art (RCIFA), 23, Central Market, Ashok Vihar, Phase-I, 11 a.m. - 7 p.m.

Exhibition: "Individual Palettes" a group art show, curated by Rameshwar Broota at Shridharan Art Gallery, Triveni Kala Sangam, 205, Tansen Marg, Mandi House, 11 a.m. - 8:30 p.m.

Exhibition: "A Wired Ecstasy" solo show by Jayashree Chakravarty at Akar Prakar, First Floor, D-43 Defence Colony, 11 a.m. - 7 p.m.

Exhibition: "Tales of Yore", a group art show at Gallerie Nyva, Square One Designer Arcade, C-2, District Centre, Saket, 11 a.m. - 7 p.m.

Exhibition: "Life Patterns" group show of paintings by Raja Deori and Dr. Danial Arabali at Art Galaxy, ICCR, Azad Bhawan, I.P. Estate, 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.

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

Man murdered over son's relationship with minor

Allegedly killed by girl's kin after being abducted from home

SAURABH TRIVEDI
NEW DELHI

A 55-year-old was allegedly killed by the family members of a minor girl as his son was in a relationship with the girl, the police said on Thursday.

Police said they received a PCR call on February 18 informing them about a semi-nude body being found on Pusta Road in Burari. A police team rushed to the spot. However, they couldn't find any injury marks on the body.

"In-between two youth approached the Burari police in search of their father. The officials there showed them the picture of the unidentified body found in Burari and the youth identified it to be their father's. The deceased was identified as Jagmohan Lal, a rickshaw puller," said DCP (North) Nupur Prasad.

Arun, son of the deceased, told the police that his father was abducted by four relatives of his girlfriend on February 16 and they must have killed him before dumping the body on the roadside.

Narrating the sequence of events that led to the abduction, Arun told the police



Three of four suspects in police custody. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

that he brought his girlfriend to his home on Valentine's Day. But her family members got to know about it and they created a ruckus at his house and took the girl back home.

On February 16, he again brought her to his house. But her family members barged into his house and thrashed his father and abducted him. However, he managed to escape from their hands, said Ms. Prasad.

Strangled to death

"The post-mortem of the deceased was conducted and the report said that the victim was strangled to death," said Ms. Prasad.

On the basis of the post-

mortem report, police registered case of murder against the suspects and detained three out of four suspects.

"We have arrested Ajay, Sonu and Krishan. Krishan is the maternal uncle of the girl while other two are her brothers. They confessed that they had thrashed the victim before strangling him to death. Later, they dumped his body along the bushes on the roadside near his house in Burari," said Ms. Prasad.

An FIR under IPC Sections 365 (kidnapping or abducting with intent secretly and wrongfully to confine person) and 302 (murder) was registered. The case is under investigation.

Gurugram police arrest proclaimed offender

Crack dozens of vehicle theft cases

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GURUGRAM

The Gurugram police claimed to have cracked several dozen cases of vehicle theft in the city and its neighbouring areas with the arrest of a proclaimed offender. The police have recovered a mini-truck and ten stolen motorcycles after the arrest.

The accused, Salim alias Sahil, a resident of Nuh, was involved in four dozen cases of vehicle theft in Gurugram, Dharuhera, Rewari, Delhi and Rajasthan, said Assistant Commissioner of Police (Crime), Shamsher Singh, in a press conference on Thursday.

The accused has been declared proclaimed offender by the court in several cases of vehicle theft. He has also been sent to jail several times, Mr. Singh said.

He has been arrested in connection with a case of vehicle theft registered at Sector-7 Manesar Police Sta-



The newly procured vehicles. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Fire service department gets 28 more vehicles

1,358 fire proximity suit distributed

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

and other specialised fire-fighting equipment for the DFS.

Director of DFS, G.C. Misra said that the fire proximity suit is a great addition to the life safety of the fireman, who used to fight deadly fires without adequate protection. This will not only boost their morale but also put them at par with their international counterparts and bring out a visible change.

Mr. Jain said that the government is committed to make Delhi Fire Service, a leading fire service across the globe and bring a change in the perception of common citizens.

I am satisfied that the parties have settled the claim amicably without any inducement, force or coercion. In view of the state-

Notorious criminal killed after 30-minute-long gun battle

Three of his accomplices arrested; cop injured in encounter

ASHOK KUMAR
GURUGRAM

A notorious criminal carrying a cash reward of ₹25,000 on his head was shot dead and his three accomplices were arrested in a 30-minute-long gun battle with the Nuh Police at Bisru village here on Thursday. A police man was also injured in the exchange of fire.

Arshad (30), who was injured during the encounter, was declared brought dead by the doctors at the hospital in Mandi Khera.

The police said eight cases were registered against him in Palwal and Nuh districts of Haryana and in Rajasthan on charges of attempt to murder, robbery, dacoity, causing hurt and rioting. A resident of Basru village, Arshad was acquitted in two criminal cases registered at Palwal, but his arrest was pending in five other cases.

His accomplices have been identified as Ikram (38), and Azad (45), from Nuh and Yameen (36), from Dhoj village in Faridabad, the police said.

Superintendent of Police, Nuh, Sangeeta Kalia, said that a seven-member Nuh

Brother held for raping minor several times

Girl narrates her ordeal to employer, who helps her in approaching the police

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

A 17-year-old minor was allegedly raped by her own brother multiple times over the last three years in Dwarika till she informed her employer about the ordeal. She was also impregnated by the accused in 2018. The accused has been arrested, the police said.

A senior officer privy to the investigation said the minor's mother, a house help, had gone to the village a few days ago and the job was ta-

ken over by the girl.

On February 18, the girl went to work at the employer's house with bruises on her face and body. The employer, a woman, enquired her about the marks on her face and asked her if she was beaten up. Initially, she hesitated to reveal what had happened, but then told the woman that her brother had beaten her up. She also told her that the brother had raped her," the officer said.

The employer immediately approached an NGO deal-

ing with such cases who further helped the girl to approach the police.

Impregnated in 2018

"The girl, in her statement, said that she had been raped multiple times by her brother for nearly three years. He had also impregnated her in 2018 and got the child aborted," the officer said.

Based on the statement, a case under Section 376 (Punishment for rape) of the Indian Penal Code and 6 of Protection of Children from

Sexual Offences Act was registered and the 24-year-old brother was arrested.

The police said that they are probing whether the mother was aware of the crime.

"When she was asked whether her mother knew about the pregnancy, she just said that she had informed her mother that her periods had stopped. The mother then told her to inform her brother. The accused then got her a medicine," the officer said.

Woman strangled to death over property tiff

Kin accuse husband, brother-in-law and mother-in-law of the woman of murder

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GURUGRAM

A 30-year-old married woman was strangled to death at a village in Sohna here on Thursday over a property dispute. Her family has accused her husband, brother-in-law and mother-in-law of the murder.

The murder came to light on Thursday morning when Kripa Devi's husband Sunder called her brother Virender and asked him to come over to his house to discuss a matter.

"When we reached our sister Kripa Devi's house in Harchandpur village, we found her lying dead on a bed in her room," said Kripa's brother Joginder, in the First Information Report.

Joginder, in his complaint to the police, said that his



The victim, Kripa Devi

niece Sonia (11), told him that her father Sunder had beaten up her mother (Kripa) late on Wednesday night. He murdered her a few hours later with the help of her uncle Sattan and grandmother Shakti Devi.

Sunder had beaten up Kripa in her mother's presence as well a month ago.

Kripa's relative Ranjit Kumar said that the autopsy report had established that she was strangled to death.

SHO of Sohan Sadar, Inspector Ramesh Kumar said a murder case was registered against the trio and the arrest will be made soon.

Armed men rob ₹45 lakh from businessmen, held

2 accused arrested; others on the run

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Accused took a U-turn and started riding on the wrong side when four officers patrolling nearby chased them and managed to catch one of them.

Traffic police nearby also joined the patrolling staff.

The accused fired one round at the police party, but no one was injured," the DCP said.

The three managed to flee from the spot. However, another accused was arrested late evening who was found to be victims' collection agent.

"He was aware that the victims would be carrying cash and he provided information to his associates," Mr. Singh said.

Police have registered a case under Section 186, 353, 307, 397 and 34 of the Indian Penal Code and relevant sections of the Arms Act.

"Raids are being conducted to nab the rest of accused," the DCP said.



The police officials after the encounter. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

police team along with the reinforcement from Rewari conducted a raid on the outskirts of Bisru around 9 a.m. following a tip-off that Ikrar, wanted in an attempt to murder case of Bichhor police station, was hiding in the village with his gang.

Bullet hits constable

"On seeing the police team, the accused opened fire. One of the bullets hit constable Pawan on the right hand and another on the chest. But he was protected by the bullet-proof jacket. The police retaliated and a bullet hit Arshad," said Ms. Kalia.

Ms. Kalia said information regarding their criminal activities is being collected and there could be more cases against them.

The senior police officer claimed that the police fired four rounds while the criminals fired three shots during

the exchange of fire. One of the bullets fired by the criminals hit the police vehicle.

Three pistols, three country-made pistols and 69 cartridges have been recovered from the possession of the criminals, the police said.

Ikrar carries a cash reward of ₹50,000 on his head and declaration of another reward of the same amount is under process, they said. Ikrar is involved in nine cases registered in Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, West Bengal and Rajasthan. He was not arrested in any of the cases yet.

Ms. Kalia said information regarding their criminal activities is being collected and there could be more cases against them.

The senior police officer claimed that the police fired four rounds while the criminals fired three shots during

Insurance company gives ₹13 lakh to accident victim

Case was settled out-of-court

NIRNIMESH KUMAR
NEW DELHI

In an out-of-court settlement in a road accident case, an insurance company has compensated an injured man by paying him ₹13 lakh.

The victim had sustained injuries when a truck hit him on Nangloi-Najafgarh road in West Delhi in 2014.

While the claim petition was pending in the Motor Accident Claims Tribunal of Hemani Malhotra, IFFCO Tokio General Insurance Company Ltd. with which the offending vehicle was insured to cover third party risk and the insurance company has indemnified the registered owner of the offending vehicle, it is under statutory liability to pay the compensation.

Hence, the insurance company is liable to pay the award amount to the petitioner," she further said.

The tribunal asked the insurance company to deposit the amount within 30 days from the date of settling the case in SBI Tis Hazari branch. In default of payment within the prescribed time, the insurance company shall be liable to pay a penal interest at the rate of 12% per annum, the tribunal said.

4 CITY

IN BRIEF



Bihar MLA held with 10 bullets at IGI airport

NEW DELHI
An MLA from Bihar has been apprehended at the Delhi airport for allegedly carrying ten bullets in his baggage, officials said on Thursday. Chandrasekhar was intercepted by a CISF personnel during baggage checking on Wednesday at the IGI Airport while he was about to take a flight to Patna, they said. The Madhepura MLA could not be reached despite repeated attempts. PTI

Noida's bus terminal to be ready by June 30

NOIDA
About 70% work has been completed on an upcoming state-of-the-art bus terminal here, which is expected to be ready by the end of June, the officials said. Being developed at a cost of ₹140.64 crore, the terminal is located in Sector 82 on the Dadri-Surajpur-Chhadera road and spread over 31,400 sq m, a senior official of Noida Authority said. PTI

Specify distance between institutes, stone crushers

NGT gives Haryana official 2-month time

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI
Following a plea seeking directions to the Haryana government to specify the distance required between stone crushers and educational institutions, the National Green Tribunal has directed the Chief Secretary to finalise the same and furnish a report within two months.

A Bench headed by NGT Chairperson Justice A.K. Goel said, "We direct the Chief Secretary, Haryana, to finalise the matter expeditiously within two months and furnish a report to this tribunal. The distance

You are killing people for making money, NGT raps Haryana govt

Over extending the time limit for adopting the brick kiln technology

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The National Green Tribunal (NGT) on Thursday came down heavily on the Haryana government over delay in adopting a brick kiln technology and said that the government's decision to extend the time limit for adoption of the technology was "killing people".

A Bench headed by NGT Chairperson Justice Adarsh Kumar Goel rapped the State government for not monitoring the air quality and asked why it should not stay the operation of impugned orders till further orders.

"Did you check the air quality before issuing extension orders? You are killing people for making money. How can you exercise your power in such a manner, don't you owe any duty towards people? You have no concern for people," the NGT Bench said during the hearing.

Smoke billows out of a brick kiln near Hisar highway.
FILE PHOTO: SHIV KUMAR PUSHAKAR

The observations came after the counsel appearing for the State government informed the Bench that extension of the time limit for adoption of the ZigZag technology has been done in non-NCR regions.

Coal consumption

The adoption of this technology helps in reducing coal consumption by approximately 20% and allows com-

plete combustion.

Petitioners Dinesh Chahal and others had moved the green panel challenging a December 2018 order issued by the Director of Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs of the State government, that extended the time limit for the adoption of the technology from September 2018 to July 31, 2019.

"The Central Pollution Control Board issued direc-

How can you [Haryana government] exercise your power in such a manner? Don't you owe any duty towards people? You have no concern for people

NGT BENCH

Lodging of e-FIRs will increase burden on investigative process, police tell HC

Oppose plea claiming it could lead to 'abuse of process of law'

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi police have opposed before the High Court a petition urging a direction for e-FIRs to be lodged for all offences, instead of only those crimes where the accused is unknown.

In an affidavit, Delhi Police said this could lead to "abuse of process of law" and "settling of personal scores" by unscrupulous online complainants. It said lodging of FIRs online in all cases would increase the burden on the investigative process and will take away the agency's power to conduct a preliminary inquiry before taking such a step.



the police said.

Apart from that lodging of e-FIRs is likely to cause great inconvenience and mental trauma to the accused, it said adding that the Delhi Police have a very effective internal mechanism through which a complainant can ensure registration of FIR in cognizable offences in the event of refusal on the part of the duty officer of a police station.

The Delhi police in its affidavit has also said that in cases where the victim is a minor or a woman, lodging of e-FIRs could lead to disclosure of their identity.

The petition has sought directions to the Centre, Delhi government and the police to implement online FIR services for all cognizable and non-cognizable offences in the Capital.

The High Court had on Wednesday asked the Centre and the Delhi government to respond to the issue and listed the matter for further hearing on July 12.

High Court rejects plea of railway employees' wards

Against BCCI's decision for RSPB team

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

limited grounds as indicated, are established," the court said.

The petition said that BCCI had decided that only permanent railway employees would be allowed to play for the Railway Sports Promotion Board (RSPB) teams.

The court passed the order on a plea by 10 wards of railway employees who said that junior teams were allowed to take part in tournaments organised by BCCI from 1980 and since then, the railway employees' children had been representing the department and winning accolades.

Justice Vibhu Bakhu said it will not interfere with the decision of the BCCI and the SC-appointed CoA.

"This court cannot support its opinion over that of the concerned authority and a judicial review of merits is not permissible, unless the

40% people feel unsafe in Delhi against 14% in Mumbai, says survey

NGO releases report on 'State of Policing, Law and Order'

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

bhai was unsafe for women, children and senior citizens.

According to the survey, maximum number of the respondents (51%) felt unsafe in north-east Delhi while 36% felt unsafe both in Lutyens' Delhi and Chandni Chowk.

Labourers least secure

The survey also highlighted that people belonging to the skilled and unskilled labour classes felt the least secure. It added that 47% of the women living in Delhi did not feel secure while travelling from one place to another within the city.

Also, 21% of the respondents witnessed crime in the city and 68% of them, who informed the police, were not satisfied with the response of police officers.

Respondents from north-east Delhi (26%) and south Delhi (26%) were least satisfied from among those who witnessed and reported crime to the police. In Mumbai, 69% people who witnessed crime and informed the police were satisfied with the response of the police officers as opposed to a meagre 32% in Delhi who were satisfied with police response.

Tributes to slain jawans

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Senior wardens and volunteers of Delhi Civil Defence, Central District, organised a candlelight march to pay tributes to the CRPF jawans killed in the Pulwama terror attack.

The Civil Defence volunteers assembled at the lawns opposite Rajghat and observed a two-minute silence as a mark of respect to the slain jawans.

The march passed through the lanes of Daryaganj and culminated at the office of the District Magistrate, Central. "The loss of lives is shocking and they deserve a rich tribute," said senior chief warden Syed Saud Ziad.

POOCHE CAFE



HAGAR THE HORRIBLE



TIGER



WUMO



PEARLS BEFORE SWINE



PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBES



THE GUARDIAN QUICK CROSSWORD-13000

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© GUARDIAN NEWS AND MEDIA LTD., 2016

6 Minor violation (12)
7 We can agree on this (6,6)

12 First letters (8)

15 English mathematician and physicist, d. 1727 (6)

18 Cooperative unit (4)

Solution will appear in Delhi Metro dated February 23, 2019.

Solution No. 12999



HEALTH CAPSULES® by Brian Smith

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF BORON DEFICIENCY?
THE SYMPTOMS OF BORON DEFICIENCY ARE NOT WELL KNOWN, BUT THEY CAN INCLUDE:
• BORON DEFICIENCY SYMPTOMS CAN OCCUR WHEN THERE ARE MINIMAL LEVELS OF BORON IN THE SOIL, DEFICIENCY SYMPTOMS INCLUDE:
• ARTHRITIS, BRITTLE BONES,
• CARPAL TUNNEL SYNDROME,
• DEGENERATIVE JOINT DISEASE, MEMORY LOSS,
• MUSCLE PAIN, OSTEOPOROSIS,
• RECEEDING GUMS, AND WEAK JOINT CARTILAGE.
Health Capsules should indicate the official diagnostic name.

- Across
 - 1 Incredulity (9)
 - 8 Golf clubs (5)
 - 9 Quick look (7)
 - 10 Middle East capital (8)
 - 11 Hill part – head part (4)
 - 13 Fixed (6)
 - 14 Wing of the main building (6)
 - 16 Land measure (4)
 - 17 Eschewing booze (8)
 - 19 Sumptuous (7)
 - 20 Fruit of the oak (5)
 - 21 Basics (9)
 - Down
 - 1 Catastrophe (8)
 - 2 Engage by written agreement (4,2)
 - 3 Way out (4)
 - 4 Blemish (12)
 - 5 Unconstrained (12)

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'It's fun doing an over-the-top comedy'

Powerhouse actor-director duo Madhuri Dixit and Indra Kumar on recreating '90s box office magic with *Total Dhamaal*

ANAHITA PANICKER

Actor Madhuri Dixit and director Indra Kumar might be sitting in different rooms at Juhu hotel, Sun-Sand, fielding questions through the afternoon about their forthcoming ensemble comedy *Total Dhamaal*, but their histories in Bollywood are intertwined.

It has been nearly three decades since Dixit and Kumar first joined forces for romantic drama *Dil* (1990). While it was Indra Kumar's directorial debut, and Dixit's first Filmfare win for Best Actress, *Dil* was still only the first of three blockbuster collaborations between the two. They obviously hope the fourth time will not be any different.

The third film of the *Dhamaal* franchise, *Total Dhamaal* has Riteish Deshmukh, Arshad Warsi and Javed Jaffrey reprising their roles from the first two instalments, and adds stars like Anil Kapoor, Madhuri Dixit, Ajay Devgn and Sanjay Misra to the mix.

Describing what it was like on set, Kumar says, "I had to control them. When they're together, they all explode! You have to curtail them: 'Arrey bhai, script mein nahiin hai yeh! Tumhara ek hi punch hai, ruk ja!' (This isn't in the script. You have just one punchline, wait!)"

Reuniting stars

This isn't the only comedy series that Kumar has to his name. The director also helmed the *Masti* series, an adult comedy franchise.

On why he chose to revisit the *Dhamaal* universe eight years after the previous film's release, Kumar says, "People prefer sequels nowadays. They're a safer bet. *Jab sequel banate ho, aur jab comedy banate ho, toh pagalpan ki had kuchh bhi*



Successful partnerships: (Right) director Indra Kumar and (top) actor Madhuri Dixit in a still from *Total Dhamaal*

*SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

other. [This] will be different."

The star was also immediately drawn to the script because she wanted to revisit the genre. After the crime drama *Gulaab Gang* (2014) and the Marathi film of self-discovery *Bucket List* (2018), Dixit wanted to immerse herself in something else. "It's fun doing a commercial, over-the-top comedy and just letting your hair down!"

But what can't be ignored is the track record both Dixit and Kumar share. Their last film together – incidentally their only collaboration for which Dixit received a Filmfare Award nomination – was the 1995 hit film *Raja* with Sanjay Kapoor. Nearly 25 years later, neither feels anything has changed.

"It's like bicycling. Once you know how to bicycle, you'll get it, [after] five minutes of [struggling]. This was just as if the time had not passed!" says Dixit.

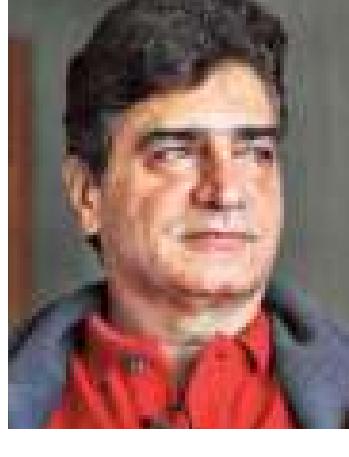
Superstar magic

Thinking back to why he knew Dixit was perfect for his debut film opposite Aamir Khan in *Dil*, Kumar says it was at a time she hadn't yet found her footing in the industry. "She had everything that a heroine should have," he says. While the romantic action film *Tezaab* (1988) and the drama *Ram Lakhan* (1989) – films that catapulted Dixit to stardom and cast aside the unkind label 'Madhuri Jinx-it' – released before *Dil*, Kumar says he had signed

her on to his first two films earlier. "When I signed her, she was not a star," he says. "She went on to become a superstar. But I didn't find any change in her. She is the same."

While *Dil*, Anil Kapoor-starrer *Beta* (1992) and *Raja* share permutations of exaggerated comedy, heavy-handed drama, and topics that have aged terribly like staged rapes and misogynistic values, they were successful at the box office. When asked if he'd like to revisit any of his '90s films, Kumar says, "Maybe Mann?"

The 1999 film featured Aamir Khan and Manisha Koirala as the lead pair, and Kumar remarks, "Manisha has done a splendid job,



but their [Aamir and Madhuri's] chemistry would've been better."

Dixit herself would love to see the director return to his '90s style. "He plays to his strengths – comedy and drama. I'd love for him to do something like *Beta*, a film that has good comedy portions and meaty emotions."

With reports abounding that Kumar might remake *Beta* and direct a sequel to *Dil*, he just might experiment with his older avatar.

This v/s That

Parks and gardens

Nehru Park or Lodhi Garden: where's it better to catch some exercise?



City fitness: Early mornings in Nehru Park • R.V. MOORTHY

The case for Nehru Park

Simply put, Nehru Park has energy, unlike its doddering South-Central-Delhi cousin. You'll feel the vibe, whether you're a cyclist who does Shanti Path and India Gate along with NP, or a child skating, a runner, or a brisk walker. There are groups of people exercising under several of the big sports' brand's banners, those using the red-mud path as they wind their way around a grassy 'hill', over a little bridge, past the ducks.

There's enough scenery without having to look at monuments, there's enough space without having to bump into slow-paced bureaucrats trudging their way around said monuments, and there's enough of a pace (from children and seniors alike) to get even a maybe-runner into keeping stride. There are 'proper' athletes training there, ups and downs that work perfectly for training, no kissing couples to distract, and certainly no pre-wedding photoshoots happening. It isn't everything to everybody.

There's a clear 2-km track around the park that's easy to walk or run around and there are pavements – always a surprise in Delhi. Plus, you don't need to be a hurdler to get onto or run or walk on them. The park has decent loos – also a rarity in our Capital – so men don't use the walls.

Okay so parking's a bit difficult, especially over the weekend, but no one gets antsy, again, a shocker for Delhi. And yes, you'll likely see the flashy side of our city – people with the best fitness equipment, biggest cars, and puffy chests, but there's always breakfast at Sagar Ratna at the Ashok, where a 'singh idly' costs 150 bucks, so you can feel at par. Well, sort of.

Sunalini Mathew is a maybe-runner, maybe-cyclist



Yoga in the park: In Lodhi Garden • SANDEEP SAXENA

The case for Lodhi Garden

If you want to run in a park, a fenced grassy stretch in your locality, but if you want to trot through time, head to Lodhi Garden. Thirteenth-century tombs and mosques stand grand amid a plethora of smaller yet significant monuments, carefully punctuated by manicured lawns, walkways, jogging tracks and water bodies.

If you are a hard-core runner it might be advisable to entirely avoid parks and stick to the track (the stadium nearby has one) but if you're a leisure runner – aspiring half-marathoner – then this 2.2kms ring is a delightful dash around one of the richest reserves of trees, bird-life, and, did I mention history?

Sure, Lodhi is also the hotspot for everyone from picnickers to courting couples, cradle-filers to walk-the-dog-chillers, but none turn up before 10 a.m., by when most runners have already clocked their step-count for the day.

The heady foliage makes for lovely uninterrupted stretches of shade which is extremely useful April to October (especially in May and June) when the sun is anything but merciful. There is ample parking with multiple entries/exits, carefully-positioned toilets, water ATMs and also a few of those open-air gyms with basic equipment. But the numerous fitness groups which occupy their own respective corners of the park just need a patch of green; from extreme cardio to the counts of '1,2,3...' to soothing yoga chants not too far away, they all co-exist in the verdant expanse. Much of it is free to the public too!

NP, by comparison, has no tree cover, a lot of the path is concrete, and is more artificially landscaped than a Punjabi jeweller.

Lodhi is not just about running, or simply fitness; it emphasises overall communal health, unlike its upstart cousin. More than a park, it's a historic monument enclosed by gardens. Sure enough it is located in Central-South Delhi, but more than location, it occupies an even more pivotal position as an entity of local pride in Delhi hearts, which NP can never.

Magandeep Singh can't swim, cycle or run well, so he tries

Where we pit iconic Delhi things against each other

Uniting threads

Ujjawal Dubey on his LFW show and working with a handloom cluster from Assam for his line called B A L A N C E

SUBHA J RAO

Twelve days before his show at the recent Lakme Fashion Week, designer Ujjawal Dubey had still not tied up with any handloom or weaving cluster or an organisation for his fabric needs. And then, he was informed about a cluster from Assam, and its work with *muga* and *eri* silk. The resultant line B A L A N C E marked Dubey's association with the United Nations Development Programme, GoCoop (an online marketplace that helps handloom and handicraft cooperatives and artisans connect with buyers) and Raymond.

Dubey, who has associated with Raymond for two years, is known for his innovative use of fabric, draping, and layering, to create a sense of fluidity.

His brand *Antar-Agni* came up with a collection that fused formal and fun, the traditional and the contemporary. There was an interesting twist too, with the asymmetrical silhouettes featuring zari work on silk sourced from Rampur in Kamrup district, Assam.

"Fabric is our strength



Horing the fabric: (from left) Ujjawal Dubey, the silk weave, asymmetrical silhouettes • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT



we can work with any fabric, that the fabric is our hero. We also realised we are super spontaneous and can work on short time frames. This is a more confident team now."

Knowing the history of the cluster that created the fabric helped make the entire experience personal, says Dubey. "We wanted to visit them, because I believe we should know their story, the core of where the fabric is coming from, how the weavers work, what drives them...but the time was too short and so we coordinated with Go-Coop. A photographer from the UN captured a lot of images. The connection is stronger due to human interaction.

The line was ultimately about the interaction of one creation, one mind with another. We are looking at lingering associations."

Available shortly in Raymond outlets and on antar-agni.com.

5 EVENTS WORTH-YOUR-WHILE



TALK

Lecture on migration

Prof. Gopal Guru, Editor, *Economic and Political Weekly* will talk on Migration: A Moral Protest, as part of the Social Change Golden Jubilee Lecture. A renowned political scientist, Guru is the author of several books. The event will be chaired by Prof. Mukund Dubey, President, Council for Social Development.

VENUE: Multipurpose Hall, Kamaladevi Block, IIC

TIME: 6:30 p.m.



CONCERT

Polish Band live

Polish Institute, New Delhi presents a concert on Klezmer music by the Rzeszow Klezmer Band, a renowned music group from Poland. Klezmer is a kind of Jewish music genre, amix of songs, instrumental, and melodious dance tunes that are popular across Poland, and Eastern and Central Europe.

VENUE: LTG Auditorium, Mandi House

TIME: 7 p.m.



HANDICRAFT

Weeklong mela

Central Cottage Industries Corporation of India is organising a week-long Cottage Crafts Mela, an exhibition-cum-sale. The aim is to exclusively promote Indian handicrafts, handlooms and spirit of craftsmanship. The products in the mela will include artefacts, woodcraft, pottery, marblecraft, paintings, sarees, and fabrics.

VENUE: Crafts Museum, Pargati Maidan

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



RAP

Mr. Doss + P Man

Hauz Khas Social is hosting hip-hop phenoms, Mr. Doss and P Man this evening. Mr. Doss is considered to be a veteran in India's rap and hip-hop circuit, and has played across the country. Rohit Pereira, better known as P-Man, is a host on the channel VH1 and a frontman for hip hop/bass outfit ViceVersa.

VENUE: Hauz Khas Social, Hauz Khas Village

TIME: 10 p.m. - 12:30 a.m.

FILM

Hachiko

This Japanese film is the heart-warming classic about a dog's devotion to his human, based on a true story. When puppy Hachiko was sent from a place in northern Japan to Tokyo University, Ueno, a professor, was reluctant to raise him. Eventually, Hachiko wins his heart and the love of the people in the neighbourhood.

VENUE: The Japan Foundation, Lajpat Nagar IV

TIME: 6:30 p.m.

6 FOOD

There's more to food photography than table settings and ambient lighting. It's part of a larger story of survival and culture

MEGHNA MAJUMDAR

Bangladesh is hit by flash floods every year, says photographer Noor Ahmed Gelal. "People become homeless in the rural areas. Food becomes a vital issue," he adds, via Facebook chat from Bamondanga, about 285 kilometres from Dhaka. It is the site of rural development and livelihood projects by NETZ Bangladesh that he is currently documenting.

"NETZ is a German NGO that has been in Bangladesh since 1979," says Gelal. It is one of his many clients – other past and current clients include WaterAid Bangladesh, UNAid, USAID, Malteser International and the German Embassy in Dhaka – whose projects take him to floodplains, rich agricultural areas and disaster zones around Bangladesh.

But it's the accolades for his work that take him abroad: "most of the countries I have visited were either to attend my exhibitions or to receive an award," he says, with the sole exception of Saudi Arabia, which he visited with his mother to perform Hajj.

Since most of his projects focus on developmental work and case studies, food invariably becomes a dominant theme, and is something he is particularly pas-



Plating comes last

sionate about. "It is one thing that doesn't have an alternative in this world," he says, "I love to do food-related, agriculture-based photography."

Globe trotter

With exhibitions in Germany, France, Italy, Singapore, Taiwan, Turkey, China and the Czech Republic, and awards like the Pink Lady Food Photographer of the Year 2018 in his kitty, Gelal makes the perfect argument for food photography as a career – and does so without having to say a word about it.

But his success has been 15 years in the making, and it is still a line of work that requires plenty of work for the long haul, and recognition by the right patrons – like any career based on an art form would be.

He admits that starting out is neither easy nor cheap – "one needs money to buy a good camera, as well as education and training." But once a photographer finds the time and makes the effort to build a strong portfolio, a clientèle like his is not difficult to reach.



It also takes time to gravitate towards a niche. Gelal's first professional job had nothing to do with food at all, but was an industrial assignment by Standard Group, a garment manufacturing company.

Starting young

Sydney-based photographer Kimberley Low, on the other hand, has been training her lens on food ever since her college days. "I first tried photography in high school, when I was about 15 or 16 years old. Then at University, I was part of the photographic society, and we used to run a food website. That's how I started getting into freelance work," she says over a phone call.

Unlike Gelal, Low spent her early years in the profession shooting fine dining subjects at upscale restaurants, before first taking a curious step into the kitchen, and then outdoors to

Once a photographer finds the time and makes the effort to build a strong portfolio, a clientèle like his is not difficult to reach

where the food really comes from.

Her project Beyond The Plate documents the restaurant industry's people more than its food. Shots of chefs, baristas, a waitress, a bartender, a noodle maker – posing calmly in some cases and caught in the intensity of the moment in others – make up most of the collection. And then there's Raw, her series dominated by grisly shots of raw meat and the process of sausage-making.

She credits her education at The University of Sydney – and a course in Economic Geography in particular – for keeping her constantly aware of the larger picture behind the suavely plated items she would photograph. "Food is part of a larger story, a story of survival and of culture," she says.

Today, with a clientèle that includes high-end restaurants, in-



Through the lens: Noor Ahmed Gelal's work around Bangladesh

• SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT


That perfect cuppa

Frothy and full of flavour

• SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

ternational publications and the ministries of tourism of different countries, her work takes her around the globe, not only for photographic assignments, but also to conduct food photography workshops. No matter what she shoots on a plate – "Thai food, Korean, Indian or Malaysian food" – she tries her best to include some culture and context in her frame.



A sip of history

Malaysia's famed white coffee, a strong sweet brew, has an interesting story of origin

A SHRIKUMAR

We are in one of the many *kopi-tiams* that dot Kuala Lumpur.

Even as we take in the invigorating aroma at an Old Town White Coffee outlet, Tansen Cheang brings us cups of frothy, creamy Malaysian coffee.

"Coffee is an all-time choice for Malaysians," he says. And, there is a wide range of the beverage on offer – *kopi tarik* (pulled coffee), *kopi peng* (thick iced coffee), *kopi O* (black coffee), *kopi cham* (mixture of three parts of coffee and seven parts of milk tea) and many others based on various flavours and combinations.

● **Moon Phase:** Melons, like all cucurbits, are best sown after the second quarter, as the moonlight increases and the gravitational pull decreases.

● **Companion Plants:** Corn and radish make good companions. The leafy foliage of the melons in turn deters weed growth, which is a boon for its companion plants. Marigold and nasturtium can be grown together to deter pests.

● **Husbandry:** Stop watering the plants by the third month as the fruits ripen; this intensifies the natural flavour and sweetness of the melons. The fruit is ready if it sounds hollow when tapped.

The melons detach from the vine by themselves at maturity or when the vine shrivels and dries. Fruits can be harvested by the third month and will continue for up to six months.

● **TIPS:** Essential conditions for the sweetest melons – a long, hot growing season, well-enriched soil and regular watering. Keep only three fruits per vine to direct all the nutrients into the selected fruits.



As melons produce male and female flowers, they are naturally pollinated

of organic mulch, consisting of leaves and grass cuttings. Remove weak seedlings at this stage, keeping only the healthy plants. As the long vines supply nutrition to the plants, they should be well maintained by

fee destinations in Asia by *Lonely Planet*. Characterised by a strong, nutty flavour, this pale brown-coloured white version of the beverage is rich, velvety and sweet, making it one of the most sought-after drinks by both locals and tourists in Malaysia.

"The speciality of white coffee has more to do with the roasting method than the beans," explains Cheang. "The trademark brew is a mixture of arabica, ro-

asted and liberica beans in a secret proportion that is roasted in palm oil margarine, which adds a unique texture and flavour to the beans."

The history of white coffee dates to the 19th Century, when the town of Ipoh in the Perak state of northern Malaysia was a major centre for tin mines. It is said that the Chinese introduced white coffee, by adding sweetened condensed milk to the black coffee that the English had.

"Acidic black coffee was not palatable to the Chinese and they modified the taste to suit their palate. Later, the first-generation white coffee underwent a series of refinements to arrive at a standard recipe. It is seen as an indigenous culinary invention by the population of Ipoh," says Cheang. "As no sugar or wheat is added to the beans while roasting, it gives the beans a lighter shade and that is one reason for it being called 'white coffee'."

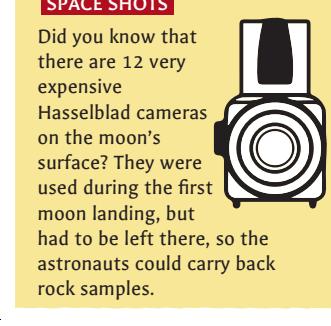
However, neither the coffee nor the bean is white. The Chinese used the name to distinguish 'white sweet coffee' as from the black bitter variant that was prevalent before.

"The coffee is also considered healthier, as the beans have no caramelised sugar in them," adds Cheang. The Old Town White Coffee chain specialises in the signature brew and has over a 100 outlets across Malaysia, serving a dozen variations of the drink. He adds, "though there are wacky flavours on the menu, classic white coffee is still the best selling number."

"Coffee drinking is an elaborate affair in Malaysia, accompanied with a range of snacks as well," says Randy Liow, executive chef at Grand Seasons Hotel in Kuala Lumpur.

Coffee and *kaya toast* is the go-to combo, apart from hors d'oeuvres such as Pie Tee, a Chinese tart with a crispy outer coat stuffed with sliced spring onions, carrots and prawns and topped with shrimp sauce and *sambal*.

(The writer was in Malaysia on invitation from Tourism Malaysia)



Sweet summer melons

Pick these refreshing fruits from your kitchen garden all summer, or even all year long



LATHIKA GEORGE

Melons are summer fruits that must be started from seed as the weather warms up in spring. However, in areas where the weather stays warm and conditions are favourable, they can be grown through the year. All melons – cantaloupe, honeydew melon and watermelon – have similar growing requirements. As melons produce male and female flowers on the same plant, they are naturally pollinated by insects. A garden with an assortment of insect-friendly flowering plants is the most conducive environment for growing melons.

The plants grow best in well-drained soil heaped into a mound with adequate space to spread out. A garden compost heap is a good place to grow me-

lons, as the plants benefit from the heat and nutrients from decomposing matter. They can also be grown in containers on terraces, where the vines are trained up a trellis and the fruits are supported with net bags. The plants need heat and sunlight during the growing period and will produce fruits in about three months.

● **To sow:** Choose melon varieties that are known to grow well in your region. Prepare the soil in a sunny section of the garden. Make a heap of rich loamy soil, mixed with crumbled neem-cake, manure and crushed leaves. Make several mounds if you have space for more than four vines. Leave a minimum distance of six feet between each mound for the plants to spread out. Plant three to six seeds per mound to ensure germination, cover with soil, leaving a slight depression that will hold moisture.



As melons produce male and female flowers, they are naturally pollinated

of organic mulch, consisting of leaves and grass cuttings. Remove weak seedlings at this stage, keeping only the healthy plants. As the long vines supply nutrition to the plants, they should be well maintained by

trimming dead leaves and weak side vines. Water on alternate days to keep the soil and plant moist. Irrigation is best done in the evening, preferably by drip tubes which supply water directly to the roots; excess water on the leaves can cause powdery mildew. Protect against aphids, ants and other pests by spraying with a neem solution; peppermint or marigold tea solutions are also effective insect repellents which can be sprayed once a week. Look for bugs under the leaves and remove them by hand. The plants should be nourished weekly with compost tea or diluted *panchagavya*. Once the flowers appear, sprinkle wood ash around the plant on alternate weeks to supply potash.

● **Moon Phase:** Melons, like all cucurbits, are best sown after the second quarter, as the moonlight increases and the gravitational pull decreases.

● **Companion Plants:** Corn and radish make good companions. The leafy foliage of the melons in turn deters weed growth, which is a boon for its companion plants. Marigold and nasturtium can be grown together to deter pests.

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● **TIPS:** Essential conditions for the sweetest melons – a long, hot growing season, well-enriched soil and regular watering. Keep only three fruits per vine to direct all the nutrients into the selected fruits.



Characterised by a strong, nutty flavour, this pale brown-coloured white coffee is one of the most sought-after drinks in Malaysia

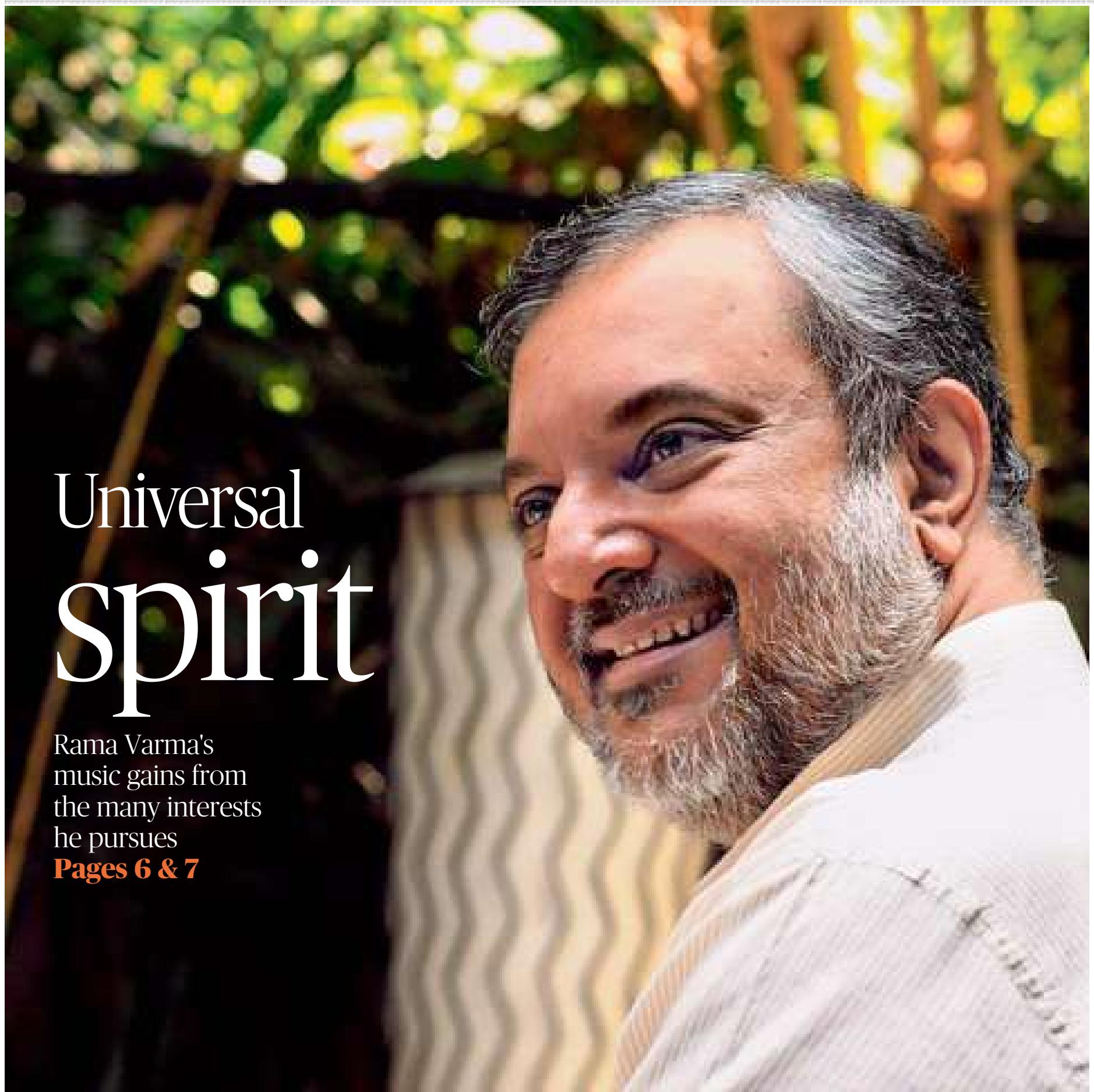
FRIDAY REVIEW

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Universal spirit

Rama Varma's music gains from the many interests he pursues

Pages 6 & 7



S. GOPAKUMAR

INSIDE



Folk and fervour

Padayani, a ritual theatre art form of Kerala, is a tribute to woman power **P5**



Making of a maestro

Padma Shri Pt. Rajeev Taranath goes down memory lane **P9**



End of an era

Namvar Singh maintained that criticism must open a front against whatever poses a threat to culture and civilisation! **P12**

TIME OUT



Shubha Mudgal in performance

INDIA HABITAT CENTRE

FEBRUARY 22

THE STEIN AUDITORIUM

Vocalist Shubha Mudgal with Aneesh Pradhan (tabla) and Sudhir Nayak (harmonium), will present a special repertoire of compositions to mark the 30th anniversary of SAHMAT. The three artistes are trained in Hindustani Classical Music by some of the greatest maestros and scholar musicians.

EXPERIMENTAL ART GALLERY

A photography exhibition on "History of the Built World" by John Gollings with the Australian High part of Photosphere Beinalle.

INDIA INTERNATIONAL CENTRE

FEBRUARY 22

LECTURE ROOM-1

Book discussion on "Decolonising Heritage in South Asia: The Global, the National and the Trans-national" edited by Himanshu Prabha Ray. Discussants: Dr. Uthara Suvrathan, Visiting Assistant Professor, Jyoti Dalal School of Liberal Arts, NMIMS, will introduce the book.

CONFERENCE ROOM-I

Environment and health public lecture on "Are India's Rivers dying a slow death?" by Manu Bhatnagar, Principle Director, Natural Heritage Division, INTACH, New Delhi; Suresh Babu SV, Director, River Basins & Water Policy, World Wide Fund for Nature-India.

FEBRUARY 23

ALL INDIA FINE ARTS & SOCIETY

The Russian news agency, Sputnik News is hosting a photo exhibition of the selected entries for the year 2018 of the 4th Andrei Stenin International Press Photo Contest held last November.

Around 6000 entries by young photojournalists from 77 countries were received for the contest that also features the photographs of two Indian photographers - Ajay Kumar from Lucknow and Amit Moulick from Kolkata.

INDIA INTERNATIONAL CENTRE

FEBRUARY 23

CONFERENCE ROOM-1

Release of Prof. R.C. Agrawal's book "Archaeology of Zangskar Valley & Conservation of Buddhist Monuments in Central India" by N. Vohra, President, IIC. Guest of Honour: Dr. Kapila Vatsyayan, Chairperson, IIC-International Research Division.



T.V. Gopalakrishnan in performance

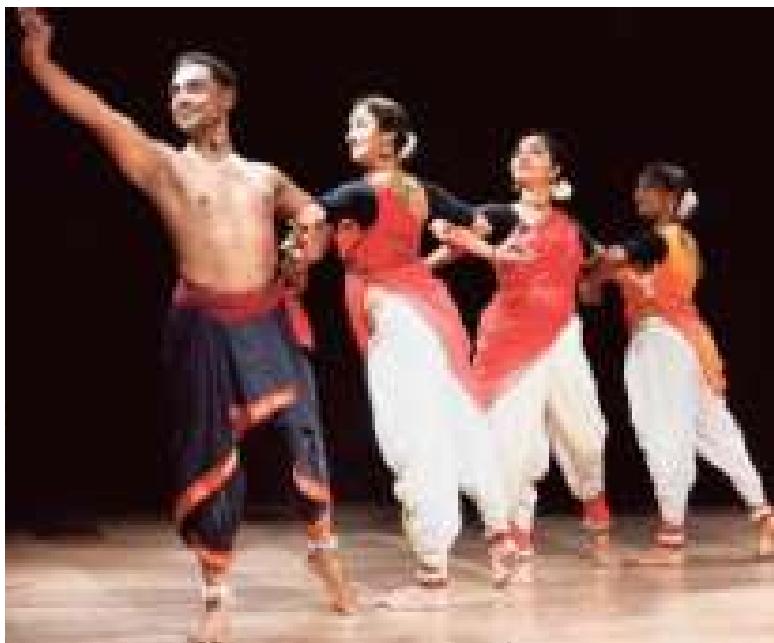
Charting new seas

Aranyani Bhargav presented an interesting blend of the old and the new

RANEE KUMAR

Complacency often bogs Indian classical arts, not for dearth of innovators or creativity but more for fear of frowns from the orthodox and also reluctance to admit need for evolution and tread uncharted paths. A very small percentage foray into creating their own space with courage and conviction. Danseuse Aranyani Bhargav is one such Bharatanatyam artiste who has made the best of both worlds, adroitly building a link between traditional dance as she had learnt and performed in her early years as a dancer and moulding it into an attractive art form that is easily devoured by a cross-section of audience who may or may not be dance literate. Her brainchild, the Vyuti Dance Company recently staged group choreography titled, *Questioning Frontality/Changing Body*.

Going by the name and also the introductory mode of dancers to an audience waiting at the Odd Bird theatre in Delhi for the performance to commence, it appeared to be something out of the box greeting us. But once inside the unconventional venue, what followed was the 'margam' (traditional) repertoire with an interesting definition and difference. The artiste had the ingenuity to rename the pieces she re-created



In sync: A scene from "Questioning Frontality/Changing Body."

within the framework of Bharatanatyam. The brief prelude to each of the pieces was welcome.

The age-old concept of all the dancers streaming on to the stage and taking positions facing the audience was jettisoned for a more interactive eye and body contact between the artistes which not only made ample sense but also enhanced aesthetics. The traditional beginning with Vicharati was like a warm-up displaying the various positions the body takes as it brings itself to a pause while dancing. The six dancers with one male among them positioned like a bouquet moved in a dialogue fashion as they emulated the mudras which flowed sequentially in a sloka. The stage wasn't a raised platform but it was made into a mandala with the help of serial, muted footlights and flowers line demarcating the viewing place from that of dancing. An upper balcony to this stage space

was also creatively used by one pair of dancers alternately going up and down there under the spotlight while darkness prevailed on the lower stage and artistes arrayed there. The effect was enigmatic to say the least.

Mathematical play

The 'Natyaramba'(alarippu) as it was called marked the traditional beginning. What would normally look like group solos on the customary stage now got recreated as group dynamics. As the celestial 'angikam bhuvanam yasya...' flowed eloquently, the group converged and dwindled like 'goppuchha yati' (a mathematical play of dwindling alphabets in classical music) making the alarippu mime an exercise in musical rhythm.

The jati swaram to follow the first piece was named 'Antaram' as it figures between the first warm-up and the acid test of the Varnam, a fair-

ly lengthy tester for the dancer's staying power and balance apart from expression (abhinaya). A bit of 'kalari' (high jumps) were introduced here as artistes moved in pairs to perform a string of mnemonics and moved out of the manda-la boundary waiting for their next turn to get in.

The entry-exit of the artistes was another unique mode of creativity where the connect was established between the audience and the artistes. Further, the knowing smile and eye contact constantly maintained between the pair of dancers as they performed together with each other sent vibes of total involvement on their part and a sense of camaraderie that emanated like incense through the auditorium. Such finesse and flourish embellished the entire presentation from start to finish. The Varnam was termed 'Sakhi' and here the deviation was a novel concept which envisaged the Ash-

malika and tanam. The notes of the elegant Reetigowla flowed eloquent through the strings of her violin. Her own creation, a Saptagiri raga cluster was soulful. She was accompanied on the mridangam by Srimushnam Raja Rao.

Day two had the veteran vocalist Gopalakrishnan rendering his trademark four kalai (speed cycle) Ata tala varnam in Sankarabharanam as a warm up. After a few lighter keertana like the dasarana, a Hamir Kalyani (Venkata shaila...), the popular Hindolam kriti (samajavara gama...) enthralled the au-

dience. He took up Sankarabharanam for exposition, opening up the raga contours in his inimitable style dwelling on its nuances and exploring its vast range. The Begada, Hamsanandi, Kuntalavarali, a Bihaq tillana and a few bhajans made for a wholesome repertoire.

Students of guru Delhi R Sridhar gave a violin recital while Ra-galaya led by Adarsh Nair performed on the two days. The festival was hosted at Tamil Sangham auditorium.

R.K.

tavidha (eight-fold) nayika (character traits of heroines of drama) with the spotlight turned on to the inevitable persona of 'sakhi' (confidante) rather than the nayaka-nayika.

This fairly lengthy piece moved like picture story coming alive as paired dancers listed out the confidante's role in appeasing the idiosyncratic heroine and playing major role in bringing about a happy union between her and the object of her love and longing. From dance point of view, the Sakhi adhered to the varnam format of footwork to swara bhol, dance mnemonics and convincing abhinaya.

The finale was the mandatory tillana, a pure footwork piece ending in a couplet devoted to a particular deity. The pillar position taken by the six dancers with backs touching each other from where they moved forward to the bhol was a joy to watch. The squirming and going flat on floor, a la ballet dance, seemed added appendages which blended well with the mainstream dance. The visible lack of percussion at certain places was made up with a sort of bell tinkling to keep count of the beat.

However, the lacuna that stared the critic in the eye amid all the laudable innovation was the absence of the stipulated three-cycle footwork speed which is also an evaluation of dancers' mastery over the medium. Led by Aranyani Bhargav, the group comprised Akanksha Tadapatri, Deepa Seshadri, Poorna Hariharan, Preeta Mahendran and Tony Aloysius Pius.

Spotlight on maestros

The recently concluded Carnatic music festival under the aegis of Gurukulam Foundation offered a wide platform for the young talent of Delhi with the spotlight on two maestros - A. Kanya Kumari, an ace violinist and veteran vocalist T.V. Gopalakrishnan.

The violinist presented an array of all-time favourites beginning of course with the customary varnam in Abhogi (Evvari bodha..) followed by an invocation to Ganesha (Mooladhara

moorthe) in Hamsadhwani. She showcased her expertise in the 'gayaki' style running into the three cycle speed with mind-boggling swara kalpana. Kanya Kumari's forte lies in show of technicalities but never too meandering and complicated as to go past the audiences' heads. Her repertoire is generally melodic, crisp and rhythmic, dwelling on intricacies in just one or two serious pieces like here in the Madhyamavati (Ramakatha sudha...) where she spun a raga-

Breaking the shackles

The ongoing Bharat Rang Mahotsav saw two interesting experiments in the form of "Jakshapuri" and Theyyam – a socio-religious ritual of the Malabar region

DIWAN SINGH BAJELI

Theatre lovers of Delhi have seen some memorable productions of Rabindranath Tagore's Raktakarabi in the past but the latest production of this all-time great dramatic piece titled Jakshapuri (Raktakarabi) which was staged by the Berhampore Repertory Theatre, Murshidabad, West Bengal, at Bharat Rang Mahotsav at LTG auditorium was in a class itself. It was performed not by experienced or professionally trained actors but by prisoners.

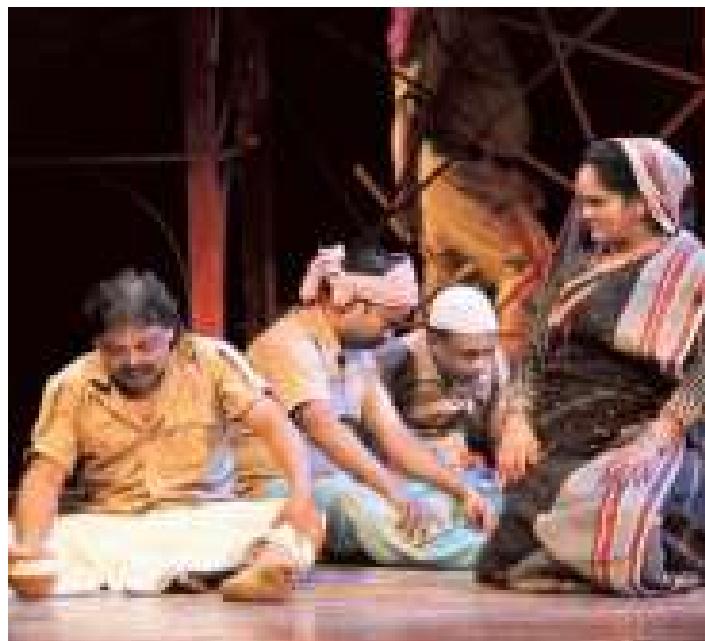
A complex work of dramatic art replete with metaphorical imagery, the king remains invisible and helpless. Another invisible character is Ranjan who symbolises liberation. The State functionaries have transformed the town into a prison. Nandini is the soul of the play who questions king again and again. But the invisible king appears to be miserably weak to act. In the production, there are characters keeping stern watch on the movements of agitated townspeople. Ironically, various exit points in the auditorium police personnel were on guard to watch the movements of prisoners acting out roles in the play. Despite the fact that they are under constant watch, the prisoner-turned-actors performed with great passion, sincerity and commitment. Arguably, this is for the first time in the history of BRM that prisoners have performed. The characters in the play are prisoners of an imaginary totalitarian system and the performers are prisoners of a jail of a modern State. Ironically, the boundary between the art and life are dissolved.

Ingenuity in production

The play is directed by Pradip Bhattacharya, a leading theatre practitioner committed to do stage play with prisoners who has been conducting theatre therapy in prison for the last 12 years at Berhampore Central Correctional Home (Jail), Government of West Bengal. With his prisoner cast, he has produced several plays. Without government support, he is determined to carry forward his creative mission to bring out the noble sentiments inherent in every soul with the belief that no man is born a criminal. A sensitive creative personality as he is, he has established cordial relationship with his prisoner-cast.

The director displays remarkable ingenuity to design his production. A huge structure is created with multiple layers and exit and entry points, creating an ambience of repression in which people are desperately interacting to achieve freedom.

The movements of the performers are charged by intense motivation.



Absorbing narrative A scene from "Jakshapuri" ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

tions. The production is punctuated with booming voice of the invisible king with Nandini questioning him for his ineffectualness. The soulful rendering of lyrics, lighting effects, stage compositions and inspired acting create a theatricality that cast spell on the audience.

Theyyam presentation

Kerala has the distinction of being the home of traditional, classical and Sanskrit theatre. It is credited with the contribution to modern interpretation of the plays by Bhasa using the traditional technique of Koodeyattam and the martial art of the Kalari. But we know little about "Theyyam", a socio-religious ritual being observed in the north Malabar region of Kerala. Thanks to the 20th Bharat Rang Mahotsav, we are able to watch the heroic tale of Kathivannur Veeran presented in the style of Theyyam on the lawns of the National School of Drama. This is not a play to be presented on a modern stage; it is the way of life of the people who observe it as a ritual with strict adherence to religious codes, eulogising heroes and worshipping ancestors and mythological characters.

The ritual is conducted under the supervision of group of leader, Sasikumar V. The performer has to lead a pious life during the course of rituals.

Theyyam's presentation is restricted to its community who treat it not as an art form but as an act of sacred religious observance. The organisers brought it to BRM because the NSD is a teaching institution and the students should know about the intricacy and inherent sentiments involved in a ritualistic observation by a community.

The entire space of the lawn is

used to enact the heroic tale. In one corner, a small structure is erected which is lighted with myriad of earthen diyas placed aesthetically. In another small structure, a Theyyam player takes his own time to have elaborate and intricate objects including headgear as part of make-up before he comes out and performs the rituals. Every movement and activities are performed slowly, rhythmically. The performance does not depend on stage lights. On one side of the lawn fire burns, using logs and on the other side special arrangement is made to keep sacred wicks burning, spreading glow. Enters "Theyyam". There is a divine aura about him. He is in trance, his wide open eyes have divine kind of glow. The audience sitting on a make-shift elevated structure is irresistibly drawn to his performance.

The solo performer, through his gestures, movements and myriad facial expressions, communicates intricately the story of Kathivannur Veeran who is remembered by the community for his valour and as one who discovered nobility in his love for his wife. He performs to the accompaniments of drum beats and music.

He grows up as a carefree and handsome youth. His father wants him to be a great warrior. Furious at his carefree manners, the father breaks his bow into two parts.

Terribly shaken, he leaves home, settles in another region and becomes a prosperous farmer by dint of hard work and marries a lovely girl and adores her from the bottom of his heart. One day, the couple quarrels and Kathivannur Veeran joins war being fought fiercely by neighbouring rulers and becomes a martyr.

Continued on Page 9

Soothing strains

The annual RIMPA Festival of Music & Dance saw an eclectic mix of performances

MANJARI SINHA

The Ravi Shankar Foundation (RSF) in California and the Ravi Shankar Centre (RSC) in New Delhi, also known as RIMPA (Ravi Shankar Institute of Music & Performing Arts), have been established to collect, document and archive the vast works of Pt. Ravi Shankar fragmented all over. The annual RIMPA Festival of Music & Dance was originally initiated by Pt. Ravi Shankar himself, to promote art and culture by inviting the upcoming as well as established artists to perform at the Centre and showcase their talent.

Despite the chill of the open air seating arrangement, there was a sizeable number of enthusiastic audiences on the inaugural evening, that opened with a Hindustani vocal recital by Sawani Mudgal.

The gifted daughter and disciple of Pt. Madhup Mudgal, Sawani was initiated into music from an early childhood at the Gandharva Mahavidyalaya. A gold medallist in M.A. Music from Khairagarh University, Sawani started rigorous training in music under her guru and father at the age of 12 and is seen now accompanying him in concerts at home and abroad.

Accompanied this evening on tabla by Khadga Singh and on harmonium by Chetan Nigam, Sawani opened her vocal recital with raga Chhayanat. The traditional bada khayal "Nevar ki jhankaar...." set to vilambit Jhoomra Tala, dealt with the raga systematically and in great detail. Sawani gave a sense of novelty by opting for "Pyari Ladli karat batiyaan...." set to drut Ek-tala for her chhota khayal instead of the oft heard Teentala composition "Jhanna jhana jhan paayal baaje....". Although composed by the same composer, this was certainly an intelligent choice offering a sense of wonder.

Her second raga was Basant, the most popular raga of the spring season, where she also chose the most popular bandish, "Phagwa Brij dekh han ko chalo ri..." adorned with the scintillating sargam and akaar taans symbolising the myriad shades of flowers and the colours of Phagwa, the festival of colours. The second composition, "Rang kesariya tero paaga...." felt repetitive because of the same notation of the mukhda (the opening phrase) as the previous bandish, which she could have easily avoided.

This was followed by a nostalgic dadra in Gara "Jiya mein laagi aan baan..." immortalized by Gauhar Jaan, where the Antara (second half of the composition) would go double the tempo of the Dadra Tala, this Dadra (form) was set to. Although there was no time for the Thumri



Sense of novelty Sawani Mudgal

type leisurely treatment but the lilting gait of the Dadra was enhanced beautifully by the accompanying artists on Tabla and Harmonium. Sawani concluded with a quick series of lively Hori and Rasiya like "Rasiya ko naar banao ri....", "Aao ri avo tum...." and "Kanhaiya sang Hori..." that took her concert to its climax.

The sitar-shehnai duet by Gaurav Majumdar and Sanjeev Shankar respectively, was the second attraction of the inaugural evening. Both of them born in musical families and initiated by their respective fathers, Gaurav by Shri Dulal Majumdar and Sanjeev by Pt. Daya Shankar the acclaimed shehnai player of Benaras gharana, were groomed further under the tutelage of Pt. Ravi Shankar.

For their main raga, they chose raga Mohan Kauns that Pt. Ravi Shankar had created as a tribute to Mahatma Gandhi on his tragic death at the behest of AIR. Pandit ji took the swaras Ga Ni Dha from Gandhi and created this pathos-filled raga. They were ably accompanied on tabla by Hindole Majumdar.

Soothing Shehnai

After the opening phrase by Gaurav on sitar, the penetrating sur of shehnai gave the first knock on the hearts of the discerning audiences. They both took a turn during the detailed alap-jod and jhala, which was followed by an impressive round of tabla by Hindole. The composition was set to Rupak Tala of seven beats cycle in medium tempo. They both worked on the raga as desired but the built-in mike of sitar was sharp enough to catch even the undesired elements which could be avoided with a normal mike. Shehnai came as a soothing balm.

The concluding piece in Mishra Pilu was expected to be short and sweet, because it was already late for the cold night and the third group of percussionists in Bickram Ghosh, with his drums of India, were still waiting in the wings for his turn; but it came out to be a full-fledged rendering of raga Pilu with the masitkhani and razakhani gat compositions. By the time Bickram could get the stage many of his admirers had left. Bickram Ghosh on tabla, Suresh Vaidyanathan on ghatam, Gopal Burman on shrikhol and Sumod Sreedharan on mridangam were brilliant as ever.

4 VOICEOVER

The West Wind

A song for shopaholics

With a replayed sample from a vintage hit, Ariana Grande's '7 Rings' shows retail therapy has always been people's recourse

PRINCE FREDERICK



Now, often, I am dragged into retail therapy kicking and screaming. It's a case of those around me making comfort buys and I, picking up the tab for it. When your Millennials are rapidly gaining in height, and have successfully staked their claim to the wifi password, what else can you expect? In my world, comfort buys are demanded for bizarre reasons. Here's a sample: Eating their lunch at school without a leftover morsel in the box, three days on the trot. No kidding here, this has happened to me.

So, you can imagine my reaction to Ariana Grande's Billboard-topping song, '7 Rings' from her recent album, 'Thank U, Next'. This song is a paean to retail therapy and has a telling line – 'I see it, I like it, I want it, I got it (Yeah)'.

It's no surprise this song has been doing well on Billboard. It has a nice lilt to it and besides that, it is patterned in theme and melody on what I would call the all-time great retail therapy song, 'My Favourite Things' from 'The Sound of Music'.

With the replayed sample from the Julie Andrews-sung 'My Favourite Things', the song seems to make a commentary that comfort buying is



not a generational phenomenon and retail shopping has always been humanity's escape route out of any existential distress.

'High Hopes' by Panic! At The Disco is another song that scaled Billboard heights in recent months.

This song stays on your lips much after you have heard it played. I have an added reason for why I think it is extremely likeable. It has to do with the video. The song is about bucking the trend and getting to the top, things that take intense effort. Through its picturisation, the song seems to have "walked the talk".

As we know, through special contraptions and a team, frontman-and-lead-vocalist Brendon Urie glided up the face of a tall building in Los Angeles.

For me, this is an equivalent of representational design. Okay, let me confess that I fall hook, line and sinker for well-executed representational design. The part of Chennai I live in, is replete with examples of it. Here are two examples: The building of a wind-energy company designed like a windmill and a leisure hotel shaped like a ship. These designs not only communicate a message loud and clear, but also suggest greater focus. Through its visuals, High Hopes seems to do something similar.



Tunes and retail therapy Ariana Grande and Brendon Urie



Catching them young A little girl performing at a reality show

Piano Man

Platform or pressure

We are in the midst of a talent revolution, but allow children to learn and succeed on their terms

ANIL SRINIVASAN



For the past several weeks, I have been travelling across the State exploring piano talent. In the deep South, closer to Tirunelveli, I was impressed by the musical skills of the children who participated, given the weaker economic background they come from. Aspirations are ubiquitous and run rife regardless of the economic condition. I was delighted to be a part of a larger dream for children, who can have a bright future if other mechanisms can also be put in place to support them.

Which brings me to the question of how the atmosphere for children's competitions is in the current climate. For instance, at one centre a parent asked me if I would be able to conquer my "Hindu" bias given how the participants that day were mainly from the Christian community. I was shocked, and also of-

fended . But, thanks to our politicians, who have infused such thinking.

Not just this, we had to comply with POCSO (Protection of Children from Sexual Offences) Act guidelines, which meant ensuring that a senior school official or a woman representing an institution be officially present during auditions, the door be kept open and parents be within calling distance. I would have normally corrected posture and the position of the wrist of these children, but preferred to demonstrate instead.

Reality shows

This led me to think about the plethora of reality shows for children that dominate our television screens today. Are these POCSO compliant? Do the adults working with children (judges, trainers, crew) follow child safety norms? Do these shows or channels that telecast them have an internal complaints committee or redressal cell

in case of issues?

I am reminded of Papon, whose kissing a minor girl on the lips created a furore in the social media. It was sad that the child and her parents were forced to say that they were not offended and that it was genuine affection. Such is the aspirational pressure. Such is also the fear of ostracism and adverse consequences of questioning those in power.

We are part of a deceitful system which derives satisfaction out of watching children behave as adults in the context of televised entertainment. The least we can ensure, and protect, is their dignity.

There is abundant talent. My heart is with children all the time. We are truly in the midst of a talent revolution. I want these children to succeed. I want these shows to do well. But on children's terms. Not on ours.

The writer is a well-known pianist and music educator

Perspective

What defines tradition

The word raises interesting and not-so-easily answerable questions

P.K. DORAI SWAMY

 There is no central authority to prescribe what is tradition or what is Carnatic music. I do not think that any issue on art can ever be resolved entirely by inexorable, objective logic, but analysis often throws more light on the issues and may invite fresh viewpoints. It is in this spirit that the following analysis is done.

The word 'tradition' is a fertile ground for raising interesting, not easily answerable questions such as: Has tradition a cut-off date (like a 'classical' language which must be at least 1,500 years old)?

Can there be more than one valid tradition (like two different patantarams for the same kriti from two different sishya paramparas)?

What do we gain or lose by preserving or not preserving tradition?

Can one create a new tradition?

What constitutes a violation of tradition?

I feel that instead of asking difficult and philosophical questions we should reframe our question as: What do we want to preserve?

Let us take the expression '*traditional classical Carnatic music*' and examine it.

Prime objective

What is the prime object of Carnatic music? Carnatic music is not merely raga-based but raga-centric. In my view, treating it purely as an art form, the central objective of Carnatic music is, and always has been, to showcase the raga bhava. The musician's virtuosity is not an end in itself but should be the means for achieving this end. This is the crux, in my view, of tradition. To the extent the musician fails to focus on this, he has deviated from tradition. Tradition, thus projected, is neither something to be idolised nor something to be destroyed or deviated from but something to be built upon. Lalgudi Jayaraman once said, "The tradition that my predecessors have bequeathed is a strong ground floor and a first floor on which I am trying to build a second floor. He modified the technique of bowing and

fingering so that the raga bhava may be projected better. Thus, he built on the tradition.

'Classical' is defined by the Oxford English Dictionary as 'something that has achieved the highest standard in an established system', in our context, this should be interpreted not literally as a fixed standard as defined in the Oxford dictionary but as 'doing one's best every time and constantly trying to improve.' The degree of melody and on-the-spot creativity that a musician brings to bear on showcasing of the raga bhava would determine the extent to which his music is closer to being truly classical.

What makes a music 'Carnatic'? The commonly described characteristics of a Carnatic style are – strongly kriti-based (unlike Hindustani music where the bandish is almost inconsequential); dasavidha gamakams (especially the kampitha gamakam), unity of raga, tala and sruti in every piece; mixing the three degrees of speeds (unlike Hindustani music where they are kept separate) and phrase by phrase raga development (in Hindustani it is note by note). The performance content of Carnatic music may change but it should always remain identifiable as Carnatic.

We may now say, with some confidence and clarity, that what we should preserve is traditional Carnatic music, which showcases raga bhava as its unceasing central objective, tries to do this by trying to achieve the highest standard of melody and on-the-spot creativity, and within the paddhati.

What we should see is whether the above three parameters are being followed substantially and substantively in most of the items of a concert, though a few items may not conform to some of these criteria.

"To believe that the best belongs to the past is the surest road to degeneration," said Lalgudi. On the other hand, far from being an inhibitor of innovation, the past, with all its pluses and minuses, should be a giant on whose shoulders one can stand and see farther.

The writer is a retired IAS officer

Colours of the Earth

Celebration of creation

Padaiyani is a tribute to the power of woman



V.R. DEVIKA



Images of clay Saptamatrikas discovered in the Pampa region (in Kozhippalam near Aranmula) recently, bear witness to the antiquity of mother Goddess worship in the region and the energy and imagery that the earth mother emanates. The devastating floods in Kerala had brought down a compound wall in Anjilimoottil Kadavu revealing from under it, votive shilpams used for idol sacrifice, some Naga sculptures and the saptamatrika figures.

Among a group of college students who went there was Gopika, who said there were many similar things found in her compound. There were long cuboid stones, obviously manually shaped, lying about. Some stones had been used to build houses. The archaeological team revealed that the stones were part of cist burials from the Megalithic age, 2500 years ago.

The Saptamatrikas and the naga figures take us to an ancient belief system recognising the Mother as the original creation.

Adi Shakti, the first woman, is believed to have spun the first threads of Creation. She creates, she conceives and she destroys simultaneously, for in her is alive the wisdom that in Srishti or creation and the seed of samhara or destruction.

The discovery reminds us that a substratum of female memories of power and energy has existed from the primordial past. To celebrate mother Goddess and her power, a fantastic ritualistic performance called Padaiyani takes place in about

thirty temples in the Alappuzha, Pathanamthitta and Kottayam districts of Kerala from February to April. It is the remnant of the ancient Dravidian modes of worship. Unbelievable masks are created out of palm fronds, coconut leaves and a combination of music, dance, painting and satire invoke the mother Goddess in an intimate play. An entire village takes part in the celebration of mother Goddess as her *Padai-anि* (line-up of soldiers).

Unique techniques

The devotees call out to Devi to come and witness the Padaiyani with loud sounds and songs. Bhadrakali form is drawn ritually using five types of natural colour powders.

She may have four, eight, sixteen, thirty two or sixty four hands. Eighteen colour shades are applied mixing the colour powders. There are special and unique regional techniques and calculations for the preparation, the right proportion, etc. The very drawing of the kalam is a ritualistic performance. The powder is taken in a special way with the thumb and fore finger and spread in an artistic manner. Around the Kolam men holding leafy twigs leap forward and perform dances and then kolams (decorated masks) come in procession accompanied by Chendamelam. Masks are cut from areca leaf sheaths and coconut leaves and drawn with natural colours.

Kolamezhutthu, Kolam thullal, Kolappattu, Thappumelam, Vinodam are the essential parts of Padaiyani. Kolams are folk deities drawn on green areca leaf sheaths with natural colours, Kolappattu are songs in admiration of Bhagavathi, Thappu is the Asuravadaya made with Jack tree hardwood and buffalo hide, Kolam thullal is the rhythmic footsteps and dance, Vinodam is satire and protesting social evils. Entire villages

take part in Padaiyani to appease the Goddess so that there is eradication of social evils and there is rain and good crop and prosperity.

Velichappadu, a comedy character, and then Paradeshi bring news from around the world in comical mode. Performances of Kuthira (horse), Ganapathi, Pishachu, Marutha, Madan, Yakshi, Kalan and Bhairavi kolams follow. Each has its own rhythm and movement and song with the alphabets of the Malayalam language as the base to sing the intimate praise of Bhagavathi, mother Goddess.

In Mangalakkolam, a Kolam is mounted on a wooden platform with wheels and is lit with torches. These are Ayiramian kolam (Kolam with thousand bells) made with thousand areca leaf sheaths.

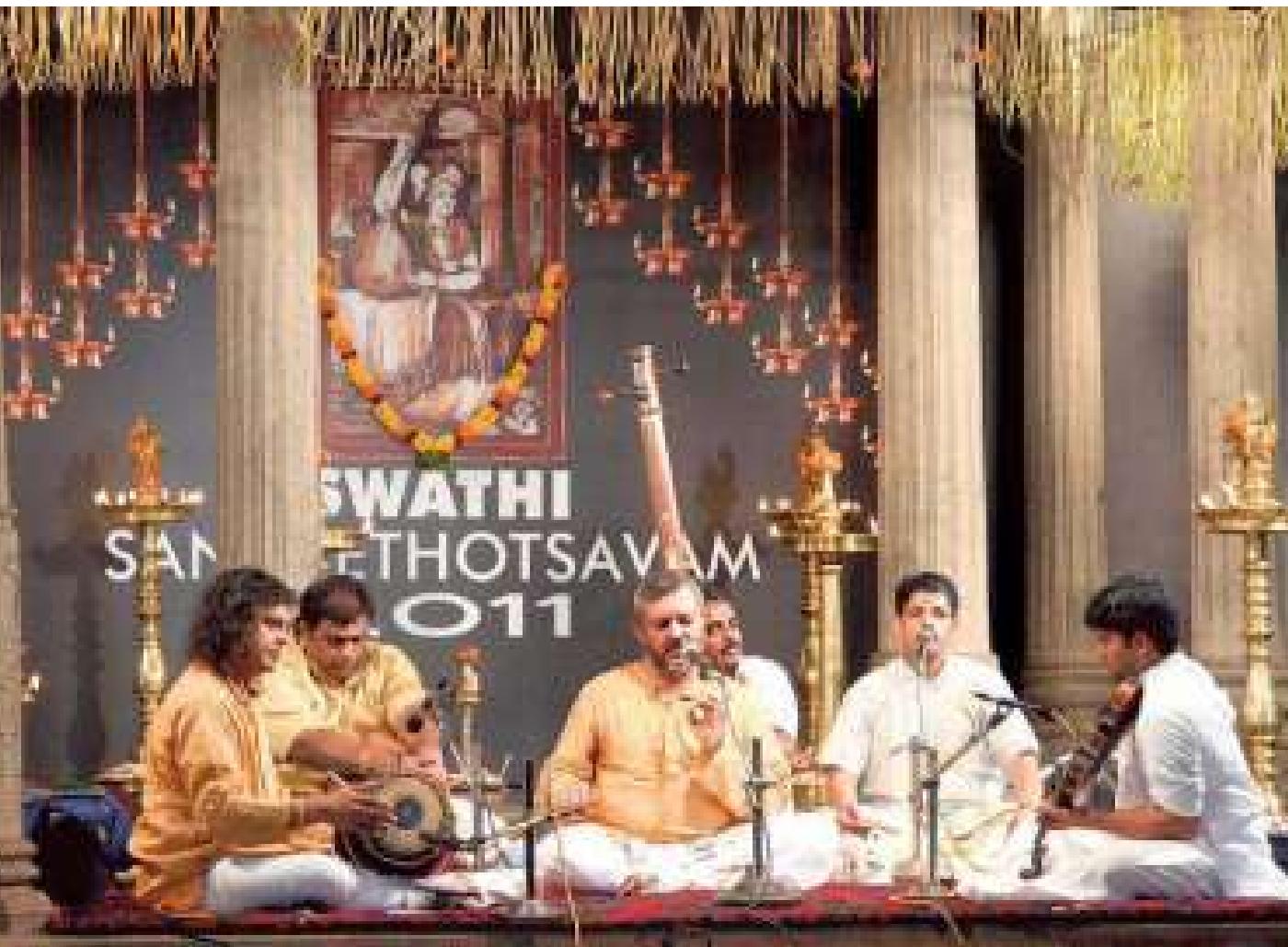
The story behind Padaiyani is that of Darika, a demon who had received a boon from Brahma to be killed only by a woman. He went berserk with his atrocities and Siva created Kali from his third eye. She, accompanied by Gooli, fought ferociously and killed Darika. She was full of fury after that and to calm her down, Gods performed dance, mimicry dialogue and comedies but when she saw a painting of herself in an angry mood, she burst into laughter. Padaiyani is said to be a re-enactment of this story.

Celebration of Padaiyani at each temple has its own special features. Rituals vary from one village to another. Most have the performances all through the night while some even have pagal Padaiyani or day performances. Kolam thullal or the steps of the dance of the masks also vary from place to place.

Padaiyani is a celebration of people power and creativity where there is no intermediary between man and God.

Go see one if you can.





'Music gave me a sense of purpose'

From growing up in a palace to becoming a performer, Rama Varma, who recently turned 50, traces his journey as a classical musician

GARIMELLA SUBRAMANIAM

He is arguably the foremost disciple of the legendary vocalist-composer Mangalampalli Balamuralikrishna. Ashwathi Thirunal Rama Varma, the vocalist and vainika and a descendant of Swati Tirunal, the Maharaja of Travancore, is destiny's child. *Breaking Barriers, Building Bonds*, the title, which reads like the opening lines of a socio-political treatise, may not be really off the mark. This collection of essays and reminiscences to commemorate his 50th birthday pays tribute to the universal spirit that pervades Rama Varma's personality and music – in the mould of Maharaja Swati Thirunal.

Take the case of the incident recounted in the introductory essay, when Rama Varma is said to have launched into a Rabindranath Tagore poem, while visiting Manna Dey. As the lights went out that evening, he stunned his host as he

sang, *Amir ei dehokhani tule dharo tomor oi debaloje pradip karo* (Let my body be the lamp that lights up your divine abode).

But that was by no means a stray episode. In one of his singing lessons on Tyagaraja's song 'Paripalaya Paripalaya Raghunatha,' in raga Ritigowla, Rama Varma alludes to a Tagore song bearing almost the same meaning.

A suave and soft-spoken demeanour disguises Rama Varma's deep yearning for change, but with an equal predisposition to draw lessons from history. A conversation over lunch on a warm autumn Sunday reveals how much his own personal journey has been intertwined with the radical changes he has wrought in the royalty's patronage of the arts.

As a child, he was a close witness to his family home, Kowdiar Palace in Thiruvananthapuram, come alive with the constant visits of celebrated Carnatic musicians. Rama Var-



Learning an instrument sharpens one's grasp of the multiple swarams that are at work in a short musical phrase. Without this advantage, one may stumble upon such intricacies after years of learning

The thinking artiste

A vocalist and veena artiste, Prince Rama Varma found his calling in music not just as a performer, he loves to share his passion for the art by talking about its aesthetic nuances at workshops and seminars. He feels it is extremely important to blend art and education; draw inspiration from the works of past masters and be aware of contemporary sensibilities.



Charting his own path Rama Varma with his veena, performing at the Swathi Sangeethotsavam at the Kuthiriamalika Palace, with his guru M. Balamuralikrishna and at a Carnatic music workshop in Visakhapatnam

ma's great grandmother, Amma Maharani Sethu Parvathy Bayi, who lived and breathed music, meticulously selected his Guru – Vechoor Hariharasubramaniam Iyer – after interviewing all the musicians from Thiruvananthapuram. As the pupil advanced in his vocal lessons, he simultaneously took to instruction on the veena from K.S. Narayanaswami.

Engaging with the art

In the mid 1980s, it was an enormous leap of faith for the young royal to plunge into a career in music. As patrons of the arts themselves for centuries, the idea of nurturing home-grown talent was, perhaps understandably, beyond their wildest imagination for the royal family. When Rama Varma says, "It was music that gave a sense of purpose and direction," there is an earnestness in his tone. That is perhaps where all his incessant energy lies – of discovering new compositions, the extensive travels in and outside the country and the hundreds of students he has engaged at workshops over the decades.

It took more than some persuasion from Prof. T.V. Gopalakrishnan to convince Rama Varma to perform on stage. The multifaceted veteran prevailed upon the family to recognise and nurture the youngster's abundant talent. In a strange irony, the young royal's musical career commenced on May Day in 1990, perhaps a foreboding of the many progressive interventions awaiting the Carnatic music community. It

fell upon Rama Varma to rectify the contradiction of barring women artists from performing at the annual festival of a female deity – Navaratri Durga Puja celebrations. Similarly, the remuneration paid to vidwans came to be matched with their professional dignity and recognition, thanks to Rama Varma's intervention.

At the May 1 recital in Thiruvananthapuram, accompanying Rama Varma on the mridangam was TVG, with V.V. Subrahmanyam on the violin. After about 20 concerts in two months around the U.S. in 1991, Rama Varma did not look back.

If Rama Varma's musical virtuosity holds his audiences in thrall, his lucid explanations around different songs appeal to their sense of history and intellectual curiosity. Somebody has to set the record straight, he says, about 'Karunacheyvan endu,' the popular composition of Irayaman Thampi, a court musician. Few music lovers know either that the tune currently in vogue was composed by Chembai Vaidyanatha Bhagavathar, in raga Yadukula Khambodi, or that the original was

set in raga Sri. This example is all the more relevant in the light of the Thampi lullaby, whose adaptation was a subject of a recent controversy. Let his profile as a foodie not be pushed into the shadows, nor his probing interest in world music be dwarfed by the spectre of his Carnatic offering... Let us be quick to spot the twin contrasting spirit within him, irreverence and a deep spirituality."

manathan describes Lord Vishnu as "standing majestically with Sri Devi and Bhoomi Devi. The relevant line there being 'Baga Shri Bhoomi Sahithudai Velyau,' cleverly incorporating the name of the ragam Bageshree in the process. The lone exception to Rama Varma's narrative-filled recitals is the event at Thiruvananthapuram's Navaratri Mandapam, where the singing is more an offering to the deity than a performance.

Sharing knowledge

This urge to blend education, aesthetic sense and entertainment, he says, was inspired by the elaborate introductions he found on Western classical music albums he assiduously acquired as a teenager. Sharing such knowledge, says Rama Varma, is an imperative and a way of paying tribute to legendary composers and musicians.

The vainika in him is not an ornamental appellation, avers the Bengaluru-based musician. "A singer, who does not play an instrument is much like a person who has merely learned to speak a language, say English, but cannot write a word." Alternatively, the gains are akin to somebody with myopia wearing glasses. Learning an instrument sharpens one's grasp of the multiple swarams that are at work in a short musical phrase. Without this advantage, one may stumble upon such intricacies after years.

Vocalists M.S. Subbulakshmi, M. Balamuralikrishna, Chembai Vaidyanatha Bhagavathar and M.D. Radamanthan from the yesteryear were adept at playing an instrument. Living veterans in this unique league are T.V. Gopalakrishnan, Neyveli Santhanagopalan, T.N. Seshagopalan, and S. Sowmya among others. Accompanying artistes can spot instantly whether the vocalist is conversant with an instrument and vice versa, says Rama Varma .

Rama Varma is too modest to recall a highlight from the unique bond, which he shared with his guru for a good 15 years. This scribe alluded to the typically maestro-like remark that 'Balamuralikrishna was learning about Balamuralikrishna from Rama Varma' only to be gently admonished by the latter. To Rama Varma, such reminiscences would remain eternally green.

Equally poignant is a fulsome tribute by the poet Sreekumar Varma in the commemorative collection, *Breaking Barriers, Building Bonds*. "If Rama Varma were to be deified in music and rigidified into an icon, in the coming years, let no one read of him and say he was a genius but a grumpy one, a path-breaker but a pompous one. Let no one disregard his charm and his naughtiness, let no one forget that his reading was parallel to his singing. His preparation was the platform for his erudition. Let his profile as a foodie not be pushed into the shadows, nor his probing interest in world music be dwarfed by the spectre of his Carnatic offering... Let us be quick to spot the twin contrasting spirit within him, irreverence and a deep spirituality."

A treasure trove

After ten years of labour, the Amar Nath Sehgal Private Collection is open to the public

ANURADHA VELLAT

An artist's life and the definition of his/her work often changes posthumously. It is then the responsibility of his/her subjects, audience, patrons and most importantly, the family to preserve and ensure that they live on. Today, we have the multimedia to record ourselves, make sure we are heard, but 50 years ago, expressions meant decades of work on one particular drawing or a sketch. A modernist, Amar Nath Sehgal was an artist who perhaps best represented the times he lived in through his work, without bounding himself to one medium. His diligence ensured he found the right medium of depiction. And today, his studio has been turned into a world-class museum by his children and a team of professionals, connecting the dots of 60 years of the artist's lifetime. The Amar Nath Sehgal Private Collection was thrown open to the public last week, with two floors showcasing his work - sculptures, photographs, letters, poems, sketches and paintings to name only a few. The process was tedious, to say the least, but a satisfying one that took almost ten years to put together.

Says Amar Nath Sehgal's son Rajan Sehgal, "My father never threw a thing away. Every piece of paper is still available, so we actually have the luxury to tell his story through documents, and present it in this sort of a single artist museum. There are letters, photographs, poetry and what not. We have almost 300 poems we did not even know existed. It is only when we opened up all the boxes that we discovered them. And I discovered about my father more after his death."

Along with his brother Raman, Rajan and a team of archivars, curators and designers have designed Sehgal's erstwhile workspace-cum-house into the museum. The inauguration was held at the India International Centre, a space where Sehgal spent a number of his days chatting and working with his friends. The documentary called "Amar Nath Sehgal - A Portrait" directed by Rajiv Mehrotra was also screened along with the release of a catalogue titled "The Amar Nath Sehgal Project: Delhi NCR Chapter" which records three years of teamwork that went into finding and restoring public installations of the artist.

Says Shruthi Issac, resident curator-ar-



We have also framed some of his poetry, we understand them as connecting everything for us
Shruthi Issac



Extraordinary artist Amar Nath Sehgal

chivist for the museum, "It all started with 289 boxes of his stuff that we had to work out of. We have tried to accommodate everything from the kind of mediums he dealt with, his subjects, the times he lived in and the people he met." A corner of the museum starts with the photo archival gallery, with original photos from Sehgal's lifetime, candid pictures of his wife, Shukla Sehgal, his children Rajan and Raman Sehgal and the man himself. "We have also framed some of his poetry, we understand them as connecting everything for us," says Issac. There are also pictures he clicked for portraiture, from S Radhakrishnan, Jawaharlal Nehru to Indira Gandhi.

Saga of Partition

Born in Campbellpur (Attock) in Pakistan, which was a military base, Sehgal came to India after Partition, before leaving for New York to study. Later he visited parts of Europe, before coming back to India. He had very strong ties in Luxembourg where he lived for many years. "What seemed like a trivial act of reaching out to public and private institutions led to months of communications, dialogues and navigating through territories. It required an in-depth study of the archival material pertaining to the artworks, the artist's relationship with the concerned institutions and the politics of the era," says Issac. The trauma of Partition had a different impact on Sehgal. His sketches of "Human Heads", for instance, depict the saga of Partition and its underlying trauma in the most reflective ways. "Anguished Cries", a solid bronze that was completed in 1971, is perhaps a manifestation of the cry for help emerging from one slate, or the silencing of them. "Tyranny of Colonisation", "Hunger, Cries Unheard" are all different takes on the angst of society as he perceived it. "You see, this process also helped us understand how to trace the work of an artist better. What started as a drawing in 1950 would change into a mould, and then a bronze," adds Issac.

"The studio was in a mess, my father's last few years were not very nice, in terms of his well-being, he'd developed Parkinson's disease. After his passing in 2007, we did not know what to do or how to go about it. But now, when we look at it, the space is not a static museum, but a living, organic being in itself," sums up Rajan.

(Amar Nath Sehgal Private Collection is located at J-23, Jungpura, New Delhi)

An intimate encounter

An ongoing exhibition maps the inspirational journey of Benode Behari Mukherjee

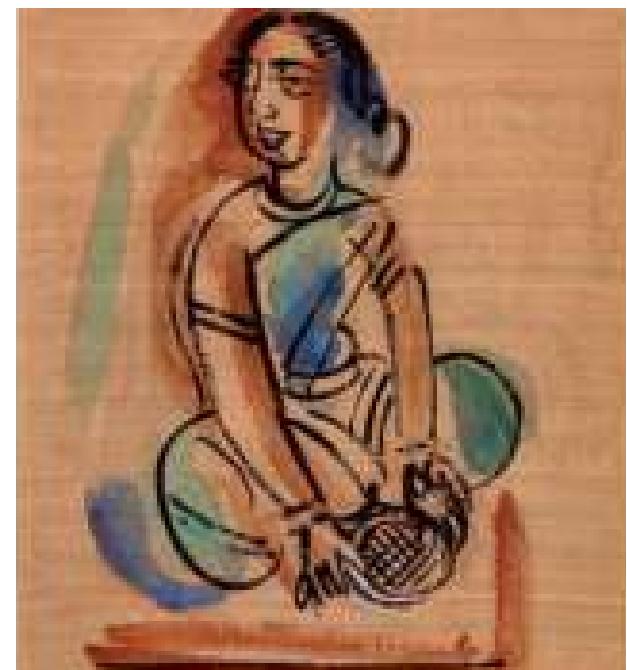
UMA NAIR

To step into "Between Sight and Insight: Glimpses of Benode Behari Mukherjee" at both the Vadehra Galleries in Delhi is to be invited into the mapping of an inspirational odyssey that presents one of the greatest artists and educators in our country. Small piquant, large and medium, the drawings, watercolours and mixed media with a few collages thrown in reflect the consummate ease he had with tempera, watercolour, crayon, felt tip pen and Chinese ink on paper; a treat for tired eyes are the etchings, lithographs and paper collages. Sensitivity stems when you read the notes and know he struggled with his eyesight.

Benode Behari Mukherjee (1904-80) was a leading modernist artist and educator at Kala Bhavan Santiniketan and known also as the teacher of Satyajit Ray, K G Subramanyan and Somnath Hore.

Curator Siva Kumar arranges the show with astute vision, his meticulous curation merges with an aesthetic unravelling in which you move from image to image enjoying the strokes that move from tradition to modernity in narrative, space and mood. Benode Behari figured in Siva Kumar's curated show at NGMA in 1997 called "The Making of Contextual Modernism".

When asked how it felt to be curating another show 22 years hence, Siva Kumar states, "Benode Behari was one of the four artists I had



Lived reality An art work by Benode Behari Mukherjee

included in 'Santiniketan: The Making of a Contextual Modernism.' There he was presented as part of a group of four artists (the others being Nandalal, Ramkinkar and Rabindranath Tagore) who together shaped a distant approach to modernism.

They were not a group by stylistic affinity but by commitment to a common set of values, which included response to their immediate environment and lived reality."

This was followed by the 'Benode Behari Mukherjee: A Centenary Retrospective', also at NGMA, which he co-curated with Gulam Mohammed Sheikh in 2006. "Here we looked at his work against a wider background but also in greater detail and comprehensiveness. The present exhibition at Vadehra Gallery is the third. It's smaller in scale than the centenary retrospective but also more intimate, less intimidating.

Benode Behari was an artist who worked quietly and very thoughtfully. He doesn't foreground himself but is always present behind the simple things from the everyday world - a small bridge, a stretch of arid landscape or a flower - he paints."

Packing in an entire oeuvre of a lifetime into nine rooms at Vadehra is by no means easy. Siva Kumar explains, "Taking advantage of the many relatively small rooms (nine in all) the Vadehra Gallery offers, I tried to set up intimate encounters with Benode Behari's works from different phases. The idea was not to overwhelm the viewer physically but allow an intimate engagement with the works. I hope this is useful because his works, small and carefully constructed as

they are, are most rewarding when looked at and absorbed in an unhurried manner."

Siva Kumar refreshes art lovers with succinct notes that examine Behari's rich and varied work from a social and historical perspective, as he situates it within Indian, Nepalese and Japanese identities and insignias all woven into his travels.

"As a curator setting up such an encounter between the artist and his viewers has been my effort. I have also tried to keep the wall texts to a non intrusive minimum for the same reason."

Minute details

Art lovers can view the evolution through a series of self-portraits; a selection of intimate sketches of flora that reveal the significance of minute details in his vocabulary, speaking not only of how he saw the world due to his limited eyesight but focusing on the significance of linear form in his understanding of space; his landscapes, preparatory drawings and paintings, which lend themselves to analysis by anyone wanting to engage with his unique understanding of space.

The show gives primacy to art's functions while respecting the need to soothe the eye and inspire the spirit. Benode Behari faced difficulties with his eyesight throughout his life, but continued his artistic work even after going blind, considering this "a new state of being," and therein lies the lesson in learning for each one of us. In the solitude of Santiniketan, when he lost his vision he taught art history for 12 years from 1957 till 1969. As Mark Antony in Julius Caesar says: Whence cometh such another!



The making of a maestro

Padma Shri Pt Rajeev Taranath goes down memory lane

SHAILAJA KHANNA

It is not usual to expect a clipped British accent with a fondness for P.G. Wodehouse's writing from an Indian classical musician. Pt Rajeev Taranath belongs to the rarefied club. He is amongst the few Indian classical musicians who have been honoured with the Padma awards this year. He is today the senior-most disciple of Padma Vibhushan Ustad Ali Akbar Khan. While the story of his life is fascinating, his wry sense of humour and self-analysis is striking.

Edited excerpts:

How did you, a professor of English, take to music?

My being an English professor was perhaps inevitable; my mother Sumati was a good English writer, and a school teacher.

She was a feminist, a very strong woman. She studied at Queen Mary's in Madras. Amazingly, she wrote a book, "Why Not Divorce" as early as in the 1920s. She was selling copies of another book, she wrote, "Towards womanhood", on a train platform when Jawaharlal Nehru spotted her in her khadi clothes, and a hat, and they interacted, for quite a few years actually. My grandfather was a freedom fighter, a highly intelligent, unorthodox man, who wanted to learn Sanskrit, but couldn't. He introduced my mother to the literature of Bertrand Russell and the like. He educated my mother at Queen Mary's.

Tell us about more about your parents

Well, my mother's roommate at Queen Mary's was my father's sister, so that is how my parents met. In fact, it was quite funny; my father came to meet his sister Leela, and my mother lambasted him in Shakespeare's English, as she had heard that he was unable to continue paying his sister's fees. She chastised him, 'You are trying to get freedom for the country, yet

you are curtailing your sister's freedom!' I believe my father had quietly left without a word.

My mother had been married off to her uncle when she was just 11. While studying, my mother grew up, realised she could not acquiesce to a marriage like this, and fought with her father. After her studies, she was homeless, but filled with a passionate desire to do good; my father was running an ashram in Tungabhadra, helping unwed mothers, so she joined him. They got married in 1931. My father's mother was called Rajivi, I was named after her.

I am very proud of my father; I remember hearing an incident of a young widow coming to my father asking him to help her abort her child as she had conceived after the death of her husband, and did not know how to name the child's father. My father offered his own name, requesting her to not kill the child. I think that required enormous generosity; this was way back in the 1920s. Even today, it's a kind act. He really walked tall.

So how did music come into your life?

Perhaps, the music in me came from my father - he was a good singer. He was also



When I went to meet Khan sahib, he told me, 'You're mad! Why do you want to leave your good life to start learning from me? Go back, think and decide, and come back only if you still want to. So I did that. And in 1955, I started.'

quite a lovely tabla player. As a child, I was built like a tadpole; when I tried to play with other kids I would invariably fall over and howl. Once, my father picked me up and introduced me to records of Ustad Abdul Karim Khan. I was about three. He taught me to play the records myself, to be careful with the needle. I then was taught vocal music, and became a graded artist at the AIR. After my voice broke, I got disenchanted, and gave up on classical music. After I turned 18, I developed an interest in instrumental music. I used to religiously listen to every concert of Pt Ravi Shankar. Before that I had heard sarod records of Ustad Shekhawat Hussain Khan, but I found his sarod stroke work quite rau-

cous.

I remember the first time I heard my guru Ustad Ali Akbar Khan. I had taken a girl, and of course her father as a chaperone, to a concert of Pt Ravi Shankar. There, I discovered that the concert included a sarod player. I reassured her, 'Just listen to the sitar, he's really good. Ignore the sarod.' That's when Khan sahib "happened" to me. My God, that tone, that imagination - I had never heard anything like it! I waited near the toilet, to meet him. He walked near me, with a cigarette dangling. I stammered, 'Where do you live?' He said, 'Khar Bombay,' and walked away. That was that! Anyway, I was studying, my mother was dying, I had responsibilities.

Later I managed to connect with him through director Chetan Anand. (Khan sahib had just done the music for Anand's "Aandhiyan.") By then, I had a job as a lecturer of English, and my mother had passed away. When I went to meet Khan sahib, he told me, 'You're mad! Why do you want to leave your good life to start learning from me? Go back, think and decide, and come back only if you



Devoted to music Pt. Rajeev Taranath ■ AVISHEK DEY

still want to. So I did that. And in 1955, I started.

Tell us about your early years of learning under him

I was just 21, and learning the sarod - you know, the nails bleeding, the "pus" under the nails, all of that. I was in Bombay first, and later when he moved to Calcutta, I followed too, though I had just gotten a job in Bombay.

I had a very fine sarod made by the finest sarod maker; I remember I could not afford to pay the ₹500 he wanted, and gave him only ₹350. Incidentally, one of my disciples later stole that sarod from me, so I no longer have it.

Khan sahib was the busiest musician those days. While the demand for sitar was split between three - Ustad Vilayat Khan, Pt Ravi Shankar and Ustad Abdul Halim Jaffar Khan - for sarod, it was the only one. I remember once, whilst playing the tamboora behind him - we used to sit very close as the tamboora did not have a separate mic - I just fell asleep behind him,

mid-concert! It was our 3rd consecutive concert in 24 hours. My head sagged on to his shoulder, and I dribbled onto his silk kurta.

He was so kind, he just said, "utho utho". He should have slapped me!

How did you come in touch with Annapurna Devi?

That time was tough. I had no money. A family took me in - Prabhat Kumar Das, who is no more, also used to learn from Khan sahib. I started living with his family. I used to eat only puffed rice, once a day. I got amoebic dysentery and had no money to pay for medicines. I was very emaciated.

In desperation, I decided to sell my sarod to a famous sarod player then, who offered me ₹700. He told me, 'Even if you get well and continue playing, what will you achieve? There is your Ustad, there is me, and also Ashish Khan. How will you survive? I was very disheartened, and discussed the matter with Nikhil da (Pt Nikhil Banerji) who just laughed it off.

Later that night, he went and told Annapurna ji (Annapurna Devi), who was with her brother in Calcutta too.

When I went the next day to Khan sahib's, she took me aside, told me to get treatment and paid for it. She said I was not to sell my sarod. Thank God for that. In my mind, she was like a mother. She saved my life like a mother would have.

Tell us about learning from Annapurna Devi?

She was five years older than me. After Khan sahib left

for the US, I remember writing her an angry letter: 'Who am I supposed to learn from now?'

So I went to her in Bombay, and what I remember learning from her was the raga Kaunsi Kanhra.

What would you say was the greatest aspect of Ustad Ali Akbar Khan's music?

Khan sahib was very kind. He was not a strict teacher, one to one. He loved to open teaching institutions, but he didn't get the kind of support he should have. When he taught in his schools, both in Calcutta and in the US, he was very exacting; you had to get the passage and the tone absolutely right.

Also, about the many ragas he made: I don't think making a raga is a big deal. It is how you develop it and what you do with those notes. That was his brilliance.

Did you ever meet Ustad Allaudin Khan?

I met Baba once too; he was very affable with us students. We never saw his fiery side, though, of course, I had heard about it.

Do you still go to hear concerts?

I don't hear live music now - only if there is Khan sahib!

Breaking the shackles

Continued from Page 3

As his body is brought home, his dear wife finds no reason to live and jumps into the burning funeral pyre of her husband.

While Theyyam is dancing in a trance, his whole body with costume transformed into a spectacle out of his world. Two-three members burn bundles of hay which

create hundreds of sparkles around Theyyam which is watched by the audience with bated breath. At the NSD lawns, the show took nearly three hours to complete. The audiences are offered Prasad prasad. both vegetarian and non-vegetarian. It is said that Theyyam ritual takes three days to complete back home watched by the whole

community with a sense of religiosity and the community is offered food. Shanu Peruvannan as Theyyam is revered with awe. People believe that he is powerful enough to redress their problems.

The strength of Theyyam is that it is truly a community way of life which brings them together to form a harmonious way of living.



Contemplation at crossroads

The seminar on Enhancing Career Opportunities organized by ITC and Indian Musicological Society at NCPA, Mumbai raised some serious questions. Is music all about performance and career or was it about rigour? In this world of abundant opportunities how do we preserve its sanctity?

DEEPA GANESH

It is meaningless to deliberate on the utility of art and the purpose of life if life and art are viewed as separate entities," said Vinay Sahasrabuddhe, president of ICCR, in his opening remarks at the recent seminar on Enhancing Career Opportunities for Musicians, organized by ITC-SRA and Indian Musicological Society in collaboration with Sangeet Natak Academy, Music Forum and NCPA. He was ruminating on the debates that Marathi critics like Naasi Phadke and V.S. Khandekar had on the meaning of art, and dismissed arguments such as Art for the sake of Arts, and Art for Livelihood as futile. "Whatever is the need of art is the need of life. Today, there are opportunities galore for a musician but we must ensure that



economy, and tools available for the present day musician, but Sahasrabuddhe emphatically maintained that crass commercialization and unscrupulousness was detrimental to art and the artiste. Taking it forward in a similar tenor, chairperson of Sangeet Natak Academy, Shekhar Sen said that temples in the past, were centres of culture and not consolidation camps of religion and ritual, like they are today. Do we need music to live? "Not really. But if you remove culture from life, people will have shorter lifespans. It is the responsibility of the society to support and nurture an artiste, for, they are representatives of culture," he argued.

Speaking at the session on Journey of Maestros, Pandit Hariprasad Chaurasia, recounted his life, its difficulties, how he could not afford to learn from a guru, lived in a temple and had prasad for food, gave up his AIR job, and other jobs, "because, I am still searching for a career. My parents and gurus felt AIR would give me my career, but it never gave me satisfaction musically. Today, I live with my students in a gurukul and we share music, and food. We are still searching for music," he said, exposing the glaring contradictions of a successful 'career' and a fulfilling musical life. Life was not a bed of roses for Pt. Ajoy Chakraborty, his parents were weavers and music came to him in various genres and sporadically, till he finally found a guru and focus. He gave up his bank job and dedicated his time to music. Thanks to the grace of the guru, it opened up a new world for him. "Today, guru's lack depth too. They are not critical, on the contrary they have become superficial and thin intellectually because they are scared of losing disciples. I think the key to being a good musician is constant self-respect, self-analysis, and self-criticism." Nothing but music interested Aruna Sairam, Carnatic vocalist, who said fame came to her only after being pushed away for years. "A musician has to deal with this world and beyond." It is therefore important that he is looked after; he has to be paid adequately for his work. "The medium of our work is music," she reiterated.



young talents are cultivated without compromising on sadhana. We need to de-glamourise the world of fine arts; glamour should never supersede sadhana," he observed.

In an address that was thought provoking, Sahasrabudde rightly tilted the balance towards the essence and philosophy of fine arts. It could have -- going by the title of the seminar -- veered towards market,



Today, guru's lack depth too. They are not critical, on the contrary they have become superficial and thin intellectually because they are scared of losing disciples

teaching was a source of steady income, however, they wondered "if everyone can become a teacher?" Adding nuance to the whole argument, vocalist Sanjeev Chimmalagi felt that while youtube has rendered the world a stage, it had to be used judiciously. It is a learning tool, but there's too much of it. "Struggle is a constant to every creative artiste's life. Today the struggle is of too much too soon. For instance, Colours TV asked me to send my students for a show. Now should I send them or not? Is it an opportunity or a diversion? These are the dangers

Is career all about opportunity?
The seminar discussed at length about how much the difference between performing and learning
■ PHOTOS: COURTESY PRIYO POTSANGBAM

about which one should constantly be aware," he explained. "What is an artiste's life without struggle? His art matures only when in struggle," added Smit.

"Even when I was told that there is no future for Dhrupad, I had decided whether there was food or no food, I would pursue this art form," said the renowned Dhrupad exponent, Uday Bhawalkar in the session, "Journey Thus Far". Remembering her guru, the legendary Girija Devi, Sunanda Sharma said: "Just because you can do a whole lot of things, don't do it", my guru used to say. She would say that you must be so one with your art that struggle becomes pleasure. "Bhakti and Gyan must be two constants in your musical journey, Vidya, Paisa and Prasiddhi - they have to come slowly," added Uday Bhawalkar. It is important to create a mind of your own, and an inner strength. However, liaisoning makes a large part of one's musical journey today, which can prove dangerous.

Dr. Mandavi Singh, Vice Chancellor of the Indira Sangeet Vishvavidyalay, Khairagarh University, took the audience on a journey through the programmes of the university, set up in 1956 for Performing Arts. A kathak dancer herself, she projected the earnest efforts of the university in motivating students with creative abilities.

Moderating the session on Teaching and Promotion of Indian Music, Pt. Vidhyadhar Vyas said that it is imperative to understand and adapt to the cultural changes of the music world. But is that really possible in the present, asked Pt. Ritwik Sanyal? "We are at cross roads and have plenty of stumbling blocks. As a community, we have to think seriously about the decisions we make." Agreeing with the seriousness of the situation, B.B. Chatterjee of ITC, Kolkata, felt that since the associations with Indian Classical Music are spiritual, a career in music has to be seen both at the levels of Sadhana and Performance. "We also have to make a choice between constructive criticism and destructive appreciation," he emphasized. Pt. Nayan Ghosh spoke at length about the journey of Sangeeth Mahabharathi, established by Pt. Nikhil Ghosh. "In the last 62 years, we boast off an unbroken chain of teaching, festivals, lecdems, workshops and more. We promoted meaningful music, and we have created teachers, research assistants, music journalists and event managers. We have also created musicians capable of heading archives and digitization studios. In all, we are a centre for excellence in performing arts," he explained.

(The second day of deliberations which discussed the scope of CSR, Event organisers, and Media, will be reported in this column next Friday.)

Hindi Belt

Living memories

Late Rekha Jain's account of her own journey from a conservative joint family of Agra to the left-leaning Indian People's Theatre Association (IPTA) and children's theatre is truly fascinating

KULDEEP KUMAR

Memoirs are personalised histories that offer us a version of the past as seen and experienced by their writer. They tell us about the person who has written them but they also tell us about the times and personalities that have been written about. Therefore, memoirs give us rare insights into the past as it was actually lived and we often come across poignant portrayals of situations that we can often not even imagine. They are living documentary evidence of the times gone by.

Recently, Surya Prakashan Mandir, Bikaner brought out a two-volume set of the late Rekha Jain's memoirs and her scripts of 31 children's plays that she wrote and directed. The memoirs are titled *Yaadghar* (A House of Memories) and the other volume containing scripts is titled *Bachchon Ki Duniya* (Children's World). Since 1956, she had been very active and deeply involved with the children's theatre in Delhi and held numerous theatre workshops for children and wrote, directed and produced plays for them. Her involvement continued almost till the time of her death at the age of 85 in April 2010. Her account of her own journey from a conservative joint baniya family of Agra to the left-leaning Indian People's Theatre Association (IPTA) and children's theatre is truly fascinating.

At the age of 12, Rekha Goyal was married to Nemi Chandra Jain on May 3, 1936 in a traditional wedding ceremony that was first performed according to the Vaishnav faith and was later performed in accordance with the Jain rituals.

Nemi Chandra Jain belonged to a well-to-do business family but was getting drawn towards progressive ideas and Marxism and had started writing Hindi poetry. Later, when Agyeya brought out the historic collection *Taar Saptak*, his poems too figured in this. The other poets were Agyeya, Prabhakar Machwe, Gajanan Madhav Muktibodh, Girija Kumar Mathur, Bharat Bhushan Agrawal and Ramvilas Shar-



Lifelong devotion Rekha Jain ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

ma. Later, Muktidobh wrote with pride that he had learnt Marxism from Nemi Chandra Jain. So, it was not surprising that breaking with the tradition and facing a great deal of opposition from the family, Jain inspired his wife Rekha to become educated and participate in the life outside home.

As her husband shifted to Calcutta (now Kolkata) and immersed himself in the activities of IPTA, Rekha Jain too started taking an interest in theatre and began singing in chorus. Her memoirs are very frank about portraying her husband as a very enlightened and progressive person who took great pains in educating his wife and making her shed old social and religious beliefs, but they also make it clear that he at times imposed his will on her and the relationship ultimately remained within the confines of patriarchy. The way she was forced to go to Calcutta illustrates this point. This reminds one of the Mahatma Gandhi-Kasturba Gandhi relationship in which the Mahatma's will always prevailed.

Unprecedented famine

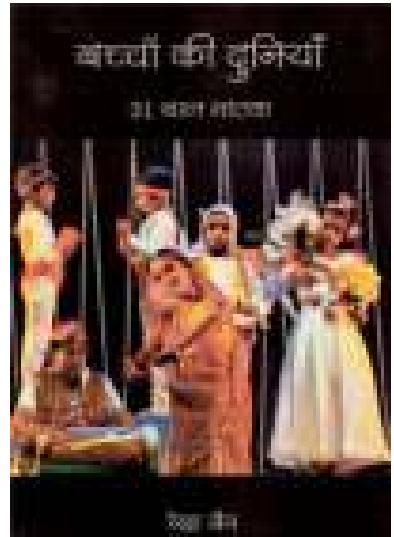
In Kolkata, Rekha Jain witnessed the Great Bengal Famine and the colossal human suffering that it brought in its wake. It was a man-made famine aimed at helping the British war machine. Here, they became associated with the Communist Party and continued their association with it as well as IPTA. Later, they shifted to Bombay (now Mumbai) where she made her debut as an actor in a play directed by Sombhu Mitra. Those were the days of hard struggle and experience in cultural work and theatre as part of the central squad of IPTA. In those days, the Communist Party of India (CPI) had its headquarters in Bombay and this enabled the Jain couple to come into close contact

with many important communist leaders as well as prominent theatre, music and film personalities. Prithviraj Kapoor used to stand at the gate of the auditorium after the play was over and would request people to donate whatever they could for the Bengal famine victims' relief.

From Bombay, the Jains went to Allahabad in 1947. There, Nemi Chandra Jain joined Agyeya to help him edit the Hindi literary journal *Prateek*. Like *Taar Saptak*, *Prateek* too played a historic role in those years and was highly thought of because of its literary standards.

After coming to Delhi in 1956, both Nemi and Rekha Jain made their names in theatre and children's theatre became her passion. She started writing and directing plays for children and their scripts collected in *Bachchon Ki Duniya* tell us about the range of subjects they dealt with. Most of these plays have an educational aspect to them and teach many things to children in a very easy, playful manner. Sangeet Natak Akademi honoured her with its prestigious award for her contribution to theatre.

The foreword, written jointly by her children Urmi Bhushan Gupta, Rashmi Vajpeyi, Kirti Jain and Sanjay Jain, tells us that Rekha Jain wrote more than 1,500 pages of her memoirs. They were first edited by Ramkumar Krishak who abridged them to one thousand pages. As this was also considered to be too long, they were further shortened and this volume was prepared with the help of Piyush Daiya. Both the volumes contain historic photographs of Nemi Chandra Jain and Rekha Jain along with the leaders of the IPTA movement and performances of the children's plays. This history has to be preserved for future generations.



Telling Voices

Noise as abstract as silence

Marlon James explains the process that went in writing his latest labour of love

SUDHAMAHI REGUNATHAN



“It is spooky when characters enter your head and refuse to leave,” says Marlon James, who has come out with his new book, *Black Leopard Red Wolf*. This fantasy comes after his *The Brief History of Seven Killings* which won him a Man Booker Prize.

The Jamaican writer who says he is an occasional short story writer feels there is no set process to his writing, “Each book demands a different process. I did not write the book (*A history of seven killings*) the way I wrote my last book which is set 200 years ago (*The Book of Night Women*)... everything about the two is different...I think it is very dangerous to go into a new book with the same attitude...my earlier novel worked best when I woke up at 5 in the morning and I wrote till 9. I tried it with the next book and it was horrible...the writing habits changed, the music I listened to changed. The way I approached it changed...I wrote my second novel when I was on a tour for the first and that changed a lot of things...so I was stealing time...realizing that background noise is just as abstract as silence. I have always listened to music when I write...my books have a playlist each. I do not have time for silence...when I am writing I have every single distraction I can think of...I write in noise.”

If that makes you feel he is a writer who brings chaos to work, here is something to revise those thoughts, “So many writers are opposed to structures and charts because they feel it kills spontaneity but that gave me spontaneity. It is like knowing the rules and how to break them. I needed charts because I was dealing with hundreds of characters.. without me plotting where each one is going I would easily start playing favourites...it forces me to pay attention to all characters. I did not have index cards; I had a chart...a spreadsheet with rows and columns. Each column was a different character, each row was different times of the day...in my book, even though it is a big book, each section of it is one day. So I would know what each character was doing at all times of day.”

James's hours of work vary, “I have many rules and one of the rules I have is that at the end of the day I should say ‘I did not see that coming.’” And if that did not happen I basically keep writing till it does. This is again different from my last book for which I started at 5 and stopped at 9 and I did not care where I was.”

Once his editor called him and asked, “Why is everything gleaming in your novel?” He had obviously used it several times. And James says there are words such as gleaming which he hates, like “...waft, pulsate, ignominy and,” he says “use only one exclamation per 3,000 words...”

Tyagaraja Music festival

Shanmukhananda Sangeetha Sabha, New Delhi in association with Government of Andhra Pradesh and Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams, is organising 29th year Tyagaraja Music and Dance Festival on 23rd and 24th February.

The first day of this two-day event will witness the unveiling of portrait of Saint Thyagaraja and conferment of “Nada Kalanidhi” award on Carantic vocalists and violinists Ranjani and Gayatri. There will be a performance by the sister-duo, accompanied by L. Ramakrishnan on violin, K. Saigiridhar on mridangam and Chandrasekara Sharma on ghatam.

Sunday will feature a Kuchipudi dance recital by M.S.V. Vaishnavi, followed by vocal performance by Bharat Sundar. The event will be held at Dhyana mandir, Tirupati Balaji Mandir, Gole Market from 4 p.m. onwards.

End of an era

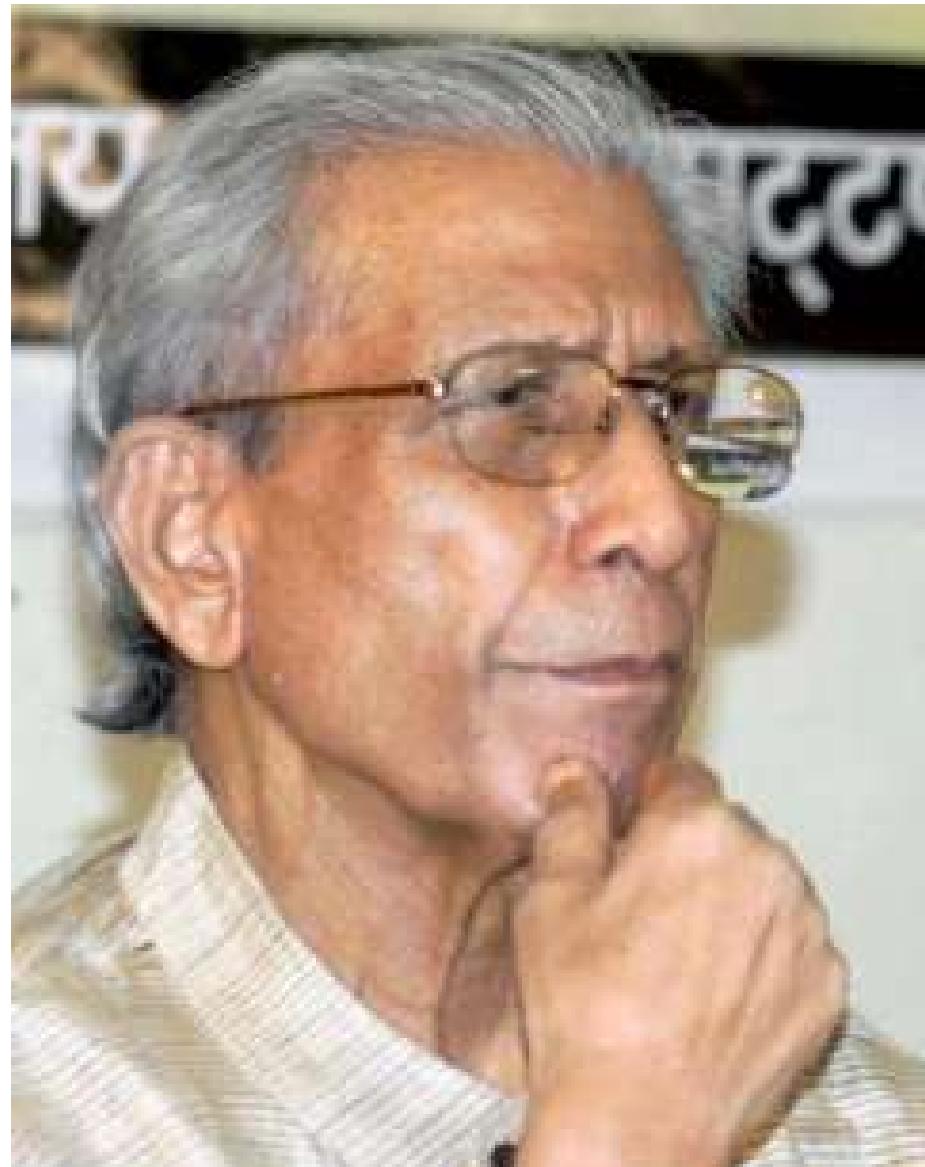
Such had been Namvar Singh's stature in contemporary Hindi criticism that both his articulation and silence on writers, works and issues were equally meaningful

MOHAMMAD ASIM SIDDIQUI

Namvar Singh (July 1926- February 2019) has left behind a huge corpus of work after years of dedication to literature. Born in Varanasi, he completed his masters and doctorate at Banaras Hindu University and taught at many places, including BHU and Jawaharlal Nehru University. Editor of "Janyug" and "Alochana", Singh was undoubtedly the most influential Hindi critic of his times and had expressed his opinions on the state of criticism and critics frankly and unabashedly. Not often very consistent in his opinions, a charge leveled among others, by Rajendra Yadav, he considered it his strength. Still such had been his stature in contemporary Hindi criticism that both his articulation and silence on writers, works and issues were equally meaningful.

He held that the field of criticism was vast and it encompassed civilisation and culture, with literature providing its spine. And criticism must open a front against whatever poses a threat to culture and civilisation.

He was very clear about the role of a critic. A critic is neither a defence lawyer who must defend his writer nor an investigative journalist who must investigate his case. Neither does criticism hold a trial of a poet or writer to pass judgement. The basic job of a critic is to see, to see completely and holistically, to see herself and show to others what is hidden, the truth that is not easily visible to others. A critic must have the knowledge of the text and its language, a quality that Ramchandra Shukla had when he talked about the language of each poet very accurately. A critic who cannot ap-



One of a kind Namvar Singh (1926-2019) ■ THE HINDU

preciate the nuances and intricacies of language cannot write good language himself. For Singh, good prose is an essential quality of a critic. A person can be a thinker but not a critic without a proper command of a language. Another important quality of a critic, Singh held, was his getting very close to the text. Not only the text, a critic must also pay attention to the reader.

Language, both the pure variety and the one considered 'corrupt', interested Namvar Singh. His masters dissertation at the Banaras Hindu University, later published as "Hindi ke Vikas mein Apbhransh ka Yog (1952)" (Contribution of the Corrupt Language to the Development of Hindi), is a thorough linguistic and historical study of the origin, development and grammatical patterns of Prakrit language and its contribution to Hindi language and literature. Singh loved challenges

thrown by difficult works and difficult poetic language. He was equal to this challenge in his deep study of the language and diction of the Hindi epic "Prathviraj Raso" in his unparalleled work "Prithviraj Raso: Bhasha Aur Sahitya" (1956).

A polymath

Singh was a polymath in the real sense of the word and his reading of different kinds of literature and dialects marks his writing. If there are allusions to western writers like Hawthorne, Melville, and Mallarme, home-grown Indian writers like Ghalib and

Akbar Allahabadi are also quoted in his work liberally. Indian literary traditions interested him. Thus tracing the roots of Indian novel in what he called romance and looking at Bankim Chandra's novels as its examples and taking a dig at the colonial thinking and the so-called English kind of novel, he wrote "it is an irony that in the 19th century when English Orientalists were mad after Indian stories like 'Kadambari', 'Katha Sarit Sagar' and 'Panchtantra', Indian writers were eager to write an 'English style novel'."

His short book "Adhunik Sahitya ki Pravattan (Trends of Modern Literature)" is a very concise summing up of important trends in Hindi literature which include 'Chhayavad (Romanticism)', 'Rahasyavad', 'Pragativad', and 'Prayogvad'. Another remarkable book "Chhayavad" (1954) discusses this important trend and tendency in Hindi literature, dwelling on

Usually criticism is synonymous with written word, but in Namvar Singh's case his spoken word is as important as the more formal medium of writing

its origin, its poetic characteristics, its grammar and diction, and its ideological contours. He was able to establish new parameters for the criticism of poetry through his book "Kavita ke Naye Pratiman" (1968) (New Models of Poetry) by first defining poetry then going on to talk about the relevance of Rasa theory, the clash of values and the issue of evaluation of poetry.

He had been associated with progressive movement in literature and served as the president of All India Progressive Writers' Association. His work also bears the influence of progressive ideology. Thus his book "Itihas Aur Alochana" (1957, 62) (History and Criticism), an expression of Marxist literary insights, played an important role in building an argument in favour of progressive ideology in the 50s and 60s. Never one to shy away from difficult questions, some of his frank talks on subjects as controversial as fascism, globalisation and communalism have been compiled in a book appropriately titled "Zamane se Do Do Hath" (2010) (Confronting the Society). In one of his interviews, he said that he always believed in looking forward. Human eyes and feet are positioned in the body to look forward and not to take refuge in past. Even before his death, not short of work, he believed that nostalgia leads to inactivity.

If in the first half of his long career he produced some remarkable works, in later years his lectures and talks contributed significantly to his persona. His interviews and lectures are a very rich source of his opinions on his life, literature, nature of criticism and the critic he liked or did not like. Usually, criticism is synonymous with the written word, but in Namvar Singh's case, his spoken word is as important as the more formal medium of writing. "Baat Baat Main Baat" (Conversations Through Conversations) includes 14 long interviews conducted from 1993 to 2005 which present his opinions on dense and difficult subjects in a very accessible language.

Fortunately, many of his interviews are also available on YouTube. Equally importantly some of his writings and talks are fortunately available online at www.hindisamay.com.

