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## NEARBY



**BJD won't align with BJP or Mahagathbandhan**

NEW DELHI

The BJD will maintain its neutrality in the run-up to the Lok Sabha polls, aligning with neither the ruling NDA nor any Opposition alliance, party leaders reiterated on Friday, while announcing a farmers' protest in the Capital seeking a higher support price for paddy.

**NEWS ▶ PAGE 8**

**EPCA raps authorities over poor air quality**

NEW DELHI

Coming down heavily on authorities over continuing garbage-burning and traffic congestion leading to the deteriorating air quality in the Capital, the EPCA on Friday asked various agencies to take necessary steps.

**DELHI METRO ▶ PAGE 1**

## Ground Zero

### A silent killer

In the 1970s, hundreds of women from villages in Mahabubnagar lost their husbands to silicosis, an occupational hazard that could have been prevented had safety protocols been followed. Even after four decades, justice and compensation remain a distant dream for the affected families.

**OP-ED PAGE**



**DELHI METRO ▶ 6 PAGES**

## Rafale will bring Modi back, says Nirmala Sitharaman

UPA stalled the aircraft deal as it didn't get money: Minister

**SANDEEP PHUKAN**  
NEW DELHI

The Lok Sabha on Friday witnessed sharp exchanges between Congress president Rahul Gandhi and Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, who asserted: "Bofors took the Congress down but Rafale will bring Modi back."

In her reply to the debate on the Rafale deal, she sought not only to make a point-by-point rebuttal of the Congress's charges, but also opened a counter-attack.

**Security ignored**  
Charging the Congress with ignoring national security, she accused the UPA of "stalling" the deal because "it didn't get money."

Ms. Sitharaman also informed the Lok Sabha that the draft report of the



Comptroller and Auditor-General (CAG) on all capital defence acquisitions, including the deal for 36 Rafale jets, was with the Defence Ministry, which was preparing its responses to the observations.

She said that even the basic price of the aircraft as negotiated by the UPA would have amounted to ₹737 crore at today's rates as against the

₹670 crore at which the NDA government was buying the jets. She further claimed that the government had condensed the delivery time by five months; the first jet would land in the country in September and the last one would be delivered in 2022.

**CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8**  
**'MINISTRY OPPOSED NEW RAFALE DEAL'** ▶ PAGE 8

## Lokpal search panel formed, govt. tells Supreme Court

Government told to detail steps in the affidavit

**LEGAL CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI

The government informed the Supreme Court on Friday that a search committee had been constituted in September 2018 for zeroing in on eligible candidates for the Lokpal, and it will frame its own rules of functioning.

The Department of Personnel and Training's notification, issued on September 27, lists the names of the eight-member search committee, led by former Su-

preme Court judge Ranjana Prakash Desai. A Bench, led by Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi, ordered Attorney-General K.K. Venugopal to file an affidavit detailing the steps taken so far in the search for a Lokpal.

When Mr. Venugopal offered to pass on to the court a "note" detailing the steps taken, Justice Gogoi insisted that the Centre file a sworn affidavit.

The court then posted the case to January 17.

Advocate Prashant Bhushan, for petitioner NGO Common Cause, submitted that Section 4 of the Lokpal Act mandates the government to be transparent about the search and appointment process.

"They have not put the names of those in the search committee on the website. They have not put the minutes of the meeting on the website," Mr. Bhushan submitted.

**CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8**  
**'AAP SHOULD HAVE REMAINED A MOVEMENT'** ▶ DELHI METRO PAGE 1

## Maken quits as Delhi Congress chief

Cites health reasons; resignation triggers speculation of alliance with AAP

**JATIN ANAND**  
NEW DELHI

Senior Congress leader and former Union Minister Ajay Maken stepped down as the party's Delhi unit president because of what he said were "solely health-related reasons".

The decision, which came within hours of the resignation of Aam Aadmi Party's Punjab MLA H.S. Phoolka, prompted insiders from both parties to claim that it was a

reaction to the likely formation of an AAP-Congress front – not only in Delhi but nationally – against the BJP.

"I had tendered my resignation earlier and had requested the party leadership to accept it since the [Delhi] Pradesh Congress Committee chief, so close to the (Lok Sabha) elections, should be in a position to give 100%... anything below that is unacceptable," Mr. Maken told *The Hindu*. "I called on the

party leadership last evening and impressed upon them that I was not in a position to give my all to the party at the moment due to health reasons and my request was accepted," he said.

AICC in-charge of the Delhi unit, P.C. Chacko, confirmed Mr. Maken's resignation. "We are looking for his successor," he said.

A source in the Congress Working Committee said Mr. Maken had tendered his re-

signation in September last year. The Congress is now looking to replace him with someone with "adequate experience" to lead the party in the Capital ahead of the Lok Sabha election; former Delhi Chief Minister Sheila Dikshit and former Delhi Minister Yoganand Shastri are being considered as his replacements, the source said.

**CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8**  
**'AAP SHOULD HAVE REMAINED A MOVEMENT'** ▶ DELHI METRO PAGE 1

## A.P. unveils second largest rock art trove

Petroglyphs suggest a link between Neolithic pastoralists and present-day 'Gollas'

**A.D. RANGARAJAN**  
KADAPA

Andhra Pradesh's second largest petroglyph site, containing about 80 petroglyphs, has been discovered at Mekala Benchi, near Aspari, in Kurnool district. These petroglyphs, or rock carvings, underscore Kurnool's importance as a major site of Neolithic settlements in south India.

Kandanathi, with 200 petroglyphs, is also in Kurnool district. While Mekala Benchi has rock carvings dating back from the Neolithic to the Megalithic period, Kandanathi's carvings range from the prehistoric to the historic period.

The petroglyphs were recently discovered by



**Ancient tools:** One of the petroglyph sections found at Mekala Benchi in Kurnool district. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Yadava Raghu, an archaeologist and academic consultant with Yogi Vemana University's Department of History and Archaeology. Two boulders, one known as 'Boodida Konda' (ash-coloured hill)

and the other an unnamed granite hillock, mostly have images of bulls or bull-riding, and human figures, an elephant, tiger-like animals and cupules.

Native bulls of western Kurnool are known for their

'long horns', as depicted in the petroglyphs. "Settled village life and the finished stone axe are salient Neolithic features of communities settled on granitoid hills or levelled terraces on hillsides or on valley floors. The current site, at the granite foothills of Boodida Konda, fits the description of a Neolithic settlement," Mr. Raghu said.

The researcher collected stone tools and potsherds from the site dating back to the Neolithic period (2900 BCE-1000 BCE).

A polished and finished triangular axe, two other axes, a broken axe, rubbing stone, and potsherds were found. Present-day Golla members use well-finished iron axes, akin to polished Neolithic stone axes.



## 'Appropriate Bench' will hear Ayodhya appeals

It will pass further orders on January 10, says Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi

**KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL**  
NEW DELHI

A two-judge Bench, led by Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi, on Friday said an "appropriate Bench" will take up the Ramjanmabhoomi-Babri Masjid title suit appeals on January 10.

In the brief moments of a rapid-fire hearing, Chief Justice Gogoi and Justice S.K. Kaul did not delve into the issue. "This is the Ramjanmabhoomi case? Yes? Listen to the order now... 'Further orders will be passed by the appropriate Bench on the 10th of January'. Please come on the 10th of January," Chief Justice Gogoi told the advocates before moving on to the next listed case.

The Ayodhya appeals were previously heard by a combination of three judges.

The whole of this week is devoted to hearing miscellaneous matters after the court re-opened post the winter vacations. All the Benches are sitting in combinations of

two judges this week. The court would continue to sit in two-judge combinations on miscellaneous days – Mondays and Fridays. This is one of the reforms intro-

**CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8**

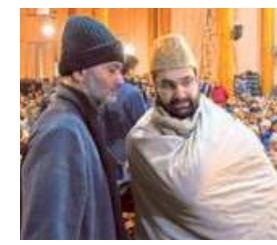
## Kashmir separatists warn youth against Islamic State

**Terror group plotting to hijack Kashmir struggle'**

**PEERZADA ASHIQ**  
SRINAGAR

Kashmir's top separatist leaders, including Syed Ali Geelani, Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, and Yasin Malik, in a joint address at Srinagar's Jamia Masjid on Friday asked the youth "not to get swayed by the Islamic State ideology."

Addressing a large number of devotees, who had



Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, right, and Yasin Malik at Jamia Masjid. ■ NISSAR AHMAD

congregated to condemn last Friday's bid by masked youth to unfurl the IS flag in the mosque, Mr. Geelani and the Mirwaiz described the

incident as "a plot to link Kashmir's struggle with terrorism and global agenda."

"Any effort to weaken this movement by diverting its course and linking it to some global agenda is unacceptable..." the Mirwaiz said.

Mr. Geelani, who delivered his speech over the phone, said the incident was a brazen "attempt to link the struggle with global terror groups."

Mr. Malik said youth were welcome to meet the leaders with their ideas.

**'NO TALKS OFFER'** ▶ PAGE 9

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
GUWAHATI/IMPHAL

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Friday that his government would be atoning for the "wrong" done during Partition by getting the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2016, passed in Parliament.

Addressing a Vijay San-kalp Samavesha rally at Kalimpong in Silchar, he said the Centre was working hard to clear the Bill for safeguarding "all who had been victims of Partition".

**DETAILS ON ▶ PAGE 9**



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PRESS TRUST OF INDIA AGARTALA  
The Tripura government would seek a special package of ₹8,389.71 crore from the Centre for development of the State's indigenous people who constitute one-third of its population, a Minister said on Friday.  
The tribal people of the State remained backward as no previous government had taken any initiative for their development. Education Minister Ratan Lal Nath, also the Cabinet spokesperson, told reporters here.

"Our government asked all that State departments to make an overall estimate for tribal development. We have compiled the estimates made by the departments and decided to put forward the demand to the Central government," Mr. Nath said.  
We made a comprehensive package amounting to ₹8,389.71 crore for tribal welfare. The Council of Ministers passed the package and the same will be sent to the Centre for final approval. The package would be used for socio-economic, cultural and linguistic development of the indigenous people," the Minister said.

The BJP-IPFT government headed by Chief Minister Biplob Kumar Deb had taken the decision to seek the package at a meeting on Tuesday.



Tripura CM Biplob Kumar Deb

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## Tripura to seek ₹8,390-crore package for tribal welfare

Estimate cleared by State Council of Ministers on Tuesday

government," Mr. Nath said.  
We made a comprehensive package amounting to ₹8,389.71 crore for tribal welfare. The Council of Ministers passed the package and the same will be sent to the Centre for final approval. The package would be used for socio-economic, cultural and linguistic development of the indigenous people," the Minister said.

The BJP-IPFT government headed by Chief Minister Biplob Kumar Deb had taken the decision to seek the package at a meeting on Tuesday.

## Big cat on the run trapped after 4 days

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA SILIGURI

A leopard that had escaped from a safari park here on New Year's Day was captured on Friday, the park director said.

After the leopard, named Sachin, fled, the authorities set up around a dozen traps near the park and the big cat was found in one of them four days later, Bengal Safari Park director Rajendra Jakharia said.

The leopard is being taken back to its enclosure, forest officials said, adding that they are trying to figure out how the big cat escaped from the park.

## Graduate constables get probe powers

CORRESPONDENT CUTTACK

In order to improve the quality of probe and reduce pending cases in police stations, the Odisha police have assigned investigating powers to graduate constables, said State DGP R.K. Sharma on Friday.

The graduate constables will be given four to five weeks of institutional training and four to six weeks of field training on investigating procedures, maintenance of case diaries and filing of chargesheets, after which there will be a test for them to select IOs among constables.

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**Delhi Palam Today**  
18°C A cloudy morning will persist with moderate fog. Rain with strong gusty wind are likely.

**Delhi Palam Tomorrow**  
16°C Rain will occur at some places over the city. Pollution level may become poor.

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## IN BRIEF



**Don't hold functions during 'Maghi' fair: CM**

**CHANDIGARH**  
Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh on Friday appealed to all political parties not to hold any public function during the annual 'Maghi' fair at Sri Muktsar Sahib, in view of the sanctity of the occasion. PTI

**3 dead after car falls into gorge in Himachal**

**SHIMLA**  
Three persons died and another was injured when a car they were travelling in fell into a deep gorge in Himachal Pradesh's Chamba district, police said on Friday. The accident occurred near Chanju Chowk in Churah area on Thursday night. PTI

## Plaque with Chouhan's name defaced

Handiwork of Congress workers, alleges BJP; ruling party denies charge

### PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**BHOPAL**  
The plaque at a railway overbridge here bearing the name of former Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan was found defaced on Friday, triggering a protest by the BJP.

The main Opposition party alleged the defacement was the handiwork of Congress workers, a charge denied by the ruling party.

Unidentified persons threw paint over Mr. Chouhan's name on the plaque at the Vir Savarkar Railway Overbridge, which was dedicated to the public in April 2016 when he was the Chief Minister, police said, citing a complaint filed by the BJP.

BJP activists staged a protest at the bridge alleging Congress workers were involved in the act of defacement.



volved in the act of defacement.

"I submitted a complaint in the Habibganj Police Station after the protest at Savarkar Bridge. We have also cleaned the plaque.

"We don't believe in this kind of politics," said Surendra Nath Singh, Bhopal district unit BJP president.

**Retaliation warning**  
A police official said they are looking into the complaint. Mr. Singh, a former MLA, complained to the Congress for the incident and warned of a retaliation.

## HC reserves order on Lalu's bail petition

In multi-crore fodder scam cases

### PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**RANCHI**  
The Jharkhand High Court on Friday reserved judgment on the bail petition of RJD president Lalu Prasad in the multi-crore fodder scam cases.

After hearing arguments of the petitioner's lawyer as well that of the Central Bureau of Investigation, Justice Apareesh Kumar Singh reserved his order.

Earlier, on December 21 last, the Bench had deferred the hearing on Prasad's bail plea for January 4.

### In jail since Dec. 2017

The RJD chief is languishing in Ranchi jail since December 2017 after conviction in the multi-crore fodder scam cases.

Noted lawyer and Congress leader Kapil Sibal, representing Prasad, cited his bad health and also his need for distributing election symbol to candidates in the



capacity of being RJD president while seeking bail.

CBI's counsel Rajeev Kumar said Prasad should not be given regular bail and referred to denial of bail to him previously in the case related to Deogarh treasury.

He further said that Prasad is also being treated in custody and hence bail should not be given to him.

The RJD is an important component of the mahagathbandhan of Opposition parties in Bihar and Prasad's approval on seat-sharing holds significance.

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• LAJPAT NAGAR, 49, Main Ring Road, Adj. Haldi Ram, Near Moolchand Crossing

## Bareilly jail authorities want Atiq shifted

### PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**BAREILLY**  
Days after mafia-turned-politician Atiq Ahmed was shifted from Deoria jail to Bareilly jail, authorities at the prison here have sought his transfer somewhere else, citing security reasons.

District Magistrate Virendra Kumar Singh requested the State government to shift Atiq out of Bareilly jail, citing security reasons and "shortage of staff".

Atiq was shifted from Deoria jail to Bareilly jail on Monday after a businessman accused the ex-MP of getting him abducted and assaulting him inside the prison.

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## Little acts that can go a long way

**At** an alumni meet of the batch of 1959, Madhavan R., along with others, decided to support the deserving students of their alma mater, Madras Christian College Higher Secondary School.

Madhavan is a reader of and contributor to The Hindu and urges the boys to read the editorial every day.

He says their vocabulary and writing have become better since they started reading the paper.

"We discuss with the students about their aspirations and then guide them along, creating exposure and nudging them to seek and learn. I keep looking out for opportunities to help mould their experience and we reimburse their travel costs as well," says Madhavan.

When on a chat with some of their students, they express a sense of gratitude, relief and sheer admiration for their seniors from the Batch of 1959.

"We nurture them like our very own children. In the past few years, I have distinctly seen a difference in them, their confidence levels have peaked," says Madhavan. The current students are determined to take the reins and sponsor students, when their time comes.

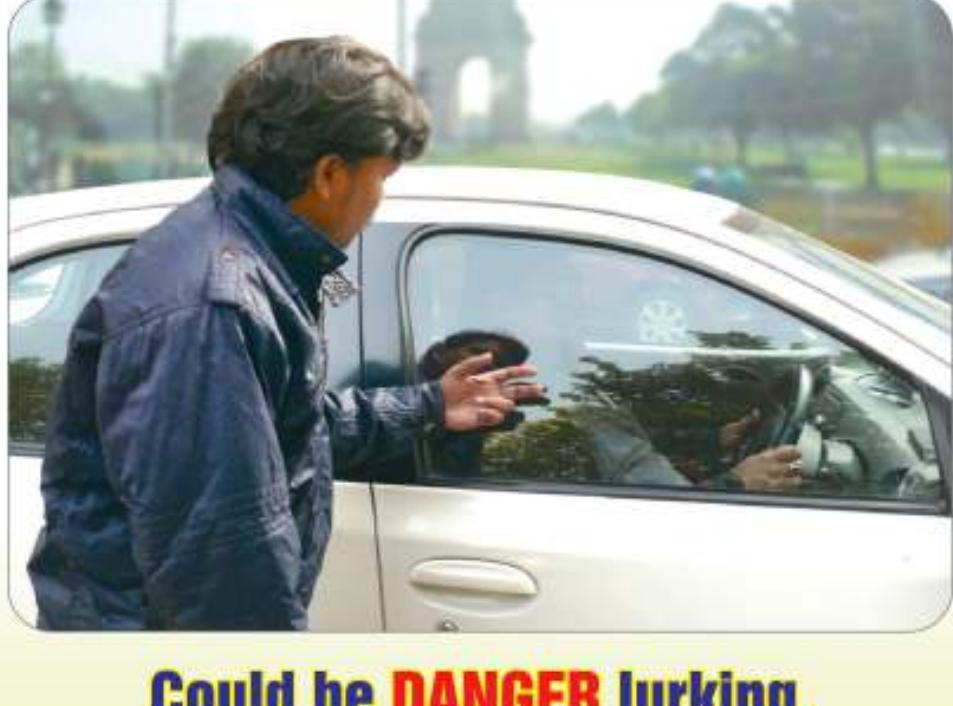
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**That STRANGER knocking**



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Page 21/03/13000019



## IN BRIEF



## Air India's special flights for Kumbh Mela

**NEW DELHI**  
Air India has announced additional flights to Allahabad from Delhi, Ahmedabad and Kolkata for the Kumbh Mela. The special flights will be operated from January 13 to March 30. The Ardh Kumbh Mela is scheduled from January 14 to March 3.

## Manipur-tagged falcon goes off radar in Africa

**GUWAHATI**  
An Amur falcon satellite-tagged in Manipur fell off the radar in Africa, dashing the hopes of wildlife specialists to track the bird on its return flight back to India via Siberia. The raptor named Tamenglong stopped transmitting its location on December 14 from Zambia.

## All India Radio national channel to be shut down

**NEW DELHI**  
Public broadcaster Prasar Bharati has decided to close down All India Radio's national channel and its regional training academies in five cities as part of "cost-cutting measures". The programme, technical, ministerial and other staff posted at National Channel in Todapur and Nagpur may now be posted as per the requirement of the organisation. PTI

## I-T search on Kannada film personalities still on

**BENGALURU**  
Search and seizure operations by the I-T Department against eight persons of the Kannada film industry – four star actors, three producers, and a distributor – that began on Thursday morning was yet to conclude till late on Friday. Sources said the search operations at all 28 premises was expected to end on Saturday.

## Open defecation continues unabated

'Open defecation levels are still above 40% in ODF States; Swachh Bharat has not brought behavioural change'

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

**NEW DELHI**  
New research on the impact of the Swachh Bharat Mission in the rural parts of four northern States shows that while open defecation has fallen and toilet ownership has increased, the percentage of people who owned toilets but continued to defecate in the open has remained unchanged between 2014 and 2018.

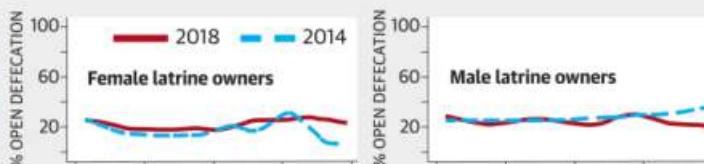
This indicates that the Mission has been more successful at toilet construction than at driving behaviour change, according to the authors of the study, being released by the research institute for compassionate economics (r.i.c.e.) and the Accountability Initiative of the Centre for Policy Research next week.

A working paper released on Friday shows that approximately 44% of people over two years old in rural Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh still defecate in the open. This finding is based on a late 2018 survey, which covered 9812 people in these states. The researchers visited the same areas and families which who participated in a similar June 2014 survey which had showed that 70% of people then defecated in the open.



## Out in the open

Despite the construction of toilets, people in rural areas in Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh continued the practice of open defecation, a research paper found. Behavioural change is key to achieving zero open defecation, the study argues



Despite the availability of a toilet at home, close to 25% defecated in the open in 2014. This proportion stayed the same even in 2018. Young women prefer to use toilets more while older men prefer defecating in the open

SOURCE: CHANGES IN OPEN DEFECATION IN RURAL NORTH INDIA: 2014 - 2018, AASHISH GUPTA ET AL.

Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh still defecate in the open. This finding is based on a late 2018 survey, which covered 9812 people in these states. The researchers visited the same areas and families which who participated in a similar June 2014 survey which had showed that 70% of people then defecated in the open.

The 2014 survey took place before the launch of the government's flagship Swachh Bharat Mission which aims to eliminate open defecation across the country by October 2, 2019. According to the Mission, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan are already open defecation free or ODF states. Bihar has achieved 98.97%

coverage of toilets for every household, while Uttar Pradesh has achieved 100%, according to government data, although the state has yet to be declared ODF.

The working paper confirms that the Mission has driven toilet construction, although its findings are more modest than government claims. Almost 60% of

latrines

coverage of toilets for every household, while Uttar Pradesh has achieved 100%, according to government data, although the state has yet to be declared ODF.

The working paper confirms that the Mission has driven toilet construction, although its findings are more modest than government claims. Almost 60% of

households covered by the survey which did not have a toilet in 2014 had one by 2018, said the study.

One major statistic, however, has remained unchanged since 2014: the fraction of people who own a toilet, but who nevertheless defecate in the open remains at about 23%.

"We find that nearly the entire change in open defecation between 2014 and 2018 comes from increases in latrine ownership, rather than from changes in behaviour (that is, differences in the proportion of owners and non-owners who defecate in the open)," said the working paper. "This finding is consistent with our qualitative interviews, which found that local officials were far more likely to stress latrine construction as a priority of the SBM than they were to stress use of latrines."

lets in excellent condition."

These are the first cities to qualify under the government's new extended protocol to sustain gains made under the basic ODF protocol, he stated. 12 other cities are being assessed, while 533 cities have applied for the certification.

## Annual survey

He was speaking on the sidelines of the launch of Swachh Survekshan 2019, the Mission's annual cleanliness survey which will rank 4237 cities and towns on their sanitation efforts on the basis of third-party surveys as well as citizen feedback.

The Urban Affairs Ministry is setting up a sub-mission on faecal sludge management under its AMRUT scheme for 500 cities and towns, said Secretary Durga Shanker Mishra.

## Precarious family milieu forces children to homes'

Survey of 9,589 shelters across nation found more than a lakh inmates are from single parent homes

## On their OWN

Of the 3,77,649 children surveyed by the Ministry of Women and Child Development, a majority belong to single parents

Category of children	Number
In juvenile homes	3,77,649
Of single parent	1,20,118
Orphan	41,730
Abandoned	7,677
Surrendered	6,791
Sexually abused	1,575
Victim of child pornography	189
Trafficked for commercial sexual exploitation	489
Victim of child marriage	469
Homeless	8,573
Runaway/missing	3,780
Mentally challenged	10,794
Physically challenged	9,040

## JAGRITI CHANDRA

**NEW DELHI**

Most children at childcare institutions are not orphans, but belong to family structures that are unable to look after them such as those that are headed by unwed mothers, abandoned wives, widows and in some cases single fathers, shows a pan-India study conducted under this aegis of the Women and Child Development Ministry.

The study records a total of 9,589 shelters across the country. These include shelters for children who are in need of care and protection such as those who don't have

a home or parents as well as children in conflict with law or those who have been accused of or found to have committed a crime. The survey found more than 3.7 lakh children housed at these centres.

## Presented to SC

The report, *Mapping of Child Care Institutions under the Juvenile Justice Act, 2015*, was conducted by Chidline India Foundation and the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR), has now been made public by the Ministry.

According to the report, children of single parents

constituted a third of the total number of total children in homes, accounting for 1,20,118 children. This number is more than double that of children orphaned, abandoned and those surrendered by their parents at 41,730, 7,677 and 6,791 respectively.

"Single parents could be a wide gamut of caregivers including unwed mothers, abandoned wives and widows and even single fathers. We have seen that daily wage labourers, domestic workers place their children in homes for their safety and education," said Harleen Walia of Chidline India.

Also. There is no check on injection of pollutants in the groundwater in the impugned notification."

Taking into account the Ministry's suggestion of levying a water conservation fee, it said, "The fee virtually gives licence to harness groundwater to any extent."

The NGT directed the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change to constitute a committee to examine "the issue of appropriate policy for conservation of groundwater".

## NGT stays notification on groundwater

Tribunal calls Dec. 12 fiat 'unsustainable'

## SHINJINI GHOSH

**NEW DELHI**

Terming a December 12 notification issued by the Union Water Resources Ministry on the extraction of groundwater, as "unsustainable," the National Green Tribunal (NGT) has asked the Centre to "not give effect" to it as it had "serious shortcomings."



The Tribunal came down heavily on the Water Resources Ministry.

also. There is no check on injection of pollutants in the groundwater in the impugned notification."

Taking into account the Ministry's suggestion of levying a water conservation fee, it said, "The fee virtually gives licence to harness groundwater to any extent."

Coming down heavily on the Ministry, the Bench said, "The so-called regulation is illusory. The so-called conditions are incapable of meaningful monitoring as shown by past experience."

## NGT imposes ₹100 cr. fine on Meghalaya

For violation of mining ban

## STAFF REPORTER

**NEW DELHI**

Following a report submitted by an independent committee constituted by the NGT in August last year.

"The report indicates that the April 2014 order has been blatantly violated. The acid mine discharge has been continuing and consequently water bodies have been polluted to an extent that it is not suitable for human consumption."

A Bench headed by NGT chairperson Justice Adarsh Kumar Goel directed the State government to deposit the amount with the Central Pollution Control Board within two months. The environmental compensation was levied on the State government based on a report

submitted by an independent committee constituted by the NGT in August last year.

"The report indicates that the April 2014 order has been blatantly violated. The acid mine discharge has been continuing and consequently water bodies have been polluted to an extent that it is not suitable for human consumption."

The compensation has been levied based on the environmental loss owing to this," said advocate Raj Panjwani, the amicus to the matter.

Jamia Hamdard Residential Coaching Academy (JHRCA) for Minorities/SC/ST & Women JAMIA HAMDARD (Deemed to be University) Hamdard Nagar, New Delhi-110062 Applications are invited from UPSC-Civil Services Mains Examinations, 2018 qualified candidates to attend Mock Interviews and counselling by reputed Bureaucrats and Academicians. Academy doesn't charge any fee for coaching and accommodation. Interested candidates may contact JHRCA Office at the earliest. Contact No.: 9958454319 & 9999309283 Office No. 011-26059688 Extrn. 5749 & 5760 The last date for submission of application form is 15th January 2019. Registrar

For further queries please contact:

Vice President (HR & Administration), Andhra Pradesh MedTech Zone Limited, AMTZ Campus, Pragati Maidan, New Delhi-110062, India. Tel: 011-26059688 Extrn. 5749 & 5760

For details visit: www.kiit.in

Advt. No. 29/2018 (No.NIRDPR/CP/R/AKB/100+/TATATRUST/2018)

SD/- Assistant Registrar(E)

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT & PANCHAYATI RAJ (Ministry of Rural Development, Govt. of India) Rajendranagar, Hyderabad - 500030 WALK - IN - INTERVIEW ON 10.01.2019 NIRDPR is an apex organisation for training and research on Rural Development & Panchayati Raj. It also functions as think tank for the Ministries of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj in policy advocacy. For contractual engagement of Programme Coordinators (vacancies) in the 100+ Panchayat Clusters Development Programme, NIRDPR invites suitable candidates having the required competencies and experiences for a Walk-in Interview to be held at NIRDPR, Hyderabad on 10.01.2019 from 11.00 AM onwards. Corresponding job descriptions are available on website www.nirdpr.in

For further queries please contact:

Vice President (HR & Administration), Andhra Pradesh MedTech Zone Limited, AMTZ Campus, Pragati Maidan, New Delhi-110062, India. Tel: 011-26059688 Extrn. 5749 & 5760

For details visit: www.nird.org.in

Advt. No. 29/2018 (No.NIRDPR/CP/R/AKB/100+/TATATRUST/2018)

SD/- Assistant Registrar(E)

## Ramnath Goenka award for The Hindu scribe

For excellence in investigative reporting

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

**CHENNAI**  
S. Vijay Kumar, Senior Deputy Editor with *The Hindu* in Chennai was on Friday presented the Ramnath Goenka Excellence in Journalism Award for Investigative Reporting (Print category).

Instituted by the Ramnath Goenka Memorial Foundation, the award was presented by Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh at a ceremony in New Delhi.

The award for Investigative Reporting went to Brajesh Rajput of ABP News Network and Sushant Kumar Singh of the *Indian Express*.

The awards were presented to 29 journalists across India in various categories.

S. Vijay Kumar of *The Hindu* with the award in New Delhi.

• SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Ashok Acharya both with *LokSatta* (*print*), bagged the awards in the Regional Languages category.

The award in the Environmental Reporting category were presented to Sushil Chandra Bahuguna of *NDTV* and Sandhya Ravishankar of the online magazine *The Wire*.

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## 6 EDITORIAL



## A global slowdown?

Policymakers will have to bust recessionary fears with more than just monetary policy

**S**tock markets across the world had very little reason to celebrate in 2018. They witnessed the return of extreme volatility after many years, and most of them recorded their worst performance in a decade. Much of this gloom has to do with the rise in fears that global economic growth could come to a grinding halt in the near future. The economic expansion in the United States, which began after the 2008 recession, is now the second-longest in history. Many believe that a recession is overdue now. China is another major concern as the People's Bank of China's earlier moves to rein in a massive credit-fuelled bubble have been dampening momentum with a lagged effect. The country's private manufacturing sector contracted in December for the first time in 19 months and the official manufacturing PMI (purchasing managers' index) number dropped below 50 for the first time since mid-2016. Other major economies such as Europe and Japan have also shown signs of a potential slowdown in growth. Global stocks have been pricing in these very real risks, particularly with major central banks such as the U.S. Federal Reserve and the European Central Bank remaining on the path to normalise interest rates from near-historic lows. The steep fall in the price of oil is another indicator of faltering demand for commodities as the global economy cools down. The tightening of monetary policy has often been followed by a slowdown in economic growth, and this time may be no different.

Going forward, a major worry for policymakers globally will be the lack of sufficient central bank firepower should the global economy move into a full-fledged recession in 2019. After years of adopting a monetary policy regime marked by near-zero interest rates, central banks like the Fed now have very little room to lower rates if they want to fight a recession. This is despite the gradual tightening of rates and unwinding of asset purchases in the last few years. The next recession may thus witness central banks adopting even more unconventional methods to stimulate their economies. Some hope that governments will ramp up spending to compensate for the lack of monetary policy leeway. But it is unlikely that any fiscal stimulus will fully compensate for the absence of an accommodative monetary policy, particularly when most governments are already deeply mired in debt. Further, the overuse of monetary policy will eventually lead to diminishing returns. A further escalation in the trade war between the U.S. and China is another imminent risk to global growth as additional tariffs could increase the overall tax burden on the economy. In order to tackle the next recession, policymakers will have to come up with reforms to boost economic productivity, instead of just relying on an ultra-easy monetary policy to boost their economies.

## Left out, abused

The shocking neglect of child care institutions must be urgently reversed

**C**hild care institutions in India have been trapped in an administrative blind spot, as revelations of the sexual abuse of inmates in a *balika grih* at Muzaffarpur in Bihar showed last year. A home meant to protect girls rescued from exploitation itself turned into a den of predation. The shocking rot in the management of such shelters has now been reported by a Central government committee. It studied 9,589 Child Care Institutions and Homes, mostly run by NGOs, that come under the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act. Only an emergency measure to address the serious lacunae can bring some semblance of order to these faceless shelters. Most of the inmates are orphaned, abandoned, sexually abused, trafficked or victims of disasters and conflict. Among them are 7,422 children in conflict with the law, and 3,70,227 in need of care and protection, including 1,70,375 girls. That they often have to live in facilities without proper toilets, secure compounds or the opportunity to vent their grievances as provided for under law underscores the painful reality that they remain virtually invisible. Reform of this depressing system, as the Ministry of Women and Child Development seeks, can be achieved only through systematic scrutiny by State governments. This could be done by appointing special officers whose task it would be to ensure that all institutions register under the JJ Act, account for funds received by each, and enforce mandatory child protection policies during adoption.

As per the recently disclosed study, only 32% of Child Care Institutions or Homes were registered under the JJ Act as of 2016, while an equal number were unregistered, and the rest were either empanelled under other schemes or awaiting registration. The priority should be to bring about uniformity of standards and procedures, evolving common norms for infrastructure, human resources, financial practices and external audits. The panel found child care standards were poor in many institutions, sans proper bedding, food and nutrition and sanitation. Some States obviously have too few homes, giving authorities little incentive to take up cases of children in distress. Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra and Kerala together account for 43.5% of all shelters. A few States do not have even one home of every category, such as child care, observation and adoption. The Ministry's study lays bare the disconnect between civil society and the welfare system for children, and the poor engagement elected representatives have with such a vital function. The imperative now is to turn the findings of the Ministry's committee into a blueprint for action. Credentialed NGOs should take a greater interest in this effort, holding the authorities to account.

## After the inevitable exit

India must be prepared for the potential consequences of withdrawal of American troops from Afghanistan



SUHASINI HAIDER

**D**espite the White House's spirited denial of reports that it has issued no orders for the pullout of U.S. troops, the course seems set for a thinning of American presence in Afghanistan. U.S. President Donald Trump had promised this during his campaign, and several advisers have said since then that he is keen to bring back most, if not all, troops before his re-election bid in 2020. If anything, Mr. Trump's ill-judged remarks this week only underline his desire to leave: he suggested that regional players like Russia, India and Pakistan should be more involved in stabilising the situation, and mocked India for not doing enough.

As a result, the U.S. war in Afghanistan, which began as revenge for the 9/11 attacks, evolved into a mission for ensuring democracy and prosperity in Afghanistan. In recent years, challenged by the resurgence of the Taliban, it has now become a mission mainly to ensure an honourable exit. This isn't the first time the U.S. has sought to do this: President Barack Obama had faced similar challenges in 2010, just before he announced the big drawdown. As Mr. Trump now moves to cutting American presence to a few well-guarded military bases, India must consider the consequences closely.

## Shift in policy

To begin with, it is time to recognise that the U.S.'s South Asia Strategy for Afghanistan, as an-

nounced by Mr. Trump in August 2017, has been discarded. Mr. Trump had defined the strategy with three features: that U.S. troops would remain involved in the country until "conditions", not a timeline, mandated their return; that the U.S. would put Pakistan on notice for its support to the Taliban and a political settlement with the Taliban would only follow "after an effective military effort"; and that the policy would hinge on further developing the strategic partnership with India

Sixteen months later, it is easy to see that each element of the U.S.'s policy on the ground has shifted, if not entirely reversed. The appointment of special envoy Zalmay Khalilzad in September to lead talks with the Taliban after a particularly brutal year shows that the U.S. is no longer waiting for military operations to take effect. According to the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction report to the U.S. Congress, casualties of Afghan National and Defence Security Forces in May-September 2018 were the "greatest it has ever been" compared to corresponding periods since 2001, and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan "documented more civilian deaths in the first nine months of 2018 than they had during the same nine-month reporting period since 2014".

Mr. Khalilzad's direct talks with the Taliban that cut out the National Unity government (NUG) in Kabul reportedly didn't even have President Ashraf Ghani in the loop until after the first talks were held in Qatar – this reversed the previous U.S. position not to engage the Taliban until it engages the NUG. Far from the tough talk on Pakistan for support to the Taliban, Mr. Trump wrote a letter to



Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan thanking him for his efforts. Afghanistan's High Peace Council members also disclosed that Mr. Khalilzad was on a deadline: Mr. Trump has reportedly given him six months to show results with the talks process, failing which the pullout may be speeded up.

The departure from the avowed U.S. position on an "Afghan-owned, Afghan-led" process has clearly ruffled feathers in Kabul. In December, Mr. Ghani appointed two aides of former President Hamid Karzai known for their hardline position on the Taliban and Pakistan as his Defence and Interior Ministers. Putting the seal on the clear drift in the U.S. Afghanistan and South Asia policy from the past was the exit of Defence Secretary James Mattis, author of the South Asia policy. Mr. Mattis had pushed most strenuously to keep India in the Afghan game by swinging a waiver for India on Chabahar and Iran oil purchases. It remains to be seen whether Mr. Trump will continue those waivers past May this year.

The internal situation in Afghanistan is aggravated now by the uncertainty of the democratic process. Parliamentary elections were held in October after being delayed by more than two years,

but even their preliminary results haven't yet been declared, casting doubt on the government's ability to conduct elections. Presidential elections have been postponed till July, despite the constitutional clause that they were to be completed by April 22, 2019. Meanwhile, Mr. Ghani has been unable to keep his commitment to hold a Loya Jirga (grand council of representatives) to turn Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah's post in the NUG into an executive Prime Ministership.

## A pragmatic view

For India, these developments may appear discouraging, but a more pragmatic view is necessary to deal with all possible outcomes. The U.S.'s eventual pullout as Afghanistan's peacekeeper is inevitable, and it would make more sense to prepare for it than to deny it will happen. New Delhi was caught off guard in 2010 when Mr. Obama planned the drawdown and discouraged India from a stake in projects there in an effort to placate Pakistan.

Mr. Trump's administration has no doubt been much more welcoming of Indian investment in Afghanistan, but that itself is symptomatic of his desire to pare down "Pax Americana" in every part of the world. The removal or reduction of the U.S. presence from most theatres of action has created space for regional players: leaving Syria to Iran and its allies; Yemen to Saudi Arabia; Afghanistan to players like Russia, Pakistan and Iran; and Pakistan to China.

Some other hard truths must be faced: India cannot replace Pakistan's position geographically, nor can it ever offer the U.S. or any other force what Pakistan has offered in the past, including bases and permission for U.S. forces to

bomb its own territory. The decision to abandon the SAARC in favour of groupings like BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation), BBIN (Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal) and IORA (Indian Ocean Rim Association) may have provided some short-lived returns in "isolating Pakistan", but it has had the effect of cutting Afghanistan loose from Indian leadership of South Asia as well. India's best course with Afghanistan remains its own regional strategy, not becoming a part of any other country's strategy. Close bilateral consultations like this week's visit to Delhi of National Security Advisor Hamdullah Mohib may not always yield dramatic headlines, but are the basis of India's ability to help Afghanistan according to its needs, not India's ambitions, and the reason for the immense popularity and goodwill India continues to enjoy in Afghanistan.

Finally, it is necessary to recognise the cyclical nature of interventions in Afghanistan, which has been called the "graveyard of empires" for forcing all world powers to retreat at some point or the other. The words of Rev. George Gleig, a soldier who survived the First Anglo-Afghan War (1839-42), are worth remembering: "A war begun for no wise purpose, carried on with a strange mixture of rashness and timidity, brought to a close after suffering and disaster, without much glory attached either to the government which directed, or the great body of troops which waged it."

Greig's description of the British retreat could ring true for Soviet forces in the 1980s, and American forces post-9/11 as well.

suhasini.h@thehindu.co.in

## The Hindutva overhang

The BJP's loss in the recent Assembly elections is not enough to merit cheer about India's secularism



SHAIKH MUJIBUR REHMAN

**D**espite the loss of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in three Hindi heartland States – Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Chhattisgarh – there is little to cheer for India's secularism. Looking at the campaign and manifestos of the two national parties, it is apparent that the campaign framework was generally defined more by competitive Hindutva. Let there be no illusion: the mere electoral defeat of the BJP does not mark the end of Hindutva as such, not even its retreat. Given the hegemonic position that the BJP has established at present, even a defeat in 2019 could be only a transitory retreat. Given that the difference in vote share between the BJP and the Congress was so small in Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh, the BJP could easily return to power after the next Assembly elections with even mild anti-incumbency.

In the early 1980s, economist Pranab Bardhan described the Indian state as a patronage dispensing one, a formulation that remains valid even during India's liberalisation post-1991. With the dimming of the Modi wave on the electoral landscape, though it took longer than expected, the 2019 parliamentary election will likely be party-driven and, more specifically, candidate-centric. Thus, a candidate of any party with a profile to offer better patronage could have a higher chance of succeeding at the hustings, implying greater decentralised use of money and muscle power.

Some of the buzzwords of the 2014 campaign – such as the Gujarat model, 56-inch chest, or even Congress-mukt Bharat – will not dominate 2019. Indeed, talk of the Gujarat model has receded from the campaign vocabulary of Prime Minister Narendra Modi for quite some time now.

**Meaning of 'Congress-mukt'**  
Unfortunately, serious academic research on the Congress party is rather limited and has been far less compared to what we have on the BJP or the Left parties, or even the Aam Aadmi Party. The deeply



intertwined narrative of the Congress party with modern India has many complex layers. The fact that the Congress sometimes deviated sharply from its founding values was often felt by many of its stalwarts, both before and after the Gandhi family monopolised its leadership. Without trivialising heroic contributions made by non-Congress leaders, it would be fair to say that many of the dissenting Congress leaders often played stellar roles in leading movements against the Congress governments, so much so that they literally helped set up almost all the non-Congress governments till 2014.

Consider the role of former Congress leaders such as Chandra Shekhar and Morarji Desai in 1977;

V.P. Singh in 1989; I.K. Gujral and even P. Chidambaram from 1996 to 98; or Mamata Banerjee as part of the Vajpayee-led National Democratic Alliance in 1999. Regardless of our view on the Congress party, any dispassionate and objective study calls for critical scrutiny of the centrality of the Congress party's role in the making and un-making of modern India. But Mr. Modi's clarion call to make India Congress-mukt, without doubt, has been ideologically inspired and can be traced to the Hindu Right's ambition in the 1920s to build a Hindu Rashtra. To say that such a call by Mr. Modi is mainly inspired by the Gandhi family's misrule would be a gross misreading of the ideological evolution of India's political history.

## Targeting minorities

On Muslim representation, the story is not particularly inspiring either. The BJP fielded only one Muslim candidate each in Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan, and both lost. The Congress fielded 15 in Rajasthan, out of whom seven won. In the Madhya Pradesh Assembly, there are only two Muslim MLAs.

Mob lynchings is perhaps the most pernicious consequence of

the growing aggression of Hindutva politics since 2014, and the pattern it has set poses the most mortal threat to India's secular fabric. Yet, lynching barely figured as an issue of secularism during the campaign in the recent Assembly elections – although India's first 'Cow Minister' in Rajasthan, Otaran Dewasi of the BJP, lost to an independent candidate.

## The secular test

From Dadri in 2015 to Bulandshahr in 2018, a new trend has appeared, representing the changing face of violence against Muslims, in which victims are presented as perpetrators and the latter often enjoy the active state patronage. The end of state complicity in perpetuating violence and harassment against Muslims is the least that could be expected from the newly installed Congress regimes in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh. Those who wish to play the secular card in 2019 must recognise that they need to promise a lynch-free India to begin with.

Shaikh Mujibur Rehman teaches at Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi, and has edited the recent book 'Rise of Saffron Power'

## 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.

## Women in Sabarimala

The entry of three women into the Sabarimala temple is as far-reaching a change as the Chamar revolt that won Nadar women the right to wear upper-body clothes and the consecration of a Shiva temple at Aruvippuram by Sri Narayana Guru ("Breaking barriers", Jan. 4). It is clear from the protests that it is not the male Ayyappa devotees who are against the judgment; it is those who are trying to foment unrest in a bid to gain some relevance in Kerala politics. What is shameful is that the Congress in Kerala has become the mirror image of the BJP and is making common cause with the latter to perpetuate a discriminatory custom.

G. DAVID MILTON,  
Maruthancode

are seen as polluting and impure. It is shameful that menstruation is seen as impure when it is a natural occurrence. Archaic practices and beliefs cannot continue in the name of tradition.

SANGEETA KAMPAANI,  
New Delhi

By entering the temple, the women have hurt the faith of millions of devotees. If they were true devotees, they would not have done something against a long-standing tradition and in such a furtive manner. Their act shows not devotion but a dogged determination to simply break tradition.

M. PRADYU,  
Kannur

The fact that there were purification rituals after the women entered the temple clearly shows that women

confuse the public; they are not outside of the law.

A.G. RAJMOHAN,  
Anantapur

I wonder what would have happened if Muslims had protested against a court order in the manner that is happening in Kerala. They would have probably been branded as 'lawless' and 'enemies of the state'. The Prime Minister says Sabarimala is about tradition and triple talaq is about gender equality. The government and the courts should either look into the question of gender equality in all religions (in which case laws and judgments should be respected by all) or wait for social reform to unfold on its own.

Z. RAHMANI,  
Delhi

If the verdict of the court does not appeal to a group of people, they should take the legal route to question it, not resort to violence. And priests cannot take political decisions and

Constitution and a Supreme Court, priests decide what is the correct thing to do. This is a country where goddesses are venerated; yet, when women enter a temple, people want to rid it of "impurities".

SHUBHAM YADAV,  
Lucknow

What was the need for the government to implement the court order in such an emotionally charged atmosphere? It could have asked for time. Given that Kerala is recovering from the terrible floods of last year, there was anyway little time to make security arrangements.

VISWANATHAN P.K.,  
Palakkad

Judicial overreach is what has led to the distressing situation in Sabarimala. The matter is one of faith, not of a constitutional right. The court should not have taken up this case. There have been many instances of

judicial overreach recently, notable among them being the ban on fireworks last Deepavali. Instead of taking up cases like Sabarimala and the cracker ban, the court should concentrate on resolving the cases already at hand.

S. KAMAT,  
Santa Cruz

**Trump mocks India**  
It is typical of U.S. President Donald Trump, an anti-intellectual preoccupied with military might as a means of shaping a better world, to mock the building of a library ("Trump's

remarks rejected by India", Jan. 4). It is in recognition of such a mindset that Nobel Laureate Malala Yousafzai requested world leaders to send books to war-torn countries like Afghanistan instead of guns. The Indian Prime Minister clearly responded to that call. Mr. Trump can't seem to think outside of the old militaristic paradigm. Hence, his infantile reaction to Mr. Modi's initiative.

RAJENDRA NAIDU,  
Sydney

**MORE LETTERS ONLINE:**  
[www.thehindu.com/opinion/letters/](http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/letters/)

**CORRECTIONS & CLARIFICATIONS:** A sentence in the Business page story headlined "Object of IBC paramount, says NCLT" (Jan. 4, 2019) read: "The original promoters of the beleaguered steel firm [Essar] had put in a higher bid after the last date was over. A day later, the CoC decided in ArcelorMittal's favour." Actually, in the evening of the same day on which the Essar bid was received, the CoC decided in ArcelorMittal's favour.

It is the policy of The Hindu to correct significant errors as soon as possible. Please specify the edition (place of publication), date and page. The Readers' Editor's office can be contacted by Telephone: +91-44-28418297/28576300 (11 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday to Friday); Fax: +91-44-28552633; E-mail: readerseditor@thehindu.co.in; Mail: Readers' Editor, The Hindu, Kasturi Buildings, 859 & 860 Anna Salai, Chennai 600 0



"Far from accepting responsibility and offering help, the government and the corporation left the workers who were suffering from silicosis to fend for themselves." The quartz mines near Elkatta in Telangana's Ranga Reddy district where the workers were employed. (Below) The women whose husbands died from silicosis narrate their stories. ■ K.V.S. GIRI

## Telangana's 'villages of widows'

In the 1970s, hundreds of women from Mahbubnagar's villages lost their husbands to silicosis, an occupational hazard in quartz mines that could have been prevented if safety protocols had been followed. Even after four decades, justice remains a distant dream for the affected families, reports **K. Venkateshwarlu**

If only someone could read them, the wrinkles on Narsamma's face would tell an epic tale of agony and tragedy spanning four decades. Narsamma was a teenager when she married Chandramouli in the 1970s. What decided the match, as was the trend in those days, was his job in a public sector undertaking – at a quartz-mining and crushing factory of the Andhra Pradesh Mineral Development Corporation (APMDC) at Elkatta, a dusty village, 5 km from Shadnagar, in Telangana's Ranga Reddy district (earlier in Mahbubnagar district).

For the first four years, things went smoothly for the couple. They had a baby boy in 1980. Narsamma's relatives envied her good fortune: she was married to a man with a secure job and a good salary. For the people in this drought-hit district, mining quartz promised jobs and prosperity.

But soon things began to go downhill. In 1981, Chandramouli returned home one night with a persistent cough. "Initially, we dismissed it as common cold," Narsamma says. "But his cough worsened, and he found it difficult to breathe. We took him to a private doctor in Shadnagar, and then to a big hospital in Hyderabad. We ran from pillar to post in search of a cure. Some said that he had tuberculosis (TB). We mortgaged the house to pay for his treatment and ran up huge debts. But we could not save him."

There are many stories like Narsamma's in Elkatta, Rangampally, Chowlapally, Kamsanipally and Peerlaguda villages in Ranga Reddy district. These places are known locally as "villages of widows", as most of the women there have lost their spouses to silicosis. All of them belong to poor Scheduled Tribe, Scheduled Caste, Backward Class, or minority communities.

**The mystery illness**  
Silicosis, an incurable disease, remained shrouded in mystery for a long time due to misdiagnosis and the delayed manifestation of symptoms. The locals called it "guttala bimari", or "the disease from the hills". The APMDC, now known as the Telangana State Mineral Development Corporation (TSMDC), ran the mines from 1965 to 1974, and then shut them down abruptly when they saw that the workers were succumbing en masse to silicosis.

But until the shutdown, whenever a worker fell sick, he was simply told that his cough was a temporary phenomenon and that he would get better. The workers were not told that they were victims of silicosis. Instead of being given proper medical treatment, they were given pieces of jaggery as some kind of an antidote.

According to the villagers, around 350 workers were employed in the mines and the crushing unit, and a majority of them were exposed to silica dust. The technologies of mining and crushing, the working conditions, and the safety protocols in the early 1970s were so primitive that most of the workers were exposed to heavy doses of silica dust on a daily basis. Quartz was mined at Chowlapally and brought to

the crushing unit at Elkatta, where it was heated to 1,000°C in a kiln, broken into smaller pieces, and turned into fine dust in an oblong closed shed.

This shed proved to be a virtual death trap, as the workers kept inhaling the odourless silica dust that gave them a racking cough and led to shortness of breath. Over 100 employees were involved in this crushing process in each of the three shifts daily. When they fell sick, the women rushed them from one hospital to another, fighting against a disease that would soon turn into an unending battle for compensation.

### Suppressing the truth

Far from accepting responsibility and offering help, the government and the corporation left the workers to fend for themselves. The authorities quietly abandoned the quartz-mining and crushing activities in 1974 though the mining lease was valid till 1985 and the mineral was available in abundance.

When they realised that the health of the workers was deteriorating, instead of acknowledging the toxicity of the workplace as the issue, the corporation told the workers that operating the mine had become uneconomical. The workers were laid off in batches and paid paltry amounts instead of the full compensation and severance package that would have been their due had the legal process of closure been followed.

"Clearly, this was done to avoid the liabilities under Section 25-O of the Industrial Disputes Act of 1947 and Section 6 of the Metalliferous Mines Regulations, 1961 (which mandates that the mine owner should submit a notice to the Chief or the Regional Inspector, stating reasons for abandoning the mine and the number of persons affected)," says M. Sambasiva Rao of the NGO, Banjara Development Society (BDS).

Perhaps because the APMDC was a government undertaking, the regulatory agencies under the Mines Act and the Factories Act looked the other way. Many even wonder if the unit had any of the other mandatory permissions apart from the mining lease. Whether in overseeing the operations, putting in place safety protocols, or taking care of the sick workers and their families, the APMDC's track record has been of consistent neglect and callousness.

For the stricken families, getting to the bottom of "guttala bimari" was itself quite a task. Exposure to large amounts of silica can go unnoticed as it is a non-irritant and does not cause any immediate health effects. The symptoms of silicosis – shortness of breath, cough, fever and bluish skin – show up only after prolonged exposure to silica dust, according to the World Health Organisation. "As silicosis is incurable, clinical management includes removing the worker from the industry and giving symptomatic treatment," the WHO says.

When the quartz mine workers who fell sick were taken to the local government hospitals, they were wrongly diagnosed as having TB and were referred to TB hospitals in Vikarabad and Hyderabad, 50 km away. As they continued to get treated for TB, there was no clinical



**C** "Our government negotiates nuclear liability clauses aggressively in international fora but doesn't care about domestic industrial disasters.

M. SAMBASIVA RAO  
Banjara Development Society, an NGO

management of silicosis. For years after the shutdown, workers kept dying of silicosis with no remedy in sight.

"The doctors were either clueless or deliberately suppressed the fact that the workers were suffering from silicosis," says Rao, who has been ferrying victims to hospital and fighting for their compensation for over two decades. "Our government negotiates nuclear liability clauses aggressively in international fora but doesn't care about domestic industrial disasters. It's been more than four decades since the quartz mine was abandoned and the workers died without proper care. But the families haven't got a single rupee as compensation despite approaching so many government bodies and regulatory agencies, including the APMDC, the Directorate General of Mines Safety, the Directorate of Factories, the Labour and Health departments, the National Human Rights Commission, Assembly, Parliament and the High Court. It is a total failure of governance."

### Saga of insensitivity

What emerges from a study of the chronology of the events is a sordid saga of bureaucratic red tape and insensitivity. To start with, no government agency was willing to recognise the disease as silicosis. This was despite the fact that two of the victims, G. Narayana and Chandramouli, who had privately ap-

proached a chest physician, Dr. Jaichandra, in Hyderabad in 1987, were certified as afflicted by silicosis.

A medical camp set up in 1991 in Mogiligidda village (near Elkatta) by Dr. Mahender Reddy, a private doctor, also confirmed silicosis among the workers. In 1993-94, a joint move by the BDS and Dr. R. Vijai Kumar, a pulmonologist at MediCiti, a private hospital in Hyderabad, revealed 69 cases of silica dust-induced illness among the workers, with 58 suffering from silicosis and 11 from silico-tuberculosis. By as late as 1994, Dr. Kumar remained the only doctor who agreed to give evidence before a government agency. But the government hospitals either vacillated or dismissed the cases as TB.

In 1991, five affected persons and their family members filed petitions before the Commissioner for Workmen's Compensation in Hyderabad. Two years later, they were referred to the Andhra Pradesh Chest Hospital for the checking of "past exposure and present morbidity and mortality". A committee formed for the purpose refused to give its view and passed the buck to the Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESI) hospital, Hyderabad. The ESI hospital, too, declined to get involved, on the grounds that mines are not covered by the ESI Act. The Commissioner for Workmen's Compensation then referred the matter to the National Institute of Occupational Health (NIOH), Bengaluru. But the NIOH too refused to take it up.

It is telling that the government's first efforts to medically examine the cases came a good two decades after the closure of the mines and the crushing unit. It was only on September 1, 1994 that the government of Andhra Pradesh issued a letter to the Andhra Pradesh Chest Hospital, after which the superintendent of the hospital held a medical camp in Shadnagar on "respiratory problems faced by people in these villages". The letter made no mention of silicosis. But even this late intervention turned out to be a non-starter as the critical equipment, a mobile X-ray unit, was "not available". Apparently, the Andhra Pradesh Chest Hospital authorities could not arrange for one to be brought from their hospital in Hyderabad to Shadnagar.

In response to a complaint filed by

the BDS and a Delhi-based NGO, Society for Participatory Research in Asia, the Director General of Mines Safety conducted an inquiry and seized the employment and other relevant records from the APMDC in 1995-96. But no action was taken though the Director General could have invoked Section 75 of the Mines Act to prosecute the APMDC.

After the BDS lobbied with some MLAs, the issue was raised in the Andhra Pradesh Assembly in 1997. The NGO ferried 54 workers from their villages to the Andhra Pradesh Chest Hospital in Hyderabad for a proper medical examination. But again there was no report.

In the absence of any succour from any of the government agencies, the victims, with the help of the BDS, petitioned some MPs. Responding to a question raised in the Lok Sabha in 1997, the Union Health Ministry released a note prepared by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR). The note blandly stated that a team of doctors from ICMR visited Hyderabad, Mahbubnagar and the office of the Mandal Revenue Officer, Shadnagar, from February 20 to 22, 1997.

The team's findings were baffling. First, it found that no cases of silicosis had been reported to the Director/Inspectorate of Factories. Second, it observed that though there may have been cases of deaths due to silicosis, no authentic records were available to establish this. These findings, however, fly in the face of a report from the Society for Participatory Research in Asia that was submitted to the ICMR team. The report, based on a house-to-house survey on deaths due to silicosis in select villages of Mahbubnagar district, stated that 136 people (85 men and 51 women) died from silicosis. Most of those who died were 40 to 49 years old.

A perusal of all the documents pertaining to these deaths leads to the conclusion that the ICMR team, instead of getting to the bottom of the causes behind the workers' deaths, simply washed its hands of the whole mess with a perfunctory note. This non-response remained the norm with nearly all the government agencies.

### Judicial intervention

Things began to move only after the issue was taken up by the National Human Rights Commission following a representation filed by the BDS in 1995. Five years after the petition was filed, the Commission issued a notice to the Chief Secretary of the Andhra Pradesh government, asking why no effort was made to find the cause of the illnesses and ameliorate the suffering of the victims. The government formed a committee under the leadership of Dr. K.J.R. Murthy, an expert in respiratory medicine, and ordered another round of tests on those willing to come to Hyderabad. The committee members examined 143 people in late 2000. Twenty-nine of them, including 11 women, were found to be suffering from silicosis. It was after this exercise that another silicosis victim, N. Sevia, died while returning to his village. Yet again, the entire exercise yielded nothing concrete for the

affected families – no compensation and not even an allowance for those taking care of the victims.

More than 20 years after the death of their husbands, the women of these villages were still to see a glimpse of either justice or compensation. Distracted, they then approached the Andhra Pradesh High Court in 2000. Helped by the BDS, three petitioners, including Narsamma, moved the court under Article 226 of the Constitution. The case was effectively argued by human rights activist K. Balagopal.

After more than a decade of litigation, the High Court converted the writ petition into a Public Interest Litigation on September 13, 2012, and passed the final order in February 2013. It directed the authorities, including the APMDC, to propose a scheme to safeguard the life and liberty of the persons suffering from silicosis. On March 5, 2013, the Advocate General, appearing on behalf of the APMDC, placed a scheme before the court. It entailed the APMDC agreeing to pay the silicosis-affected workers compensation as decided by the Compensation Commissioner under the Workmen's Compensation Act, 1923.

The High Court gave two weeks to the affected persons to obtain the necessary documents from the authorities and another two weeks for the latter to complete the task. Fully aware of how bureaucracies tend to function, the court noted, "If any help is required from the Revenue authorities by the persons who were affected, generosity shall be shown and shall be dealt with on humanitarian ground."

Another five years have passed since the court order. Only on December 19, 2018 did an official team of the TSMDC start a preliminary survey of the villages. While the visit has triggered hope among the families of the victims, there is also an unmistakable note of cynicism. What will they do after so many decades, the families wonder.

Their despondency is hardly surprising. The scheme submitted to the High Court is good but it again talks of submission of proof of employment and confirmation and verification of workers who suffered silicosis. The government and the TSMDC are still struggling to put together a list of victims and their families who are eligible for compensation. G. Deepthi, general manager, sales and marketing, TSMDC, however, says that the corporation would ensure that the families are compensated.

Rao has his doubts. He wonders how many of these poor families will have 40-year-old records and documents, given that the Director General of Safety had seized most of the employment-related records. "The authorities should show their human face and be generous in extending compensation instead of forcing the victims to again visit offices and hospitals seeking assorted documents to prove their misery," he says.

Will these families, devastated by a deadly combination of industrial callousness, medical tragedy and official neglect, ever find closure? "I am not sure," a weary Narsamma says. "Let's see if I find something in hand."



## FROM PAGE ONE

## 'Appropriate Bench' to hear Ayodhya case

The new phase in the Ayodhya case began after the Supreme Court, in a majority judgment, on September 27 last declined the plea made by Islamic bodies and individuals to refer the question as to whether prayer in a mosque is an essential part of Islam to a seven-judge Constitution Bench. The majority verdict, in its last paragraph, had further directed the Supreme Court to start hearing the pending from the week commencing October 29.

It was also found rather unusual for Justice Ashok Bhushan, a puisne judge on the previous Ayodhya Bench which delivered the September 27 verdict, to fix the date of hearing of the appeals as October 29. This should

have been ideally left to Chief Justice Gogoi, as the master of roster.

This direction in the September judgment also triggered questions whether the court intended to deliver a judgment in the appeals before the May 2019 election.

In 2017, when the court started hearing the appeals after a hiatus of over seven years, senior advocate Kapil Sibal suggested it to adjourn the hearings to a date after the Lok Sabha election.

The Ayodhya appeals have been filed against the September 30, 2010 decision of the Allahabad High Court to divide the disputed 2.77 acre area among Sunni Waqf Board, Nirmohi Akhara and the Ram Lalla.

## Rafale will bring Modi back, says Nirmala

The Minister accused the Congress of misleading the country and claimed that there had been "no deal" concluded during the UPA government's term.

The Opposition party was shedding "crocodile tears" for Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) and insulting Prime Minister Narendra Modi with a hug and a wink and by referring to her as a "liar", Ms. Sitharaman said.

She also said for every AA (a term coined by Mr. Gandhi to refer to industrialist Anil Ambani), there was an RV (a reference to Sonia Gandhi's son-in-law Robert Vadra) and a Q' during Congress governments.

An equally combative Mr. Gandhi – who sat through the debate – hit back and said he didn't blame Ms. Sitharaman or her predecessor, Manohar Parrikar, but only Mr. Modi, whom he accused of having committed a "bypass surgery" of defence procurement procedures.

Later, speaking to reporters outside Parliament, he accused the Defence Minister of running away and asserted that there would be a "criminal investigation into the deal once the government changes."

Earlier during her reply, Ms. Sitharaman countered

## Lokpal search panel set up, govt. tells SC

However, the government countered that the names were already published on the government website.

On July 24 last year, the Supreme Court had said the government's stand on completing the appointment of Lokpal, an ombudsman to protect the common man from corruption in public service and power centres, was "wholly unsatisfactory."

The court had then been reacting to an affidavit filed by the government, of which the stated aim was to specify the exact time frame by which it would appoint the Lokpal. Instead, the government had said the appointment was a "complicated" process.

The eight-page affidavit said the Selection Committee led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi had met on July 19 on the choice of a Search Committee for Lokpal. The Search Committee would prepare a panel of names for Lokpal.

On July 19, the selection panel had discussed that the Search Committee would comprise persons from expertise as diverse as anti-corruption policy, public

administration, insurance, banking, law and management, etc. Besides 50% of them should be drawn from SC/ST category, OBC, Minorities and women. The panel decided to discuss it further the next time it met at a convenient time.

The NGO had filed a contempt petition against the government for not appointing Lokpal despite an April 2017 judgment by the Supreme Court, and said the court should now take over and appoint the Lokpal.

The court has for the past several months been constantly urging the government to complete the Lokpal appointment.

Though passed in 2014, the Lokpal and Lokayukta Act of 2013 was not implemented all these years because there was no Leader of the Opposition (LoP) in the 16th Lok Sabha. The 2013 statute includes the LoP as a member of the selection committee. The Act intends the LoP to be part of the selection committee of the PM, the CJI and the Speaker, which has to first appoint an eminent jurist among their ranks.

## Maken quits as DPCC chief

– but the Congress is not in favour of discussing the same yet, the source said.

An AAP leader on the other hand claimed that the party was not willing to give up "important seats" such as East and North Delhi, deepening the gridlock.

(With PTI inputs)

## Ministry opposed new Rafale deal'

Congress leaders cite 'file notings' by officials against changes in terms of contract

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI



Raising the pitch: Congress leaders Ghulam Nabi Azad, Randeep Surjewala and Mallikarjun Kharge speaking to the media at Parliament in New Delhi on Friday. ■ SANDEEP SAXENA

Days after Congress president Rahul Gandhi had asked Prime Minister Narendra Modi to clarify whether or not Defence Ministry officials had objected to his government changing the terms of the contract in the Rafale deal, his party released what it claimed to be "file notings" objecting to the new deal".

Will the Prime Minister and the Defence Minister now disclose the full facts to Parliament, the Congress leaders asked. Only a joint parliamentary committee (JPC) can investigate the Rafale scam, Ghulam Nabi Azad, Mallikarjun Kharge and Randeep Surjewala told presspersons before the government's reply in Parliament.

They alleged Mr. Modi

brushed aside objections raised by the Defence and Law Ministries that cost the exchequer and compromised national security.

The Opposition party fielded the senior leaders to reiterate its demand for a JPC

investigation. "I am quoting their objections that said "No Advance and Performance Bank Guarantee has been obtained from Dassault Aviation and the advance payments made prior to delivery are not secured," read

out Mr. Surjewala from one of the "file notings".

The Congress leader said that another file noting related to performance maintenance of the deal.

"I quote again, 'the Maintenance Terms and Condi-

tions including Performance Based Guarantee (PBG) of 36 Rafale IGA was not better than that of 126 MMRCA bid," Mr. Surjewala said.

However, inside the Lok Sabha, the Defence Minister said performance maintenance of the NDA-negotiated deal was better than what the UPA regime had agreed to.

While Mr. Kharge raised these points in the Lok Sabha during the debate, former Finance Minister P. Chidambaram charged the BJP government with compromising national security.

"We charge the BJP government with compromising national security by buying only 36 aircraft when the Air Force's requirement was 126 aircraft. Why did the government not enter into a contract to buy 126 aircraft," said Mr. Chidambaram.

## LS passes Bill to amend Aadhaar Act

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI

The Lok Sabha on Friday passed a Bill to amend the Aadhaar Act and two related laws which will allow individuals to offer voluntarily biometric ID as a means of identity verification for obtaining services such as opening a bank account and getting a mobile phone connection.

The Aadhaar and Other Laws (Amendment) Bill also gives a minor the option to opt out of the 12-digit identity scheme on attaining the age of 18. It provides for stiff penalties for violation of norms set for the use of Aadhaar and bans service providers from storing core biometric information and Aadhaar number of individuals who voluntarily offer it as a means of authentication.

## 'Obsolete tech in EVMs deliberate'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
JAIPUR

Former Chief Election Commissioner O.P. Rawat said on Friday that the electronic voting machines (EVMS) used in India were not Internet-enabled as in developed countries, making them tamper-proof just like calculators. The use of this obsolete technology in the machines was deliberate.

Jharna Das Baidya of the CPI(M) said the BJP had absolute majority in the Lok Sabha but had not got the Bill passed. V. Thota Seetharama Lakshmi (TDP) said her party supported the legislation. Shanta Chhetri (Trinamool Congress) said her party had given third of the ticket to women in the 2014 Lok Sabha election. Vijila Sathyananth (AIADMK) urged the government to ensure the passage of the Bill, while Sonal Mansingh (nominated) said the rotational provision in the Bill needed detailing. Congress member Viplove Thakur said there cannot be women's empowerment until women become decision-makers.

## Women MPs push for quota

Urge government to ensure Lok Sabha passes Bill which is pending for 9 years

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI



Even in Parliament, in Assemblies, we pass Bills, we make laws, we amend laws and only men are making decisions for women. I think, it is absolutely unfair because our voices are not heard  
KANIMOZHI, Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam MP

The Rajya Sabha on Friday turned down a private member's resolution moved by DMK leader Tiruchi Siva, which sought legislation for the welfare of widows in the country.

The Opposition accused the government of being anti-women after the resolution was defeated through division of votes.

Earlier, Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs Vijay Goel requested Mr. Siva to withdraw the resolution stating that the government agreed with his suggestions. Not satisfied with the reply from the Minister of State for Child and Women Welfare, Virendra Kumar, on the steps taken, Mr. Siva insisted on moving the resolution. He said that as per Census 2011, India had over five crore widows.

Referring to the protests in Kerala regarding the entry of women into the Sabarimala temple, Kanimozi, Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam member, said there was discrimination against women in the country.

"When we look around – we don't have to go into the statistics – we can count the

number of women in both the Houses," Ms. Kanimozi said. "Even in Parliament, in the Legislative Assemblies, we pass Bills, we make laws, we amend laws and only men are making decisions for women. I think, it is absolutely unfair because our voices are not heard, our viewpoints are not heard. I request the government to do something in this regard.

It is in their election manifesto. It is a promise they have given to the nation and we are all there to support them to bring this Bill... We see what is happening in Sabarimala. I mean, there is so much discrimination against women in the country.

Women members spoke after Chairman M. Venkaiah Naidu allowed short submissions. He converted notices from some members for discussions into matters that could be raised during the Friday zero hour.

women in this country. So, to address that, I think, our voices should be heard and laws cannot be made without women," she said.

Women members spoke after Chairman M. Venkaiah Naidu allowed short submissions. He converted notices from some members for discussions into matters that could be raised during the Friday zero hour.

## SP's objections

Samajwadi Party MP Jaya Bachchan said her party was not against the Bill but wanted sub-reservation for Dalits. "Also parties should be given the right to choose the seats

## Data protection law finalised'

Government will soon introduce it in Parliament, says Ravi Shankar Prasad

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Union Minister for Electronics and IT Ravi Shankar Prasad told the Rajya Sabha on Friday that the government had finalised the data protection law and it would soon be introduced in Parliament.

Mr. Prasad said the government was in the process of finalising guidelines for social media intermediaries such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Google and WhatsApp.

The draft bill, which was released last year, had proposed that critical personal data of Indian citizens be processed in centres located within the country. It had al-

so proposed financial penalties for data processor for violations of the data protection law. Likening Google to the East India Company, BJP MP Rakesh Sinha said companies in the West have col-

lected data related to all aspects of the lives of Indians and this was a step in the direction of "neo-imperialism." Responding to this, Mr. Prasad said, "irrespective of

how big the company was, if they tried to manipulate the data of Indians, strict action would be initiated."

While responding to a question on hacking of data, Mr. Prasad said that as per the information provided by the Reserve Bank of India, a total of 1191, 1372, 2059 and 921 cases of frauds involving ATM/debit cards, credit cards and Internet banking frauds (amount involving ₹1 lakh and above) were reported during the years 2015-16, 2016-17, 2017-18 and 2018-19 (up to September 30, 2018) respectively.

"In comparison to the number of transactions, the number of fraud or data manipulation was minuscule," he said.

**BJD won't align with BJP or grand alliance, says MP**

Naveen to address Delhi rally, seeking higher MSP for paddy

PRISCILLA JEBARAJ  
NEW DELHI

The Biju Janata Dal (BJD) will maintain its neutrality in the run-up to the Lok Sabha election, aligning with neither the ruling NDA nor any Opposition alliance, party leaders reiterated on Friday, even while announcing a farmers' protest in the capital seeking a higher support price for paddy.

The accused, identified as Naeem, was arrested from Meerut on Thursday night, an NIA official said. He was brought to a city court on Friday and sent to 10-day police custody.

On December 26, the probe agency busted a suspected IS-inspired terror group, Harkat ul Harb e Islam, and arrested 10 men, including a 'mufti' from Amroha in Uttar Pradesh.



Naveen Patnaik

re [We will walk alone]," he said. "We are like one tongue between the teeth. We have to survive both sides," added Bhartruhari Mehtab, the party's floor leader in the Lok Sabha.

Accordingly, the party is holding a separate dharna to highlight the agrarian crisis, rather than joining in any similar protest. "We don't link farmers' issues to politics... Our demand for a minimum support price (MSP) of ₹2,930 a quintal for paddy is unique," said Prasanna Acharya, Rajya Sabha member and president of the party's farmers cell. The current MSP is ₹1,750.

BJD leader and Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik will address the rally to be held at the Talkatora Stadium here on January 8, along with all party MPs and MLAs.

## Telcos pay ₹58 lakh fine for call drops

Idea, BSNL among those penalised

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The feedback from subscribers is shared with the telecom service providers every week for taking corrective action. As a result, 85,000 individual cases have been resolved so far  
MANOJ SINHA, Telecom Minister



count in the country to about 20.07 lakh in November 2018. Additionally, about 9.59 lakh 2G/3G cells have been rectified or optimised during July 2016 to October 2018.

**Time-bound redressal**  
Also, to get direct feedback from subscribers, the Department of Telecommunications has launched an interactive voice response system wherein about 2.15 crore subscribers had been individually contacted since December 2016 of which 30.1 lakh subscribers had participated in the survey.

"The feedback is shared with the TSPs (telecom service providers) every week for taking corrective actions in a time-bound manner. As a result, about 85,000 individual cases of call drops have been resolved so far," he said.

This took the total BTS

A-NDE

## IN BRIEF



Congress chief Rahul's Amethi visit cancelled

NEW DELHI  
Congress Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh on Friday stated that Rahul Gandhi's visit to Amethi, which was scheduled for Friday, has been cancelled. "Rahul Gandhi's programme has been cancelled for the day. Rest of the information will be conveyed soon," Mr. Singh said. Mr. Gandhi was supposed to be on a two-day visit to the constituency and participate in several programmes. ANI

## Mamata Banerjee plays badminton, posts video

NEW DELHI  
West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Friday took to her Instagram handle mamataofficial to post a video of her playing badminton during her recent visit to Birbhum. The post, which was captioned "We love sports. A token game in a village...", has the Bengal CM in her trademark white sari and a shawl draped across her shoulders enthusiastically waving her racket as she plays with three other people. ANI

## Centre made no talks offer: separatists

Government is scared of any meaningful dialogue with the Hurriyat and Pakistan, says Geelani

PEERZADA ASHQI

SRINAGAR  
Jammu and Kashmir separatist leaders have rebutted Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh's statement made in Parliament on Thursday that an unconditional dialogue offer was made to separatists in the Valley.

Mirwaiz Umar Farooq said that to put the record straight, there was no such offer at any point.

## Military solution

"On the contrary, all focus by the present regime in Delhi has been on a military solution. It made no attempt to make the dialogue institution credible or viable, to pave the way for the final solution of the dispute. It only created hurdles in ensuring that all the stakeholders, including Pakistan, comes to the table."

He said there was a mismatch in what Mr. Singh said

## Will right Partition wrongs, says PM

'Citizenship Bill will be the atonement for the injustice done to some people in the past'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

GUWAHATI/IMPHAL  
Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Friday that his government would be atoning for the "wrong" done during Partition by getting the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2016, passed in Parliament.

The comments come amid widespread protests in Assam against the Bill which seeks to amend the Citizenship Act, 1955 to provide citizenship to illegal migrants from Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan who are of Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Jain, Parsi or Christian origin.

Addressing a Vijay Samakal Samavesha rally at Kalinagar in Silchar in southern Assam, the Prime Minister said the Centre was working hard to clear the Bill for safeguarding "all who had been victims of Partition".

## Poll campaign

Mr. Modi was in Silchar as a part of his first phase of election campaign, in which he is scheduled to address rallies in 20 States in 100 days before the model code of conduct comes into force.

"The government is going ahead with the Citizenship Bill, which involves the lives



Poll call: PM Narendra Modi with Manipur Chief Minister N. Biren Singh in Imphal on Friday. • PTI

of people. This Bill will be the atonement for the injustice done to some people in the past. I am confident it will be passed in Parliament soon," Mr. Modi said.

Silchar is the nerve centre of the Bengali-dominated Barak Valley comprising three of Assam's 33 districts.

A large number of people

from this valley, many of them Hindus, were left out of the final draft of the National Register of Citizens (NRC) being

dumping ground for fresh waves of migrants, specifically "Hindu Bangladeshis". They also feel that the Bill would make redundant the exercise of NRC, which lists those who have come to Assam before March 24, 1971 as mandated by the Assam Accord.

"Mistakes were made in the past when the country was divided and they have to be undone. Some people had stayed back in some

places and if they face difficulties there, it is the duty of Mother India to give shelter to them. Those reposing faith in Mother India will be protected," Mr. Modi said.

"Many of you faced hardships during the NRC updating process, and some of you are worried. But I assure you that no Indian citizen will be left out of the NRC. Efforts are being made to ensure that every individual is heard. We had made several appeals to the Supreme Court regarding NRC documents and it accepted those.

As a result, the difficulties of applicants were minimised," the Prime Minister said.

Earlier on Thursday, Mr. Modi inaugurated eight projects and laid the foundation of five more in Manipur. These projects include an integrated check post at Moreh, a town bordering Myanmar, the Dolaithabi Barrage, an FCI warehouse at Sawmung in Imphal East district, and a buffer water reservoir at Shirui village in Ukhrul district.

All markets in Imphal town remained closed during the Prime Minister's visit following a boycott call by a conglomerate of six banned extremist groups.

## 'Modi silent on RSS violence in 1984'

He is deceiving people, says Amarinder

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

CHANDIGARH

A day after Prime Minister Narendra Modi accused the Congress of deceiving people on the farm loan waiver and the 1984 anti-Sikh riots issues, Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh on Friday hit back saying that every statement by Mr. Modi was a desperate bid to mislead the people in the face of an imminent defeat in the upcoming Lok Sabha elections.

Capt. Singh alleged that Mr. Modi had yet again lied on every issue – from the 1984 riots to the farm debt waiver and Kartarpur corridor – at the public rally in Gurdaspur.

In a statement released here, Capt. Singh asked why Mr. Modi had been silent on the BJR-RSS workers named in the FIR lodged at the Tilak Marg police station on the violence perpetrated against the Sikhs during the 1984 riots.

## 2002 riots

"And what about the 2002 riots in Gujarat, which happened right under your nose and in which your own



party members were squarely blamed and named," he asked.

Capt. Singh also criticised the Prime Minister for trying to seize credit for the Kartarpur Corridor, which "the Congress had been actively pursuing since the days of former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, right down to Dr. Manmohan Singh."

Capt. Singh said the Congress government in Punjab had fulfilled more promises in 21 months than the Modiji-led government at the Centre had done in five years.

"We have managed to waive ₹3,417 crore of crop loans of 4,14,275 farmers in just one year," he said.

## Smartphone interred in 'techno' time capsule

University plan to convey today's technology a century later

JACOB KOSHY

JALANDHAR  
A laptop, smartphone, voltage resistor and a portable stereo were among an assortment of objects placed in a 'time capsule' that was "interred" by Nobel Laureates Duncan Haldane and Avram Hershko on the Lovely Professional University (LPU) campus here on Friday. The university is hosting the 106th Indian Science Congress.

"Maybe a 100 years hence, these will be exhumed and people will ponder these objects as curiosities," said C.H.

Venkatappala Naidu, a mechanical engineering student at LPU, member of a group of students who compiled the objects for the time capsule. "The objective is to capture today's technological essence for the future generations," he said.

An aluminium cupboard-like container, about 6 feet wide and 5 feet tall, served as the time capsule bearing the various objects. The objects sported labels featuring their names and a brief description of function. At the press of a button, the capsule was hydraulically lowered into



Treasure trove: A time capsule with objects that capture technology devices 'buried' in Jalandhar varsity. • JACOB KOSHY

the ground and sealed with a slab of concrete.

Time capsules have historically been a popular way for people to preserve their legacy. A time capsule was buried at the IIT-Kanpur in 2010.

While time capsules are typically buried without any date set for their recovery, the LPU project's organisers have set a one-century goal. "This capsule is to be unearthed and opened on the 3rd of January, 2119. This time capsule is a historic cache of goods or information, intended as a method of communication with future people and help archaeologists, anthropologists and historians," says a

lithograph accompanying the capsule.

The LPU capsule was lowered 10 feet into the ground by the scientists. "We may not be there but we'll leave instructions through the university to ensure that this spot is taken care of," said Akash Purohit, a student of computer science. "Who knows future students of this campus may unearth it," he said.

The time capsule largely contains lab equipment – rheostats (used to control electric current by varying resistance), a compound microscope, a solar cell and a hard disk with some preloaded movies. All told there were about 60 objects buried in the capsule.

## CBI books Bharat Coking Coal officials

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The Central Bureau of Investigation has registered a case against senior officials of the Bharat Coking Coal Limited (BCCCL) for allegedly siphoning off ₹22.16 crore through illegal payments routed via a Dhanbad-based firm.

The accused BCCCL officials were then posted in the Bastacola area. They have been identified as General Manager P.K. Dubey, Additional General Manager A.K. Jha, Area Survey Officer M.K. Singh, Project Officer B.K. Jha, Colliery Managers N.C. Ghosh and Arun Kumar, Colliery Surveyor Lalan Kumar Singh, and AT-Libra BPL (JV) represented by Rahul Singh.

The agency has alleged that during 2015-18, the accused officials conspired with Mr. Rahul Singh to cheat the BCCCL by showing extra removal of earth in open-cast mines to the tune of 35.30 lakh cubic metres by making false entries in the measurement books. An alleged illegal payment of ₹22.16 crore was made for it to AT-Libra BPL.

The company was given a work order in 2012 by the BCCCL for removal of coal and overburden (layer of earth) for a period of 72 months.

## Artistes, actors, scholars, poets being stifled: Shah

In Amnesty video, actor says country is awash with hatred

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI

Walls of hatred are being erected in the name of religion in India and those who stand against this "injustice" are being punished, actor Naseeruddin Shah said in a video released on Friday by Amnesty India against alleged government "crackdown" on NGOs.

In the 2.13-minute solidarity video for the human rights watchdog, Shah said those who demand rights are being locked up.

"Artistes, actors, scholars, poets are all being stifled. Journalists too are being silenced," he said in the video message.

"In the name of religion, walls of hate are being erected. Innocents are being killed. The country is awash



Naseeruddin Shah

with horrific hatred and cruelty," he claimed.

He said that those who stood against this "injustice" were having their offices raided, licences cancelled and bank accounts frozen to silence them so that they were deterred from speaking the truth.



Akbari Baar Manav Adhikar

"Is this where our country is headed? Had we dreamt of a country where there was no space for dissent, where only the rich and powerful are heard and where the poorest and most vulnerable are oppressed? Where there once was law, there is now only darkness," he said in the video in Urdu.

Under the hashtag of #AbkiBaarManavAdhikar, Amnesty said India had witnessed a massive crackdown on freedom of expression and human rights defenders.

Akbar Patel of Amnesty India, said it might seem that the odds were against human rights defenders and civil society in India at the moment, but human rights had always won and would this time also.

## ED attaches ₹41.87 cr. in Hong Kong

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate has attached an amount equivalent to ₹41.87 crore lying in bank accounts in Hong Kong of some shell companies in connection with the Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust (JNPT)-OBC bank fraud case.

According to the agency, accused Rajesh Bangawala conspired with bank officials and fraudulently got transferred ₹180 crore deposited by the JNPT to a private entity on the basis of forged documents.

## ₹109 crore recovered

"The amount was further transferred to various accounts and part of which was siphoned off to Hong Kong in the accounts of shell companies controlled by the accused."

"An amount of ₹109 crore has been recovered and returned to the Trust," said the agency.

The Enforcement Directorate's money laundering probe is based on an FIR registered by the Central Bureau of Investigation in 2014.

The agency has already attached immovable properties worth ₹1.08 crore in India and filed a chargesheet against the accused persons in June 2018.

Friday said he would continue to oversee the case.

A CBI official said the previous order, through which the additional charge of AC (HQ)-I was handed over to G.K. Goswami, Joint Director of the Lucknow zone, had been amended.

Earlier, the responsibility was with Mr. Murugesan.

"Although Mr. Murugesan has been relieved of the additional charge, he will continue to supervise the probe in the First Information Report against Mr. Asthana," the official said.



Provocative writer pens novel on French protests

PARIS  
Provocative French author Michel Houellebecq gives voice to the simmering anger behind the rural "yellow vest" revolt in his eagerly awaited, prophetic new novel *Serotonin* which was published on Friday to rave reviews. AFP

## U.K. warns Russia against 'diplomatic chess games'

LONDON  
Britain warned Russia on Friday against playing "diplomatic chess games" after Paul Whelan, an ex-Marine with triple U.K., U.S. and Irish citizenship, was charged with espionage. "We don't agree with individuals being used in diplomatic chess games... We are all extremely worried about him and his family," Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt told the BBC in an interview. AFP

## U.S., China to hold trade talks next week

BEIJING  
A U.S. government delegation, led by Deputy Trade Representative Jeffrey Gerrish, will visit China on Monday and Tuesday for the first face-to-face talks since President Donald Trump and his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping agreed on a temporary truce in the trade war, China's Commerce Ministry said. AFP

## Most Conservatives prefer 'no-deal Brexit' to May's plan

Survey results offer a snapshot of challenges faced by the PM

**REUTERS**  
LONDON  
British Prime Minister Theresa May's bid to push her Brexit plans through Parliament was dealt another blow on Friday when a survey showed that most of her own party's members oppose the deal and would prefer to leave the European Union (EU) without a deal.

If lawmakers do not approve the deal, the U.K. is on course to leave the EU on March 29 without one, a nightmare scenario for many big businesses who fear disruption to trade.

**Parliamentary vote**  
Ms. May needs 318 votes to get the deal she struck with Brussels in November through Parliament, yet 117 of her Conservative Party's 317 lawmakers voted against her in a confidence vote on

## Democrats pass Bills to end impasse

Representatives, led by Speaker Pelosi, take oath; pass measures aimed at re-opening the government

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
WASHINGTON

U.S. Democrats swept back to power on Thursday in the House of Representatives with veteran Nancy Pelosi at the helm, but they came face to face with what may be a new divided government normal in Washington: legislative gridlock.

After a historic opening session of the 116th Congress in which Ms. Pelosi was elected as Speaker for the second time in her career, lawmakers took aim at a bipartisan priority of ending an embarrassing partial government shutdown that was stretching into its 13th day.

The House passed two measures that would reopen government agencies whose funding had lapsed, but provide no money for a border wall demanded by Donald Trump.

They are all but dead on arrival in the Senate, where the Republican leadership has vowed not to bring them up for a vote.

**'No wall funding'**  
Mr. Trump has demanded that Congress approve \$5.6 billion for construction of a wall on the southern U.S. border with Mexico – an oft-repeated pledge from his 2016 presidential campaign.

The Bills that passed the House contain no wall funding. "We're not doing a wall," Ms. Pelosi told reporters shortly before the votes lar-



**A diverse Congress:** Rashida Tlaib, at right with hand raised, at a ceremonial swearing-in with Speaker Nancy Pelosi, second left in the front row, in Washington on Thursday; below, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, the youngest woman to be elected to Congress, taking oath. ■ AFP

more border agents.

Republican leaders immediately blasted the vote as a pointless political gimmick that would do little to provide the resources necessary to secure the border, and said Democrats were not negotiating in good faith.

"The President made it clear, we're here to make a deal," Vice-President Mike Pence told Fox News late on Thursday. "We will have no deal without a wall."

## Shift in power

Democrats' new majority in the House of Representatives marked a dramatic power

shift on Capitol Hill less than two years before Mr. Trump's re-election bid.

Ms. Pelosi will preside over the most diverse Congress in history.

One hundred House freshmen took the oath of office, including trailblazers like New York's Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, who at 29 is the youngest woman ever elected to Congress.

The first two Native American women and first two Muslim women were also elected. "It's a new day in America," tweeted Ilhan Omar, a former Somali refugee elected from Minnesota.

## 'We're gonna impeach the President'

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
WASHINGTON

Congresswoman Rashida Tlaib kicked off her term with an expletive-laced vow to impeach President Donald Trump.

At an event following her swearing-in Thursday, Ms. Tlaib spoke to a cheering crowd of supporters. "And when your son looks at you and says, 'Momma, look you won, bullies don't win.' And I said, 'Baby, they don't; because we're gonna go in there and we're gonna impeach the \*\*\*\*\*'."

She had made Mr. Trump's impeachment central to her campaign.

The morning of her entry into Congress, Ms. Tlaib labelled Mr. Trump "a direct and serious threat to our country" in a co-authored op-ed published in the *Detroit Free Press* newspaper. "The time for impeachment proceedings is now," she said.

However, Mr. Trump tartly dismissed the threat of impeachment in a tweet on Friday. "They only want to impeach me because they know they can't win in 2020, too much success!" Mr. Trump tweeted.



German Chancellor Angela Merkel. ■ AP

early on Friday to coordinate the response of federal government agencies, a spokesman said.

## Possible hacking

If the data release does stem from a hack, it would be the latest in a number of hi-tech assaults on Germany's political institutions and key individuals. Last year, lawmakers said a powerful cyberattack breached the Foreign Ministry's computer network.

Security officials have blamed most previous attacks on a Russian hacking group APT28 that experts say has close ties to a Russian spy agency. The Kremlin, responding to previous allegations of cyberattacks on foreign computer infrastructure, has denied any involvement.



gely along party lines. "A wall is an immorality between countries. It's an old way of thinking, it isn't cost effective," she said, arguing that money would be better spent on border security technology such as drones and cameras, and on hiring

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Analysts say that China's lunar probe is part of its 'Made in China-2025' project, which focuses on advanced technology, including space applications.

**Homegrown GPS**  
It follows the BeiDou Navigation Satellite System – China's homegrown Global Positioning System that started worldwide service last month. Next year China plans to launch its Mars ex-

ploration mission. In 2022, it hopes to complete its own earth-orbiting space station.

Some observers say that China's advances can mutate into a Cold War-style competition in outer space with the United States. Already, China and the United States are roiled in a so-called trade war. U.S. administration officials are on record stating that there is deep opposition

on trade. Tomorrow it can be on the moon," he observed.

## A military dimension?

According to the *Nikkei Asian Review*, after the latest launch, Beijing is moving forward with plans to build a research base on the moon. It is also said to be considering mining there for helium-3, a rare substance on earth that can be used as a fuel in nuclear fusion power generation. The publication added that the U.S. is growing increasingly alarmed because a more advanced Chinese space programme could be translated into military strength.

The rover has been programmed to launch ground penetration radar that would help map the moon's inner structures. It would also analyse soil and rock samples for minerals, apart from activating a radio telescope to search for possible signals from deep space.

## China tests its 'Mother of All Bombs'

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
BEIJING

China has tested its most powerful non-nuclear weapon, dubbed the "Mother of All Bombs" by official media in a reference to a U.S. munition used in Afghanistan.

In a short video published on the website of state arms manufacturer Norinco, the massive bomb drops on to a plain and produces a gigantic ball of fire and black smoke.

The bomb is five to six metres long (16 to 20 feet), but weighs less than the American version, according to the official Xinhua agency – was dropped by a Chinese H-6K bomber.

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The bomb is five to

## MARKET WATCH

	04-01-2019	% CHANGE
Sensex	35,695	0.51
US Dollar	69.72	0.68
Gold	32,690	-0.44
Brent oil	58.23	6.14

## NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	382.15	4.05
Asian Paints	1385.85	-2.45
Axis Bank	619.60	11.65
Bajaj Auto.	2734.20	32.85
Bajaj Finance	6140.45	27.15
Bharti Airtel	322.45	8.95
BPCL	359.45	6.95
Cipla	512.80	0.40
Coal India	236.50	1.50
Dr Reddys Lab	2600.00	22.65
Eicher Motors	20103.60	107.85
GAIL (India)	353.15	3.20
Grasim Ind	806.15	6.45
HCL Tech	932.35	-16.00
HDFC	1972.60	35.75
HDFC Bank	2117.45	5.65
Hero MotoCorp	2987.85	-26.80
Hindalco	210.90	1.70
HPCL	248.20	-0.10
Hind Unilever	1781.70	-6.70
Indiabulls HFL	829.80	13.15
ICICI Bank	365.20	1.95
IndusBank	1548.20	-11.90
Bharti Infralet	285.05	13.45
Infosys	661.05	-8.10
Indian Oil Corp	133.95	1.30
ITC	280.95	2.10
JSW Steel	287.95	5.30
Kotak Bank	1247.95	12.70
L&T	1388.05	-6.95
M&M	725.60	7.30
Maurit Suzuki	7234.50	30.55
NTPC	145.75	2.35
ONGC	145.70	3.30
PowerGrid Corp	195.90	2.85
Reliance Ind	1098.65	5.90
State Bank	297.65	6.55
Sun Pharma	433.80	-2.30
Tata Motors	170.95	4.90
Tata Steel	487.65	6.40
TCS	1876.85	-23.10
Tech Mahindra	681.10	-10.15
Titan	928.45	-2.75
UltraTech Cement	3914.55	14.50
UPL	756.40	9.75
Vedanta	192.90	4.95
Wipro	324.45	-1.05
YES Bank	189.65	5.55
Zee Entertainment	463.95	2.50

## EXCHANGE RATES

CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	69.52	69.84
Euro	79.32	79.69
British Pound	88.05	88.46
Japanese Yen (100)	64.37	64.67
Chinese Yuan	10.12	10.17
Swiss Franc	70.41	70.74
Singapore Dollar	51.07	51.31
Canadian Dollar	51.71	51.95
Malaysian Ringgit	16.80	16.91

Source: Indian Bank

## BULLION RATES CHENNAI

January 04 rates in rupees with previous rates in parentheses
Retail Silver (1g) ..... 42.45 ..... (42.22 ct gold (1g) ..... 3048 ..... (3052)

## E-com clarification adds to confusion

Ambiguity remains as to whether private label goods could be sold on e-commerce portals

TCA SHARAD RAGHAVAN  
NEW DELHI

The government's attempt on Thursday to provide clarity regarding its e-commerce rules announced last week seems to have backfired, with the clarification, instead, creating a lot of confusion, notably regarding whether private labels can be sold on e-commerce portals or not.

The reason for the confusion, according to lawyers conversant with the matter, seems to be that the reference in Thursday's clarification to 'private labels' is to the products sold under these labels and not the companies behind the labels, as assumed by many.

"Concerns have been raised that Press Note 2/2018 prohibits sale of private label products through the marketplace," the Department of Industrial Policy and Promo-



Turning foggy: Trader associations point out that there was no ambiguity in the original rules. ■ GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

tion (DIPP) said in press release on Thursday. "It is clarified that present policy does not impose any restriction on the nature of products which can be sold on the marketplace."

"They are saying they are not restricting any product from being sold in the marketplace, but they are re-

stricting the players who can sell it," L. Badri Narayanan, partner, LakshmiKumaran & Sridharan, said. "For example, Amazon Basics or Flipkart Essentials, are sold on only Amazon and Flipkart, respectively. But the condition in the rules [released last week] specifically says that group companies are

not allowed to sell on the platform."

"But, if, for example, Tata Cromax wants to sell products from Amazon Basics on the Amazon website, then there is no restriction on the sale of such labels," Mr. Narayanan added. "But then, this is no longer a private label."

## Dilution of stance?

The ambiguity in the wording of the clarification on Thursday led many commentators and media houses to conclude that the government had diluted its earlier stance and now allowed private labels owned by e-commerce companies to sell their products on that e-commerce company's portal.

Officials in the Ministry of Commerce declined comment when contacted by *The Hindu*, and queries mailed to the DIPP Secretary have so

far been unanswered.

The clarification on Thursday has drawn criticism from traders' bodies with the Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT) saying that there is no ambiguity in the original rules saying that private labels owned by e-commerce companies would not be allowed to sell on their portals.

"The nature of the product does not have any linkage with private labels or branding," Praveen Khandelwal, national secretary general of CAIT told *The Hindu*.

"They have already mentioned in the earlier provisions that any entity in which the marketplace has a stake, will not be allowed to sell its goods on the same marketplace.

Officials in the Ministry of Commerce declined comment when contacted by *The Hindu*, and queries mailed to the DIPP Secretary have so

## New norms: big e-com firms may seek time

'Need 4-5 months for compliance'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI

Large e-commerce marketplaces could approach the government seeking extension of the February 1 deadline as compliance with the recent changes would require at least 4-5 months at operational level, according to multiple sources.

A senior executive at one of the big e-commerce companies said at least 4-5 months would be needed for players to rework the operational aspects and that the February 1 deadline does not provide adequate time.

## Reworking ties

The rules were announced on December 26, giving firms just a month to execute these changes which, in many cases, would re-

quire reworking existing partnerships and even, overhauling business models, the executive added.

Another official said companies are studying the recently announced amendments in detail and are likely to approach the government in the coming weeks. These representatives did not wish to be identified as the matter is sensitive. Emails sent to Amazon and Flipkart did not elicit any response.

The government's move to tighten norms has hit Amazon and Flipkart the hardest as the new regulations prohibit online marketplaces with foreign investment to sell products of companies in which they hold stake. Norms also ban exclusive marketing arrangements.

## RBI limits customer liability in fraudulent PPI transactions

Issuer to bear loss that occurs after transaction is reported

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
MUMBAI

The Reserve Bank of India has decided to limit the liability of customers in case of unauthorised electronic payment transactions in Pre-paid Payment Instruments (PPIs) issued by non-banks.

Under new norms on customer liability, the regulator said frauds due to third-party breach where neither the customer nor the PPI issuer is at fault, there cannot be any liability for the customer, in case the incident is reported within three days.

If the fraud is reported between three and seven days, customer liability will

amount to the transaction value or ₹10,000, whichever is lower.

For over seven days, the liability of the customer will be according to the board-approved policy of the PPI issuer.

After the customer reports the fraud, the PPI issuer has to credit the amount involved in the unauthorised transaction to the customer's PPI within 10 days.

## Proof of liability

"The burden of proving customer liability in case of unauthorised electronic payment transactions shall lie

on the PPI issuer," RBI said. There will be no liability to the customer if fraud is due to negligence or deficiency of the PPI issuer, irrespective of whether or not the transaction is reported by the customer.

"In cases where the loss is due to negligence by a customer, such as where he / she has shared the payment credentials, the customer will bear the entire loss until he / she reports the unauthorised transaction to the PPI issuer. Any loss occurring after the reporting of the unauthorised transaction shall be borne by the PPI issuer," the RBI said.

## 'No decision taken on ₹2,000 note'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

No decision has been taken regarding the ₹2,000 currency note, Economic Affairs Secretary Subhash Chandra Garg said.

"Printing of notes is planned as per the projected requirement," Mr. Garg tweeted. "We have more than adequate notes of ₹2,000 in the system.

There has been no decision regarding 2,000 rupee note production recently."

The clarification follows media reports quoting an unnamed Finance Ministry official saying the government has decided to keep the printing of the ₹2,000 notes to the minimum.

## Services PMI slips to 53.2 in December: Nikkei survey

But new business and employment sustain upward trend

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Service sector activity expanded strongly in December, albeit with a marginally lower reading than in the previous month, according to the Nikkei India Services Business Activity Index.

"Despite falling to 53.2 in December, from 53.7 mid-quarter, the seasonally adjusted Nikkei India Services Business Activity Index pointed to an expansion in sector output that was among the strongest recorded in the past two years," the report said.

The figure contributed to the highest quarterly average seen since Q4 FY 2015-16."

**Stronger demand**  
The report said that India's service economy expanded to 2018."

on the back of strengthening demand. Although growth of new work and activity moderated from November's four-month high, companies hired additional workers, it added.

"Service sector continued to enjoy positive levels of activity in December, with new business and employment remaining on an upward path," Pollyanna De Lima, principal economist, IHS Markit, and author of the report, said. "However, except for jobs, rates of expansion slowed slightly to form a somewhat disappointing end to 2018."

## SEBI tweaks norms for commodity exchanges

Bourses to disclose quantum of trading for all participants

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
MUMBAI

Commodity derivatives exchanges will now have to disclose the quantum of trading done by farmers and other commodity market participants like millers and wholesalers on the exchange platform, as the capital market regulator has tweaked the disclosure norms for such bourses.

In a circular issued on Friday, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) directed commodity bourses to disclose the open interest and turnover of various categories of participants like farmers, farmers producer organisations (FPOs), value chain participants, proprietary traders, foreign participants, and domestic financial institutional investors.

Value chain participants include processors, com-

move assumes significance also because a large section of market players believe that the commodity market turnover is largely dominated by speculators and other participants that are not genuinely connected with the commodity segment.

**Transparency important**  
"Transparency in the commodities derivatives markets is paramount for price signals as well as its correlation with the underlying physical market activities," stated SEBI in the circular.

"To begin with, stock exchanges shall make the disclosures on a weekly basis for every Wednesday by October 1, 2019. By April 1, 2020 onwards, such disclosures shall be made on daily basis by 6 p.m. on T+1 day," SEBI said in the circular.

Currently, commodity derivatives exchanges disseminate turnover data for only two broad categories of participants – clients and proprietary.

Incidentally, the SEBI

U.S. manufacturing activity slowed sharply to a two-year low in December amid a plunge in new orders and hiring at factories, suggesting the economy was probably not immune to slowing growth in China and Europe.

The Institute for Supply Management (ISM) survey published on Thursday offered a downbeat assessment of the manufacturing sector, with almost all components declining last month. Concerns about the economy's health are escalating despite the labour market remaining strong.

**'Subpar growth**

## IN BRIEF



## 'No mechanism to fix single daily gold price'

NEW DELHI There are no specific measures or mechanism to fix a single daily price for gold in India, the government said on Friday. "Gold is widely traded in local markets across the country. At present, there are no specific measures or mechanism to fix a single daily gold price in the country," Minister of State for Consumer Affairs C.R. Chaudhary said in a written reply to the Rajya Sabha.

## NINL touches new high in hot metal production

BHUBANESWAR Neelachal Ispat Nigam Limited (NINL) on Friday said it has stepped closer to its turnaround plan by achieving all-time high production in 2018 at its integrated iron and steel plant in Odisha's Kalinga Nagar. With further growth in production, value added billets, iron ore from the captive mines in its basket and converting part of the billets into TMT, wire rod, the company aims to make net profit in next financial year, NINL said.

## New pact on the cards for GMR unit sale

HYDERABAD Close on the heels of Malaysian Airports Holdings Berhad terminating a share purchase agreement (SPA) under which it would have sold 11% stake in GMR Hyderabad International Airport, GMR Infrastructure Ltd. said a new agreement is on cards. "The SPA was terminated since the long stop date of 31st December 2018 for meeting various conditions could not be extended. Discussions are under way to enter into an updated agreement," it said.

# India key to Intel data centre growth'

Seeing rising adoption of tech such as artificial intelligence, data analytics and cloud, says official

**YUTHIKA BHARGAVA**  
NEW DELHI

Intel is betting big on India for the growth of its data centre business, driven by increasing adoption of technologies such as cloud, data analytics and artificial intelligence (AI), a senior company official said.

"India has always been a tremendously important part of our workforce but increasingly it is becoming the market accelerator or the proving grounds for new capabilities... we see a tremendous scope for that continuing to happen for the coming years as India accelerates on digital transformation," said Rajeeb Hazra, corporate vice president, data centre group and general



Data inside: Opportunities for new advances in data-centric tech is almost limitless, says Intel's Rajeeb Hazra. • REUTERS

manager, enterprise and government group, Intel Corporation.

Global revenue from data centre business in the third quarter of 2018 stood at about \$6 billion for the technology firm, a growth of 26% year-on-year. While Mr. Hazra did not comment on India-specific numbers, he said that in the first three quarters of 2018 (January-September), India has been on

the "fastest side of growth in the overall growth of our business." He added that India – with so much talent – is an integral part of Intel's worldwide R&D workforce. "We are a technology company driven by innovation and India is a key part of our innovation pipeline. It is contributing to some of our core businesses."

## Digital transformation

"We also look at India as an increasingly growing market for digital transformation. If you look at the size of the population and the scale of the problems to be solved, and the connectivity that creates more and more data... the opportunities for some of these new advances

in data-centric technologies is almost limitless," Mr. Hazra added.

He said the fundamental drivers needed for growth of businesses are positive in India. "The first thing we see is the growth of public cloud...we think the cloud phenomenon is only going to continue to accelerate in India and we are really well engaged with the cloud service provider ecosystem here.

"Second is growth of AI and data analytics. That is across the board, be it telecom service providers or AI as a service," he said.

Asked about localisation of data, he said, "It is every country's sovereign right to decide what is the best data localisation policy."

capital spending," said Vikas Halan, senior vice president, Moody's.

Moody's cautioned that larger oil firms remain exposed to risk as the government has been looking to accelerate consolidation in the oil and gas sector, such that larger firms could be asked to acquire smaller ones.

"IOCL's ratings also remain constrained by uncertainty around government policy, especially with respect to fuel pricing," he said.

Separately, Fitch Ratings assigned IOCL US-dollar-denominated notes, a rating of BBB. The notes will rank on an equal footing with other senior unsecured borrowings of IOCL.

# Indian Oil outlook stable, says Moody's

'Oil firms constrained by uncertainty'

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI

The outlook for Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL), remains stable in spite of negative free cash flows, according to Moody's Investors Service.

IOC's leverage is likely to stay within the tolerance level of its ratings, even as the State-owned refiner promised higher shareholder returns and capital spending, Moody's said.

"The affirmation of IOCL's ratings reflects our expectation that the company's leverage will stay within the tolerance level of its ratings, despite negative free cash flow because of high shareholder returns and

# 'Will resolve angel tax issue soon'

## PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI

Union Commerce Minister Suresh Prabhu said the government will soon come up with a solution to address the problems being faced by start-ups with regard to angel tax.

Several start-ups have raised concerns over levying taxes on angel funds under Section 56 of the Income Tax Act.

Mr. Prabhu acknowledged that start-ups were facing some difficulties due to angel tax and he had taken up the issue with the Finance Ministry.

"I want to assure you that we are working with the Finance Ministry in order to find the appropriate solution to angel tax and I am quite confident that we will come up with a solution soon," he said.

## Chennai Port drives on Hyundai for volumes

Carmaker a major revenue contributor

**N. ANAND**  
CHENNAI

Despite losing its leading position in car exports to Kamraj Port some years back, Chennai Port Trust (ChPT) is showing some signs of revival by posting a 22% increase during 2018.

"We have been relying on Hyundai Motor India Ltd. (HMIL) for export volume and revenue generation," said a ChPT official. "We came out with aggressive pricing and that also helped us to improve volume," he said.

**Renews pact**  
Recently, HMIL renewed its export pact with ChPT for the next 10 years with a minimum volume of 50,000 cars per annum.

"This is due to the aggres-



sive action plan initiated by our chairman to tackle fierce competition from nearby ports. Car exports volume from ChPT have been on the rise for the last two years," he added.

From January to December 2018, ChPT exported almost 1.35 lakh Hyundai cars through 36 vessels against 1.10 lakh cars handled in the corresponding year-earlier period.

## JNPT container traffic grows 7.24% in 2018, crosses five million TEUs

In December alone, it handled its highest-ever volume of 4.45 lakh TEUs

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
MUMBAI

Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust (JNPT), one of India's biggest container ports, said it had handled container traffic of 5.05 million TEUs (twenty-foot equivalent units), in the January to December 2018 period, representing a growth of 7.24 % over the previous calendar year.

In December 2018, the port handled 4.45 lakh TEUs, the highest container volume handled in a month, ever recorded, JNPT said.

In the April to December 2018 period, which is the first nine months of this financial year, the traffic handled so far is 3.81 million TEUs and with the last quarter of the financial year underway, JNPT expects to exceed the performance of



All cylinders firing: All the four terminals of the port trust contributed to the volume growth. • PAUL NORONHA

2017-18, JNPT said.

compared with 7.01 million tonnes in 2017.

**Bulk cargo**  
JNPT reported a growth of 8.41% to 8.57 million tonnes in bulk cargo compared with 7.90 million tonnes in the previous calendar year. Liquid cargo's share rose to a cumulative of 14.60 lakh

TEUs and BMCTPL handled 3.34 lakh TEUs in the calendar year 2018.

**Increasing volumes**  
JNPT said it had been consistently improving its volume and turnover and several steps, taken under the ease of doing business and introduction of direct port delivery (DPD) system, have contributed in increasing the volume of traffic at the port.

Already, close to 43% of the cargo handled is routed through DPD system which is not only saving time and cost for the trade, but also elevating JNPT at par with global standards, it said.

JNPT had achieved a record traffic of 4.83 million TEUs for the year ended March 2018 and crossed the ₹1,000-crore profit mark.

**CPWD - NOTICE INVITING e-TENDERS**  
The Executive Engineer, IIT Palakkad Project Division, CPWD, Palakkad invites on behalf of President of India online percentage rate bids from approved and eligible contractors of CPWD and those of appropriate list of M.E.S., BSNL, Railway and Kerala State P.W.D. for the following works:-  
NIT. NO.4/CPM/PPZ/2018-19:  
Name of work: Construction of Permanent Campus for Indian Institute of Technology Palakkad Phase 1A, SH: Construction of Road connecting the Entrance gate, three sides of Academic zone, a part of Residential and Hostel zone including Drain and Cross Drainage Estimated cost: Rs. 27,70,57,943/-, Earnest money: Rs. 37,70,579/- Period of completion: 8 (Eight) Months, Last date and time of submission of bid: 21.01.2019 upto 3:00 p.m. The bid forms and other details can be obtained from the website [www.tenderwizard.com/CPWD](http://www.tenderwizard.com/CPWD). The Press Notice is also available on [www.eprocure.gov.in](http://www.eprocure.gov.in).

**TO ADVERTISE PLEASE CONTACT**  
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[gaurav.sehgal@thehindu.co.in](mailto:gaurav.sehgal@thehindu.co.in)

**WESTERN RAILWAY PROCUREMENT WORKS**  
Chief Engineer, Western Railway, Churchgate invites E-Procurement Tender Notice No. W628031818 dated 04.01.2019 for the following:  
**Description of Stores Tender:** Procurement of Engine Mounted Off Track Tamper as per RD&SO Specification No.TM/SM/OT/321 dated 28.01.09. **Quantity:** 20 SETS **Total Tender Value:** ₹1,95,79,500/- **Earnest Money:** ₹3,91,600/- **Date of Closing of e-Tender Box:** On 29.01.2019 at 11:00 hrs. **Date of Opening of e-Tender Box:** On 29.01.2019 at 11:15 hrs. **Note:** The complete information along with tender document of above e-Procurement Tender is available in website on [https://www.rerail.gov.in](http://www.rerail.gov.in) upto the due date of tender opening.  
follow us on: <https://twitter.com/WesternRly>

**NORTHERN RAILWAY TENDER NOTICE**  
Sr. Divisional Safety Officer Northern Railway, New Delhi for and on behalf of President of India, invites open tenders on prescribed form for the following work. Tender form may be obtained from this office on any working day between 10.30 hrs. to 17.00 hrs. from 31.12.2018 to 04.02.2019. Tender form duly filled in may be submitted up to 15.00 hrs. on 05.02.2019 in the tender room in premises DRMs Office, State Entry Road, New Delhi. The tender will be opened at 15.30 hrs. on 05.02.2019 in the presence of available tenderers. In case the day 05.02.2019 happens to be a public holiday, the tenders can be submitted & will be opened on the next working day. The cost of the tender paper is not refundable and the tender paper is not transferable. Further information/details if required may be obtained from this office. The NIT is also available at website of Delhi division [www.nr.indianrailways.gov.in](http://www.nr.indianrailways.gov.in). From 31.12.2018 to 04.02.2019 (Upto 17.00 hrs.)  
Tender No.: 213-S1/Vehicle/Contract/safety-2018. **Name of work:** HIRING OF ONE ROAD VEHICLE (7+1=8 INCLUDING DRIVER) TAVERA, SCORPIO, XYLO, XUV-500 INNOVA OR BETTER ROUND THE CLOCK FOR TRANSPORTATION OF SAFETY COUNSELLORS UNDER Asst. Divisional Officer, FOR SAFETY BRANCH, DRM OFFICE, NEW DELHI. App. Cost of works: Rs. 13,53,600/- Earnest Money: Rs. 27,072/- Date of opening: 05.02.2019 at 15.30 hrs. Completion period: Two years. Cost of Tender Form: Rs. 2,360/- Category: Open Tender No: 213-S1/Vehicle/Contract/safety-2018 Date: 31.12.2018. 13/19 SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

**INDIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY MANDI**  
MANDI-175001 (HIMACHAL PRADESH), INDIA  
Tender No.: IIT Mandi/S&P/PIUR-343/2018-19/9504-05 Date : 03.01.2019  
**Notice: Inviting Tender's for supply and installation of "Bioenergetics Profile and Flux Analyzer" at IIT Mandi**  
Online tenders are invited from the eligible & interested bidders for the supply & installation of above mentioned equipment. For detailed terms & conditions, Bidder can download the tender document from Central Public Procurement Portal website [www.eprocure.gov.in](http://www.eprocure.gov.in) & IIT Mandi website <http://www.iitmmandi.ac.in/administration/tenderseoln.php>. Bidders need to submit the bids online by uploading all the required documents through [www.eprocure.gov.in](http://www.eprocure.gov.in). The last date for submission of bids through above mentioned portal is 23rd January, 2019 till 03:00 PM. and Technical Bids will be opened on 24th January, 2019 at 04:00 PM P.M. For all further complement's/addendum's in this regard, please regularly visit [www.iitmmandi.ac.in](http://www.iitmmandi.ac.in) & [www.eprocure.gov.in](http://www.eprocure.gov.in).  
sd- Assistant Registrar (S & P)

**NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY SRINAGAR**  
HAZRATBAL KASHMIR- 190006 (J&K)  
**TENDER NOTICE Dated 01.01.2019**  
Sealed bids affixed with revenue stamps worth Rs. 10/- are invited from the agencies registered with Central / State Assistant Labor Commissioner for providing of Guards for the Security of men and material of the Institute. The tender should reach the office of the Dean Students Welfare by or before 15.01.2019 up to 04:00 PM. Other Tender details are available on Institute website [www.nitsri.ac.in](http://www.nitsri.ac.in)  
B.V. NIDHISHREE, Asstcde  
Chambers: 306/1C, 1st Cross, 6th Main: Srinagar, Jammu & Kashmir-190006  
Tel: 091-4166-8469  
Dated: 02.01.2018  
Sd/-  
Dean Students Welfare  
DIPR/C/39

**ANNA UNIVERSITY**  
CHENNAI - 600 025  
**TENDER NOTICE**  
Tender Ref No: 13326/PP4/ET/SAP/DaFSTFST/2018-19  
On-line Tenders in Two Bid System are invited for the Supply and installation of following equipment for the Dean, School of Architecture and Planning, Anna University, Chennai - 600 025  
**Sl.no.** **Tender Ref. No.** **Name of the equipment** **Qty.** **Approx.coast**  
1. 13326/PP4/ET/SAP/DaFSTFST/2018-19 "Design and Fabrication of Standard Test Facility Sound Transmission" 1 ₹ 52,30,000/-  
The tender documents can be downloaded by registering in the website <https://tenders.gov.in> using Digital Signature Certificate and E-Token from 05.30 p.m. on 05.01.2019. The tenders in tender documents can be submitted by uploading in the website upto 04.30 p.m. on 23.01.2019 and will be opened at 04.35 p.m. on 23.01.2019. For EMD and other detailed tender conditions, future corrigenda etc., please visit the website (<https://tenders.gov.in>) and any press advertisement will not be published in this regard.  
REGISTRAR IIC

DIPR/J-4491-P

**Office of the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests & Chief Wildlife Warden, Rajasthan, Jaipur**  
**Works & Learning Opportunities**  
Forest Department, Rajasthan has initiated an "intern Program to encourage talented and interest youth to work in wildlife and forest areas to gain firsthand experience in their chosen field. Selected interns will be assigned to various sanctuaries/ National Parks/HQ level to work on the project. Department will provide suitable remuneration to the selected interns. The details of the program, eligibility, selection procedure, remuneration etc. is available on departmental website [www.forest.rajasthan.gov.in](http://www.forest.rajasthan.gov.in). Advertisement for application and application from is available on the website.

(G.V. Reddy)  
Principal Chief Conservator of Forests & Chief Wildlife Warden, Rajasthan, Jaipur.

DIPR/J-4491-P

**T.S.CO-OP OILSEEDS GROWERS' FEDN Ltd.**, 9<sup>th</sup> Floor, Parisrambhamban, Basheerbagh, Hyderabad-04, Tel No.: 040-23290350 | Fax No.: 040-23290351 | E-mail: tsolfed@gmail.com  
P&P/NEW PLANT/14/2018-19. **TENDER NOTICE** Dt: 03.01.2019  
TSOLFED, Telangana State, India invite sealed competitive bids from the experienced and competent contractors with sound technical and financial capabilities and with adequate organizational set up. The tenders should have adequate number of technically qualified and experienced personnel, which in the opinion of TSOLFED is capable of executing the work of this magnitude.  
**Name of the Work** **Earnest Money Deposit** **Cost of Tender**  
"Supply, Erection & Commissioning of Kernel Drying Silos-

# Pant and Jadeja pile on Aussies' agony after Pujara's 193

The wicketkeeper remains unbeaten on 159 and the left-arm allrounder helps himself to an 81 as India runs up 622 for seven decl.

## OZ CHALLENGE

S. DINAKAR  
SYDNEY

Entering the Sydney Cricket Ground, the statue of one of Australia's favourite cricketing sons, Steve Waugh, greets you.

Apart from being a tough-as-nails batsman, Waugh was a ruthless captain who often spoke about "mental disintegration of the opposition."

At the SCG, Waugh's home ground, the celebrated former Australian skipper watched helplessly from the Member's Pavilion as Austra-



**Punishing blade:** An aggressive Rishabh Pant raised crucial partnerships en route to his unbeaten 159 to snuff out hopes of an Australian comeback. ■ AFP

lia suffered physically and psychologically with the relentless Indians piling on the runs. When India declared in the last session on day two of the fourth Test here on Friday at a mammoth 622 for seven, its first Test series triumph in Australia was virtually ensured.

The hosts, pounded under a scorching sun, were relieved to go off the field. The boot was on the other foot.

And had keeper Rishabh Pant, diving to his left, not

floored Usman Khawaja when the southpaw nicked Mohammed Shami, Australia would have lost a wicket very early.

### Compelling strokeplay

Earlier, Pant had remained unbeaten on a 159 of compelling strokeplay; it was the first Test hundred by an Indian wicketkeeper-batsman on Australian soil.

The surface was flat on day two and the Indian batsmen capitalised. Runs

flowed even as the Aussie shoulders drooped.

Cheteshwar Pujara (193) batted on and on, 'leaving' and defending solidly, and driving, cutting, whipping and pulling for runs.

The right-hander was approaching a double hundred when he fell to a lovely Nathan Lyon delivery that dipped. Drawn forward, Pujara knocked back a return catch.

During his innings, the patient Pujara went past Rahul Dravid's mark of 1203 balls in

2003-4 for most deliveries faced by an Indian batsman in a Test series down under.

The resilient Pujara built partnerships around him; he added 101 for the fifth wicket before the promising Hanuma Vihari fell sweeping at Lyon. Vihari lost the review but the replays did not seem clear whether he had got a touch.

Then Pujara and Pant raised 89 to snuff out hopes of an Australian comeback. After that, the tiring Austra-

lian attack was sent to the cleaners with Pant and Ravindra Jadeja (81) putting on a rousing 204 for the seventh.

The mercurial Pant innovated and created, a sense of adventure unmistakable in his batting. His confidence borders on arrogance and he doesn't respect reputations.

The left-hander strikes the ball with incredible bat speed. And he possesses strong wrists to further propel the sphere.

He square drove Mitchell Starc, cover-drove Josh Hazlewood and dismissed Lyon on long-on. Strong with his bottom hand, he cut, pulled and then reverse swept.

Southpaw Jadeja joined in, clubbing Pat Cummins past long-on for the maximum, and whacking Starc down the ground. He was looking good for a hundred when he jumped out and was foxed in the air by Lyon.

The crafty Lyon held his own but the highly-rated

Aussie pace attack seemed toothless. The inability of the Australian pacemen to achieve reverse swing has been a major area of concern for the host. The Kookaburra ball, with its diffused seam, encourages conventional swing for around the first 15 overs. After that it does very little in the air.

The grounds here are not abrasive and the ball does not get scuffed up easily. There are legal means, though, for teams to 'work'

on the ball to roughen up one side in a manner that would encourage reverse swing.

The Indians have bowled cross seam capably to land the ball consistently on one side to roughen it up. Consequently, the ball had reverse swing for the Indians.

Starc can reverse it but the left-arm quick has been out of his rhythm, unable to string together a series a good deliveries to create pressure.

The left-armer seems to have at least temporarily lost his ability to swing the ball into the right-hander from over the wicket, and has over-pitched or strayed down leg-side attempting his otherwise potent workers.

And apart from the odd mean ball, his short-pitched deliveries have been off mark.

India holds all the aces going into day three.

## 'Played according to team plan'

Pant thrilled with innings; Paine accepts criticism of team

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
SYDNEY

Rishabh Pant blasted a Test century in England last year and now he has done so in Australia. The lad from Delhi is growing in confidence.

He said after his innings here on Friday, "Every hundred I score in international cricket is special for me because I have just started my career. The team has given me the freedom to express myself."

He said, "The team plan was to bat on for as long as possible. I played according to the team plan, and then the runs took care of themselves."

Pant walked back to a standing ovation after India declared its innings. "I will remember the innings. I was batting with batsmen this time rather than the tail. You could see the difference in my approach."

### Outplayed

Australian captain Tim Paine said, "Pujara was again superb, wore us down.



Did what he always seems to do. He was extremely disciplined. That set the scene for Pant to show his skill. They drove it into us pretty well."

"When you don't execute your plans, teams can get away from you. Both had similar conditions. We have been outplayed."

### Humorous Paine

In the midst of fielding se-

rious questions, Paine kept the light-hearted humour going by answering a reporter's phone call, much to the mirth of the mediapersons.

On the bowling attack coming under criticism, Paine said, "When you're playing sport at the highest level and you don't perform as you should, you're going to cop criticism. We all know that."

Gilchrist felt 'keeping' was a lot about practice. "The only exception to that was M.S. Dhoni. I have hardly seen

## 'Lot of promise in Pant; has a good base to work on'

Statistically, Indian pacers are doing better than the West Indian quicks of the 80s: Gilchrist

S. DINAKAR  
SYDNEY

They do not call him the greatest wicketkeeper-batsman ever for nothing. The game-changing Adam Gilchrist could take the match away from the opposition in a hurry with the bat or the big gloves.

The Aussie legend spoke to *The Hindu* here on Friday.

Asked about Rishabh Pant's wicketkeeping, Gilchrist said, "There is a lot of promise in him. He moves well, has energy. He has a good base to work on. He has dropped a couple of diving catches in the series but they were not due to faulty positioning, they were owing to go work."

Gilchrist added, "Pant has been caught out a few times getting up too early and ahead of the bounce while standing up. He will learn to stay low and rise with the bounce."

Gilchrist felt 'keeping' was a lot about practice. "The only exception to that was M.S. Dhoni. I have hardly seen

him practise 'keeping. He would rather come in and bowl than practise keeping!"

Talking about Pant's often belligerent left-handed batting, Gilchrist said, "Pant is exciting to watch, bats without inhibitions. He attacks the bowlers, is flamboyant. As time goes on, he will learn to balance his aggression with defence."

Gilchrist felt India had a tough decision to make when Wriddhiman Saha returned from injury. "I think it should be left to the bowling group to make that decision, whether they want Saha's high quality glovework behind the stumps or the extra runs by Pant. Saha himself is a very good batsman."

### Paine is the best

And the Aussie icon considered Tim Paine the best men's wicketkeeper in the world. "He is balanced, has soft hands, is excellent both standing back and up. I think Sarah Taylor is very good in women's cricket. She's technically brilliant."

Adam Gilchrist. ■ QUINN ROONEY/GETTY IMAGES

80s. It doesn't mean they are better than the Caribbean fast bowlers but it certainly says they have been very effective."

With India set to win its first Test series in Australia, Gilchrist said, "I think the Indian planning has been exceptional. The have been smart, quick to act. For instance, dropping both openers mid-way through the series in Melbourne was a bold decision."

Gilchrist elaborated, "But Vihari batted 60-odd deliveries to keep the scoreboard ticking. And he also protected India's most precious asset in the series, Cheteshwar Pujara, from the new ball."

Asked about the most influential player in the series, Gilchrist said, "Kohli has been good but Pujara has been the difference between the two sides."

The Aussie superstar felt the Indian pace attack had been a big factor in the ongoing series. "Statistically, they are doing better than the West Indian quicks of the

tion about that. As captain, he has been aggressive and motivated his men well in this series."

### Areas of concern

Queried about the Aussie decline and the preference given to Big Bash over First Class domestic cricket when an important Test series was on, Gilchrist said, "The Aussies need to look at their priorities. There are areas of concern. We need to look at our programme, our domestic structure."

Following the ball-tampering episode and its aftermath, weren't the Aussies becoming soft on the field? Gilchrist responded, "It's actually an awkward situation for the Aussies. If they are aggressive on the field, people will say they are crossing the line again. And if they do not do so, many will say the Australians have become soft."

He was unhappy about Kohli being booed when he came out to bat at the SCG. "It's sad when any cricketer is treated this way."

## Du Plessis, Bavuma stretch South African lead

### SA VS PAK

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
CAPE TOWN

Faf du Plessis ground out a century and put South Africa in a commanding position on the second day of the second Test against Pakistan at Newlands on Friday.

Du Plessis made 103, his ninth Test century, as South Africa reached 382 for six at the close, a lead of 205 runs.

The South Africa captain shared a fifth-wicket partnership of 156 with Temba Bavuma (75), which sapped the energy from the Pakistan bowlers and fielders. Wicketer Quinton de Kock benefited from the wearing down of the bowlers, hitting a breezy 55 not out off 71 balls late in the day.

Du Plessis, out for a pair during South Africa's six-wicket win in the first Test in Centurion, showed patience and resolve in an innings lasting six minutes short of six hours. He faced 226 balls and hit 13 fours.



**Coming good:** Faf du Plessis' ninth Test century put South Africa in command. ■ REUTERS

### SCOREBOARD S. AFRICA VS PAKISTAN, 2ND TEST, 2ND DAY

**Pakistan – 1st innings:** 177.

**South Africa – 1st innings:** A.

Markram b Masood 78, D. Elgar

b Amir 20, H. Amla b

Abbas 24, T. de Bruyn c Babar b

Afidi 13, F. du Plessis c Sarfraz b

Afidi 103, T. Bavuma c Sarfraz b

Afidi 75, Q. de Kock (batting) 55,

V. Philander (batting) 6;

Total (for six wkts, in 116

overs): 382.

**Fall of wickets:** 1-56, 2-123, 3-

126, 4-149, 5-305, 6-356.

**Pakistan bowling:** Amir 29-9-

69-1, Abbas 31-8-81-1, Afidi

26-3-112-3, Yasir 21-1-79-0,

Masood 5-1-19-1, Shafiq

4-0-16-0.

## New champion waiting in the wings

Gujarat Fortunegiants and Bengaluru Bulls to clash for the title

### PKL

NANDAKUMAR MARAR  
MUMBAI

Pro Kabaddi League season six will see a new team emerge as the champion as both Gujarat Fortunegiants and Bengaluru Bulls have never won a final before.

Manpreet Singh, under whose guidance the former had finished second in season five, believes his squad can go all the way this time.

"We came within touching distance of the trophy in last season's final. We plan to lift it this time," said Manpreet. "Our team of young talents are focussed on winning the trophy," he added.

**Proud coach**  
Bengaluru Bulls coach Randhir Singh said: "Not many were confident that this team would reach the finals.

I am proud of the players who have made it this far."

"Now that we are here, we will definitely go for the win. The team and support staff



**Ready to peak:** Gujarat Fortunegiants, which finished second in season five, will hope to go the distance this time.

■ VIVEK BENDRE

have worked extra hard over the past few days."

Bulls also advanced into the final once before, in sea-

son two.

The team, led by Rohit Ku-

mar, had outsmarted GFG in

a qualifier recently, though

match-day performance matters more than past records.

Bulls also advanced into the final once before, in sea-

son two.

## 14 SPORT

# Anderson, Karlovic set up title clash

Rohan Bopanna &amp; Divij Sharan make the doubles final

## TATA OPEN

N. SUDARSHAN  
PUNE

Top seed Kevin Anderson survived a harrowing examination of his title credentials to defeat Gilles Simon, the defending champion, 6-3, 7-6 (3) and enter the singles final of the Tata Open Maharashtra.

In Saturday's summit clash, the World No.6 will play Croatia's Ivo Karlovic, who beat Belgium's Steve Darcis 7-6(3), 4-6, 6-3.

If the opening set was anything to go by, the South African seemed set for a demolition job. Where in last year's final Simon had thrown Anderson off gear by denying him the pace he usually likes, the Frenchman could do no such thing on Friday.

Anderson stepped into the court, took the ball early and hit with great depth. He routinely pinned Simon deep into his backhand corner. The Simon backhand is no liability, but such was the relentlessness of Anderson's game that it proved brittle on the day. A break in the eighth game was enough to earn the set.

In the second, Anderson switched off. But for the hold to 2-2, he was under pressure in every service game. Still, when he managed to break Simon to 3-2 and subsequently hold, it seemed all over for



**Devastating form:** Croatia's Ivo Karlovic emulated Ken Rosewall to become the oldest ATP finalist after the Australian great did it at Hong Kong in 1977, aged 43. ■ R. RAGU

the World No.30.

But like he had in the first two matches, he rose again from the dead to get back on even terms and then lead 6-5. Simon even had two set points on the Anderson serve, but the latter displayed some first-rate nerves to deny him. In the ensuing tiebreak, Anderson bolted to victory for the loss of just three points.

In the first semifinal, 39-year-old Karlovic became the oldest ATP finalist since the legendary Australian Ken Rosewall (Hong Kong in 1977 aged 43). The 6'11" Croat hadn't been broken all week, and had pumped in 55 aces in three matches until the semifinal. Against Darcis, it was more of the same, as he blasted 33.

A whopping 17 of those came in the first set alone with Karlovic allowing the Belgian just one look at his serve – at 2-1, 30-30. Much of set seemed like a blur, as Karlovic combined pace and precision to devastating effect.

Darcis did save three break points, but there appeared to be just one clear winner. When Darcis did get his hands on the serves, he made the play, with two great lobs. Court-craft isn't something alien to him, for he did beat Rafael Nadal at Wimbledon in 2013. The 34-year-old went on a roll in the middle of the second set, and levelled the match at one set all.

He however dropped guard again in the third as Karlovic broke to 3-1 and held on for the win.

Earlier, Rohan Bopanna and Divij Sharan entered the doubles final with another

edge of the seat thriller, beating Italy's Simone Bolelli and Croatia's Ivan Dodig 6-3, 3-6, [15-13]. The Indian duo saved two match points in the super tiebreak and needed five of their own to set up a meeting with the British pair of Luke Bambridge and Jonny O'Hara.

**The results: Semifinals:** Kevin

Anderson (Rsa) bt Gilles Simon 6-3, 7-6(3); Ivo Karlovic (Cro) bt Steve Darcis (Bel) 7-6(3), 4-6, 6-3.

**Doubles:** Rohan Bopanna & Divij Sharan bt Simone Bolelli (Ita) & Ivan Dodig 6-3, 3-6, [15-13].

# Blue Moon fancied

BENGALURU: Blue Moon, who has been well tuned, is expected to score in the Bangalore Oaks (2,400m), the chief event of the races to be held here on Saturday (Jan. 5). False rails (width about 4.5m from 1,600m to the winning post) will be in position.

**1 JANUARY PLATE (I,200m)**, 1 maiden 3-y-o only, (Terms), 1-45 pm: 1. Alexandre Dumas (IO) Suraj 55, 2. Balter (I) David Allan 55, 3. Cuban (5) Trevor 55, 4. Debonair (7) Neeraj 55, 5. Jai Vikram (II) P.S. Chouhan 55, 6. Jersey Legend (2) Chisty 55, 7. Ozark (8) Akshay K 55, 8. Renegade (3) Sai Kiran 55, 9. Tomy Pet (6) Dhanu Singh 55, 10. Constanza (4) Sudesh 53.5 and II. Loveyemoona (9) Sa Vamsi 53.5.

**1. BALTER, 2. JERSEY LEGEND, 3. ALEXANDRE DUMAS**

**2 CORDON BLEU PLATE (DIV. II)**, 1,200m, rated 15 to 50, 5-y-o & over, 2-15: 1. Habanero (I) Trevor 60, 2. Bold Move (6) Anjar Alam 58.5, 3. Girl With Pearl (2) Raja Rao 58, 4. Varsha (4) Rayan 58, 5. Odyssey (3) Sai Kiran 57.5, 6. Bold Runner (9) Praveen 57, 7. Tudor Prince (8) A. Imran 57, 8. Agmar (10) Tauseef 56.5, 9. Ocean Park (5) Darshan 56.5 and 10. Limato (7) R. Manjunath 55.

**1. HABANERO, 2. BOLD MOVE, 3. ODYSSEY**

**3 MURDESHWAR PLATE (I,100m)**, rated 00 to 20, 2-45: 1. Irish Prince (9) Rathod 60, 2. Indian League (13) Dhanu Singh 59.5, 3. Naabay (12) Ranjeet Singh 58.5, 4. High Hawk (11) Vivek 57, 5. Island Pearl (7) Kiran Rai 57.5, 6. Glorious Days (8) P.S. Chouhan 57, 7. Country's Pearl (2) Irvan 56, 8. Perfect Horizon (1) Raja 59, 9. Scorching (5) Rajesh K 54.5, 10. One To Note (6) P. Mani 54, 11. South Bell (10) Sai Kiran 54, 12. Kruger Park (14) S. Shareef 53.5, 13. Premier Premises (4) Arshad 53.5 and 14. Classic Speed (3) Sai Vamsi 53.

**1. SOUTH BELL, 2. GLORIOUS DAYS, 3. PREMIER PREMISES**

**4 CORDON BLEU PLATE (DIV. I)**, 1,200m, rated 15 to 35, 5-y-o & over, 3-15: 1. Amazonite (3) Srinath 60, 2. Princezaem (3) Dhanu Singh 60, 3. Fantastic App (4) R. Pradeep 59, 4. Master Of War (11) Trevor 59, 5. Lady Majestic (5) Prabhakaran 58.5, 6. Happy Dancing (8) Rathod 58, 7. Maybe Forever (2) R. Manish 57.5, 8. Streak Ahead (6) Antony 57.5,

**1. ROSEBROOK, 2. INTERESTING, 3. RAMON**

Day's best: **AMAZONITE**

Double: **BLUE MOON – IRIS**

Jkt: 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8; Tr (0): 3, 4 and 5; (ii): 6, 7 and 8.

# PSPB teams up and running

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
CUTTACK

The Petroleum Sports Promotion Board (PSPB) men and women's teams started the defence of their titles in style at the senior National table tennis championship here on Friday.

While the men cruised to 3-0 wins over Bihar and Maharashtra-B to seal a place in the pre-quarterfinals, the women similarly crushed Uttarakhand in their opening league tie.

**Important league results:**

**Men: PSPB bt Bihar 3-0** (G. Sathiyan bt Yogesh Mathur 11-7, 11-4, 11-4; A. Amalraj bt Piyush Gandhi 11-9, 11-6, 11-4; Manav Thakkar bt Lekh Rane 11-9, 11-3, 11-6); **PSPB bt Maharashtra-B 3-0** (Sathyian bt Jash Dalvi 11-4, 11-7, 11-9; Amalraj bt Raegan Albuquerque 11-3, 8-11, 11-7, 12-10; Sudhantha Grover bt Tanmay Rane 11-9, 11-9, 11-6); **Haryana bt Odisha 3-0** (Jubin Kumar bt Bikash Kumar Singh 11-5, 11-3, 11-2; Sourav Saha bt Asif Haque 21-11, 9-11, 11-7); **Haryana bt Chhattisgarh 3-0** (Jeet Chandra bt Santosh Araswali 12-10, 11-7, 10-12, 11-9; Jubin Kumar bt Sagar Ghate 11-6, 11-6, 11-4; Sourav Saha bt Abhishek Raj 6-11, 11-6, 11-4, 11-5).

**Women: PSPB bt Uttarakhand 3-0** (Manika Batra bt Vanisha Yadav 11-7, 11-6, 11-4; Madhurika Patkar bt Priyanka Saha 11-3, 11-8, 11-5); **Archana Kamath bt Jyoti Bharti 11-2, 11-4, 11-3.**

# Manzi does the 'trick again

Chennai City manages to ward off a determined Gokulam

## I-LEAGUE

RAYAN ROZARIO  
COIMBATORE

Spanish star Pedro Manzi scored his third hat-trick of the season as Chennai City FC scripted an exciting 3-2 win over a fighting Gokulam Kerala FC in the Hero I-League clash at the Nehru Stadium here on Friday.

Manzi, who struck thrice in the team's earlier clash, was on target yet again. It was a well directed corner kick that the skipper cashed in to shoot the team into the lead in the eighth minute.

But that did not snuff the morale of the visitor. It replied in a fitting fashion ten minutes later through Mudde Musa from Uganda, who belted home a rebound that came his way.

**Full of verve**  
The teams showed lots of energy on the field and did not hesitate to push forward. The visiting side occasionally played a bit too rough and, with it, picked a couple of yellow cards.

It did not matter much for the team as it was determined to pile on the pres-



**Prolific:** Chennai City FC's Pedro Manzi made merry with a triple strike. ■ S. SIVA SARAVANAN

sure on the home side. And the latter fell for it once when Roberto, in a hurry to stop the free-flowing forwards, handled the ball inside the danger area. Nigerian Joel Sunday shook a bit before hammering the penalty kick past the Chennai custodian.

The battle was so intense that towards the extra time in the first half a rough tackle by a Kerala player led to a minor scuffle between the players and the referee wasted no time in flashing the red card for substitute Pandian (Chennai City) and Arjun Jayaram (Gokulam).

Down by a goal, the Chen-

nai City men went that extra mile in search of the equaliser in the second half and finally managed it through a beauty of a header from the in-form Manzi in the 59th minute. The skipper scored one more in the 80th minute to help the host romp home. His effort also earned him the 'Hero-of-the-Match' award.

**The result:** Chennai City FC 3 (Pedro Manzi 8, 59, 80) vs Gokulam Kerala FC 2 (Mudde Musa 17, Joel Sunday 38).

**At Imphal:** Neroca FC 3 (Katsumi Yusa 8, Singham Subash Singh 21, Dohling Aliba 55-OG) bt Shillong Lajong 2 (Sheen 53, Phrangki Buam 89).

Down by a goal, the Chen-

# Railways overwhelms Haryana

## NATL. VOLLEYBALL

K. KEERTHIVASAN  
CHENNAI

The Indian Railways team is determined to change the script this time around after losing twice in the last two years to Kerala in the men's final.

Trailing by two sets to one, Railways won a cliffhanger against Haryana 17-25, 25-21, 22-25, 25-13, 15-13 in a senior National volleyball championships Group-B tie at the Nehru Indoor Stadium here on Friday. This is the 12-time champion's second successive win in its group.

Earlier, Karnataka did well to put it across Tamil Nadu 25-20, 17-25, 25-21, 27-25 in a Group-A contest.

Universal Shubham Chaudhary of Haryana, along with central blocker Sube Singh and setter Aman Singh, was the main reason why Haryana, a two-time champion, was able to make a match out of it.

Shubham decimated Railways' defence with immaculate smashes, while Sube did

his main job of blocking – and additional job of attack – with aplomb. Aman did what was expected of him with intelligent passing.

Realising that the receiv-



**Flawless performance:** S. Prabhakaran, right, produced his best when it mattered most for Railways. ■ M. VEDHAN

ing was not up to the mark, Railways gradually improved on it.

And it was evident in the last two sets. At crucial stages, Haryana's double block nullified the power of Shubham and Sube. Attacker S. Prabhakaran produced his best when it mattered with a flawless performance in the decider and fittingly he finished with a gorgeous smash from the middle.

Tamil Nadu's inadequacies in attack and defence were in full view against Karnataka.

Though universal Ashwin Raj, setter Utkrapadian and attacker Naveen Raja Jacob did well, it was consistency that they lacked.

It was G.R. Vaishnav's

grand show that gave a glimmer of hope for the host whenever the chips were down. With a minimum of effort, the India blocker makes every point count. He was the lone bright spot in Tamil Nadu's drab display.

**The results:** Men: **Group-A:** Kerala bt Punjab 25-14, 28-26, 25-23; Karnataka bt Tamil Nadu 25-20, 17-25, 25-21, 27-25; **B:** Railways bt Haryana 17-25, 25-21, 22-25, 25-13, 15-13; Services by Andhra Pradesh (3-2) 19-25, 22-25, 25-23, 25-18, 15-10

**Women: Group-A:** Railways bt West Bengal 25-12, 25-10, 25-13; Tamil Nadu bt Haryana 25-12, 25-16, 25-8; **B:** Kerala bt Karnataka 25-12, 24-26, 25-10, 25-16; Maharashtra bt Telangana 25-19, 22-25, 28-26, 25-23.

It was an error-ridden

match, with Kirsty showing energy and drive to hit winners in the first game. But eventually Beiven brought cheer to her team.

After Beiven had brought

# Easy win for Warriors

## PBL

G. VISWANATH  
AHMEDABAD

Beiwen Zhang, Lee Yang and Mathias Christiansen and Son Wan Ho won their matches in three games each to give Awadhe Warriors a 5-(1) win over Ahmedabad Smash Masters in the Vodafone PBL season 4 at 'The Arena by SE TransStadia' here on Friday.

Beiwen has played for the country of her birth, China, and Singapore, and has been representing the USA for the last five years, was a clear cut favourite to win the opening Trump match for the Warriors.

But the fiercely determined 25-year-old Scottish competitor, Kirsty Gilmour, seemed bent upon having things her own way and make a strong start for Ahmedabad Smash Masters. But after dropping the opening game, the wily American, Beiwen, staved off the challenge.

It was an error-ridden match, with Kirsty showing energy and drive to hit winners in the first game. But eventually Beiwen brought cheer to her team.

After Beiwen had brought an end to Kirsty's hopes of



Beiwen Zhang. ■ VIJAY SONEJI

causing an upset, it was the puny-looking South Korean, Son Wan Ho who stole the thunder with a brilliant win against Denmark's Viktor Axelsen.

Ranked a rung above his regular Danish opponent, Son dominated the opening game and won it.

He was decimated in the second with Axelsen's smashes winning him the points.

## TV PICKS

**Australia vs India:** 4th Test, day 3, Sony Six & Ten 3 (SD & HD), 5 a.m.

**New Zealand vs Sri Lanka:** 2nd ODI, SS Select 1 (SD & HD), 6 a.m.

**NBA:** Sony Ten 1 & ESPN (SD & HD), 9 a.m.

**Women's Challenger Trophy:** Star Sports 2 (SD & HD), 9 a.m.

**Hopman Cup:** Sony Ten 2 (HD), 1.30 p.m.

**South Africa vs Pakistan:** 2nd Test, Sony ESPN (SD & HD), 2 p.m.

**Tata Open:** SS Select 2 (SD & HD), 3 p.m.

**PBL:** Star Sports 1 (SD & HD), 3.30 p.m.

**PKL:** Star Sports 2 (SD & HD), 8 p.m.

## IN BRIEF



## Harden sinks Warriors

SAN ANTONIO  
James Harden rattled in the winning basket with two seconds left in overtime to lift Houston Rockets to a 135-134 win over Golden State. Harden finished with 44 points, 15 assists and 10 rebounds. Elsewhere, DeMar DeRozan delivered his first career triple double as San Antonio Spurs routed Toronto Raptors 125-107. DeRozan finished with 21 points, 14 rebounds and 11 assists. APP

## Tim Southee to lead New Zealand T20 side

WELLINGTON  
Tim Southee was named on Friday to captain New Zealand in next week's one-off Twenty20 match against Sri Lanka. Regular skipper Kane Williamson is to be rested along with Trent Boult and Colin de Grandhomme. Southee, who has captained New Zealand twice before, admitted that leading a side in cricket's shortest form can be a bit of a gamble. APP

# Karman Kaur gets ready

Will start the season with the Australian Open qualifying event

KAMESH SRINIVASAN  
NEW DELHI

Karman Kaur Thandi has made good progress over the last two years, getting back to the Grand Slam circuit after having competed in all the four Grand Slams as a junior.

The 20-year-old, ranked 207 in the world, will start the season with the women's qualifying event of the Australian Open in Melbourne.

She had competed in the US Open juniors in 2015, and followed that up with the Australian, French and Wimbledon events in 2016. Her best memory was making the singles pre-quarterfinals and the doubles quarterfinals with Y. Pranjala at the Australian Open.

"When I was playing those Slams as a junior, it was preparation for the future. Every Slam has its own charm, and I enjoyed all four. It was basically a learning experience. The goal was to return there as a pro. So, I am very excited and glad to be back there," she said.

She could have tried the US Open last year, but it clashed with the Asian Games, and Karman had opted



**Looking ahead:** Karman Kaur Thandi will start the season with the women's qualifying event of the Australian Open in Melbourne. ■ FILE PHOTO

to delay her Grand Slam entry as a professional.

Having closed the season by the end of November, Karman did well to rest and recover.

"I was happy with getting my first ITF singles title and

my first WTA doubles title last year. Of course, I wanted to finish better, but there is no limit to that desire," she said.

If their rank lets them get back into the big tournaments together, Karman and Ankita Raina would keep their option open for competing together.

"If we are playing the same tournament and making the cut, we will take a call," she said.

At the moment, the target for Karman is to try and play more WTA events, for her singles.

"I want to reach a rank by which I can get a direct entry into Wimbledon. Or do so, maximum by the US Open," Karman said.

Karman emphasised that she would always look at multiple Grand Slam champion, Mahesh Bhupathi as her "mentor and guide."

## Anirudh & Vijay in final

**SPORTS BUREAU**  
ANNING (CHINA)

Second seeds Anirudh Chandrasekar and Vijay Sundar Prashanth beat Sora Fukuda and Taisei Ichikawa of Japan 4-6, 7-5, [10-8] in the doubles semi-finals of the \$25,000 ITF men's Futures tennis tournament on Friday.

The Indians will challenge top seeds Ti Chen and Ray Ho of Chinese Taipei in the final.

**The results:** \$25,000 ITF men, Anning, China: Semifinals: Anirudh Chandrasekar & Vijay Sundar Prashanth bt Sora Fukuda & Taisei Ichikawa (Jpn) 4-6, 7-5, [10-8].

## We can take pride in the flawless execution of the plans: Karim

Local and neutral curators ensured that the matches were played on excellent pitches'

**VIJAY LOKAPALLY**  
NEW DELHI

The intrigue that marks the qualification race of the Ranji Trophy is the "most satisfying" factor of the revamped domestic cricket as visualised by the Cricket Operations team of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI).

If their rank lets them get back into the big tournaments together, Karman and Ankita Raina would keep their option open for competing together.

"If we are playing the same tournament and making the cut, we will take a call," she said.

At the moment, the target for Karman is to try and play more WTA events, for her singles.

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Karman emphasised that she would always look at multiple Grand Slam champion, Mahesh Bhupathi as her "mentor and guide."

## Logistic challenges

From eight new teams, adding to the 29 with past experience, the Ranji Trophy presented gigantic logistic challenges. "We reverted to home-and-away system which was much needed. To put in place travel of the teams, scheduling of the games, appointment of match officials, we accom-

plished it all without any flaw. We showed out ability to handle such a big exercise," noted Karim.

A total of 70 match referees, 115 umpires, 149 scorers and 185 video analysts have been on the job.

The Cricket Operations team maintained uniformity of the schedule in all age groups. "We made the under-19 and under-23 teams understand the dynamics of the senior format. We drew our strength from the encouraging feedbacks. The best part was that the local and neutral curators ensured that the matches were played on excellent pitches."

"There has not been any complaint about the playing surfaces this season. Putting the infrastructure in place is one thing but executing it successfully is another. It has been a memorable exercise this far," Karim observed.

## Evaluation of officials

Among the new features was the evaluation of umpires and match referees. "We have a portal where the match referees and umpires assess each other. There is another portal where the umpires and match referees log their views on talented players for the benefit of the



Saba Karim. ■ FILE PHOTO

national selectors, who have exclusive access to the portal. Every registered player is assessed in this portal and it bodes well for the future administration of the game," asserted Karim.

Uttarakhand coach K.P. Bhaskar said, "It has been a superb season of domestic cricket. The pitches have been very sporting and the overall mood among the teams is to give their best. The players are now confident of playing on any surface and beat any team."

For Himachal Pradesh coach Vikram Rathour, the season has been full of excitement. "Till the last round, we don't know which teams will qualify. But I would have loved eight teams (3+3+2) from the first three groups. The Plate group should have been only to push one team to Group C and then compete to qualify."

## Man City reignites title race

**AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE**  
MANCHESTER

Manchester City won a "final" according to manager Pep Guardiola to remain in the title race by inflicting Liverpool's first Premier League defeat of the season

with a 2-1 victory at the Etihad.

1990.

## The results:

**Premier League:** Manchester City 2 (Aguero 40, Sane 72) bt Liverpool 1 (Firmino 64).

**La Liga:** Villarreal 2 (Cazorla 4, 82) drew with Real Madrid 2 (Benzema 7, Varane 20).

## ANDHRA PRADESH MEDICAL SERVICES & INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

2nd Floor, Plot No.9, Survey No.49, IT Park, Mangalagiri - 522503  
Ph.No.8978622296 Fax: email: apmsidc@gmail.com  
**Tender Notice No.15/APMSIDC/Equipment-2018-19, Dated: 03.01.2019.**  
1. APMSIDC invites tenders through e-procurement platform for procurement of Medical Equipment and Furniture items to various Government Hospitals in Andhra Pradesh 2. Total no. of works 8 Nos 3. ECV : 2830.00 lakhs 4. For detailed notification and further details please visit the web site <http://apmsidc.apnic.in> & www.tenders.approcurement.gov.in. Contact EE (Equipment) on mobile 8978622966 APMSIDC will reserve the right to cancel the tender at any time without assigning any reasons.  
DIDR 599P/CL, Dt. 4/1/2019

**Sd/- MANAGING DIRECTOR**

**TRANSMISSION CORPORATION OF ANDHRA PRADESH LIMITED VIDYUTH SOUDHA, VIJAYAWADA-520004.**  
**e' PROCUREMENT NOTICE**  
The APTRANSCO invites on line bids under e-procurement for the following equipment.  
**SL. No.** **Specification No.** **Description of Equipment**  
1. PMM31-01/2019 Supply of 400 KV Silicos Rubber Composite Insulators (i) 120 KN/400 KV SRC Insulators - 1,600 Nos. (ii) 160 KN/400 KV SRC Insulators - 2,330 Nos.  
Tenders can have further details and download the tender schedule from e-procurement market place i.e [tender.approcurement.gov.in](http://tender.approcurement.gov.in). Contact Nos: Chief Engineer / Transmission - 0866 - 2429230, Ext: 2014, 2034, 2042, 2706. Website: [www.aptranco.gov.in](http://www.aptranco.gov.in)  
**Sd/- CHIEF ENGINEER TRANSMISSION**

## CPWD, CALICUT: NOTICE INVITING e-TENDERS

The Executive Engineer(EE), Calicut Central Electrical Division, CPWD, Calicut for and on behalf of the President of India invites online percentage rate bids from approved and eligible contractors of CPWD under composite category of appropriate class for the following work on or before 10.01.2019 at 23.59 hrs.

**NIT No. 14/CLCTED/2018-19**

Name of work: Rewiring and Replacement

works at JNV Vengara, Malappuram.

(1) Rewiring of Mess Hall.

(2) Replacement of Defective Wiring for

Principals residence, 12 Nos Type III(A),

4 Nos Type III(B), 8 Nos Type II, 11 Nos

Type I(B) & 5 Nos Type I (SD) Qtrs

Estimated Cost : Rs. 59,77,310/-

Earnest Money : Rs. 1,19,546/-

Period of completion: 03(Three) Months.

The tender forms and other details can

be obtained from the website,

[www.tenderwidgit.com/CPWD/](http://www.tenderwidgit.com/CPWD/) or

[www.cpwd.gov.in](http://www.cpwd.gov.in)

Tenders can have further details and download the tender schedule from e-procurement market place i.e [tender.approcurement.gov.in](http://tender.approcurement.gov.in). Contact Nos: Chief Engineer / Transmission - 0866 - 2429230, Ext: 2014, 2034, 2042, 2706. Website: [www.aptranco.gov.in](http://www.aptranco.gov.in)  
**Sd/- CHIEF ENGINEER TRANSMISSION**

## DELHI JAL BOARD

### OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER WEST-III NANGLOI PH-II: NEAR BARAT GHAR: NEW DELHI-41

**N.I.T No. 34 WEST-III/(2018-19)**

S. No.	Description	Amount put to tender	Tender Fee	Earnest Money	Date of release of tender in a procurement solution	Last date/time for tender download through e-procurement solution
1	Replacement of old AC/PVC water line in Ladpur Village in Mundka Constituency AC-08 under EE(West) III.	Rs. 39,53,465/-	Rs. 500/-	Rs. 79,500/-	01.01.2019 I.D. No 2019_DJB_164830_1	18.01.2019 at 3:00 PM

Further details in this regard can be seen at (<http://govtprocurement.delhi.gov.in>)

Issued by P.R.O. (Water)

Advt. No. J.S.V. 651/2018-19

**Ex. Engineer (West)-III**

## भारत सरकार/GOVERNMENT OF INDIA, अंतरिक्ष विभाग/DEPARTMENT OF SPACE

### विक्रम सारामार्ड अंतरिक्ष केंद्र/VIKRAM SARABHAI SPACE CENTRE

### तिरुवनंतपुरम्/THIRUVANANTHAPURAM-695 022

**विज्ञापन सं. वीएसएसी/पी/विज्ञापन/272/2018 दिनांक 04.01.2019**

**ADVT. NO. VSSC/P/ADVT/272/2018 DT. 04.01.2019**

भारत के राष्ट्रपति के लिए यात्रा लाई और बैरिट क्रेस, आर्मी प्रोजेक्ट विभाग ने विज्ञापन एंड शॉर्ट लिस्टिंग के अंतर्गत विभागीय कार्यालयों की अधिकारीयता दिलाई है।

विज्ञापन सं. वीएसएसी/पी/विज्ञापन/272/2018 दिनांक 04.01.2019 के लिए विभागीय कार्यालयों की अधिकारीयता दिलाई है।</

# Moment of truth

The AFC Asian Cup is a significant milestone for Indian football. It's an opportunity for the national team to test itself against the continent's best and prove it belongs in such company



ILLUSTRATION: KANNAN SUNDAR

## SHREDDUTTA CHIDANANDA

The wait ended in all certainty when Jeje Lalpekhlua swept Sunil Chhetri's cross into the net in injury time. The rain that had soaked Bengaluru's Sree Kanteerava Stadium had at last stopped; Stephen Constantine quietly embraced his staff while behind him the dugout erupted.

Moments later, the whistle went. India had beaten Macau 4-1 and, with two games to spare in Group A, had qualified for the 2019 AFC Asian Cup.

"If not the best, this team is surely one of the best Indian teams

in history," Constantine gushed afterwards. "I'm immensely proud of my team."

## A wait ends

Some 15 months have passed since the events of that October evening, and it is finally time for all of India's grand plans to be put to the test. The Asian Cup will begin this weekend in the UAE, a competition India will be returning to after a gap of eight years.

Back in 2011, India had entered the Asian Cup by virtue of having won the 2008 AFC Challenge Cup, beating opposition that was not

exactly challenging.

This time around, the side came through the qualifiers in some comfort, though it helped India's cause that the tournament expanded to 24 teams from 16. The 2019 Asian Cup is a significant milestone for Indian football. It is an opportunity for the national team to demonstrate to Asia – and the rest of the world – that India is an improved (and quickly improving) footballing community.

## Reality check

For all the hype and self-congratulation that follow India's every move upwards in the FIFA rankings, it is worth noting that since

its last appearance in the Asian Cup in 2011, the side has played only two matches against an opponent in the continent's top six: the two World Cup qualifiers against Iran in 2015-16. It is not always for want of trying. The big teams want to play one another; India – in the continent's eyes – is no superpower.

Chhetri put it bluntly last June.

"Only once we start playing the likes of Japan, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Australia and South Korea regularly will we have a reference point," he said. "We'll know how far behind we are. Only when we are in the top 10 (in Asia) can we

go and ask one of these teams to play a friendly against us. Right now, why would they want to play against us?

"It's sad, but that's how it is. When Japan is meeting tough teams like Senegal and Colombia at the World Cup, why would they want to face us? For them to take us seriously, we need to be in the top 10."

## Chance to shine

The 2019 Asian Cup, then, is a chance for India to rub shoulders with the continent's best. Eight years ago, Bob Houghton's men were placed in a group alongside

South Korea, Australia and Bahrain; to nobody's surprise, they lost all three games. This time around, India finds itself pooled with Thailand, the UAE, and Bahrain.

On paper, things look rosy: only the UAE (79) is ranked higher than India (97). But Bahrain (113), which over the last 12 months has drawn with Iraq, Qatar and China, and defeated Lebanon, will prove hard to beat.

Thailand (118), meanwhile, is a far better unit than the rankings suggest; having perhaps been on par with India a decade ago, the Thais are now one of Asia's fast-

## WORD PLAY

## Taper

• What is it? In sports training, the 'taper' is a system of reducing the volume of work in the days leading up to competition. Some find the idea of cutting back, sleeping in, and eating during the final stage of preparation counter-intuitive, but studies have shown it helps.

• Who uses it? Athletes who compete in endurance sports such as long-distance running and swimming. Many marathoners swear by it. Sprinters have been known to benefit from it, as well, but they typically 'taper' for much shorter periods than endurance athletes.



• How does it work? Studies have shown that hard training in the final phase causes fatigue, depleting the body's reserves of glycogen, enzymes, antioxidants and various hormones. Tapering minimises this; done properly, it can improve performance by as much as 3%.

• Not to be confused with The hairstyle 'taper fade' is a sharp look, but it does little for performance – no, it doesn't reduce aerodynamic drag enough to make a difference. 'Taper' training has few aesthetic benefits; but it gets the job done.

## ON THE BOX

## STACKING UP



■ FA Cup: SAT: Manchester United v Reading, 6 P.M.; SONY TEN 1 & HD; Chelsea v Nottingham Forest, 7.30 P.M.; Blackpool v Arsenal, 11 P.M.; SONY TEN 2 & HD. SUN: Manchester City v Rotherham United, 7.30 P.M.; Newport County v Leicester City, 10 P.M.; SONY TEN 2 & HD.

■ La Liga: SAT: Real Valladolid v Rayo Vallecano, 5.30 P.M.; SONY TEN 3 & HD. SUN: Sevilla v Atletico Madrid, 8.45 P.M.; SONY TEN 1 & HD.

■ Tata Open Maharashtra: SAT: 2.40 P.M.; STAR SPORTS SELECT 2 & HD.

■ Hopman Cup: SAT: 1.10 P.M.; SONY TEN 2 HD.

■ NBA: SAT: Trail Blazers v Thunder, 9 A.M.; SONY TEN 1 & HD, SONY ESPN & HD. SUN: 76ers v Mavericks, 6 A.M.; Kings v Warriors, 8.30 A.M.; SONY TEN 1 & HD.

■ Indian Premier League: SAT: 7 P.M.; SONY TEN 1 & HD. SUN: 7 P.M.; SONY TEN 1 & HD.



## ICC Test Rankings

#	TEAM	W	PTS	RATE
1	India	38	4,397	116
2	England	49	5,310	108
3	New Zealand	30	3,213	107
4	South Africa	35	3,712	106
5	Australia	36	3,663	102
6	Sri Lanka	42	3,888	93
7	Pakistan	28	2,579	92
8	West Indies	35	2,463	70
9	Bangladesh	25	1,727	69
10	Zimbabwe	11	138	13

## ODI Rankings

#	TEAM	W	PTS	RATE
1	England	55	6,918	126
2	India	58	7,000	121
3	New Zealand	43	4,603	103
4	South Africa	45	4,985	111
5	Pakistan	43	4,370	102
6	Australia	40	3,980	100
7	Bangladesh	39	3,608	93
8	Sri Lanka	54	4,240	79
9	West Indies	40	2,899	72
10	Afghanistan	36	2,394	67

## T20I Rankings

#	TEAM	W	PTS	RATE
1	Pakistan	36	4,979	138
2	India	42	5,298	126
3	England	22	2,546	118
4	Australia	28	3,266	117
5	South Africa	22	2,502	114
6	New Zealand	25	2,803	112
7	West Indies	27	2,725	101
8	Afghanistan	27	2,490	92
9	Sri Lanka	29	2,518	87
10	Bangladesh	30	2,321	77

## Men's Top Five

1 Keita Momota 24 1,04,650 37

2 Shi Yuqi 22 91,582 17

3 Cheu Tien-Chen 28 82,024 21

4 Chen Long 29 72,378 15

5 Son Wan Ho 30 72,142 19

India's best: ■

K. Srikanth Rank 8

Sameer Verma Rank 12

## Women's Top Five

#	PLAYER	AGE	POINTS	EVENTS
1	Tai Tzu Ying	24	1,00,267	16
2	Nozomi Okuhara	23	85,907	19
3	P.V. Sindhu	23	84,264	17
4	Chen Yufei	20	83,529	18
5	Akane Yamaguchi	21	82,813	18

India's next best: ■

Saina Nehwal Rank 9

Rituparna Das Rank 55

## English Premier League Standings

#	TEAM	GP	W	D	LT	GF	GA	GD	PTS
1	Liverpool	21	17	3	1	49	10	39	54
2	Manchester City	21	16	2	3	56	17	39	50
3	Tottenham Hotspur	21	16	0	5	46	21	25	48
4	Chelsea	21	13	5	3	38	16	22	44
5	Arsenal	21	12	5	4	46	31	15	41
6	Manchester United	21	11	5	6	43	32	11	38
7	Leicester City	21	9	4	8	25	23	2	31
8	Watford	21	8	5	8	30	31	-1	29
9	Wolverhampton Wanderers	21	8	5	8	23			

est improving outfit, an attractive quick-passing side with three players competing in the Japanese league.

But the draw could have been a lot worse. And with four third-placed teams also to advance to the last 16, India will feel it is in with a decent chance.

Constantine's men will also draw encouragement from recent performances in friendlies against China, Jordan, and Oman: they lost 2-1 to Jordan with nearly half of the first-choice eleven missing and drew with the other two. In Suzhou, China twice hit the crossbar and India was forced into some last-ditch work in the goalmouth, but the defensive organisation was largely solid.

#### Encouraging signs

"I like the way we fought against China," says former international Renedy Singh, who played in midfield at the 2011 Asian Cup. "Against Myanmar and Kyrgyzstan (in the qualifiers) we were not great. But this was an improvement. Thailand and Bahrain are not South Korea or Australia. If we fight, we can get good results."

After taking charge of India for the second time in March 2015, Constantine set about calling up a great number of players. In a little over two years, he had handed out nearly 40 new caps, but the head coach soon settled on a preferred squad.

For India's trip to the UAE, he has largely stuck with the players who helped the side qualify, regardless of current form. The likes of Rahul Bheke, Lallianzuala Chhangte, Joby Justin, and Farukh Choudhary have made strong cases for inclusion in the squad of 23 but they have been ignored. This, predictably, has sparked much debate.

"Constantine has taken the players he trusts; it is something any coach will do," says Renedy. "But what I feel is that seven or eight months ago, [Michael] Soosairaj, Bheke and Joby Justin could have been called up to the camp. See if they can jell with the players who are already there; if not, send them back. But they weren't even tried. Now it's too late to try new players."

#### Calm heads needed

This is a young Indian squad – the second youngest in the Asian Cup with an average age of 25 – and nobody, with the exception of Chhetri and Gurpreet Singh Sandhu, has been to a tournament of this sort before. India will need calm heads and will have to fight for every inch.

"You don't have to play well; you have to defend well and nick a goal," says Pradhyum Reddy, coach of ISL side FC Pune City.

"We've shown that defensively we're very organised. A couple of hard-fought draws and a hard-fought victory, and maybe we can get out of the group."

India's mere presence at the Asian Cup has generated much public interest in the tournament. Any progress beyond the group stages may well come to be regarded, one day, as an infliction point in Indian football.



## Substance over style, results over philosophy

A hard taskmaster who demands defensive discipline of all his players, Stephen Constantine has drawn both admiration and criticism for his methods. But there is no doubt India is a much-improved side compared to five years ago

SHREEDUTTA CHIDANANDA

**I**t was interesting to note Stephen Constantine's words after India sealed qualification for the Asian Cup back in 2017. "They have followed my manners, my demands," he said of the team. "They've gone through the tough training regime, rigorous pressure and at the end of the day, they have delivered."

Constantine does not deny that he is a hard taskmaster. He expects defensive discipline of all his players, and it can be boring to watch his team show little or no attacking endeavour sometimes. His methods have drawn accusations of rigidity and tactical intransigence, but he will point to results.

#### Improved fitness

One thing is obvious: this Indian team is much-improved compared to five years ago. Some of it has to do with a general rise in fitness standards in Indian football, as Constantine himself acknowledged in an interview to the AFC recently. "We're now using sports science which has been very instrumental in how we prepare and we're able to keep our players in good shape on and off the field," he said. "I feel there's a more holistic

approach now to then (2011) in that we are able to use the GPS systems to ensure that the loads we give players are manageable. We're also using video analysis."

India's tactical plans at the Asian Cup will be relatively straightforward: stay defensively compact, close the spaces between the lines, and hit teams on the counter-attack when the chance presents itself. Udanta Singh will be a major outlet on the right flank; he and Holicharan Narzary, stationed on the left, will do a lot of defensive work too. Winger Ashique Kuruniyan, who can come off the bench, will also be a threat to rival defences.

Young Anirudh Thapa is perhaps the lone creative presence in the middle of midfield; India will hope to get him on the ball as much as possible. Goals have been a concern; India has scored only one in the last three friendlies, and much depends on 34-year-old Sunil Chhetri, for whom there is no replacement on the horizon. Jeje Lalpekhlua has endured a difficult ISL season, failing to score a single goal or provide a single assist, but he found the net six times in the Asian Cup qualifiers and will be persisted with.

Constantine's India has at times been guilty of play-

ing route-one football, but Pradhyum Reddy defends the Englishman's approach. "At this level you can't be too concerned about style of play," he says. "It's about results. You have to compromise sometimes to get what you need. We've seen in the past under Wim Koevermans and others, we've tried to be more expansive and it hasn't worked. We don't necessarily have the players to play that kind of a game."

#### The value of pace

Pradhyum, who has worked with Kuruniyan at FC Pune City this season, can see why the Malappuram winger made the squad. "His work rate is fantastic. He's the kind of player Constantine wants in his team because he does both: tracking back defensively and attacking. He's got pace like Udanta. Irrespective of what opposition you're playing against, pace does cause problems. Especially on the counter-attack.

"He (Constantine) wants players who suit his system 100%. He's omitted some skilful players – ones who are eye-catching but who don't necessarily put the work rate in."

Renedy Singh

played under Constantine during the latter's first spell in charge (2002-5), and he is less complimentary.

"We won the LG Cup under him; yes, he's a good motivator, but philosophy I'm not too sure," he says. "It was only when Bob Houghton came after him that we saw what real football was all about. Everyone in the team had a duty; for example, when the play is on the right, what should the left winger do. Bob had that philosophy."

There has been much speculation over Constantine's position and there have been reports of a rift between him and Chhetri. The AIFF has been quick to quash all rumours of a sacking, but it remains to be seen what Constantine's fate will be when his contract runs out at the end of the month.

#### FORMAT EXPLAINED

- The 24 teams have been divided into six groups of four (see: Groups)
- In the group stage, teams play one another once
- The top two teams from each group and the four best third-place finishers qualify for the knockouts
- The knockouts comprise four rounds: pre-quarterfinals (Jan. 20, 21 & 22); quarterfinals (Jan. 24 & 25); semifinals (Jan. 28 & 29); final (Feb. 1)

#### GROUPS



**Matt Holland** knows his way around both Indian and Thai football. Formerly at Bengaluru FC, he is the technical director of Buriram United, Thailand's most successful club in recent years. The Hindu asked him about India's first opponent at the Asian Cup

## What Chhetri & Co. can expect in their opener

I know about 10 players from this Thai squad on a personal level. Many of them are playing at Buriram while some have played here previously and moved on. They are a very tight-knit side; they spend a lot of time together, especially the boys in and around Bangkok.

There's a complete contrast between the former coach (Kiatisuk 'Zico' Semarnang) and the current coach (Milovan Rajevac, who took over in 2017).

Zico was more about high volumes of possession, a lot of combinations and they absolutely walked this region. But they struggled when it came to World Cup qualifying.

#### Technically strong

Rajevac is defensive-minded. The Thai public don't want to see that. They like entertainment, they like goals. That's the culture in this region. The Thais are not happy winning 1-0. They didn't win the recent AFF Suzuki Cup, so it's a difficult phase for him (Rajevac).

I don't think it will be easy for Thailand against India. Technically, the Thais are going to be very, very good. There are three very good players that will start all the games – Chanathip Songkrasin, Teerasil Dangda, and Theerathon Bunmathan, who have been playing in Japan.

Theerathon (left-back) has got a fantastic delivery on his left foot. Chanathip (attacking midfielder) is very difficult to deal with; he's small but you can't really outmuscle him and out-challenge him because he's so quick in and around you. It's very complex to take the ball off him. Teerasil (forward) doesn't go past three or four players but he's very smart; his movement's good and he's got that knack of scoring goals.

#### Decisions, decisions

If they're cautious, India could be left chasing shadows. India can approach this on the front-foot and give it a go and they've got players capable of scoring goals. If they want to be tactically a little compact and try to play on the counter, they've also got a little more speed. The North-Eastern boys are absolutely rapid.

It's difficult. If India sit back, Thailand may pop the ball around too much. If India go for the throat, they may get done with one or two passes. But India have got Sunil Chhetri. When he's on the pitch, anything can happen.

(As told to Shreedutta Chidananda)



## GAME THEORY

### The amazing race

This year's Dakar Rally takes place entirely in Peru – the first time ever that the famously gruelling off-road endurance race will be held in a single country. A look at what's in store for competitors and fans from January 7 to 17

#### RACE NOTES

■ Starting and finishing in Lima, the rally will see riders compete in 10 stages for a total distance of around 5,600km, including about 3,000km of special stages

■ At least 70% of the terrain to be tackled will be sand and dunes

■ The race will also feature two marathon stages, where competitors service their own vehicles without technical assistance from rally crews

#### KEY TO VEHICLE CATEGORIES

Bikes and quads Trucks

Cars and SxS (side-by-sides)

\*Marathon stage: Competitors receive no technical assistance

Sources: Amaury Sport Organisation, Twitter, Graphic News



Dakar's 2019 edition is being run solely in Peru after both Chile and Argentina withdrew because of austerity measures and Bolivia failed to agree on a route with rally organisers. The Dakar was moved from Africa in 2009 because of security issues that saw the 2008 rally cancelled.

## PICTURE THIS



### Hand of glory

While the concept has been around for ages, the modern game of handball was codified as a sport only in the late 19th century.

The indoor version made the summer Olympics in 1972 and competition for women debuted

four years later, in the 1976 Games.

Handball is played between two teams of seven players each – seven substitutes can be used in rotation without even notifying the referee.

A standard match lasts 60 minutes (two halves of 30 minutes each) and is rather fast-paced, played on a court about half the size

of a basketball court.

The objective, like in most sports, is to score more goals than the opposition.

However, there are some restrictions, and players are not allowed into the D-zone around the goalkeeper. This means they often have to slam the ball in from a

distance or score while diving.

Countries from Europe have dominated the sport right from the beginning.

In the World Men's Handball Championships, which will be held in Germany and Denmark from January 10 to 27, they will once again be the main contenders.

## IN BRIEF



## Book fair to draw readers with special needs

NEW DELHI  
The New Delhi World Book Fair, in its 27th edition, will focus on readers with special needs, by promoting the idea of inclusive learning through a series of exhibitions of audio, silent, tactile and Braille books. The theme pavilion will exhibit over 500 books. The fair opens on January 5. PTI



## Unsold Christmas trees turn snack for elephants

BERLIN  
Berlin's unwanted Christmas trees have ended their days as a festive snack for zoo elephants. The once-a-year treats arrived on Friday at the Tierpark, one of the German capital's two zoos. The zoo takes only fresh, unsold trees from selected vendors. It doesn't accept trees from the public, which could contain chemicals. AP



NEW YORK  
A large protein found in spinach may aid in the development of new medications for millions around the world dealing with alcohol use disorders, chronic pain and mood disorders, researchers said. The study was led by researchers from the Purdue University in the U.S. IANS

# Smartphone apps are helping researchers detect depression

Teenagers leave digital footprints that offer clues to their mental health

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Rising rates of depression in teens and young adults have prompted researchers to ask a provocative question: could the same devices that some people blame for contributing to tech-age angst also be used to detect it?

The idea has sparked a race to develop apps that warn of impending mental health crises. Call it smartphone psychiatry or child psychology 2.0.

Studies have linked heavy smartphone use with worsening teen mental health. But as teens scroll through Instagram and Snapchat, tap out texts or watch YouTube videos, they also leave digital footprints that might offer clues to their psychological well-being.

Changes in typing speed, voice tone, word choice and how often kids stay home could signal trouble, according to preliminary studies.

There might be as many as 1,000 smartphone "biomarkers" for depression, said Thomas Insel, former head of the National Institute of Mental Health and now a leader in the smartphone psychiatry movement.

Researchers are testing experimental apps that use artificial intelligence to try to predict depression episodes or potential self-harm.

"We are tracking the equivalent of a heartbeat for the human brain," said Alex Leow, an app developer and associate professor of psychiatry and bioengineering at the University of Illinois' Chicago campus.

At least, that's the goal. There are technical and ethical kinks to work out including privacy issues and making sure kids grant permission to be monitored



**Subtle shift:** Changes in typing speed, voice tone and word choice could signal trouble. ■ GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

so closely. Developers say proven, commercially available mood-detecting apps are likely years but not decades away.

"People often feel that these things are creepy," because of the tech industry's surreptitious tracking of online habits for commercial purposes, said University of Oregon psychologist Nick Allen.

#### Informed consent

Using smartphones as mental illness detectors would require informed consent from users to install an app, "and they could withdraw permission at any time," said Mr. Allen, one of the creators of an app that is being tested on young people who have attempted suicide.

"The biggest hurdle at the moment," Mr. Allen said, "is to learn about what's the signal and what's the noise what is in this enormous amount of data that people accumulate on their phones that is indicative of a mental health crisis."

People with mental illness typically get treatment "when they're in crisis and very late in the course of an illness. We want to have a

method to identify the earliest signs," in an objective way, Dr. Insel said.

If smartphones prove to be accurate mood predictors, developers say the ultimate goal would be to use them to offer real-time help, perhaps with automated text messages and links to help lines, or digital alerts to parents, doctors or first responders.

Facebook is already doing just that with what it calls "proactive detection". After a livestreamed suicide, Facebook trained its AI systems to flag certain words or phrases in online posts that could indicate imminent self-harm.

Friends' comments expressing concern about the user's well-being are part of the equation.

"In the last year, we've helped first responders quickly reach around 3,500 people globally who needed help," Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg announced in November. Facebook has not disclosed outcomes of those cases.

A Stanford University study involving about 200 teens, including kids at risk

for depression because of bullying, family circumstances or other life stresses. As part of the research, teens who have been tracked since grade school get an experimental phone app that surveys them three times daily for two weeks with questions about their mood.

#### Tracking moods

Researchers are combining those answers with passive smartphone data, including how active or sedentary kids are, to identify any changes that might be linked with future depression.

Study participant Laurel Foster, 15, acknowledges feeling stress over academics and "the usual" teen friendship pressures and says depression is rampant at her San Francisco high school.

She said using the smartphone app felt a bit like being spied on, but with so many online sites already tracking users' habits "one more isn't really a big difference."

"I feel like it's good to actually find out what is stressing you," Ms. Foster said, endorsing the idea of using smartphones to try to answer that question.

At UCLA, as part of a broader effort to battle campus depression launched in 2017, researchers are offering online counselling and an experimental phone app to students who show signs of at least mild depression on a screening test.

About 250 freshmen agreed to use the app in the first year. Personal sensing data collected from the app is being analysed to see how it correlates with any worsening or improvement in depression symptoms seen in Internet therapy.

# Archaeologists find temple to god of skinning sacrifices

Stone idol uncovered in Mexico at a site built by Popolocas

ALAN YUHAS

Archaeologists in Mexico say they have found the first temple dedicated to a deity called the 'flayed lord', an important god in the Aztec Empire whose worshippers were said to wear the skin of sacrificial victims.

Artifacts related to the god were found in the central state of Puebla, at a site built by the Popoloca people, Mexico's National Institute of Anthropology and History said in a statement.

The Popolocas built in the area over several centuries, beginning around A.D. 900, and were assimilated into the sprawling Aztec kingdom.



**Ancient idol:** A sculpture of Xipe Totec at the archaeological site of Ndachjian-Tehuacan in Mexico. ■ REUTERS/INAH

killing the prisoners with arrows. The worshippers then flayed the victims, and priests were said to have worn their skin.

ethnic groups, such as the Popoloca people.

Various depictions of Xipe Totec, for instance, have been found around Mesoamerica, though until now archaeologists had not found a temple that seemed dedicated to him.

"Finds like this will help us understand how they used religion as one of the ways to create a multi-ethnic empire," said Rosemary Joyce, a professor of anthropology at the University of California, Berkeley, who also did not take part in the research.

**Culture absorbed**  
Ms. Joyce compared the cultural practice to that of the Roman Empire, which incorporated religious beliefs from the territories' outlying people.

"It's really important that

we're beginning to get more information about people other than the Mexica," she said, using the indigenous word for the rulers of the Aztec Empire.

She also warned against taking all Aztec artwork that portrays violence as proof that it was carried out as shown. NY TIMES

## Invitation for suggestions on Entrepreneurship Curriculum

**in  
Delhi Government Schools**

Delhi Government intends to introduce 'Entrepreneurship Curriculum' for classes 9th to 12th in all its Government Schools. This Curriculum will be another milestone after the successful implementation of 'Happiness Curriculum' for classes Nursery to 8th. The Government is in the process of developing an activity based curriculum for this purpose.

The Entrepreneurship Curriculum will instill key elements of Aspiration and Mindset needed for problem solving, decision making, risk taking abilities which leads to the spirit of entrepreneurship. The Curriculum may be based on a four-fold framework:

- Inspire through Stories and Case Studies of entrepreneurial journeys,
- Educate through self designed micro research,
- Involvement through local community,
- Facilitate by supporting in developing ideas into projects.

Suggestions are invited from organizations/NGOs/ foundations/Universities/Schools/Teachers and Practitioners who have sufficient experience in the area. **Suggestions may be submitted at [www.edudel.nic.in](http://www.edudel.nic.in) by 15th January, 2019.** For detailed guidelines, refer to 'Public Circular' on [www.edudel.nic.in](http://www.edudel.nic.in).

Selected Organisations and experts will be invited to participate in curriculum development and further effective implementation of the curriculum.

If our schools prepare only job seekers, as we see today, who will prepare job providers? Through entrepreneurship curriculum, in the students of 9th to 12th class, we hope to instill an aspiration to become job providers instead of job seekers

Manish Sisodia, Dy. Chief Minister, Delhi



State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT) - Delhi  
Directorate of Education, Government of NCT of Delhi