



## 'Media targeting Rahul for a decade'

Everything he does is open to criticism, says Sam Pitroda

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The media has been picking on Congress president Rahul Gandhi for the last 10 years, Congress leader Sam Pitroda said on Monday.

In the context of relentless questions on why Mr. Gandhi decided to contest from Wayanad along with

Amethi, Mr. Pitroda said, "The media is such that they are constantly focused on this one young man for the last 10 years. Everything he does is open to criticism. If he scratches the right side, then they will question 'Why did he not scratch the left side?' and there will be a national debate on that." He

was speaking at the second V.K. Madhavan Kutty memorial lecture on 'Political campaigns in the digital era'.

Mr. Pitroda also panned the social media which, he said, produced fake news. "Social media amplifies lies in a big way mainly because you can hide behind fake identity," he said.

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## Rahul, Priyanka cancel on Saharanpur

No-show attributed to bad weather; Congress general secretary to hold roadshow today



DAMINI NATH  
SAHARANPUR

A day after the show of strength by the Bahujan Samaj Party-Samajwadi Party-Rashtriya Lok Dal alliance in Saharanpur's Deoband, the stage was set for Congress president Rahul Gandhi and party general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra to address supporters in the constituency on Monday.

However, after hours of waiting, the crowd gathered at Gandhi Park in Saharanpur left without a glimpse of the brother and sister. According to the announcement made about three hours after the rally was supposed to start, the two leaders were forced to cancel their appearance at the rally in Saharanpur, as well as in Shamli and Bijnor later in the



A dust storm uprooted the tents at the site of the Congress rally in Saharanpur on Monday. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

day, due to "bad weather", which prevented their helicopter from taking off. Ms. Gandhi would, however, hold a roadshow in Saharanpur, which goes to polls on April 11, on Tuesday morning, the party announced.

### Support for Masood

As the crowd was gathering at the venue earlier in the day, a dust storm blew

through, ripping the tents open and leaving the metal trussing dangling overhead. While the two star campaigners of the party cancelled, many local Congress leaders as well as representatives of the Bhim Army turned up to lend support to the Saharanpur candidate, Imran Masood. Many among the crowd said that they will continue

to support and will vote for the Congress candidate, while some felt they were "fooled" and used to assemble a big crowd at the venue.

Rashid Ahmed, a carpenter who attended the rally, said: "We will still vote for the Congress. Priyanka is coming for a roadshow on Tuesday, and we will go and attend that as well."

Mr. Ahmed was interrupted by another member of the crowd, Ishrar, who said: "They have made fools out of us, they just wanted a big crowd."

For Mohammad Farhan, an 18-year-old first-time voter, defeating Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government was the aim.

"Modi kept promising *acchhe din*. The good days never came, so we want the old days back. Rahul Gandhi does what he says, Modi only spreads rumours," he said.

Twenty-one-year-old col-

lege student Shahrukh Ali said: "Modi has done *sabka saath, sabka naash*. I opened four zero balance accounts and they are still at zero. Now, I will wait for ₹72,000 [minimum income guaranteed by the Congress]."

### Rally vs rally

Another local at the rally, Gulbahar, said he had attended the *gathbandhan*'s rally in Deoband on Sunday as well and the turnout was more than that at the Congress rally.

Haji Fazulrahman [the SP-SP-RLD alliance candidate] may win here, but Rahul should be the next Prime Minister," he said.

Ram Kumar Jogi, a teacher who attended the rally, said: "What they [Mr. Gandhi and Ms. Vadra] did today is disrespect of the whole community. All parties are making false promises."

## Hapur killing: SC seeks fresh status report

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday asked the Uttar Pradesh government to file a fresh status report in the Hapur lynching case last year, in which one person lost his life.

A Bench of Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi and Justices Deepak Gupta and Sanjiv Khanna asked the State government to submit its status report on the investigation and trial in the case.

The apex court on September 5 last year directed the I-G of Meerut range to supervise the investigation in the Hapur lynching case.

## Untimely rain leaves farmers worried

Can damage crops, delay harvesting in Haryana and Punjab

VIKAS VASUDEV  
CHANDIGARH

Untimely rain accompanied by strong winds in the key wheat-growing States of Punjab and Haryana on Monday has left farmers worried as it could damage crops and delay harvesting.

"Parts of Punjab and Haryana experienced rain and gusty winds this morning. There is a possibility of intermittent rain over the next two days," said Surinder Pal, director at the India Meteorological Department, Chandigarh.

Harvesting of wheat, the main rabi crop sown from late October to December, has already started in both the States but is yet to gain momentum as rain at regular intervals during the entire winter season has delayed harvesting. The wheat procurement season in Punjab and Haryana began on April 1.

P.S. Rangi, an agriculture expert and former adviser to the Punjab State Farmers' Commission, said the current spell of rain would not have damaged the standing crop extensively.

"However, the crop which has already been harvested and is lying in the fields may have been damaged," he said, adding that if overcast conditions prevail and it continues to rain in the coming days, the wheat crop would absorb the moisture

and harvesting could get delayed.

Punjab is expecting a bumper wheat crop touching 180 lakh tonnes this year. Last year, the wheat output was 177 lakh tonnes, according to data from the State agriculture department.

### Crops flattened

Sanju Gudeyan, a farmer leader with the Bhartiya Kisan Union in Haryana's Yamunanagar, said rain and strong winds lashed Bilaspur, Chahraili, Sadara and Naraingarh regions in the morning, flattening standing crops and causing extensive damage.

"Farmers are at the receiving end due to this untimely rain," he said.

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**AIR 18 Top Rank Test Series ESSAY**

## Reply to CBI's plea on arrest: SC to ex-top cop

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday sought a response from former Kolkata Police Commissioner to a plea by the CBI to arrest him in connection with the Saradha chit

fund scam.

The CBI urged a Bench, led by Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi, to lift its February 8 stay order against any "coercive action" against Mr. Kumar. The agency said that his arrest was necessary

to "unravel the entire gamut of the larger conspiracy in the ponzi scam cases".

The Bench gave Mr. Kumar four weeks' time to file his response.

The CBI also sought the court's directions to the

West Bengal authorities to comply with the court's earlier orders "in letter and spirit" and not to create any hurdle in the probe or try to "intimidate, harass and scare the agency officials" probing the cases.

**Denied ticket, sitting MLA turns star campaigner**

SIB KUMAR DAS  
BERHAMPUR

Ramesh Chandra Chyau Patnaik, the sitting MLA of Odisha's Berhampur Assembly constituency, may have missed out on the party ticket but has emerged as the star campaigner for both parliamentary and Assembly poll candidates of the Biju Janata Dal in the area.

All BJD posters, banners and billboards in Berhampur city bear photos of the five-time MLA prominently, along with those of party founder Biju Patnaik and his son and Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik. Chandrasekhar Sahu, the party's Lok Sabha candidate here, and Assembly election contestant Bikram Panda make it a point to take the doctor along during their campaigns.

Both candidates were political rivals of Dr. Chyau Patnaik until last year, when they left the Congress to join the BJD. Mr. Panda has tasted defeat at the hands of Dr. Chyau Patnaik four times as a Congress candidate for Berhampur Assembly seat since 2000. At rallies now, he says he might have got the BJD ticket this time but the incumbent MLA is helming his campaign.

The denial of ticket to the doctor had led to rumbblings in the Berhampur BJD and among voters.

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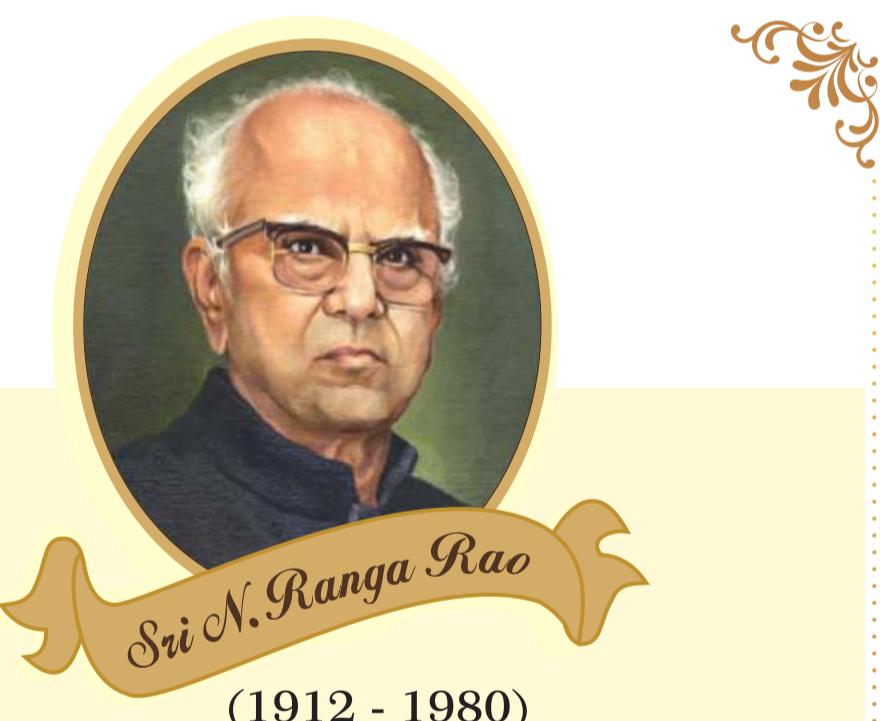
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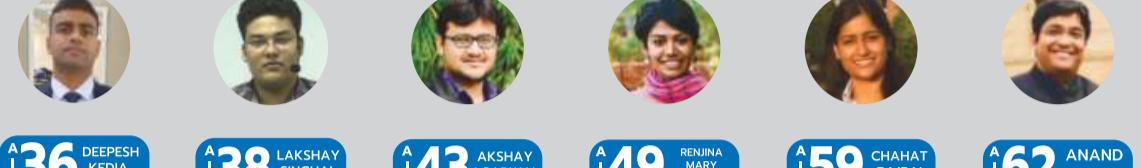
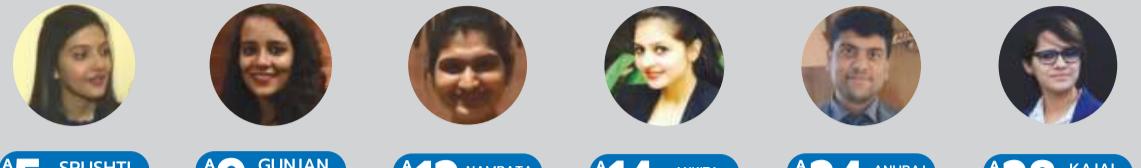
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**MINAL KARANWAL** AIR 35

I am Minal Karanwal, AIR-35. This journey of 8 years has been arduous & yet it has culminated so beautifully. And Forum IAS has an extremely important part to play in it. Constant support by Jaysh Sir, Sujit Sir, the most pivotal CA classes of Dipan Sir and the entire management at Forum has been crucial in scripting this victory. Thankyou!!

Minal Karanwal  
AIR-35

**AIR 13 VARNIT NEGI**

Any success is supported by multiple pillars. ForumIAS was one such pillar in my success story. Thank you AYUSH SIR (NEYAN) for your time, support and timely blogposts which helped me to keep myself motivated. ASIF SIR's guidance for improving my answers and DIPIN SIR's expert analysis of current affairs too were extremely helpful. I would like to thank the entire ForumIAS fraternity for believing in me.

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## IN BRIEF



K.M. Mani's condition stable, says hospital

KOCHI  
The condition of Kerala Congress (M) leader K.M. Mani is said to be serious even as the medical bulletin by the VPS Lakeshore Hospital and Research Centre says that his condition is stable. He is being treated for chest infection.

**Elephant tusks: HC issues notice to Mohanlal, govt.**  
KOCHI  
The Kerala High Court issued notice to actor Mohanlal, the State government, the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Wildlife) and the Chief Wildlife Warden on a public interest litigation petition challenging the government order granting ownership certificate to the actor for the four elephant tusks seized from his house at Thevara, Kochi, in 2012.

## Five girls drown in well in Telangana

HYDERABAD  
Five girls in the age group of 6-11 drowned in an open well in Jogulamba Gadwal district of Telangana, police said on Monday. The bodies have been recovered. It seems after one of them began drowning, the other girls may have tried to save her and drowned in the process, a senior police official said. PTI

## Maoists seek boycott of polls in Wayanad

WAYANAD  
Maoists have put up posters and banners asking farmers and plantation workers in Mundakkai, which forms part of the Wayanad Lok Sabha constituency from where Congress president Rahul Gandhi is contesting, to boycott the April 23 election. The posters appeared in Mundakkai town on Monday, Wayanad District Police Chief R. Karuppasamy said. PTI

## JD(S)-Congress unity fails to trickle down to grassroots

Hassan, Mysuru party workers still at war

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
MYSURU/ HASSAN

The undercurrent of mutual suspicion among the Congress and the Janata Dal-Secular (JD-S) grassroots workers continues to manifest in the Mysuru and Hassan parliamentary constituencies, notwithstanding a show of unity among the party leaders at the top.

For the second time in a week, the Congress meeting in Hassan on Monday saw pro-Modi slogans being raised by a section of the Congress activists, while JD(S) workers in the neighbouring Mysuru openly expressed their disenchantment with their leaders for the tie-up with the Congress.

In the first instance, the differences manifested in a meeting at Udayapura in the Channarayapatna taluk, where a few Congress workers chanted "Modi-Modi", registering their protest against the party's decision to back the JD(S) candidate. The meeting was convened by Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee (KPCC) vice-president B. Shivarao, and the Congress candidate for the Holenarsipur Assembly constituency last year Bagur Manje Gowda.

**Chaos at meeting**  
Both the leaders had a tough time pacifying the workers. A few workers also raised slogans praising the Congress, resulting in chaos at the meeting. Such scenes were witnessed earlier at Channarayapatna, Holenarsipur, Arasikere and Belur, where a good number of Congress workers, includ-

## Support Nikhil: Siddaramaiah

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
MANDYA

With disgruntled Congress leaders in Mandya district continuing to support Independent candidate Sumalatha for the Lok Sabha poll, Congress-JD(S) coalition coordination committee chairman Siddaramaiah has requested the electorate and leaders to support JD(S) candidate Nikhil K.

In a one-minute-21-second video, released by the JD(S) in Bengaluru on Monday, the former Chief Minister urged workers of both parties to work together to ensure Mr. Nikhil's victory. The veteran Congress leader said he would canvass for Mr. Nikhil along with former Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda in Mandya on April 12.

ing office-bearers in the party, have openly opposed the JD(S) candidate. Former MLA H. M. Vishwanath, who was till recently chairman of the Congress party's district campaign committee, has announced that he would not work for Prajwal Revanna, grandson of former Prime Minister H. D. Deve Gowda and JD(S) candidate for the Hassan Lok Sabha seat. Similarly, District Congress Committee vice-president Narayana Gowda participated in BJP meetings, ignoring warnings by his party leaders.

## Cong. will offer clean politics in Telangana, says Sachin Pilot

'TRS polluted atmosphere by buying MLAs, creating environment of fear'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD

Rajasthan Deputy Chief Minister Sachin Pilot said the Congress would bring back clean politics to Telangana where the incumbent Telangana Rashtra Samiti (TRS) government had "polluted the atmosphere by buying legislators, pressuring law makers and creating an environment of fear".

Telangana Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhar Rao was doing exactly what Prime Minister Narendra Modi was doing at the Centre – using agencies to suppress the voice of leaders who question them, said Mr. Pilot at a press conference here.

He said he was part of the historic decision of the Congress that decided to help Telangana fulfil the wishes of the people and it pained him to see the State where the government suppressed people and bought legislators in violation of norms.

Mr. Pilot, who was in the city to extend support to Congress candidate in Chevella Konda Vishweshwar Reddy, said every vote to the TRS would automatically



Frontal attack: Rajasthan Deputy Chief Minister Sachin Pilot addressing a media conference with other Congress leaders in Hyderabad on Monday. ■ K.V.S. GIRI

help the BJP, that had also ruined the institutions in India.

## Promises delivered

"The Congress delivers what it promises and the 'Nyay' scheme is not like a 'jumla' (empty promise) like the ₹15 lakh promised by Mr. Modi in 2014 election. We could have easily said ₹20 lakh but we don't believe in such jumbas," he said. The Congress manifesto, he said, talked

about helping the poorest of the poor 20% of Indian population with a promise of giving them a guaranteed ₹72,000 income per year.

Mr. Pilot said Mr. Modi had done everything to stop the NREGA of the Manmohan Singh government.

The scheme had lifted 14 crore people out of poverty, but Mr. Modi was not interested in such schemes but only in waiving of loans of crores of rupees of a few in-

dustrialists, he alleged.

Expressing confidence that UPA-III would come to power after the elections, he said the party would perform extremely well in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh where it grabbed power from the BJP.

Mr. Pilot claimed that there was a wave of change across the country and various parties would come together to stop the BJP.

## No reason why Modi should be kept at bay, says his brother

Siblings of PM, Shah campaign in Guntur

V. RAGHAVENDRA  
GUNTUR

After two days of hectic campaigning for BJP, Sombhai Modi, brother of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, returned to Ahmedabad, on Monday. He appeared relaxed, having breakfast with Andhra Pradesh party presi-

dent Kanna Lakshminarayana at the latter's residence here, barely 48 hours before the State goes to polls. Also present was BJP national president Amit Shah's brother Lalit Shah.

As the duo prepared to leave Guntur for their hometown, Mr. Lakshminarayana told them that the break-up of the alliance with the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) was "a good riddance", though it had come late, and he could

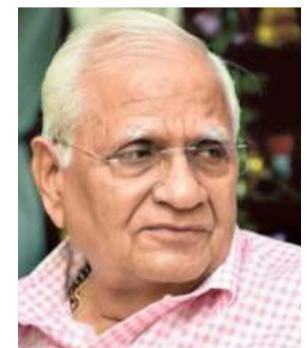
undo some of the damage caused by Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu with great difficulty.

In a chat with *The Hindu*, Mr. Sombhai said it was his first visit to Andhra Pradesh and going by public response, he believed that the mood was pretty much in favour of Mr. Modi, whom he had seldom met in five years.

"My brother has done a lot for the country, there is no reason why he should be

kept at bay," he quipped, when asked to give his assessment of the party's performance in Andhra Pradesh, while having some nice words for the hard work done by Mr. Lakshminarayana to revive the party's fortunes in the State.

At election rallies in Guntur and Tenali, Mr. Sombhai and Mr. Lalit Shah have insisted that the country would be safe in the hands of the "Modi-Shah" duo.



Sombhai Modi

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Land buy for Salem corridor quashed

MOHAMED IMRANULLAH S.  
CHENNAI

In a setback to the AIADMK government in Tamil Nadu and the BJP government at the Centre, the Madras High Court on Monday quashed a notification issued last year to acquire land for the ₹10,000 crore, eight-lane Chennai-Salem expressway, holding that environmental clearance was mandatory for the project.

A Special Bench of Justices T.S. Sivagnanam and V. Bhavani Subbaroyan passed the order, allowing a batch of cases filed by landowners and others, including Anbumani Ramadoss of the PMK, which is now a constituent of the BJP-AIADMK alliance.

The Bench rejected the Centre's contention that environmental clearance was required only before the actual laying of the expressway and not at the nascent stage of land acquisition. It held that the need for such clearance should be decided on a case-by-case basis.

The court said, it was necessary to get environmental clearance before proceeding with the notification.

## IN BRIEF



SC to hear bail plea of ex-cop Sanjiv Bhatt

NEW DELHI  
The Supreme Court on Monday agreed to hear the bail plea of former IPS officer Sanjiv Bhatt in connection with a two-decade-old drug seizure case. The court has sought a response from the Gujarat Police. His plea had been rejected by the Gujarat High Court on March 7. Bhatt, is behind the bars since September last year. PTI

## Two dead, 21 ill after consuming 'prasad'

JAIPUR  
Two persons from Rajasthan's Banswara district died due to food poisoning and 21 others were taken ill after consuming 'prasad' at a temple in Madhya Pradesh. Nearly 40-50 people of Danpur village in Banswara had visited the temple in Ratlam district. M.P. Samples of the food have been sent for examination, and a case has been registered. PTI

## Two govt. officials held for 'accepting' bribe

KOTA (RAJASTHAN)  
In two separate cases of corruption, two government officials were arrested on Monday while accepting bribes from private contractors for clearing their pending bills for their works, said Anti-Corruption Bureau officials. Both the accused will be produced before the ACB court in Kota on Tuesday. PTI

## Fake currency seized, two arrested in Kolkata

KOLKATA  
The Kolkata Police has seized fake Indian Currency Notes with a face value of ₹5 lakh from the city's Maidan area and arrested two persons in this connection. The counterfeit notes were in denomination of ₹2,000, a senior police officer said on Monday. PTI

# Along LoC in Jammu, Cong. finds favour with strife-torn residents

Absence of PDP, NC candidates, 'invisible' sitting MP likely to boost party's chances

JATIN ANAND  
POONCH/SURANKOTE/NOWSHERA



A torn BJP poster along National Highway 144A in Poonch en route to Jammu. ■ JATIN ANAND

The 200-odd-km-long Muslim-dominated belt between Jammu and Poonch along the Line of Control believes the Lok Sabha election in Jammu is a direct contest between the "face of Prime Minister Narendra Modi" and the "Congress' hand".

The reasons cited for their conviction are – the absence of the Peoples Democratic Party and the National Conference from the contest, the "clean image" of Congress candidate Raman Bhalla, who's also the party's State vice-president, and the complaints of the voters against the sitting MP, BJP's Jugal Kishore Sharma.

Voter loyalty in this region traditionally swings between the Congress and the regional parties. In 2014, all three Assembly constituencies under Poonch district voted for different parties – Poonch-Haveli elected the PDP candidate, Surankote chose Congress and Mendhar opted for the NC. With both the NC and the PDP deciding to stay out of the fray in Jammu, the Congress' decision to field Mr. Bhalla from the seat is a "double plus" for the party, feels Sabir Bitta, a teacher at the Model Higher Secondary School at Sheeshmahal in Poonch district.

**Traditional support**  
"Just like you hear about cross-border shelling along the LoC in the National Capital Region, we too hear of cases like [Mohammad] Akhlaq's lynching [in Dadri], Bulandshahr [violence] up here. Add to that the fact that our community has traditionally supported the Congress and that he [Mr. Bhalla] has immense goodwill among the

people here, you have the answer to your question," says Mr. Bitta.

According to the official 2011 Census figures, Muslims constitute 90.45% of the district's total population of 4,76,820.

BJP flags and hoardings, bearing the photos of Mr. Modi, party president Amit Shah and State leaders, dominate the Jammu-Akhnoor Highway for a good 30 km. Congress flags on homes and shops ostensibly belonging to Muslims on one side confront BJP flags on Hindu homes on the other side in areas such as Manjakote in Rajouri district for the next 100 km on National Highway 144A. A little further on Poonch Highway, smaller BJP hoardings, similar to the ones in Jammu but mysteriously torn, hang from trees.

Mohammad Nazeer, a dhaba owner in Surankote, has just returned from a poll-related meeting at a local mosque" and asks his customers for advice. "Are you coming from Jammu? What's the mood there?" he asks in a mix of Dogri and Punjabi. "At the meeting [at the mosque] they were asking us to vote for the Congress because our party hasn't fielded any candidate. I feel uncomfortable

about that. They talk about the greater good but to me it seems like giving my vote for nothing," he says, choosing not to name the "party" in reference.

**'Grim' realities**

Residents of the twin Rajouri and Poonch districts, 70 km apart along the LoC, are targeted frequently by Pakistani forward posts located on the mountains above. They assert that events such as cross-border hostility and India's retaliatory air strikes in Balakot are not mere electoral issues but "realities" which they are living every day.

BJP general secretary Ram Madhav's rally in town on Saturday, according to Poonch residents, "failed" to draw crowds and was a proof that voters would rather have better roads and more doctors at the district hospital than surgical strikes across the border.

"Yes, events such as Pulwama and Balakot air strikes have made the situation favourable for the BJP, but one must understand that these occurrences were, are and will remain a part of a persistent challenge. The State and political parties need to work on a rehabilitation policy for residents in LoC areas in-

stead of just restricting the problem to being an electoral issue," says Gulshan Rashid Bhat, an assistant professor of geography at the Department of Higher Education in Jammu.

Sunny Singh, who works for a local newspaper, says the people of Poonch, over and above religion and traditional loyalty, prioritise "local work". "There weren't people at the [BJP] rally here on Saturday but at a recent public meeting addressed by [Congress leader] Dr. Ghulam Nabi Azad there wasn't even space to set foot in. It is a fact that previous Congress governments have done a lot of work and that's why the party, on its own, is enough to contest against the face of the Prime Minister," he says.

Krishan Singh, a transporter, says he is "annoyed" with the BJP despite having benefitted from a scheme for the welfare of people displaced from Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. "No one thought about us earlier but Modiji gave ₹5 lakh to the people displaced from PoK. But we are still annoyed with him because of our MP. We have heard about Jugal Kishore but never seen him," he says.

Anil Maini, a trader, says issues like the Ram Mandir and scrapping of Articles 370 and 35A aren't "real". "These are not issues but promises which won't and can't be kept," he says.

Down in Nowshera, BJP's State president Ravinder Raihan's constituency, Subhash Kapoor, a leader of the local traders' community, questions the timing of the government's stance towards Pakistan. "We support the Balakot air strikes but what about jobs for youth and the condition of roads?" he asks.

Haryana  
Oppn. against appointment of judge's wife to info panel

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
CHANDIGARH

Days after the Haryana government appointed Kamaldeep Bhandari, wife of the judge hearing the Kathua rape case, as one of the State's information commissioners, the issue has taken a political turn with Opposition parties terming the decision "unethical" and an attempt to influence the judiciary.

The BJP government, however, said that the decision was taken on merit after following due process.

On March 8 – just two days before the model code of conduct came into force for the Lok Sabha election – the Haryana government appointed Ms. Bhandari, Lieutenant-General K.J. Singh (retired) and Jai Singh Bishnoi as State Information Commissioners.

Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar, former Leader of Opposition Abhay Singh Chautala and Forest Minister Rao Narbir Singh, who were part of the selection committee, picked the candidates from a list of names recommended by the search committee.

Haryana Congress chief Ashok Tanwar on Monday said that Ms. Bhandari's appointment was "clearly an attempt" by the BJP to influence institutions.

"We are not questioning the integrity of anyone, but this shows the immorality of the BJP government; how they are trying to influence sensitive issues such as rape of the girl child in Kathua. The Election Commission should take cognisance of the appointment and take appropriate action," said Mr. Tanwar.

## WEATHER WATCH

RAINFALL, TEMPERATURE & AIR QUALITY IN SELECT METROS YESTERDAY



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

**Forecast for Tuesday:** Heavy rain likely at isolated places over Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram and Tripura. Heat wave conditions likely in isolated pockets over Gujarat, west Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	0.5	22.0	22.0	Kozhikode	—	35.2	28.4
Ahmedabad	—	43.0	22.7	Kurnool	—	41.8	27.6
Aizawl	—	30.0	15.4	Lucknow	0.6	35.1	22.2
Allahabad	—	38.8	22.7	Madurai	—	39.8	25.4
Bengaluru	—	35.6	24.0	Mangaluru	—	35.3	26.1
Bhopal	2.1	39.7	22.0	Mumbai	—	33.5	23.1
Bhubaneswar	0.8	32.9	25.5	Mysuru	—	36.7	21.8
Chandigarh	—	30.6	22.6	New Delhi	—	36.4	20.2
Chennai	—	35.0	27.6	Patna	—	35.0	21.8
Coimbatore	—	38.2	25.2	Port Blair	—	32.7	26.1
Dehradun	—	29.0	20.0	Puducherry	—	35.0	27.0
Gangtok	7.8	19.3	10.5	Pune	—	40.0	19.7
Goa	—	33.0	24.3	Rajipur	—	39.1	28.0
Guwahati	0.9	28.3	20.8	Ranchi	—	36.8	17.2
Hubballi	—	37.0	23.0	Shillong	6	19.6	10.8
Hyderabad	—	38.5	23.3	Shimla	—	23.0	12.6
Imphal	—	27.3	15.6	Srinagar	—	25.6	12.4
Jaipur	0.2	40.0	24.0	Trivandrum	—	36.2	26.7
Kochi	—	34.0	26.4	Tiruchi	—	40.0	27.0
Kohima	1.4	23.0	11.5	Vijayawada	—	37.4	25.6
Kolkata	—	32.2	24.6	Visakhapatnam	—	32.4	27.0

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

**Pollutants in the air you are breathing** Yesterday

CITIES	SO <sub>2</sub>	NO <sub>x</sub>	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	15	.73	26	.165	—	—
Bengaluru	.4	.24	44	.165	—	—
Chennai	.6	.11	41	.145	—	—
Delhi	19	.58	64	.275	.343	—
Hyderabad	.3	.61	30	.77	.97	—
Kolkata	10	.67	14	.75	.88	—
Lucknow	15	.25	58	.286	—	—
Mumbai	29	.27	86	.27	.61	—
Pune	29	.14	32	.71	.88	—
Visakhapatnam	.5	.28	35	.36	.74	—

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Sesa, Haryana recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 404 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Amaravati, Andhra Pradesh recorded a healthy AQI score of 33

Air Quality Code: ■ Poor ■ Moderate ■ Good (Readings indicate average AQI)  
SO<sub>2</sub>: Sulphur Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

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

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

## “MY VOTE IS NOT FOR SALE”

**Do you accept Cash, Liquor, Gold, Drugs and Gifts to influence your vote?**

It is a betrayal of democracy and also a punishable offence with imprisonment upto one year or fine or both.

Rs 1862.50\* Crore worth Cash, Gold, Liquor and Other Items seized by Election Commission

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THE HINDU GROUP

DAYP 5/2017/3/00/18/19/20

Election Commission of India



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## IN BRIEF



## NIA questions chief of Hurriyat Conference

NEW DELHI  
The NIA on Monday questioned Hurriyat Conference chairman Mirwaiz Umer Farooq in connection with a case of "funding terror groups and separatist organisations" in Jammu and Kashmir, officials said. PTI

## Vice Admiral Verma moves tribunal

NEW DELHI  
Vice Admiral Bimal Verma, who currently heads the Andaman and Nicobar-based tri-service command, on Monday moved the Armed Forces Tribunal over the appointment of Vice Admiral Karambir Singh as the next Chief of Naval Staff.

## Assam man assaulted for selling 'beef'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
GUWAHATI

The police in north-eastern Assam's Biswanath district picked up five people after a mob assaulted a 68-year-old man for allegedly selling beef at his restaurant.

The incident happened on Sunday afternoon but came to light on Monday after a video of the assault was uploaded on social media. The man, identified as Shaukat Ali, sustained injuries and was taken to a local hospital for treatment.

"We picked up five people, including two market committee leaders, in a bid to disperse the mob. They were allowed to go after signing a good behaviour bond under Section 107 of Code of Criminal Procedure," a district administration official said. He added that some locals had been warning Mr. Ali not to sell what they believed was beef. Things came to a head when a group went to inspect his eatery on Sunday. Mohammed Sahabuddin, the brother of Mr. Ali, later filed an FIR at the local police station.

## Army gets Dhanush artillery guns

It is the indigenously upgraded version of Bofors gun procured in 1980s

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Ordnance Factory Board (OFB) on Monday handed over the first batch of six Dhanush artillery guns to the Army. Dhanush is the indigenously upgraded version of the Swedish Bofors gun procured in the 1980s.

"Indigenisation to the extent of about 81% has already been achieved. By the end of 2019, the indigenisation level of the gun will go up to 91%", the Defence Ministry said in a statement. Six guns were handed over at a ceremony at Gun Carriage Factory, Jabalpur.

"The first Dhanush regiment with 18 guns is expected to be ready by the end of next year," an Army source said. The GCF received the Bulk Production Clearance



The indigenously developed Dhanush artillery guns.

(BPC) to manufacture 114 guns from the Army on February 18, 2019.

Dhanush is a 155 mm, 45-calibre towed artillery gun with a range of 36 km and has demonstrated a range of 38 km with specialised ammunition. It is an upgrade of the existing 155mm, 39 calibre Bofors FH 77 gun. It is compatible with all North Atlan-

tic Treaty Organisation (NATO) 155 mm ammunition system.

## Conducting of trials

The first phase of trials were conducted between July and September 2016 at Pokhran and Babina ranges and the second phase was held between October and December 2016 at the Siachen base

camp with three guns. The last round of user exploitation trials were completed with six guns in June last year.

The gun is fitted with inertial navigation system with global positioning system (GPS) based gun recording and auto-laying, an enhanced tactical computer for onboard ballistic computations, an onboard muzzle velocity recording, an automated gun sighting system equipped with camera, thermal imaging and laser range finder

All 114 guns are expected to be delivered within four years. The OFB has already undertaken capacity augmentation to manufacture over 400 barrels and 250 ordnances for large calibre weapon systems.

Call for entries for  
The Hindu Prize 2019

The annual *The Hindu* literature prizes reflect the newspaper's commitment to promoting good writing, fiction as well as non-fiction, in English as well as other Indian languages, and encouraging writers of promise in all fields and languages.

*The Hindu* Prize for Fiction was instituted in 2010 to recognise and encourage Indian fiction written in English. Originally limited to fiction in English, the competition has since been extended to include translations of literary fiction from the regional languages into English. The prize is awarded to a novel or short story collection that exemplifies the best work of fiction in each year.

*The Hindu* Prize for Nonfiction, introduced in 2018, is awarded to the best work of non-fiction in English or regional languages (in translation).

The winners in both categories, fiction and non-fiction, will receive ₹5 lakh each in cash, a trophy and a citation. In the case of a translated work being the winner, the prize money will be divided equally between the translator and the author.

There will be separate jury panels for the two categories of awards. Jury members will be drawn from a pool of prominent writers, academics, book critics, and experts in different fields.

A shortlist of the best five books in each category will be announced in October 2019, and the winners will be announced at *The Hindu* Lit for Life in Chennai in January 2020.

**HOW TO ENTER**  
**The Hindu Prize:Fiction**  
Publishers may submit novels or short-stories collections by a single

author, written in English and published between July 2018 and June 2019.

- Translations of works from the regional languages into English published between July 2018 and June 2019 will also be eligible for the competition. The original work should have been published not earlier than August 1947.

- Only works of literary merit will be considered.
- Publishers may enter a maximum of five books from across their imprints.

- Publishers are asked to send a list of all their published titles to *The Hindu*. This will enable the judges to nominate additional books if they wish.

**THE HINDU PRIZE**

Publishers are required to send eight (hardcover) copies of each title they submit. Paperbacks and electronic copies are not acceptable.

- Entries must be in prose.

- Self-published or electronically published books are not eligible.

- Children's books, Young Adult fiction or non-fiction, graphic and pictorial publications are not eligible.

- Employees of *The Hindu* and their family members are not eligible.

All entries must reach *The Hindu* on or before May 31, 2019. All entries must be marked *The Hindu* Prize 2019 Fiction/Non Fiction and should be sent to Shalini Arun, Sr. Associate Editor, *The Hindu*, Kasturi Buildings, 859-860, Anna Salai, Chennai 600002.

For more details, contact R. Krithika@0422 2212572 (extension 334) or email to krithika.r@thehindu.co.in

Environment and Ecology and Academic works with a social science orientation.

- Publishers should also send a list of their published titles to enable the judges call in for additional books.
- The books/manuscripts should have been published between July 2018 and June 2019.

- Only works of literary merit will be considered.
- Publishers may enter a maximum of five books from across their imprints.

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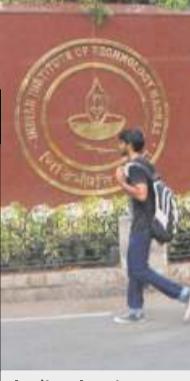
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## Top 5 About 3,127 institutions applied for different categories of the NIRF this year. A list of the top 5 across categories

Categories/Rank	1	2	3	4	5
Overall	IIT-M	IISc., Bengaluru	IIT-D	IIT-B	IIT Kharagpur
University	IISc., Bengaluru	JNU	BHU	Univ. of Hyderabad	Univ. of Calcutta
Engineering	IIT-M	IIT-D	IIT-B	IIT-Kgp	IIT-K
Medical	AIMS, Delhi	PGIMER, Chandigarh	CMC Vellore	SGPIMS, Lucknow	Amrita Vidyapeeth
Management	IIM-B	IIM-A	IIM-C	IIM-L	IIM-Indore
Colleges	Miranda House, Delhi	Hindu College, Delhi	Presidency College, Chennai	St.Stephen's, Delhi	LSR, Delhi
Indian Institute of Technology, Madras.					



## SC: why should govt. officers head temples?

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Justice S.A. Bobde on Monday wondered aloud why government officials should be in charge of managing temples in a secular country.

The oral observations came in the backdrop of allegations raised that devotees were subject to harassment at the hands of staffers at the Jagannath temple in Puri.

"I do not know why government officials should manage temples," Justice Bobde asked.

Questioning the efficiency of government officials manning posts in temple administration bodies, Justice Bobde pointed to the idol theft case in Tamil Nadu. "These idols, apart from the religious sentiments, are priceless," Justice Bobde observed orally.

The comments have come even as a separate petition filed by BJP MP Subramanian Swamy seeking temples to be made independent of government control is pending in the Supreme Court.

## SC may consider plea against order on TikTok

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi on Monday indicated that the Supreme Court would look into a petition challenging an interim order of the Madras High Court to the Centre to prohibit download of TikTok, a mobile application.

In an urgent mention

made before a Bench presided over by the Chief Justice, senior advocate A.M. Singhvi said the order violated the right to free speech and expression and did not factor in the protection given to intermediaries under the Information Technology Act.

In April, the Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court even ordered the me-

dia houses to refrain from telecasting TikTok videos. A Division Bench of Justices N. Kirubakaran and S.S. Sundar asked the Centre whether a law similar to the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA) of the U.S. could be brought in to shield children from cybercrimes.

Though the High Court did not object to TikTok be-

ing used in jest, it pointed out how the application could be used for crude humour against innocent parties, leading to violation of the fundamental right to privacy.

The High Court said inappropriate contents were being made available to children and this could expose them to sexual predators.

## TENDER NOTICE

Visit [www.etenders.kerala.gov.in](http://www.etenders.kerala.gov.in) for Online Submission of Bids for:

- Proposed Canteen at Mines (Part-A Civil work)
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- Miscellaneous Structural Work at Walayar Plant
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- Collection & Transportation of Bulk Cement from Walayar and CGU Cherthala
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## MANAGING DIRECTOR

## NOTIFICATION NO. PS-07/2019

Position & Stipend	Essential qualification	Age limit	Date and Venue for interview
Project Assistant-II ₹ 25,000/-p.m. + HRA (05 Positions)	M.Sc. in Chemistry / Physical Chemistry/ Materials Science/ Nanoscience/ Microbiology/ Biotechnology or B.E./Tech., in Chemical Engineering / Biotechnology with 55% marks (50% marks for SC/ST)	30 Years	22.04.2019 (Monday) at 9.00 AM Central Electrochemical Research Institute, Karakudi, Tamil Nadu.

For further details, please visit [www.cecri.res.in](http://www.cecri.res.in)

प्रशासन अधिकारी / Administrative Officer

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RO.C.NO.C1/2025/V&SO/TTD/PTP/19

e-tenders were invited to engage the Security Staff/ Man Power under work contract system by Inviting Tenders through online (e-Tender) for Watch & Ward duties at Sri Kondandarama Swamy Temple, Vontimitta, Kadapa District.

## DATE OF OPENING TENDER

●Technical Bid : 29-04-2019 ●Financial Bid : 02-05-2019

Tender documents can be downloaded from the website: <https://tender.approcurement.gov.in>. For further details contact phone numbers 0877-2264079, 2264555, FAX- 2264554 and mail ID: cvsofficecttd@gmail.com. List of attested documents to be uploaded at the time of tender, (1) EMD in the form of Demand Draft, (2) Documents as mentioned in Pre-qualification criteria (3) Registration of the firm, (4) GST registration, (5) PAN card / Income Tax Document.

Roc.No.PRA/Adv.No.13905/Adv.606/PRO/19, Dated:08-04-2019 EXECUTIVE OFFICER

## High Court orders release of Manipur television journalist in sedition case

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
GUWAHATI

The Manipur High Court has ordered the release of television anchor Kishorechandra Wangkhem who was charged with sedition under the National Security Act (NSA) for criticising Chief Minister N.Biren Singh on social media.

The release order came

more than four months after he was lodged in the Sajiva Central Jail on the outskirts of Imphal on November 27 last year and days ahead of the election to the Inner Manipur Lok Sabha seat on April 18.

"The court has released my husband's after revoking NSA. We expect him to be released from jail soon,"



## Fighting together

The BSP, SP and RLD need to convince voters that they are on the same page

The chiefs of the Samajwadi Party-Bahujan Samaj Party-Rashtriya Lok Dal combine threw down the gauntlet to the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party in Deoband in western Uttar Pradesh on Sunday. The scale and fiery rhetoric were clearly aimed at forcing the momentum as western U.P. constituencies go to the polls on April 11, in the first of a seven-phase parliamentary election in the State. The BJP and its partners had won 73 of 80 seats in U.P. in 2014, and the State is central to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's re-election bid. The political landscape in U.P., however, has changed significantly in the interim years, both in terms of party alliances and social realignments. Priyanka Gandhi Vadra's entry as a Congress strategist and campaigner has added new variables that could complicate electoral calculations in U.P. In this emergent situation in the State, the rally must have brought some reassurance to the triumvirate of Akhilesh Yadav, Mayawati and Ajit Singh, leaders of the SP, the BSP and the RLD, respectively. Mr. Yadav has been unambiguous in his defiance to Ms. Mayawati, and they have been at pains to emphasise that they are reading from the same page, as coherence between the SP and BSP leaderships is crucial for vote transfer of their core supporters.

Ms. Mayawati is an icon of Dalit empowerment, and since the 1990s has often been deft in building social alliances around her core vote. Mr. Yadav is the inheritor of the rump of Socialist (Lohiaite) politics in the Hindi belt, which has been reduced to a purely caste-based entity around the SP's Yadav support. Both could be characterised as part of social justice politics, but the accent and rhetoric of their respective politics are dissimilar. Their opposing positions on the use of English is a case in point – the SP has been rather late in blunting its anti-English edge, while the BSP's Ambedkarite politics considers it as a tool of empowerment. Though the SP and the BSP had an alliance in the mid-1990s, they had parted ways bitterly, with an SP mob even trying to physically harm Ms. Mayawati. The rout in the 2014 Lok Sabha and 2017 U.P. Assembly elections have forced a rethink in their adversarial politics. Equally striking is Mr. Yadav's outreach to the BSP, compared to his father Mulayam Singh Yadav's. Both parties are conscious that recovering the support of their larger social constituencies, the backward castes and Dalits, which were drifting towards the BJP in the past five years with a new format of social empowerment through Hindutva, is crucial. However, since the Assembly elections, old caste cleavages have deepened under upper-caste Hindutva assertion. By joining hands with the RLD, which has a Jat base in western U.P., and reaching out to Muslims forcefully, the two parties are seeking to draw voters with a show of winnability.

## Maldivian wave

President Solih consolidates power with his MDP's victory in parliamentary polls

The administration of Maldives President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih has received a shot in the arm with the parliamentary election held over the weekend. His Maldivian Democratic Party is poised to garner more than 60 out of 87 seats, paving the way for easy passage of bills and a policy agenda with a realistic chance of implementation. Mr. Solih, whose pro-democracy government assumed power after a presidential election in September 2018, has sought to break with the regime of his predecessor Abdulla Yameen, which had propelled the Indian Ocean nation into Beijing's economic embrace, described by some as "debt-trap diplomacy". While Mr. Solih was quick to signal the shift in his government's priorities, not least by ensuring that Prime Minister Narendra Modi was the chief guest at the presidential inauguration, his agenda has been hobbled by resistance from lawmakers on certain bills aimed at the previous administration. Specifically, Parliament Speaker Qasim Ibrahim, the head of the Jumhooree Party, a coalition partner of the MDP, declined to support a vote on a bill aimed at recouping stolen assets and looking into unresolved murders. With the election throwing up a single-party majority, Mr. Solih can push through his agenda with fewer stumbling blocks.

So far as India's interests in the Indian Ocean Region are concerned, warm bilateral ties between New Delhi and Male are a high priority after five years of strategic drift that benefited Beijing considerably. According to some analyses, the surging influx of Chinese infrastructure investment under the Yameen administration may have caused the Maldives' national debt to balloon to nearly a quarter of its GDP. As it seeks to unravel this web of Chinese loans, the new leadership has promised that what is owed would be paid. However, the honouring of such debt, especially where it was linked to the grant of land, lease rights and mega-construction projects, will be complicated. As Mr. Solih grapples with these challenges, the assurance that the Maldives has New Delhi's backing would be vital. Already, the elements of a strategic reset with India seem to be falling into place. When Mr. Solih visited India in December, a \$1.4 billion financial assistance package for the Maldives was announced, and the two governments agreed to exempt holders of diplomatic and official passports from visa requirements. MoUs on Indian grant aid for "high-impact community development projects" have been signed, as also agreements on clean energy and regional maritime security. So long as the new government presses on with the urgent task of rebuilding and deepening the Maldives' democratic credentials, there is hope for political stability and economic development across the 1,192-island archipelago and the wider IOR.

# Open up the Supreme Court

A judiciary confident of its place in a democratic republic must not worry about public scrutiny of judicial appointments



GAUTAM BHATIA

Almost 10 years ago, on September 2, 2009, the High Court of Delhi handed down a landmark judgment dealing with the Right to Information (RTI) Act. It held that the Office of the Chief Justice of India (CJI) was a "public authority", and therefore, subject to the provisions of the Act. Information held by the CJI – including, in the context of the case, information about judges' assets – could be requested by the public through an RTI application. In ringing words, Justice Ravindra Bhat declared that the RTI was a "powerful beacon, which illuminates unlit corners of state activity, and those of public authorities which impact citizens' daily lives, to which they previously had no access".

The Supreme Court appealed against this judgment, and the case eventually wound its way to the Supreme Court, where a stay was granted, and matters remained in limbo for a few years. Earlier this month, however, a five-judge Bench of the court finally heard the case on merits, and reserved judgment. By this time, the issues under consideration involved not only Justice Bhat's ruling on the status of the Chief Justice as a public authority and the disclosure of judges' assets, but also the question of whether the correspondence of the Collegium (the body of judges that selects and makes appointments to the higher judiciary) was subject to the RTI.

### The basic question

The basic question, i.e. whether or not the Office of the CJI is subject

to the RTI Act, has an easy answer: yes. As Justice Bhat correctly observed in the High Court judgment, "all power – judicial power being no exception – is held accountable in a modern Constitution". A blanket judicial exemption from the RTI Act would defeat the basic idea of "open justice": that the workings of the courts, as powerful organs of state, have to be as transparent and open to public scrutiny as any other body. Nor would bringing the judiciary under the RTI Act destroy the personal privacy of judges: as the High Court judgment noted, the RTI Act itself has an inbuilt privacy-oriented protection, which authorises withholding the disclosure of personal information unless there is an overriding public interest. While disclosure of assets is arguably justified by an overriding public interest, medical details or information about marital status, for example, are clearly not. There will always be borderline cases, of course, but that only calls for nuanced and fine-grained analysis of such cases, nothing more.

### The Collegium

During the hearings, however, the question most at issue involved the disclosure of the correspondence of the Collegium. The Collegium includes the five senior-most judges of the Supreme Court, who collectively constitute the selection panel for judicial appointments to the Supreme Court (and the three senior-most judges when it comes to the High Courts). India is one of the few countries where judges have the last word on judicial appointments, through the mechanism of the Collegium. The Collegium itself is not mentioned in the text of the Constitution; it arose out of a judgment of the Supreme Court, and in response to increased executive interference in judicial appointments, particu-



larly during Indira Gandhi's regime.

The Collegium began life, therefore, as a tool to secure and guarantee the independence of the judiciary. In 2015, the Supreme Court struck down a constitutional amendment establishing a National Judicial Appointments Commission, which would have replaced the Collegium. A majority of the five-judge Bench held that judicial primacy in appointments was the only constitutionally-authorised way of securing/ensuring judicial independence against an increasingly powerful political executive.

Through this time, however, the Collegium had come under increasing criticism. A major point of critique was its opacity: it was increasingly being perceived that judicial appointments were too often made in an ad hoc and arbitrary manner. Perhaps the most vivid example of this was when former Supreme Court Justice Markandey Katju admitted that, as the Chief Justice of the Allahabad High Court, he had refused to recommend a High Court lawyer for judgeship because that lawyer was in a live-in relationship without being married. One may wonder what connection there is between a lawyer's marital status and his ability to discharge judicial functions, but this was, at any rate, a stark example of what the critics

had in mind. Indeed, the Supreme Court's own NJAC judgment acknowledged this critique, and vowed to evolve a system where concerns of transparency were addressed. A small step towards this was made during Dipak Misra's tenure as CJI, when the resolutions of the Collegium began to be published online.

It is in this context that we must examine the arguments of the Attorney-General of India, who represented the Supreme Court before the Constitution Bench. The AG argued that disclosing the correspondence of the Collegium would "destroy" judicial independence. The CJI seemed to agree, noting that disclosing the reasons for rejection of a judge would "destroy" his or her life or career.

This is, however, a bewildering argument, when we consider that the Collegium system was specifically put in place by the Supreme Court in order to guarantee judicial independence. It is rather self-servingly to argue, first, that there is only one permissible method to secure judicial independence – and that is through ensuring judicial primacy in the appointments process – and then to argue that the only permissible way in which this system can work is by making it immune to transparency. The Supreme Court cannot eat its cake and have it too: if it has instituted a process of appointment that makes itself the final arbiter of judicial appointments, then it must also ensure that that same process meets the standards of accountability in a democratic republic.

Indeed, a look at judicial appointments elsewhere suggests that transparency in appointments is integral to the process. In the United States, for example, candidates for judicial appointments in the federal judiciary are subjected to public confirmation hearings by the Senate. In Kenya

and South Africa, the interviews of candidates taken by judicial appointments commissions are broadcast live. The public, thus, is in a position to judge for itself the selection process. This is crucial to maintaining public faith in the impartiality of the institution.

The Collegium, however, has immunised itself from any form of public scrutiny. The nomination process is secret, the deliberations are secret, the reasons for elevation or non-elevation are secret. This creates an extremely unhealthy climate, in which rumours become staple, and whispers about executive interference are exchanged in court corridors. CJI Ranjan Gogoi publicly stated concern that "in the name of transparency, you cannot destroy an institution" betrays a refusal to engage with the manner in which institutions are actually destroyed: in an insidious and incremental manner, through the slow drip-drip erosion of trust.

### Open to sunlight

"Sunlight is the best disinfectant" is a trite and overused phrase. In the context of public scrutiny of the Supreme Court, however, it is an apt one. The Collegium's recent decisions to recommend a set of names for elevation, and then hastily backtrack on them without any publicly stated reasons, dealt a serious blow to its reputation for impartiality and independence. The only way to salvage this is to open up the court. A judiciary that is confident of itself and of its place in the democratic republic should not be worried about subjecting judicial appointments to public scrutiny. The occasional discomfort that might come from the harsh public glare is more than outweighed by the cleansing value of transparency.

Gautam Bhatia is a Delhi-based lawyer

## Playing politics over the Golan Heights

U.S. recognition of Israeli sovereignty is a challenge to the rules-based international order



ARUN K. SINGH

On March 21, U.S. President Donald Trump upended another long-standing American policy, tweeting: "After 52 years it is time for the United States to fully recognize Israel's Sovereignty over the Golan Heights, which is of critical strategic and security importance to the State of Israel and Regional Stability!"

### Third pro-Israel step

This was another major pro-Israel step Mr. Trump has taken as President. On May 8, 2018, he had walked out of the 2015 JCPOA (Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action) with Iran, negotiated by the Obama administration with provisions for sanctions relief in response for Iranian restrictions on its nuclear programme. Israel had opposed the agreement and any sanctions relief for Iran, seeing a continuing threat to itself from Iran's growing presence in Syria, its support for Hezbollah in Lebanon and Hamas in Gaza, its refusal to recognise Israel's right to exist, and its military capabilities.

Before that, on December 6, 2017, in a speech from the White House, Mr. Trump had declared: "I have determined that it is time to officially recognise Jerusalem as the capital of Israel." He also pro-

ceeded to close the Palestinian office in Washington DC, as well as U.S. consulate in Jerusalem dealing with the Palestinian Authority.

Hitherto, U.S. policy had been that any formalisation of status changes on the ground, following Israel's victory and gains in the 1967 Israel-Arab conflict, could only flow from negotiations among parties concerned. UN Security Council Resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) had asserted inadmissibility of acquisition of territory by force, and called for Israeli withdrawal. UNSCR 497 (1981) had declared that "Israel's decision to impose its laws, jurisdiction and administration in the occupied Syrian Golan Heights is null and void and without international legal effect".

Mr. Trump's decisions have a bearing on U.S. and Israeli domestic politics. The American Jewish community, traditionally around 65% Democratic, has grown in its support for him, despite an increase in anti-Semitism within the U.S. because of his encouragement to right-wing groups. His base among Evangelical Christians backs Israel. Some of the major contributors to his campaign are also ardent supporters of Israel. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, facing a tough election on April 9, and under threat of indictment for corruption and misdemeanour, is touting his influence on Mr. Trump as having potential for further gains for Israel. This has been interpreted by many in Israel as beginning of the process of establishing the legitimacy



would not carry out any withdrawal of Israeli settlements from the West Bank, putting an end to the "land for peace" formula advocated since the Camp David Accords of 1979.

Faced with international opposition, Israel and its supporters have, in the past two, leveraged the support of the leading global power of the time to advance their cause. On November 2, 1917, Lord Balfour, the British Foreign Secretary, declared that "His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people". This eventually led to the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948, despite Palestinian and Arab opposition. In an April 14, 2004 letter to Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, U.S. President George W. Bush stated that "in light of new realities on the ground, including already existing major Israeli population centers, it is unrealistic to expect that the outcome of final status negotiations will be a full and complete return to the armistice lines of 1949" (position before the 1967 conflict). This has been interpreted by many in Israel as beginning of the process of establishing the legitimacy

of a two-state solution. The constraint for Israel is that its goal of a democratic and Jewish state would be difficult to achieve in a one-state solution with current near equal proportions of Arab and Jewish populations.

Mr. Trump's announcement on Golan Heights goes a step further. The Syrian Golan was part of the French post-World War I mandate, and hence technically not covered by the Balfour Declaration. Mr. Trump is now seeking to extend recognition of Israeli sovereignty to an area beyond Balfour, beyond the UN partition plan for Palestine in the 1940s, and beyond the outcome of the 1948/49 Arab-Israeli conflict.

In his proclamation of March 25, issued in presence of the visiting Israeli Prime Minister, Mr. Trump cited Israeli security interests and regional threats. The present situation in Syria is no doubt a factor. The U.S. wants to draw down its military presence, Russia and Iran have significantly enhanced their presence and influence. Israel is concerned about Iranian presence beyond Golan in Syria and that of Hezbollah on the Lebanese side. It has repeatedly targeted Iranian positions and supplies, including to Hezbollah.

Following Mr. Trump's announcement, U.S. National Security Adviser John Bolton tweeted that to allow Golan Heights "to be controlled by the likes of the Syrian or Iranian regimes would turn a blind eye to the atrocities of Assad and the destabilizing presence of Iran in the region".

### Tepid global response

The new U.S. position has not received support from any other country, including its European allies. While Iran, Russia, Turkey, among others, have been critical, the Arab response has been assessed as insufficiently strident. This is no doubt a reflection of reduced influence in Washington, with greater U.S. leverage on oil supplies, divisions among Arab countries over Qatar, pressure on Saudi Arabia because of Yemen and the Jamal Khashoggi issue.

India's interests are not directly involved immediately. It has a strong and growing relationship with Israel, and has maintained its relations with Syria. Indian troops have been a part of UN peacekeeping presence on the Golan Heights. Mr. Trump's move, however, is indicative of shifting geopolitics in the West Asian region, with longer-term implications for India. It also asserts unilateralism, is a challenge to a rules-based international order, and is contrary to positions U.S. has taken elsewhere, as for instance in its response to Russia and Crimea.

Arun K. Singh has served as India's Ambassador to the U.S. and Israel

## 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.

### Gandhiji and politics

If Mahatma Gandhi were alive today, he would have never participated in our elections, national especially. He was never a leader of a political party; rather, he was the undisputed leader of the masses. He never required votes to gain power. His immense power sprung from the belief of the masses in him. But, hypothetically, if he were to, it would be to fill the large moral vacuum in the political sphere (OpEd page, "If Gandhiji were alive today", April 8). Politics today is devoid of values and morals. It is largely about money and power.

SANDEEP SETHIA,  
Mandsaur, Madhya Pradesh

### Gandhiji predominantly based his leadership on secular principles and nation-building and not for any material gains or personal aggrandisement.

The difference today is that political parties want to grab power by hook or by crook, which includes buying votes. E.S. CHANDRASEKARAN, Chennai

■ Young voters – like me – who are about to cast their first votes in these elections must note that Gandhian politics can alter our political parties. Most of the changes would be seen in the organisation of the Congress party itself as Gandhiji was strongly opposed to dynastic politics. Overall, it is foolish to expect our politicians to

### ever follow Gandhiji in spirit.

KIRAN BABASAHEB RANSING,  
New Delhi

■ In the current political era of coalition, competitive and unprincipled politics, it would be difficult for political parties to follow what is right and of long-term significance; anything which gives instant gratification to the masses works well. Gandhiji is obviously well respected and studied but not followed because his ways were hard and do not suit the game of contemporary power politics. But why point a finger at our politicians, who only show the mirror to us; they are an integrated and extended part of us and

### reflect the thinking of our societies at large.

We as a society have to grow and evolve with maturity to see a future built on the principles of justice, equality, truth and peace. It is only then, with time, that we can demand and deserve disciplined politics from our leaders.

SALMAN MAHMUD,  
Noida, Uttar Pradesh

■ Young voters – like me – who are about to cast their first votes in these elections must note that Gandhian politics can alter our political parties. Most of the changes would be seen in the organisation of the Congress party itself as Gandhiji was strongly opposed to dynastic politics. Overall, it is foolish to expect our politicians to

### attributed to indoor pollution caused due to conventional chula use.

Factors that must be considered are the possible high cost of a refill as well as the unavailability of an LPG cylinder in rural India. A point in the report, of a common misconception that "eating food cooked on gas causes gas in the stomach", can be tackled with proper awareness. The health and well-being of women in rural India are important.

N. VIJAI,  
Coimbatore

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

### Weather resilience

There is a strong possibility of a monsoon deficit according to the IMD (Editorial, "The heat is on", April 8). In many Tier II cities such as Coimbatore, there is the pressure of development which is leading to rapid depletion of green cover. This too is sure to have an impact on heat stress and water scarcity. Are planners taking this into account?

NITHYANANDHAM V.G.,  
Coimbatore

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### CORRECTIONS & CLARIFICATIONS:</

## INTERVIEW | ABDULLA SHAHID

# 'India-Maldives relations have never been better'

The Maldivian Foreign Minister on the folly in playing India and China against each other

MEERA SRINIVASAN

*For Maldivians, the election of President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih in September 2018 meant a possible opening up of democratic space in the country, after former President Abdulla Yameen's term, which was marked by an authoritarian slant. It also meant reconnecting with many countries with which Male's relationship had turned rather tense in those years, particularly India. In an interview in Male, Maldivian Foreign Minister Abdulla Shahid talks about how Maldives sees its role in the region, and its relationship with the world. Excerpts:*



SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Since your government came to power, India-Maldives ties have undergone a dramatic change, marked by renewed cooperation, close dialogue and multiple high-level visits from both sides. How do you view the changing dynamic?

■ Since the new government came in, we have had very high-level visits. Prime Minister Narendra Modi attended President Solih's swearing-in ceremony. I was in New Delhi a week after taking office, preparing for the visit of President Solih, who was in Delhi a month after being sworn in. The recent visit by External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj cemented many aspects of the cooperation agenda we have been drawing up.

The level of cooperation between the two countries has never been better. We are continuously in contact, we speak to each other at the highest levels whenever there seems to be any difficulty, which is very rare. That is because the leaders have shown where they would like the [relationship between] the two countries to go. And for us Ministers and staff of the ministries in both countries, it is a question of delivering. We have to deliver.

The generous development assistance provided by the Indian government is deeply appreciated by the people of the Maldives. It is going into people-oriented projects like providing fresh water, sanitation, sewerage. Building roads and moving the Male commercial harbour to Thilafushi [island west of Male] are huge projects that are going to be major symbols of cooperation between the two countries.

Between 2013 and 2018, then-President Yameen's administration was seen as tilting heavily towards China amid growing tensions with India. Given that China has also been an important partner for the Maldives and the latter's strategic location in the Indian Ocean, how does the geopolitical tussle between the two big powers affect the Maldives?

■ The mistake President Yameen made was to play India against China and China against India. That is a childish way of dealing with international relations; it will blow up in your own face. And that is what happened. No one trusted him.

For us it is very clear. India and the Maldives might be very different, but the respect we have for each other is the main factor behind the friendship. Look at people-to-people contact. You have so many Maldivians living in India. We have so many Indians living in the Maldives. At times of need, we have always seen India as the first respondent. And that is something that the people of the Maldives really appreciate. On November 3, 1988, when mercenaries attacked the Maldives, India was the first to respond. In 2004, when the tsunami hit us, Indian naval ships were despatched to assist us. During the last government's term, we had the Male water crisis. Within four hours we had Indian Navy and Air Force vessels deliver water.

Of course, China has been a good friend, it has helped in many of the development projects in the Mal-

dives. China is also going to be one of the largest economies in the world. We can't say that we will not have any relations with China because we have to appreciate what countries do for the people. If we have to choose between friends, or if we are forced to choose between friends, then we can't see our relationship go very far.

Because of the geopolitical location of the Maldives, the government has a huge responsibility, which is to provide freedom of maritime trade in the Indian Ocean. The Eight Degree Channel is one of the major maritime lanes of the world. We need stability, maturity and democratic systems to function in the Maldives so that peace and security can be maintained in the Indian Ocean.

The issue of India-gifted helicopters in the Maldives has remained politically sensitive, especially since the Yameen government asked New Delhi to withdraw them. Among the people, is there a sense that a big neighbour might be trying to wield influence here?

■ I think there are a few people who are trying to spread hatred. All I have seen these two helicopters do is humanitarian work. They transport children, or elderly people, or some-

one who has suffered a stroke for immediate medical attention. Our islands are many and very widespread. We need this kind of assistance. I would ask the hate-mongers to go and speak to the families, who are very grateful. The helicopters are under the control of the Maldivian security services and much of what the hate-mongers say are lies.

What about the physical presence of the Indian military personnel? Is that a reason for discomfort for some?

■ For these hate-mongers it is. But it is not the first time we are having technical people on the ground from different countries. These are not military personnel stationed in barracks. There is no military presence of any foreign force in the Maldives.

Earlier, you pointed to renewed dynamism in Male-New Delhi relations. More broadly, what is your vision for the Maldives's relationship with the rest of the world?

■ The Maldives has been alienated in the past five years. The foreign policy of the [then] government was so-sided that the credibility of the country was eroded.

During the last three months, President Solih visited India and the UAE. Since I was appointed Foreign Minister, I have met Foreign Ministers, Ambassadors, Presidents, Prime Ministers and Vice-Prime Ministers of 50 countries so far. I utilise my travels to conferences, to the UN and other meetings to connect with other countries so that they will understand that the Maldives is back.

How do you see the political landscape in the region changing?

■ We are a government that came to office promising reform and people-oriented development, both social and economic. Once we start implementing these reforms, they will realise that democracy functions. And in a democracy, we would have room for dissent, but you don't have to go to the extreme. You don't have to buy into hatred in order to attain power. Power comes from the people and once people in large numbers start saying no to ultra-nationalism and hate politics, then we will be able to move forward.

# Locking horns with the wrong party in Wayanad

The Congress has failed to realise the meaning and scope of the great struggle to save India



BINOY VISWAM

we get a hung Parliament after this election, how many of the Congress's MPs will withstand the temptation to move to the BJP? Nobody has an answer.

The Congress has been struggling to find its way in the political arena. It is unable to see the truth on the ground and take a stand. The same Congress that lashed out against the BJP and Prime Minister Narendra Modi has chosen to field its president against a Left party candidate in Wayanad, Kerala. It is not aware of the actual stage of contest that we are in against the BJP. Instead of fighting its arch enemy, the Congress has come to Wayanad to lock horns with the Left. The BJP does not have a candidate in Wayanad; Thushar Vellappally from the Bharat Dharm Jana Sena is contesting against Congress president Rahul Gandhi. The BJP does not have a prominent presence in Kerala. Then why should Mr. Gandhi contest from Wayanad against the Left Democratic Front candidate P.P. Suneer instead of contesting against Mr. Modi?

It is in this context that UPA-I and UPA-II are being brought back into focus. UPA-I could be formed only because of the unflinching anti-BJP stance taken by the Left. The UPA-I experiment came to a close because the Left opposed the India-U.S. civil nuclear deal. The monumental failures of UPA-II and its flawed policies paved the way for the NDA to come to power.

## The meaning of this election

During the Modi government's tenure, most of the time the Congress could not even be an effective Opposition party. When the general election was announced, the party made feeble efforts to talk about poverty and the troubles of the common people. It sparingly mentioned the need for a union of secular democratic forces.

The Congress is failing to realise the meaning, seriousness and scope of the great struggle that has been launched for saving the nation. It is distancing itself from its Nehru-Gandhi legacy. This is rendering it myopic to the extent of not even recognising the predominant enemy. The Nehruvian vision has never justified blind hostility to the Left. It is an approach that makes happy only those forces which do not want the Left to gain strength in Indian politics. Mr. Gandhi's arrival in Wayanad, where the BJP has no candidate, leaves a deep scar on the Nehruvian spirit. The party will have to pay heavily for it.

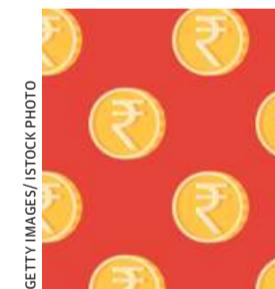
Binoy Viswam is a Rajya Sabha member representing the Communist Party of India

## SINGLE FILE

### Cronepatis in Parliament

A rich people's club is governing a largely poor country

SATYA NAAGESH AYYAGARY



It is an interesting facet of a changing India: there are ever greater numbers of cronepatis in the Lok Sabha, as well as among those who aspire to become MPs. According to the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR), 430 out of the 521 sitting MPs in the Lok Sabha have assets worth more than ₹1 crore. In other words, 83% of our lawmakers are cronepatis. That makes them a rich people's club governing a largely poor country.

There was a time when members of most legacy business and industrial houses of the country stuck to their business of doing business and left politics to politicians. During the License Raj, politicians were content accepting donations from businessmen or seeking jobs for their kin. But business and politics never intersected with each other. However, there were exploratory undercurrents across the dividing line.

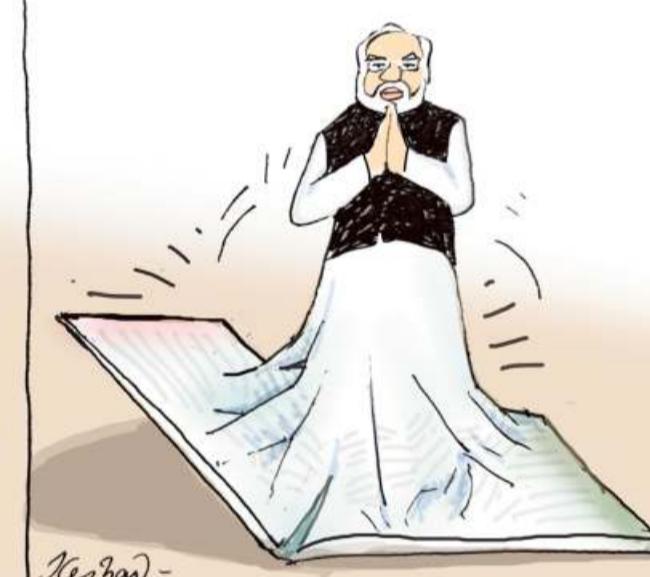
Come 1991, that changed. Liberalisation altered India's economic present and future. There was a permanent severance from the country's socialist economic past. The nouveau riche saw politics and political power as a means to first secure and then expand their business interests. It is a truism that business and politics share a symbiotic relationship. Today, they have almost become one, necessitating a new definition of businessman-politician or politician-businessman. The hyphenation is not semantic or syntactical, but reflects the emergence of a new class.

#### Some examples

Konda Vishweshwar Reddy, an engineer-turned-businessman-turned-politician and former Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS) MP, is now the Congress candidate from Chevella, near Hyderabad. His declared family assets are over ₹895 crore (the major share of which belongs to his wife). Nama Nageswar Rao, the TRS candidate from Khammam Lok Sabha seat who is a former Telugu Desam Party (TDP) MP, is the founder of Madhucon Projects. He was among the richest Lok Sabha candidates in the 2014 elections with declared assets worth ₹338 crore. In Andhra Pradesh, Jaydev Galla of the TDP is the managing director of Amara Raja Batteries and has declared assets worth over ₹600 crore. These are just a few crossover examples. There are of course plenty of examples from other States too.

As Walter Annenberg, American businessman and diplomat, posited, "The greatest power is not money power but political power." It suffices to say that the heady mix of economic and political power is even more intoxicating than either of its stand-alone constituents.

## THE POP-UP MANIFESTO



Kesava -

## DATA POINT

### Voter turnout patterns

A region-wise analysis of voter turnouts in the last 10 Lok Sabha polls reveals significant variations. Many seats in West Bengal consistently saw higher turnouts, while J&K was on the other side of the spectrum. By Vignesh Radhakrishnan

The table segregates Lok Sabha seats into various voter turnout ranges. For instance, in the last 10 Lok Sabha polls clubbed together, 39% seats in Bihar saw a turnout between 50% and 55%, 23% seats saw a turnout between 55% and 60%, and so on

State	TURNOUT %																		
	0 to <5	5 to 10	< 15	15 to 20	< 25	25 to 30	< 35	35 to 40	< 45	45 to 50	< 55	55 to 60	< 65	65 to 70	< 75	75 to 80	< 85	< 90	
J&K	5	2	5	5	0	17	0	14	10	12	10	0	2	12	2	5	0	0	
Punjab	0	1	3	1	3	1	0	2	1	3	31	21	18	14	3	0	0	0	
Himachal	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	50	34	9	6	0	0	0	0	
Haryana	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	29	35	20	6	0	0	0	
Uttarakhand	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	33	40	7	7	0	0	0	0	0	
Delhi	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	36	38	7	11	0	0	0	0	0	
Uttar Pradesh	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	15	27	42	7	2	1	0	0	0	0	
Rajasthan	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	7	13	23	37	14	6	1	0	0	0	0	
Gujarat	0	0	0	0	0	1	6	13	14	23	27	9	4	2	0	0	0	0	
Goa	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	19	6	31	19	0	6	13	0	0	0	
Maharashtra	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	7	16	41	19	9	3	0	0	0	0	
Jharkhand	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	12	48	21	10	5	0	0	0	0	
Bihar	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	6	9	39	23	12	6	2	0	0	0	
Odisha	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	10	33	18	20	10	6	1	0	0	
West Bengal	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	6	16	28	36	11	0	
Madhya Pradesh	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	5	10	16	45	13	5	2	0	0	0	0	
Chhattisgarh	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	11	33	12	12	6	0	0	0	0	0	
Assam	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	4	11	20	29	21	10	2	0	
Meghalaya	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	13										

## FROM PAGE ONE

**Manifesto keeps focus on national security**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who spoke at the event at the party's headquarters in New Delhi, said three main themes emerged from the manifesto: nationalism which he termed as the party's inspiration, 'antiyodaya' (catering to the last man in the queue) terming it the party's philosophy and 'Sushasan' or good governance as the party's mantra.

Reflecting the priorities of the party, the first chapter of the manifesto dealt with nationalism and national security, including a zero tolerance of terrorism, and a commitment to annulling Article 35A.

Finance Minister Arun Jaitley said the national security doctrine of the BJP-led government rejected "ideas of Balkanisation of India" and that it had been done by neither the "Tukde Tukde" mindset (a euphemism for ultra left) or "Ivy leaguers." Keeping to Mr. Modi's thematic breakdown, it also promised to not only universalise the ₹6,000 per annum income support scheme for farmers but also extend a pension scheme for shopkeepers and small scale traders to kick in after the age of 60.

Union Home Minister Raj-

**Supreme Court increases VVPAT verification**

The Supreme Court's order would be implemented in the Lok Sabha election, scheduled to begin on April 11. The court refused to go into the issue of integrity of the EVMs at this belated stage.

A Bench led by Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi increased the number of EVM-VVPATs subjected to physical verification in order to "ensure the greatest degree of accuracy, satisfaction in election process."

"Not only political parties but the poor and the illiterate should be satisfied," the apex court observed.

Earlier, under the ECI guideline 16.6, only the VVPAT slips from one EVM in every Assembly segment/constituency was subjected to physical verification. Now, with five such EVMs under physical scrutiny, the apex court said the election

nath Singh who chaired the manifesto committee, said it was a unique crowd sourced exercise that distilled the suggestions of nearly 6 crore people through various means including manifesto trucks that were sent out to solicit suggestions, group dialogues and even social media into the 45-page document.

Senior party leaders, including Ahmed Patel and Randeep Surjewala, released a document that detailed 125 "failed promises" by the BJP after five years in government.

Mr. Surjewala said no BJP leader – Prime Minister Narendra Modi, party president Amit Shah or Ministers Rajnath Singh and Sushma Swaraj – spoke on these crucial issues.

**Shah meets veterans Advani, Joshi**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Hours after the launch of the BJP's manifesto on Monday, party president Amit Shah met the two veterans, L.K. Advani and Murli Manohar Joshi, who, after many years, would be absent from contesting polls. Mr. Shah met the leaders amid strong indications that their exclusion from the candidate list and the manner in which they were excluded rankled.

"Mr. Shah drove to the residence of these two leaders, gave them copies of the election manifesto released on Monday and sought their blessings for victory," a senior BJP leader said after the meeting.

No statement was forthcoming from either Mr. Advani, who has been replaced by Mr. Shah as candidate from Gandhinagar, or Mr. Joshi.

Earlier Mr. Advani has penned a blog stating that calling opponents anti-national for holding different views was not the BJP's way.

Mr. Joshi had penned an open letter to voters of Kanpur stating clearly that he had been asked not to seek ticket by party general secretary Ram Lal.

## SAYS

Says there is no mention about jobs, goods and services tax, black money and demonetisation

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Congress on Monday called the BJP manifesto for the 2019 Lok Sabha polls a bunch of lies, and said the ruling party had not mentioned anything about jobs, the goods and services tax (GST), black money and demonetisation.

Senior party leaders, including Ahmed Patel and Randeep Surjewala, released a document that detailed 125 "failed promises" by the BJP after five years in government.

Mr. Surjewala said no BJP leader – Prime Minister Narendra Modi, party president Amit Shah or Ministers Rajnath Singh and Sushma Swaraj – spoke on these crucial issues.



**Questions galore:** Congress leader Randeep Surjewala said time has come for BJP to wind up its government. ■ FILE PHOTO

cetic) but never fulfils his promises," Mr. Patel said.

Mr. Surjewala questioned the BJP on the promises made in 2014, and said that it was time for the BJP to wind up its government since people had seen through it.

"You promised two crore jobs every year, which translates into 10 crore jobs in five years. In reality, during these five years, the number of jobs has actually reduced by 4.7 crore. And it's not something that I am saying, but what has been said by the government's own NSSO (National Sample Survey Organisation) data," he told reporters.

The Congress leader also said that the BJP had not brought back ₹80 lakh crore of black money and deposit

on their website as they adopt gimmicks to stay in power. Sometimes, he [Mr. Modi] becomes chowkidar (watchman), chaiwala, kaamdar (toiler), fakir (as

**BJP, Cong. are corrupt: Mayawati**

Alliance partner Jayant Chaudhary hints at BSP chief's role as Prime Minister



**Show of strength:** BSP chief Mayawati receiving a memento from RLD leader Jayant Chaudhary and others during a rally in Meerut on Monday. ■ PTI

the contribution and unfulfilled dreams of Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar, Kanshi Ram and Chaudhary Charan Singh.

"Now, I ask you to open your eyes and see that only the person sitting on stage can fulfil those dreams and aspirations," he said.

**No doles but jobs?** In her address, instead of giving ad hoc doles, Ms. Mayawati promised to give permanent jobs to the poor in the government and private sectors, if voted to power at the Centre. "Policies come

and go with the governments. We want to strengthen the hands of the poor," she said.

Stating that the BSP-SP-RLD pact was not limited to the Lok Sabha elections, Ms. Mayawati said, "We will fight the next Assembly elections together and root out the Yogi [Adityanath] government [from Uttar Pradesh]."

**Intoxicated by power?** The BSP supremo said the party did not believe in manifestos. "Unlike the BJP and the Congress, we don't be-

lieve in boasting. We get things done," she said.

She said before the Deoband rally, the BJP was describing the *magha gath han* combine as a divided house. "But the massive turnout at Deoband would make them lose their sleep.

And the 'Jai Bhim' chant at Meerut will make them forget 'Namo, Namo'. The Prime Minister calls us 'sab-rab' (liquor) but he is intoxicated by power. I believe the voters of Meerut, Bijnore and Baghpat will give him a reality check," she said.



**It is BJP's latest jumla, says CPI(M)**

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Left parties on Monday panned the BJP manifesto with CPI(M) general secretary Sitaram Yechury calling it "the latest edition of *jumla* manifesto."

"We have heard similar promises five years ago. We have heard that the farmers will be stopped from committing distress suicides, but the number of suicides have increased, our youth were promised 10 crore jobs in the last five years; instead you have unemployment rate at the highest in the last 45 years," Mr. Yechury said.

He said the manifesto was mum on the promises made in 2014 or policies such as demonetisation.

**Chidambaram's poser to Modi on rally cost**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Former Finance Minister P. Chidambaram on Monday questioned the source of funds spent on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's election rallies and asked if it was added to the election expenses of the candidates for whom Mr. Modi campaigned.

"Heard from people attending one of PM's election rallies: how many crores of rupees are being spent on each rally? At every rally there is a pandal that is better than a rich family's marriage pandal. There are tens of LED screens. What is the source of this huge amount of money?" he asked.

His tweets on the PM comes hours after he tweeted that I-T department was planning to raid his house to cripple the campaign of his son, Karti.

**IAF presents 'proof' to show F-16 was shot down**

Says owing to security and confidentiality concerns, it is restricting information being shared in the public domain

## DINAKAR PERI

## NEW DELHI

The Indian Air Force (IAF) on Monday presented two radar images of the aerial engagement with Pakistan Air Force (PAF) on February 27 to prove that a Pakistani F-16 was shot down by the MiG-21 pilot by Wing Commander Abhinandan Varthaman.

"The IAF has irrefutable evidence of not only the fact that F-16 was used by PAF on February 27 but also that an IAF MiG-21 Bison shot down a PAF F-16," Air Vice-Marshal (AVM) RGK Kapoor, Assistant Chief of the Air Staff, Operations (Space), said at a press conference.

The images from the Air



**Clearing the air:** Air Vice Marshal RGK Kapoor speaking at a press conference in New Delhi on Monday. ■ PTI

bome Warning and Control System (AWACS) show the tracks of PAF jets and one

IAF jet in combat and in the second image, one of the PAF jet disappeared. "In the

aerial combat that followed, one MiG-21 Bison of the IAF, piloted by Wing Commander Abhinandan Varthaman, shot down one F-16 of PAF," he said.

Analysis of electronic emissions has shown that the aircraft picked up by the ELINT intercepts from AWACS and radio transcripts indicated F-16s in the area directly in front of Wg.Cdr. Varthaman's aircraft, he stated. The F-16 crashed and fell across the LoC in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (POK). Indian Army posts in the vicinity of the Line of Control (LoC) in the Jhangar sector sighted two separate parachutes, he said. The first was

due west, in the Sabzot area, and the second was, after a few minutes, southwest, in the Tandar area. The two areas are separated by 8-10 km.

Air Vice-Marshall Kapoor said the IAF had more credible info and evidence clearly indicating that the PAF lost one F-16 in the air action.

"However, due to security and confidentiality concerns, we are restricting info being shared in the public domain," he said. Pakistan, which has denied losing any F-16s, has released an image showing four missiles which it claimed showed that the MiG-21 flown by Wg.Cdr. Varthaman did not fire any mis-

siles. However, IAF officials refuted this, and pointed to the fact that for one of the missiles in the picture, only the front seeker and the end tail portion were seen. "It is because the missile had impact and detonated due to which the explosive was destroyed," an IAF officer said.

Last week, the *Foreign Policy* magazine quoted an unnamed U.S. defence official as saying that the U.S. had counted PAF F-16 planes and "all aircraft were present and accounted for." However, to questions, a U.S. Defence Department spokesperson said they "weren't aware" of any such investigation.

A Bench, led by Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi, said the court could not step in unless it was clear about what the film was "seeking to depict" and what the petitioner, Congress activist Aman Panwar, was objecting to. "How can we order anything without knowing

## SAYS

## LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

## NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday refused to intervene in the release of the film *Prime Minister Narendra Modi*, alleged to be "blatant propaganda" dressed up as a work of art, in violation of the poll code.

A Bench, led by Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi, said the court could not step in unless it was clear about what the film was "seeking to depict" and what the petitioner, Congress activist Aman Panwar, was objecting to.

Mr. Panwar said the court should then direct the filmmakers to provide Mr. Panwar with a copy of the movie. But the court refused. "We fail to see how such a direction can be passed by this court," Chief Justice Gogoi responded.

what we are ordering about," Chief Justice Gogoi asked senior advocate A.M. Singhvi, who represents Mr. Panwar.

The Bench then asked Mr. Panwar to file an application, if possible by Monday, after watching the film and highlight the parts he found objectionable.

Mr. Singhvi said the court should then direct the filmmakers to provide Mr. Panwar with a copy of the movie. But the court refused. "We fail to see how such a direction can be passed by this court," Chief Justice Gogoi responded.

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

## NEW DELHI

Amid reports of searches by Income Tax officials of properties associated with Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Kamal Nath, the department late on Monday evening issued a statement saying it had conducted search and seizure operations in Bhopal, New Delhi, Indore, and Goa on a group with links to politics and business.

The Delhi Directorate of Income Tax (Investigation) initiated search and seizure action on a group in NCR, Bhopal, Indore and Goa, the statement said. It said the searches in Madhya Pradesh had detected a widespread and well-organised racket of collection of unaccounted-for cash of about ₹281 crore. "A part of the cash was also transferred to the headquarters of a major political party in Delhi including about ₹20 crore which was moved through hawala recently to the headquarters of the political party from the residence of a senior functionary at Tughlak Road, New Delhi," the statement said.

**Highway ban: J&K parties approach court**

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

## SRINAGAR

Political parties in J&K, including the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and J&K Peoples Movement, on Monday approached the High Court on State Home department's order to restrict civilian traffic twice a week on the national highway.

Peoples Conference's chief Sajad Lone also wrote to Governor Satya Pal Malik.

The case was listed for Tuesday for a hearing.

**Vijay Mallya not allowed to appeal**

London High Court judge rejects businessman's plea for permission to challenge extradition order

## VIDYA RAM

## LONDON

A judge at London's High Court has rejected businessman Vijay Mallya's application for permission to appeal against the extradition order against him. The order was passed on Friday last week by Justice William Davis and sent to all parties on that date. It does not, however, necessarily mean the end of the story.

This application to appeal was made on paper – via the exchange of documents between the judge and both

sides. Now Mr. Mallya's legal team can make a renewal application for a brief oral hearing before the same court, in another attempt to push for an appeal hearing. If it were to be rejected at this stage there would be no further recourse in terms of the appeal process.

"The appellant has 5 business days to apply for oral consideration," a spokesperson for the judiciary explained.

If a renewal application is made, it will be listed before a High Court judge and dealt

with at a hearing." Should Mr. Mallya apply for an oral hearing, this could be a leng-

thy process, requiring time to be found in front of a judge at the High Court. Beyond this court, Mr. Mallya would potentially also have appeal opportunities to the Supreme Court and eventually the European Court of Human Rights (though he would not be able to appeal if he were denied permission to appeal at the oral hearing).

Mr. Mallya, who has been on bail on an extradition warrant since the start of the extradition proceedings, launched his application to

appeal to the High Court after Home Secretary Sajid Javid signed the extradition order against him in early February. The order comes as Mr. Mallya awaits a judgment in a separate case. It involves an interim third-party debt order relating to £260,000 in Mr. Mallya's ICICI bank account in the UK from a consortium of public sector banks earlier this year. The banks have been attempting to recover £1.145 billion worth of assets from Mr. Mallya.

The Delhi Directorate of Income Tax (Investigation) initiated search and seizure action on a group in NCR,

Bhopal, Indore and Goa, the statement said.

It said the searches in Madhya Pradesh had detected a widespread and well-organised racket of collection of unaccounted-for cash of about ₹281 crore. "A part of the cash was also transferred to the headquarters of a major political party in Delhi including about ₹20 crore which was moved through hawala recently to the headquarters of the political party from the residence of a senior functionary at Tughlak Road, New Delhi," the statement said.

[CAMPAIGN TRAIL: CHIRAG PASWAN]

# Almost smooth sailing on the road with LJP leader

I have been around the people of my constituency, so I do not need to knock on every door right now, says Lok Janshakti Party scion

SOBHANA K. NAIR  
JAMUI

It's almost noon, the heat is rising and so is the pace of the Lok Janshakti Party's election campaign, urging voters to choose the party's *bangla chaap* election symbol, the message blaring from speakers placed atop a Toyota Fortuner piled with marigold garlands.

Party supporters wearing T-shirts emblazoned with LJP scion Chirag Paswan's photograph with the slogan 'Dil se Chirag, phir se Chirag' grow restless. Mr. Paswan is the son of LJP founder and president Ram Vilas Paswan.

On the fifth floor of Hotel GenX, a freshly minted hotel that opened six months ago, the room to his door is closed. Outside, the narrow, dark corridor is packed with a gaggle of his supporters.

Mr. Chirag Paswan leaves the hotel past 2 p.m. He jumps into the front seat of the Fortuner, his close associate Saurobh Pandey sits at the back along with a security staff. A vehicle of security personnel leads the cavalcade of six SUVs as they zip around Jamui in Bihar.



Lending his ears: LJP leader Chirag Paswan interacting with voters in Jamui. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

har, standing out like a sore thumb on a two-lane road.

#### Presence felt

At the first couple of stops, Mr. Paswan climbs down from his car, forges into the crowd with his smile intact, does not say much, obliges every selfie request, peering into the phone cameras of his supporters, and accepts the marigold garlands thrown at his neck. Be-

fore climbing back in, he throws the marigold garlands onto his car's deck, adding to an ever-growing pile there.

Back in the car, he says he has ensured that his presence was felt in the constituency in the past five years. He counts a Kendriya Vidyalaya, a medical college (both at the drawing board stage) and a host of railway projects among his achievements.

"I have been around the people of my constituency all through the five years; so I do not need to knock on every door right now," he said.

When told of conversations of discontentment among voters, he concedes that it is difficult to reach each of the 2,100 villages in his constituency spread across three districts. His opponent is Bhudev Chaudhary of the Rashtriya

Lok Samata Party (RLSP), whom Mr. Paswan defeated in 2014.

Vestiges of his one-movie film career remain. His lone film, *Mile Na Mile Hum*, co-starring Kangana Ranaut, released in 2010. The film bombed and three years later, well in time for the 2014 Lok Sabha polls, he was back in Bihar to take over the reins of the LJP from his father.

Do people still remember his film? "There was a very famous song from my movie called *Katto gillhari*, written by Javed sahab [lyricist Javed Akhtar] that happens to be popular in U.P. and Bihar. So when I go out, at times, they sing the song, the youngsters tell me that I look good and I must make another movie, but politics is a full-time job," he says.

#### Changing gears

As the roadshow gathers speed, the campaigning changes gears too. Mr. Paswan opens the door of the moving vehicle, and with one foot inside the car and the other on the landing step, he waves out to supporters. Almost on cue, two security guards also jump

in beside him, three of them dangling in unison from the vehicle.

In between the waving and smiling, Mr. Paswan and his associate Mr. Pandey, have serious matters at hand. They exchange notes on possible "internal sabotage".

The roadshow also takes a discomfiting turn when the cavalcade is rudely stopped by a group of women. They have blocked the road, lining up empty buckets and pots at the Lakshimpur market.

The lone municipal tap that serves close to 50 families here has not had a drop of water for more than a month. The women are angry.

#### 'Won't vote'

"Nahi denge vote, ja ('We won't give the vote, get lost')," they shout. Mr. Paswan, initially clueless, gets down from his car to do the usual meet and greet routine, and cajoles the women to remove the blockade. For a moment, the protest is forgotten, and children and women stand on their toes to peek at him. But fearing worse, Mr. Paswan beats a hasty retreat.

## Kalahandi: where the royals still hold sway

It is set to witness a triangular contest

SATYASUNDAR BARIK  
BHAWANIPATNA

Kalahandi, the western Odisha Lok Sabha constituency, where star campaigners, right from the Prime Minister to the Chief Minister and from the BJP president to the Congress chief have so far addressed public meetings, is poised for a close triangular fight.

Three-time MP and former Union Minister Bhakta Charan Das, state BJP president Basant Panda and BJD heavyweight Puspendra Singh Deo are trying to outsmart one another through crafty election manoeuvring and massive public meetings.

Since Independence, Kalahandi's politics has been revolving around royal families and the issue of back-breaking poverty and malnutrition.

Of the 16 general elections held in the past, members of royal families have been elected nine times from here, while on seven occasions, senior Congress leader Das has emerged as the principal challenger, winning the seat thrice.

#### Early bird

Sensing a comeback this time, the senior Congress leader had embarked upon the campaign in Kalahandi much earlier than his counterparts. Congress sources said he had played a crucial role in the selection of nominees in seven Assembly segments falling in the Kalahandi LS constituency.

Mr. Das hopes a combination of caste factors, his personal relations and impact of the party's recent success in neighbouring Chhattisgarh will help him scrape through.

"It is very deceptive if one

One can see that Kalahandi has never progressed from what it was in the 1980s

BHAKTA CHARAN DAS  
Congress leader

sees wide roads connected to the district headquarters town of Bhawanipatna. It does not represent a true picture of development. A travel to a rural village, a few hundred metres off the main road, would tell the real story. One can see that Kalahandi has never progressed from what it was in the 1980s," he said. Congress president Rahul Gandhi, along with Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel, held a rally at Bhawanipatna to bolster his prospects.

The sitting MP, Arka Keshari Deo, who had fought the 2014 election on BJD ticket, has been denied renomination by the party this time. Instead, Puspendra Singh Deo, a royal descendant and trusted party leader, has been chosen. The BJD is banking on Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik's pro-poor and development programmes to see it through. Moreover, the regional party has a well-oiled organisation in place in almost all blocks. Mr. Singh Deo hopes that the party's organisational strength will help him retain the seat for the BJD.

Buoyed by its spectacular victory in the last panchayat election in 2017, the saffron party has identified Kalahandi as one of the winnable seats. Mr. Panda, state BJP president, is of the view that the strings of visits by the top leadership have created a sort of wave in favour of his party.

## Final countdown



Putting in order: An election official arranging poll materials in Jorhat district of Assam on Monday. The constituency along with four others in the State will go to the polls on Thursday. ■ RITU RAJ KONWAR

#### INTERVIEW | PRAVEEN CHAKRAVARTY

## Cong. will triple its tally in Parliament'

Party's data analyst says the GDP can absorb the cost of minimum income guarantee

SANDEEP PHUKAN  
NEW DELHI

Following up on former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's advice to make the Congress's 2019 manifesto a talking point, the party has lined up over two dozen press conferences, seeking to steer the election narrative toward 'bread and butter issues'. Head of the party's Data Analytics team Praveen Chakravarty, who was closely involved in the drafting of the manifesto, dispels misgivings about implementing NYAY, saying India's GDP is now large enough to absorb the costs

Is the Congress seeking to build an election narrative through its manifesto?

■ It is extraordinary the kind of reaction we have got. When was the last time a manifesto was discussed and debated so widely before an election? Whether you support it or criticise it, the fact that it is being discussed makes us feel grateful.

The BJP has called it a document that is 'full of lies'...

■ We all know where the word *jumla* came from and in what context. I think the country has moved beyond rhetorical statements.

The Nyuntam Aay Yojana (NYAY) or minimum income guarantee is the centrepiece of your manifesto. Several people, including economists, have questioned the scheme that



promises transfer of ₹72,000 to five crore poorest households. And what happens to fiscal deficit?

■ Sure, I will answer all of this but let me tell you how it came about. The Congress president [Rahul Gandhi] told us that the poorest families are getting left behind and can we have a direct policy intervention. He said 'Let's find a solution'. That's the origin of the idea.

In the Indian context, in 2017, this government's own Chief Economic Advisor (Dr. Arvind Subramanian) talked about universal basic income. His proposal was that it would cost 1.5% to 2% of the GDP.

When we roll out NYAY, it would cost us 1.2% of the GDP. It will be about ₹3.6 lakh crore and our GDP today is ₹200 lakh crore. It is entirely doable. In

Mr. Chidambaram (former Union Finance Minister) keeps reminding all of us that these were exactly the same questions when NREGA was planned. Today, it is an astounding success.

Will this connect with the voters, especially after the Balakot strike following the Pulwama terror attack?

■ Ok, let me tell you that I do what are called panel surveys that include voters, sarpanches [village headmen], party workers, civil society members etc. Our sample size is about seven lakh people, covering every single Assembly constituency in as many as 7.6 lakh polling booths. Now, when I asked them will you vote for BJP post-Balakot strikes if you didn't vote for them in 2014, a majority of them said 'No'.

Most people said the strikes were good and we [India] should have hit Pakistan earlier but it will not change their electoral behaviour.

So what does the data tell you about seats. How many seats do you think the Congress could get?

■ At this stage, to predict how many seats we get will be a fool's hazard. Look, data indicate that one-third of the voters decide who to vote in the week of voting.

I can only say that as of now, we will triple our seats [from the 2014 tally] and the BJP will halve their count.

## POLL POURRI

### Tura: a Sangma pocket-borough



GUWAHATI

Barring two years in between, the Tura Lok Sabha seat in Meghalaya has been with the family of former Lok Sabha Speaker Purno Agitok Sangma for 41 years, since 1977. The two-year gap, from 1989-1991, was when Mr. Sangma returned to State politics to become the Chief Minister. He nominated a loyalist for the seat. In these 41 years, the Sangma family represented the seat for four parties – the Congress, the Nationalist Congress Party, the Trinamool Congress and the National People's Party (NPP). Mr. Sangma "bequeathed" the seat to daughter Agatha Sangma (in photo), now the NPP candidate, from whom his son Conrad K. Sangma took over only to quit after becoming the Chief Minister in 2018.

### Population-based quotas: RJD

**PATNA** The Rashtriya Janata Dal on Monday released its manifesto promising reservation to SC/ST, OBC and EBC categories in proportion to their population, and also to implement all the suggestions of the Mandal Commission report. Party leader Tejashwi Yadav declared that toddy juice will be tax-free when his government would be formed in Bihar. "Our party is not against 10% reservation to Economically Weaker Section (EWS) but, we think that reservation to SC/ST, EBC and OBC categories should be given in proportion of their population," Mr. Yadav said.

### 'Blocking 1 mn accounts daily'

NEW DELHI

Facebook on Monday said it has been blocking or removing nearly one million accounts daily using artificial intelligence and machine learning, ahead of the Lok Sabha election.

"For a year and a half, we've been working to bring a comprehensive and strategic approach to our work on the Indian elections," Ajit Mohan, Facebook managing director and vice-president for India, said in a blog post. He added that Facebook was "absolutely committed" in maintaining the integrity of the election and would help to ensure that it is fair and free from interference, both foreign and domestic.

### Trespass case against candidate

**GUWAHATI** The Assam unit of the BJP has filed a police complaint against Supreme Court lawyer Upamanyu Hazarika, who is contesting the Guwahati Lok Sabha seat as an Independent, for allegedly trespassing onto one of the party's election offices and stealing documents. Mr. Hazarika, who heads an anti-infiltration forum, said the BJP had lied in the complaint because he went live on Facebook to show that the party's promises were empty as its office. "We went live at 3.38 p.m. while occupying the empty BJP office but the complaint says we entered the office between 1 and 1.30 p.m. (on Sunday)," he said.

### Injecting enthusiasm

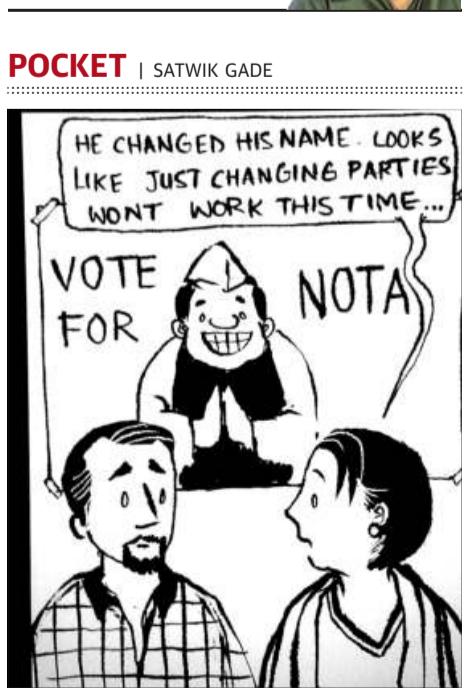
JAIPUR

Doctors at government hospitals in Banswara district of Rajasthan have joined the voter awareness campaign. They affix the seal with the punch line, 'Vote Kar! Banswara', on prescription slips to encourage voters to exercise their franchise on the April 29. Chief Medical and Health Officer Hiratal Tabiyar said the hospitals have also joined the Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation programme.

I come on Twitter and so many chowkidars abusing and spewing venom. Really these chowkidars will protect us and our country? Who is gonna watch the watchmen?

ANURAG KASHYAP

FILMMAKER



### POCKET | SATWIK GADE

#### How the islands voted

The Andaman and Nicobar and the Lakshadweep islands have one Lok Sabha seat each. Tables show winners, vote % of parties in the past

#### Winners in past Lok Sabha elections

Year	Andaman and Nicobar	Lakshadweep
2014	BJP	NCP
2009	BJP	INC
2004	INC	JD(U)
1999	BJP	INC
1998	INC	INC
1996	INC	INC
1991	INC	INC
1989	INC	INC
1984	INC	INC
1980	INC(I)	INC(Urs)
1977	INC	INC

In the 2014 election, in the Andaman and Nicobar islands, the BJP secured a vote % of 47.8 and the Congress secured 43.69% votes. In the Lakshadweep, the NCP secured 50.11% and INC secure 46.56% votes respectively.

## NDA ahead, but game on

Survey says the BJP and the Congress could increase their vote shares by 4 percentage points in 2019 compared to the 2014 elections. The BJP could lose seats due to a more united opposition in some key States



TABLE 1

After hitting a peak in 2017, BJP's estimated vote share began declining, but has picked up in the pre-poll survey. The NDA seems to have eaten into the vote shares of non-UPA parties

Party/alliance	2014 actual vote share	2019 estimate
BJP	31	35
BJP allies	7.4	6
INC	19.3	23
INC allies	3.7	7
BSP+	7.6*	9
Left	4.8	3
Others	26.2	17

TABLE 2

The BJP and its allies are expected to get fewer seats, while the Congress and BSP combines are expected to get a significantly higher number of seats

Party/alliance	2014 actual seats won	2019 estimate
BJP	283	222-232
BJP allies	53	41-51
INC	44	74-84
INC allies	15	41-51
BSP+	0*	37-47
Left	12	5-15
Others	136	88-98

\*Does not include vote share of SP and RLD here; SP and RLD secured 3.4% and 0.1% votes respectively in 2014.

TABLE 3

NDA may not cross the majority mark this time, with the UPA and others expected to win considerably more seats

Front	Seats won in 2014	2019 estimate
NDA	336	263-283
UPA	59	115-135
Others	148	135-155

All for BJID; \*\*All for SP-BSP-RLD alliance; \*\*\*All for TMC

TABLE 4

Regional parties are expected to play a major role in States like Andhra Pradesh and Kerala

States	NDA	UPA	Others
A.P.	5	4	91 (TDP: 36, YSRCP: 46)
Bihar	53	39	8
Gujarat	56	36	8
Karnataka	46	50	4
Kerala	18	34	49 (LDF: 38)
M.P.	50	44	6
Maharashtra	57	39	4
Odisha	27	17	57 (BJD: 44)
Rajasthan	50	40	10
T.N.	37	53	10
U.P.	44	10	46 (MGB: 44)
W.B.	26	10	64 (TMC: 39, Left: 19)

TABLE 5

Estimate shows that the grand alliance could win about half the seats in Uttar Pradesh

States	NDA	UPA	Others
A.P.	0-3	0	19-25 (TDP: 6-12, YSRCP: 10-16)
Bihar	28-34	5-11	0-2
Gujarat	22-26	0-4	0-0
Karnataka	14-20	8-14	0-0
Kerala	0-2	5-13	6-14
M.P.	17-23	6-12	0-0
Maharashtra	38-42	6-10	0-0
Odisha	2-8	0-0	13-19*
Rajasthan	17-21	4-8	0-0
T.N.	4-14	25-35	0-0
U.P.	32-40	0-6	38-46**
W.B.	2-6	3-7	30-36***

\*All for BJID; \*\*All for SP-BSP-RLD alliance; \*\*\*All for TMC

Raw figures of voting intention have been adjusted for the known patterns of under-reporting for independents and very small parties and over-reporting for the ruling party/alliance. Voters who did not disclose their preference have been adjusted

## Demographic trend

Across geographies, classes, age groups and castes, the NDA found considerable support. It also regained support among farmers. The only demographic among whom the NDA was trailing was religious minorities

Will vote for...	Villages	Small cities	Big cities
NDA	46	38	49
UPA	25	28	31
Others	29	34	20

TABLE 2

The NDA found support across classes. Half the upper class respondents said they would vote for NDA

Will vote for...	Upper class	Middle class	Lower class	Poor
NDA	50	45	40	38
UPA	24	33	29	28
Others	26	22	31	34

FARMERS' SUPPORT

The NDA, which was losing farmers' support in previous surveys regained it in the pre-poll survey

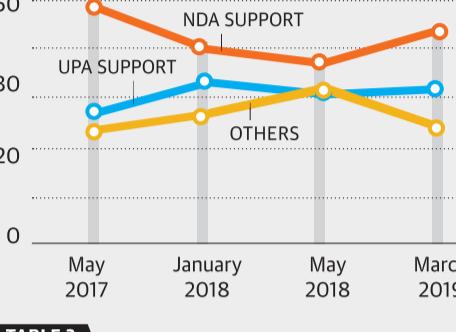


TABLE 3

The BJP's support base is largest among the youngest voters, with an 8 percentage points gap between them and the oldest age group

Age group	Will vote for BJP (2019)
18-25 years	40
26-35 years	36
36-45 years	35
46-55 years	33
56+ years	32

TABLE 4

A high percentage of minority respondents believe that the Modi government should not be given another chance

Group	Should get	Should not get	No answer
Overall	46	36	18
Hindus	51	31	18
Muslims	26	56	18
Christians	20	62	18
Sikhs	21	68	10
Others	35	41	24

Columns indicate % of respondents who said the NDA should or should not get another chance

TABLE 5

Those who supported the NDA government said they were more likely to exercise their franchise

Support	Very likely to vote	Somewhat likely	Not very likely
NDA	74	20	7
UPA	61	27	12
Others	63	21	16

In the above table, the numbers in brackets indicate the % of respondents who said that their most important voting consideration will be the local candidate, party (highest proportion) and PM candidate

## Advantage NDA, but it may fall short of majority

### FROM PAGE ONE

it may find it difficult to achieve the high strike rate of 2014.

The SP-BSP combine in Uttar Pradesh is posing a stiff challenge to the BJP. If the current trends were to continue, the BJP is likely to lose a significant chunk of seats in this politically important State.

The survey shows both the BJP and the Congress are likely to register a four percentage point increase in their vote share. But, in the case of the BJP, this rise does not translate to more seats.

In some key States of north and central India, the party is likely to lose seats as

overnment formation after the election.

#### Non-UPA parties

It is important to highlight that as things stand today, the projected rise in the NDA vote share appears to be at the cost of the non-UPA Opposition. Ironically, among supporters of these non-UPA parties, the sentiment against the NDA is not very strong. Close to one-third of non-UPA/non-BJP voters prefer not to take a stand on the question of the Modi government getting a second chance and just four of every 10 are against giving the ruling party another opportunity.

Possibly, the supporters of the non-UPA Opposition see a limited opportunity of the parties they support coming to power and this is reflected in their stand on a

second chance for the BJP. In any case, this opens possibilities for the BJP in States like West Bengal and Odisha.

If one were to undertake a region-wise analysis, it is clear that the NDA appears to be doing extremely well in north, west and central India. It is also catching up in the east and the northeast, though it is faring poorly in the south. While the NDA has made some gains in the south in the last one year, it has been unable to catch up with either the UPA or other regional parties in this region.

South India is the only region where close to half the respondents (45%) believe that the country is heading in the wrong direction.

#### Among social groups

The BJP seems to be ahead of its opponents on account

of the support it enjoys among critical social groups. It retains its lead among both upper castes and the OBCs.

While it gets more support among the upper and middle income groups, its support among the low income groups and the poor is not insignificant

## Summary of offset proposal of Dassault Aviation

Sl No	Avenue for offsets/ Make in India	% of offset / Make in India							Total offset (%)
		Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	
1	(a) Direct purchase of eligible products	0%	0%	0%	1%	10%	17%	44%	72%
2	(b) FDI in joint ventures (equity investment)	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	1%
3	(c) Direct purchase through investment in kind through ToT	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	2%	4%	7%
4	(d) Investment in kind in terms of Equipment	0%	0%	0%	2%	5%	4%	9%	20%
5	(e) Provision of equipment and/or ToT, (f) Technology acquisition by DRDO								(*)
<b>Annual offset obligation (%)</b>		<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>100%</b>

(\*) Technology Acquisition (TA) projects with DRDO are foreseen to be included in the Offset Contract, following discussions to take place between Dassault and the DRDO after coming into force of the Offset Contract. Depending on the outcome of these discussions, the Offset Schedule will be amended to reflect the TA projects and their associated offset value agreed between Dassault and the DRDO. However, such amendment will not affect the Annual Offset obligation indicated in the table here-above.

## Summary of offset proposal of MBDA

Sl No	Avenue for offsets/ Make in India	Yearly fulfillment of offset ^							Total offset ^^
		Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	
1	Direct purchase or executing export orders [avenue 3.1 (a)]	0	0	0	0	2%	6%	12%	20%
2	FDI [avenue 3.1 (b)]	0	0	0	0	0	2%	0	2%
3	Investment in kind through ToT to Indian enterprises [avenue 3.1 (c)]	0	0	0	0	1%	0	1%	2%
4	Investment in kind in terms of provision of Equipment to Indian enterprises [avenue 3.1 (d)]	0	0	0	2%	4%	14%	26%	46%
5	Provision of equipment and/or ToT to government institutions including DRDO Technology acquisition by DRDO [avenue 3.1 (e) & (f)]	0	0	0	2%	2%	8%	18%	30%
<b>Annual offset / Make in India obligation (%)</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>100%</b>

<sup>^</sup> Yearly fulfillment of offset/Make in India obligation (in %) of the total offset/Make in India obligation

<sup>^^</sup> Total Offset/ Make in India (%)

FROM PAGE ONE

# Rafale: Modi govt. gave waivers in offset agreements

Provisions of DPP-2013 relating to arbitration, access to books of accounts, and penalties for use of undue influence and commission agents were not complied with

N. RAM

What needs to be noted is that nothing in our current series of investigative articles raises any questions about the quality of the Rafale, or indeed the rival Eurofighter Typhoon, combat jet, or about the need to modernise the Indian Air Force. Interestingly, and as a matter of record, this was also the case during *The Hindu's* Bofors investigation of the late-1980s, when neither the quality of the Bofors, or the rival Sofma, howitzer nor the need to upgrade the Indian Army's artillery resources was in question.

## 0% offsets in first three years

There has been a major political controversy over Dassault Aviation's choice of Indian Offset Partners (IOPs), notably Anil Ambani's Reliance Group, and the non-transparent arrangements for the discharge of offset obligations. Offsets are 'domestic content-based requirements' imposed on an exporting foreign entity by an importing government or public entity as a *quid pro quo* for placing a large order with the exporting entity. 'Offset' is usually rendered in French as 'contrepartie' (compensation), as Eric Trappier, Chairman and CEO of Dassault Aviation, pointed out in an interview to AFP (<http://bit.ly/2tlyDRasReliance>)

The INT's final report reveals that the initial proposal of Dassault Aviation and MBDA had nearly 88% of offset obligations loaded on to the seventh year. The avenues proposed for offset discharge were also far from satisfactory. A meeting held in the Defence Ministry on January 4, 2016 decided that in view of advice received from the Ministry of Law and Justice, the French side should be informed that the offsets "will have impact on the commercial proposal" and that the French industrial suppliers should be advised to submit revised offset proposals urgently.

However, the INT report notes, certain Articles of the offset contracts "were not consistent with the standard contract document provided in DPP-2013. Specifically, the French side was not ready to include the Articles on 'Arbitration', 'Use of Undue Influence', 'Agents and Agency Commission', 'Access to Book of Accounts' and 'Offset Performance Bond'."

**The two waivers**  
Dassault Aviation and MBDA proposed the inclusion of the same clause on arbitration in the offset contract as in the IGA. Article 16 of the IGA, the dispute resolution provision, stipulates that both parties make their best efforts to settle the dispute through direct negotiations and that if any dispute cannot be settled through direct negotiations within 24 months, it will be settled in accordance with the arbitration clause of the Supply Protocols.

Article 21 of the Supply Protocols stipulates that all disputes be settled by direct discussions and that if any dispute cannot be resolved in this way within 24 months, it will be settled by arbitration in accordance with the prevailing United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL) Arbitration Rules in Geneva. ([http://bit.ly/UNC\\_Arbit](http://bit.ly/UNC_Arbit))

The Indian negotiators contended that the IGA formulations could not be applied to the offset contracts, which would be signed directly by the Government of India with the two industrial suppliers. The offset contracts were clearly not part of the IGA. Acting on directions from the DAC, the INT repeatedly pressed the French side to agree to the alignment of Article 9 of the offset contract with Article 21A of Chapter V of the Standard Contract Document of DPP-2013 (<http://cgda.nic.in/pdf/DPP2013.pdf>). But Dassault Aviation and MBDA dug in and refused to do this, citing three reasons: "(i) Simple and efficient wording; (ii) Agreed by both governments; (iii) No confusion or risks of overlap in Arbitration procedure for any dispute spreading from the Supply Protocols to the Offset Contract."

The INT's efforts on this issue had been weakened, if not undermined, by the parallel talks conducted by the

**The discharge of offset obligations is heavily loaded on to the last two years of the seven-year period**

achieved as INT was able to persuade DA to increase the percentage of offsets in the avenue 'direct purchase' from the initial value of 9% to 72% and reduce offsets in the avenue 'investment in kind (equipment)' from the initial value of 30% to 20%. This would facilitate greater direct investment in India by the French vendors."

## French reluctance to mention 'offsets'

The INT report reveals that the French negotiators were initially "not ready to mention the word 'offsets' in the IGA" but upon insistence by the Indian side, they "relented and added 'Make in India' initiative through Offsets at Article 12 of the IGA". The proposal originally submitted by Dassault Aviation and MBDA was titled 'Rafale Make in India initiative in the frame of the procurement of 36 Rafale aircraft'. This "neither mentioned the word 'Offset' nor provided the desired avenues/percentages/yearly discharge, etc., as mandated by the DPP-2013 guidelines". It was only after extended discussions that the two industrial suppliers agreed to provide their offset offer "as per the format specified in DPP-2013".

Article 12 of the IGA reads: "The French Party will facilitate the implementation of 'Make in India' initiative by the Industrial Suppliers nota-

despite being repeatedly asked to remove the additional formulation, the French side insisted that "they are bound to consider the French law as stated". In July 2016, two months before the Rafale deal was signed, the DAC decided to send the issue of the lack of alignment of Article 9 – the arbitration provision in the offset contracts with the French industrial suppliers – with the mandated DPP-2013 provisions to "the government". On August 24, 2016, the Cabinet Committee on Security decided to give a waiver on this issue to the two French companies.

## Subject to France's blocking statute

The INT report reveals that although the French side agreed to have a provision on 'Access to Book of Accounts' (Article 12) included in the offset contracts, it "introduced an additional formulation over and above the DPP guidelines", which read: "However Dassault shall comply with French Law No. 80-538 dated 16 July 1980." This is France's controversial blocking statute which criminalises the communication of economic, commercial, industrial, financial, or technical documents or information to foreign individuals or foreign legal entities. France's anti-corruption agency, the Service Central de Prévention de la Corruption, has recommended changes in Law No. 80-538, and in December 2016 a new anti-corruption law was enacted. But the blocking statute remains in place and can be invoked if needed. (<http://bit.ly/FrenchBlock> and <http://bit.ly/2FXr4eh>)

The INT report shows that

despite being repeatedly asked to remove the additional formulation, the French side insisted that "they are bound to consider the French law as stated". In July 2016, two months before the Rafale deal was signed, the DAC decided to send the issue of the lack of alignment of Article 9 – the arbitration provision in the offset contracts with the French industrial suppliers – with the mandated DPP-2013 provisions to "the government". On August 24, 2016, the Cabinet Committee on Security decided to give a waiver on this issue to the two French companies.

## Offsets are made for controversy

Offsets, as we have seen, are domestic content-based obligations that the buyer imposes on the seller as compensation for placing a large order. Although the practice is often criticised for being trade-distorting, non-transparent, and riddled with corruption and has been generally prohibited by the World Trade Organisation (with an exception made for protection of the essential interests of a country's national security), offsets are increasingly in vogue in the defence sector (<http://bit.ly/FToffsets>).

India's "Defence Offset Guidelines", which form Appendix D of DPP-2013 ([http://bit.ly/DPP\\_2013](http://bit.ly/DPP_2013)), lay down that the Defence Acquisition Council may, after consideration by the Services Capital Acquisition Plan Higher Categorisation Committee (SCAP HC), "prescribe varying offset obligations above 30 percent or waive the requirement of offset obligations in special cases." In the original process, initiated by the United Progressive Alliance government, to procure 126 Medium Multi-Role Combat Aircraft (MMRCA) as well as in the new Rafale deal for 36 fly-away Rafale jets, the DAC prescribed offset obligations

to the extent of 50% of the contract value.

It is important to note that the offset contracts, which were concluded between the Government of India and the two private French companies, were not part of the Indo-French Inter-Governmental Agreement.

Although signed on the same day, September 23, 2016, as the IGA, the two offset contracts may be placed for a decision by the Govt". This waiver was also approved by the CCS on August 24, 2016.

**The offset contracts between India and two French companies were not part of the Inter-Governmental Agreement**

Singh, Adviser (Cost), A. R. Sule, Financial Manager (Air), and Rajeev Verma, Joint Secretary and Acquisitions Manager (Air), the three domain experts on the seven-member INT, in their June 1, 2016 note of dissent: "The offsets are not part of the G to G agreements and therefore the Offset Contract must be in line with the one prescribed in the Defence Procurement Procedure (DPP). In the MMRCA process also, the French Industrial Suppliers would have been required to follow the Offset Guidelines and the

Standard Clauses of Contract prescribed in DPP. The proposed draft Offset Contract is still not aligned with the one prescribed in the DPP.

The arbitration clause proposed by the French Industrial Suppliers in the draft Offset Contract is not as per the DPP and cannot be agreed to. The French Industrial Suppliers have insisted upon reducing the maximum ceiling for penalty from 20% as prescribed in the DPP to 8.5% of the Offset value, which is not acceptable.

The French Industrial Suppliers are not agreeing to the requirement of confirmation of Performance Bank Guarantee for Offset Contract from Indian Public Sector Banks located in India. The French Industrial Suppliers proposed to include a clause on 'Access to the Book of Accounts' subject to French Law, which is not acceptable.

As the official negotiations got under way, it became clear that the August 5, 2015 amendment to the DPP-2015 "Offset Policy Guidelines" allowed Dassault Aviation and MBDA a great deal of leeway. They were no longer required to submit their offset plans, including the identities of their IOPs, the details of their work share and specific products, and supporting documents indicating IOP eligibility at the bid stage, as laid down earlier.

They were not even required to provide this information at the time of signing the IGA and the offset contracts. They are now required to provide the information to the Indian government only "at the time of seeking offset credits or one year prior to discharge of offset obligations through that IOP".

## Questions that won't go away

The controversy over Dassault's choice of offset partners will not go away any time soon. As has been widely reported, Anil Ambani's Reliance Group, with its subsidiaries, entered the defence manufacturing sector in January 2015 (<http://bit.ly/DASRIL>).

Reliance Defence Limited was incorporated on March 28, 2015, that is, two weeks before the new Rafale deal was announced in Paris; Reliance Aerostructure Limited (in which Reliance Defence Limited was a 99.988% shareholder as of March 31, 2018), was incorporated on April 24, 2015; and in October 2016 Dassault Aviation formed a joint venture with Reliance Aerostructure Limited's subsidiary, Reliance Aer-

ospace. The joint venture, which was incorporated in February 2017, has been named Dassault Reliance Aerospace Limited (DRAL).

The allegations revolve round the charge of crony capitalism - the charge led by Congress president Rahul Gandhi that as a *quid pro quo* for the new Rafale deal the NDA government had secretly nominated the younger Ambani scion as Dassault's leading offset partner. It may be recalled that the controversy took off in September 2018, after the former French President, François Hollande, told Mediapart, the independent French online investigative journal: "We didn't have any say in this matter. It is the Indian government which had proposed this service group, and Dassault who negotiated with Ambani. We didn't have the choice, we took the interlocutor who was given to us."

The allegations gained traction when Mediapart reported that it had obtained an internal Dassault document that revealed that "a senior executive of the French group told staff representatives that the joint venture with Reliance was agreed as a 'compensation' in the Rafale deal in securing the fighter contract".

The allegations have been denied by Dassault Aviation, by Anil Ambani, and by the NDA government, which has maintained that it has had nothing to do with the aircraft manufacturer's choice of IOPs and has not even received official word on who they are. However, the Dassault chief, Eric Trappier, has gone on record to say that DRAL, the joint venture that was building a manufacturing facility in Mihan, Nagpur, would make components of the Legacy Falcon 2000 series of civil jets and deliver about 10% of these offset obligations" (<http://bit.ly/DASNagpur> and <http://bit.ly/DasReliance>)

What part Reliance Defence Limited, other Indian companies, or the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), will play in the discharge of the offset obligations in the Rafale deal will be known only in the months and years to come.

Our present state of knowledge is that a group that entered the defence manufacturing sector some weeks before a new Rafale deal was announced in Paris is the only publicly known offset partner.



## EXCLUSIVE

National Security Adviser, Ajit Doval, in Paris in January 2016. The Indian negotiators found themselves up against a wall. Eventually, in July 2016, two months before the Rafale deal was signed, the DAC decided to send the issue of the lack of alignment of Article 9 – the arbitration provision in the offset contracts with the French industrial suppliers – with the mandated DPP-2013 provisions to "the government".

On August 24, 2016, the Cabinet Committee on Security decided to give a waiver on this issue to the two French companies.

The INT report shows that

despite being repeatedly asked to remove the additional formulation, the French side insisted that "they are bound to consider the French law as stated". In July 2016, two months before the Rafale deal was signed, the DAC decided to send the issue of the lack of alignment of Article 9 – the arbitration provision in the offset contracts with the French industrial suppliers – with the mandated DPP-2013 provisions to "the government".

On August 2



## ELSEWHERE

## Fire at Imran Khan's office causes evacuation

ISLAMABAD A fire broke out at Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan's Office on Monday, triggering evacuation, according to a report. The fire broke out on the sixth floor of the building and Mr. Khan was reportedly one floor below in a meeting, *The Express Tribune* reported. It was later contained and a police official said an electrical short circuit may have caused the incident. PTI

## Air strike forces closure of Tripoli airport

TRIPOLI Fighting raged around Tripoli and an air strike closed its only functioning airport on Monday, as Libyan commander, Field Marshal Khalifa Haftar, defied international calls to halt his advance on the capital. Thousands were also reported by the UN to be fleeing the capital city in face of Field Marshal Haftar's surprise assault which has left dozens dead. AFP

# U.S. Homeland Security chief resigns

She oversaw the 'zero tolerance' policy on migration, which led to separation of children from parents

**SRIRAM LAKSHMAN**  
WASHINGTON

U.S. Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen resigned on Sunday evening, according to reports. Ms. Nielsen will, however, stay on until April 10 after which Kevin McAleenan, the current Customs and Border Protection Commissioner, will take charge as Acting Homeland Security Secretary.

Ms. Nielsen, who has had a rocky working relationship with President Donald Trump, handed in her resignation at a time when there were growing signs of division within the administration over how to handle the swelling numbers at the U.S.-Mexico border.

## 2,700 children separated

Ms. Nielsen, 46, was appointed to her role in December 2017. She will be remembered most for her role in overseeing the "zero tolerance" policy towards migrants crossing the border, which resulted in the separation of more than 2,700 children from their parents. Ms.

Nielsen had initially resisted the move, advocated by Mr. Trump, but weeks later, in the spring of 2018, made a choice to sign a memo bringing to life a policy that was widely seen as inhumane.

Images and reports – including from lawmakers – surfaced showing disused warehouses being used as detention centres, with children being kept in cage-like enclosures, sleeping on floors on mattresses and foil blankets.

Two children died in custody at the border in 2018, and a third minor, a 19-month-old baby, died a few weeks after being released from a detention centre.

"Nielsen will go down in history as presiding over an exceptionally cruel regime that separated families and violated human rights," Congresswoman Pramila Jayapal tweeted. "I welcome her resignation and believe she should be held accountable for the abuses that happened under her watch."

Mr. McAleenan was among those who had en-



U.S. President Donald Trump with Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen in California. ■ REUTERS

couraged Ms. Nielsen to sign the family separation memo in 2018, *The New York Times* reported. In June last year, a judge had ordered that separations under most circumstances would not be permitted and that separated children had to be reunited with their parents.

However, almost 250 families have been separated since – without violating the June order, the government

claimed in February this year. Ms. Nielsen was grilled in March by a U.S. House of Representatives committee on the border situation, and questioned repeatedly on whether the enclosures in which children were held were significantly different from dog cages.

The Secretary, who posted her resignation letter on Twitter, hit out at Congress

and the courts in the document. "I hope the next Secretary will have the support of Congress and the courts in fixing the laws which have impeded our ability to fully secure America's borders and which have contributed to discord in our nation's discourse," she wrote.

Ms. Nielsen had a complicated working relationship with Mr. Trump – she was often berated for not being tough enough and alternated between resisting some of Mr. Trump's more outlandish policy requests and first capitulating, then defending the administration's policies.

The dissonance between Mr. Trump and Ms. Nielsen had become particularly pronounced as the Secretary struggled to keep up with his agenda.

Some 58,000 migrants were apprehended at the border in January and some 1,00,000 in March, as per the Department of Homeland Security. The rising numbers – part of a pre-summer surge – have frustrated Mr. Trump.

## U.S. designates Iran's elite military unit as a 'terrorist organisation'

## IRGC promotes terrorism as a tool of statecraft: Trump

**AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE**  
WASHINGTON President Donald Trump on Monday announced the United States is designating Iran's elite military force, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), a terrorist organisation.

Mr. Trump said in a statement that the "unprecedented" move "recognises the reality that Iran is not only a state sponsor of terrorism, but that the IRGC actively participates in, finances,

and promotes terrorism as a tool of statecraft." The IRGC was formed after the 1979 revolution with a mission to defend the clerical regime.

Addressing reporters following Mr. Trump's announcement, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo warned all banks and business of consequences to dealing with the Revolutionary Guards.

"The leaders of Iran are racketeers, not revolutionaries," Mr. Pompeo said. "Businesses and banks around the

world now have a clear duty to ensure that companies with which they conduct financial transactions are not conducted with the IRGC in any material way."

In retaliation, Iran's Supreme National Security Council declared the U.S. a "state sponsor of terrorism" and U.S. forces in the region "terrorist groups", the country's state media said.

It also slammed Washington's move as an "illegal and foolish act".

## Modi congratulates Solih on MDP's landslide win

Prime Minister reiterates India's 'neighbourhood first' policy in deepening the bilateral partnership

**MEERA SRINIVASAN**  
COLOMBO

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday called Maldivian President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih to wish him on his party's landslide victory in the recent parliamentary election.

A statement from Mr. Solih's office said Mr. Modi "personally called" on Monday, "to congratulate him on his party's exceptionally strong performance" in the Maldives's Majlis election, in which the Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP) secured

65 of 87 seats, securing a significant majority in Parliament.

Mr. Modi said the poll outcome was indicative of "the high level of trust and support" that Maldivian citizens had vested in their government and its policy priorities.

"He [Mr. Modi] further conveyed his full confidence that the Maldives government can deliver on their promises towards the Maldivian people in the upcoming five years, and that the Indian government will always stand ready to be of assistance to the Maldives," the statement said.

Maldivian President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih. ■ AP

An official press release from the Ministry of External Affairs said, "The Prime Minister reiterated India's deep commitment in keeping with

## Sri Lanka seeks enhanced military training from India

Sirisena meets Defence Secretary

**MEERA SRINIVASAN**  
COLOMBO

Sri Lanka has sought enhanced military training from India, according to President Maithripala Sirisena's office.

Visiting Indian Defence Secretary Sanjay Mitra called on Mr. Sirisena on Monday, and wide-ranging matters, including bilateral defence cooperation between the neighbouring countries and regional security, were discussed, officials said.

"India and Sri Lanka agreed to increase cooperation in security and defence spheres in several areas, including regional security, curbing drug smuggling and human trafficking and training of members of the security forces," a statement from the Indian Ministry of Defence said.

Thanking India for its partnership, Mr. Sirisena requested to increase the number of personnel trained by India. The Indian Defence Secretary agreed to

look into the possibility of enhancing training facilities, the statement further said.

Currently, over 60% of Sri Lanka's military personnel pursue their young officers' course, junior and senior command courses in India, according to defence sources in Colombo.

Meanwhile, 'Exercise Mitra Shakti', the sixth edition of the joint military training exercise between the Indian Army and the Sri Lankan Army, concluded in Badulla district, in Sri Lanka's Central Province, on Monday.

Contingents from the two countries jointly planned and executed a series of "well-coordinated tactical operations based on scenarios that are likely to be encountered in rural and urban environment", a press release from the Indian Ministry of Defence said. The two-week programme is part of an initiative that began in 2013 as part of military diplomacy between India and Sri Lanka.

with External Affairs Minister @SushmaSwaraj. I assured them we will use our Majlis majority responsibly; implement manifesto pledges; consolidate democracy; ensure Indian Ocean stability."

New Delhi has been watching developments in Male closely, as it tries to renew ties with the neighbour after the relationship turned increasingly hostile during the Abdulla Yameen administration.

(With inputs from Kallol Bhattacharjee)

## AMAR MAHAL PALACE

Amar Mahal Palace, built in the 19th century for Raja Amar Singh, a Dogra King by a French architect on the line of a French Chateau. The palace has been converted into a museum which has many exhibits including a "Golden Throne" weighing 120kg, a library of 25,000 antique books, Pahari & Kangra miniature paintings & rare art collection.

## AMAZING JAMMU



Department of Tourism, Jammu & Kashmir

[www.jktourism.jk.gov.in](http://www.jktourism.jk.gov.in)

JandKTourism



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MARKET WATCH		
	08-04-2019	% CHANGE
Sensex	38,700	-0.42
US Dollar	69.67	-0.63
Gold	33,215	1.3
Brent oil	71.14	1.87

NIFTY 50		
	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	379.90	-7.25
Asian Paints	1496.35	-18.10
Axis Bank	754.60	-7.60
Bajaj Auto	2853.35	-8.30
Bajaj Finserv	7347.25	-50.55
Bajaj Finance	3024.10	-90.10
Bharti Airtel	354.95	-1.70
BPCL	351.00	-7.10
Britannia Ind	2971.50	-22.55
Cipla	525.40	-6.70
Coal India	232.95	-1.75
Dr Reddys Lab	2763.70	9.35
Eicher Motors	20612.65	-367.65
GAIL (India)	341.90	-6.90
Graism Ind	840.45	-8.50
HCL Tech	1096.35	3.55
HDPC	2054.90	-4.30
HDFC Bank	2289.40	-16.20
Hero MotoCorp	2586.85	-31.55
Hindalco	214.45	-0.95
Hind Unilever	1664.90	5.80
Indiabulls HFL	859.35	-43.70
ICICI Bank	387.10	-3.45
IndusInd Bank	1751.00	-16.95
Bharti InfraNet	316.10	-0.70
Infosys	767.25	7.95
Indian Oil Corp	152.05	-6.40
ITC	292.75	-1.80
JSW Steel	290.40	-3.85
Kotak Bank	1343.25	7.30
L&T	1373.65	-0.15
M&M	667.00	8.80
Maruti Suzuki	7129.45	21.75
NTPC	135.55	0.75
ONGC	158.10	1.55
Power Grid Corp	198.35	2.05
Reliance Ind	1329.25	-24.65
State Bank	312.80	-4.25
Sun Pharma	462.45	-0.70
Tata Motors	200.55	-4.60
Tata Steel	549.05	-0.25
TCS	2070.75	22.45
Tech Mahindra	787.15	9.90
Titan	1104.40	-2.00
UltraTech Cement	4166.85	-23.55
UPCL	946.80	5.80
Vedanta	186.65	-5.05
Wipro	263.70	1.60
YES Bank	260.05	-6.80
Zee Entertainment	404.75	-6.75

EXCHANGE RATES		
	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	69.47	69.79
Euro	78.12	78.49
British Pound	90.69	91.11
Japanese Yen (100)	62.33	62.62
Chinese Yuan	10.34	10.39
Swiss Franc	69.49	69.82
Singapore Dollar	51.25	51.50
Canadian Dollar	51.96	52.20
Malaysian Ringgit	16.95	17.04

Source: Indian Bank

BULLION RATES CHENNAI		
	April 08 rates in rupees with previous rates in parentheses	
Retail Silver (1g)	40.9 (-40.5)	
22 ct gold (1g)	3053 (3028)	
Retail Silver (1g)	40.9 (-40.5)	
22 ct gold (1g)	3053 (3028)	

# SBI sets terms for Jet Airways sale

Maximum stake on offer is 75% in the cash-strapped airline; last date for receipt of EoI is April 10

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI

State Bank of India (SBI) on Monday invited bids from strategic and financial investors for stake sale in the cash-strapped Jet Airways.

SBI, the lead bank of the consortium of lenders of Jet Airways (India) Ltd., has offered bidders a maximum of 75% stake (8,51,98,037 shares). The minimum stake on offer is 31.2% (3,45,42,383 shares).

SBI Capital Markets Ltd., on behalf of the SBI, has invited expression of interest (EoI) for a change in control and management of Jet Airways. The last date for receipt of EoI is April 10.

Selected bidders are required to submit binding bids by April 30, 2019.

A competitive bidding



White knight wanted: A competitive bidding process will be followed for identifying a suitable investor. ■ REUTERS

process would be followed for identification of a suitable investor to acquire ownership of the company on as-is basis.

The winning bidder is expected to settle the obligations of the company in relation to existing bank loan facilities.

EoIs had been invited from individuals, including foreign nationals, trusts, cooperative societies, private limited companies, public limited companies, part-

nership firms and sole proprietorships. Bidders can be strategic investors (SIs) or financial investors (FIs).

In the event of a bidder not being a consortium, the SI bidder should have a minimum net worth of ₹1,000 crore in the immediately preceding financial year or have funds available for investment in Indian assets of ₹1,000 crore or more or a minimum of three years of experience in the commercial aviation business.

If the bidder is an FI, then it should have minimum assets under management of ₹2,000 crore in the immediately preceding completed financial year or committed funds available for investment in Indian assets of ₹1,000 crore or more.

A consortium that may bid

would consist of not more than three members with shareholding of an individual member not being less than 15%. There must be a lead consortium member to take decisions.

## Access to data

After conclusion of the EoI stage and following execution of a non-disclosure agreement (NDA) and payment of bid access fee, the qualified bidders would be provided access to the data room to provide information about the company.

Interested parties are ex-

pected to submit a preliminary term sheet providing indicative valuation for 100% equity share capital of the company and settlement of all obligations of the company.



In first gear: For FY19, the industry clocked the highest sales and production seen in a financial year. ■ B. VELANKANNI RAJ

## PVs grew 2.7% in FY19, the slowest in 5 years

SIAM pegs FY20 sales growth at 3-5%

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

With new model launches and aggressive sales promotion by carmakers failing to lift consumer sentiment, the passenger vehicle (PV) segment grew 2.7% in 2018-19, the slowest pace in the last five years, according to Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM).

The current year is also expected to be a challenging one for the industry with the general elections in the first quarter, along with transition to BS VI technology later in the year, prompting the industry body to forecast a modest growth of 3-5% in sales of passenger vehicles for 2019-20.

According to SIAM data, passenger vehicle sales in the last fiscal stood at 33,77,436 units, compared to 32,88,581 units in 2017-18. The 2.7% growth follows the original forecast of 8-10%, which was later revised to 6%. This is the slowest pace of growth for the industry since 2013-14, when sales declined 6.7%.

SIAM president Rajan Wadhura called for a reduction in GST to offset the increase of 10-15% across vehicle categories prices due to BS VI implementation. "It is important to note that we

are in election year. Historical data shows that the growth before the elections remains subdued," he said. Other factors that affected demand included increase in insurance costs, a liquidity crunch and the highest-ever commodity prices that forced carmakers to raise vehicle prices, he added.

"However, if we look at the positive side, we have continued to grow. Also, it is the highest-ever sales and production [achieved] in a financial year," he added.

Two-wheelers, the data showed, grew 4.85% in FY19, with the industry body forecasting growth of 5-7% for this fiscal. Likewise, commercial vehicles grew 17.55% in 2018-19 and are expected to see lower growth of 10-12% this year.

Seeking lower taxes for the sector, Mr. Wadhura noted that the change in insurance policy has resulted in prices of two-wheelers rising by about 10%. This will go up further with introduction of BS VI. "The [Centre] should look at lowering GST for two-wheelers to 18% from 28%. The impact for cars will be higher with BS VI and other safety norms. We need serious consideration from the government," he said.

## Jet: different journeys for different investors

Though debt-laden and staring at oblivion, the airline can still add value to buyers

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI

Even as lenders have kick-started the process of selecting a bidder for Jet Airways, the carrier is reporting a daily loss of more than ₹20 crore with sharp erosion in cash flows, company officials said.

While Jet's promoter Nares Goyal has stepped down in deference to the wishes of the lenders, its strategic partner Etihad Airways is unwilling to take charge.

To add to its woes, the lenders have declined to disburse the much-needed ₹1,500 crore loan. Jet Airways, once one of India's top airlines, is possibly heading towards oblivion as cash taps dry up, said the officials. The over six-month delay in the

execution of the rescue plan had made the situation only difficult, they added.

Jet Airways, that had reported a negative net worth of ₹10,370 crore as on December 31, 2018 and bank loans worth ₹7,500 crore, including aircraft loans, is estimated to have recorded losses of a few thousand more crore during the January to March quarter.

"There is no clear idea about how much money the airline might have lost in the last three months," said Ansuman Deb, aviation analyst, ICICI Securities.

Analysts said the situation was grave since there had been no advance cash flows and the working capital requirement had spiralled out of control. Besides, most of the fleet had been grounded-



due to non-payment of dues to lessors. As on December 31, Jet's current liabilities had exceeded its current assets by ₹9,610 crore and as on March 31, 2019, it might have increased by a few thousand crores.

"From what has been re-

ported by the airline so far, you can easily add ₹3,000 to ₹4,000 crore to the losses," an analyst said, asking not to be named.

While Jet's total liability is estimated to be over \$2 billion, its assets are no match.

### Jet's assets

The airline's assets include 16 aircraft which, after loan repayment, are valued at ₹1,700 crore; it has booking slots for 220 Boeing 737 MAX planes, hangar at Mumbai, parking and landing slots at key airports and the goodwill of a world-class airline. Its employee base is one of the best in the industry.

Besides, its real estate in Mumbai is estimated to be worth more than ₹800 crore.

Put together, these may still be insufficient to meet the liabilities but Jet can find a buyer as it brings different sets of value proposition to

different buyers.

"For an investor like Tata, it can immediately augment international market share by 30% and help them scale up Vistaar without investing for years to grow the market.

"They may invest ₹10,000 crore but it makes sense," an analyst said. Similarly, for an investor like IndiGo, Jet Airways can enhance its international market share from 2% to 35% at one go.

"One has to think about the replacement-cost value. The value of Jet is in what somebody can do with it," the analyst said. For a new entrant, it provides market access. For a foreign airline, Jet gets a different value while for private equity investors, who would buy at deep discounts, it would have a different meaning.

## LVB shares hit upper circuit, Indiabulls HFC falls almost 5%

Regulatory approval holds the key to merger

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

## IN BRIEF



## TVS Motor unveils 4 new vehicles in Bangladesh

CHENNAI  
TVS Motor Co. Ltd., has expanded its offering in Bangladesh by launching four new products. These include premium motorcycle TVS Apache RTR 160 4V single disc, 125cc motorcycle TVS Max 125, 100cc motorcycle TVS Metro special edition and utility vehicle TVS XL100 heavy duty 'i-Touch Start'. The products would target the growing customer demand in each of their segments.

## TKML launches upgraded SUV, MPV

CHENNAI  
Toyota Kirloskar Motor Ltd. (TKML) on Monday announced the roll-out of upgraded version of its MPV Innova Crysta and SUV Fortuner. Innova Crysta is a market leader in MPV segment and the new features are applicable in select grades in diesel variants. Upgrades for Fortuner, which has a 40% share in the MPV segment, are available in select diesel variants, said N. Raja, DMD, TKML, in a statement.

## ThoughtSpot to invest \$25 mn in India centre

MUMBAI  
ThoughtSpot, a U.S.-based company that is into artificial intelligence (AI) and helps organisations empower their employees with the ability to quickly uncover data-driven insights through a Google-like search, has announced plans to invest \$25 million at its engineering centre in Bengaluru to hire talent and support its global business. With the new funding, ThoughtSpot would be able to expand its engineering centre in India.

## Inflows into equity, income funds surge

Aided by interest rate cut and other factors, MF sector poised to grow 17-18% in FY20, says AMFI's CEO

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI

Equity mutual fund schemes snapped a four-month decline in flows in March leading to a marginal increase in the overall assets of the fund industry in the last month of the financial year. Income funds also saw a huge jump in inflows for the month.

According to data from the Association of Mutual Funds in India (AMFI), equity schemes saw net inflows of ₹9,014 crore in March, which was more than double the previous month's net inflows of ₹3,948 crore.

If the cumulative inflows of equity and equity-linked savings schemes are taken into account, the month saw net inflows of ₹11,756 crore, higher than February's ₹5,122 crore, which was the

## Weathering the storm



Category	Net flows (₹ crore)
Income	13,856
Equity Schemes (Excluding Arbitrage Funds)	9,014
Arbitrage Funds	(3,998)
Balanced	(3,181)
Liquid/Money Market	(51,343)
Gilt	38
ELSS - Equity	2,742
Gold ETFs	(38)
Other ETFs	10,540
Fund of Funds Investing Overseas	13

Figures in brackets indicate outflows; Source: AMFI

lowest since January 2017.

On an overall basis, the assets under management (AUM) of the mutual fund industry grew to ₹23.80 crore in March, marginally higher

than previous month's ₹23.16 crore, while registering a 11% increase on an year-on-year basis that also saw folios rising 16% to touch 8.25 crore.

"The mutual fund indus-

try, in one of the most difficult and uncertain years, marked with acute market volatility, credit events and border tensions, has done exceedingly well, with overall industry growing by 11% and retail by 14%," said N.S. Venkatesh, CEO, AMFI.

"With interest rates easing and impact of credit events almost normalised, and macro-economic indicators showing healthy uptrend, the mutual fund industry is poised to grow at 17-18% in 2019-20," he added.

## Income funds

Meanwhile, income funds also saw a strong surge in March, registering net inflows of ₹13,856 crore as against ₹2,080 crore in the previous month. Mr. Venkatesh attributed the flows into

income funds to the recent rate cut by the Reserve Bank of India and its dovish stance that made investors stay invested in such schemes.

The financial year 2018-19 saw total inflows from systematic investment plans (SIPs) of ₹84,638 crore, which was higher than the previous fiscal's net inflows of ₹67,190 crore. Further, the number of SIP accounts as on March 31, 2019 was pegged at 2.62 crore – a little over 24% higher than 2.11 crore as on March 31, 2018.

Incidentally, liquid and money market schemes continued to see huge outflows, affecting the overall rise in the AUM of the mutual fund. In March, such schemes reported outflows of ₹51,343 crore, following last month's outflows of ₹24,509 crore.

## 'LNG imports fell 9.1% despite declining prices'

Lower consumption driving trend

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) imports fell 9.1% during February 2019, despite global prices falling, which bucks the established trend in India where LNG imports rise when prices fall, according to a report by India Ratings and Research (Ind-Ra).

This change in import behaviour could be explained by the dual trends of increased production and decreased consumption within India, the report added.

"LNG imports have been gradually declining since November 2018 and fell 9.1% year-on-year to 68 mmSCMD (million metric standard cubic meter per day) during February 2019," the report said. "On the other hand,

the Henry Hub prices reduced gradually to \$2.7/mmBtu (metric million British thermal unit) in February 2019 from \$4.0/mmBtu in November 2018." This is in contrast to the historical trends seen where LNG imports have increased on a reduction in Henry Hub prices," the report added.

According to Ind-Ra, whose analysis is based on data from the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, natural gas production rose 3.3% in February 2019 compared to a year earlier.

While ONGC registered an 8.5% increase in natural gas production, Oil India saw a 2.7% fall; private and joint venture fields saw a more drastic fall in production of 14%.

## Samsung introduces new line of smart televisions in India

Consumer electronics firm to focus on AI, IoT products

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

South Korean electronics major Samsung on Monday introduced a new line of smart televisions with features specifically made for the Indian market.

"The entire new range of televisions, which we are calling Unbox Magic series, comes with specific features such as personal computer, music system, home cloud, live cast and two-way sharing. These have been developed by our R&D team in India, from insights received from Indian consumers," said Raju Pullan, senior vice-president, consumer electronics, Samsung India.

The new range consists of



smart TVs with size starting at 32 inches and priced ₹24,900 onwards.

## Sweetening the deal

"The consumer is moving towards 'smart' across price points... we are sweetening the deal by offering consumer-centric features and more

importantly, tying up with finance companies across the spectrum to make upgrade cycle much more stronger," he said.

About non-smart TVs, Mr. Pullan said that overall TV penetration in India was 60% of which 40-45% accounted for CRT televisions.

"We see a fast conversion from non-smart to smart TVs, similar to what happened in change from 3G to 4G... big strong double digit growth. We will transition in line with consumer demand. One key area of focus for Samsung will be products with AI and IoT-based. This is not just for TVs but for all other categories as well," he said.

## HDFC Bank plans to raise ₹50,000 crore

## PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI

Private lender HDFC Bank on Monday said it was planning to raise up to ₹50,000 crore this fiscal by issuing bonds on private placement basis.

"We wish to inform you that the bank proposes to raise funds by issuing perpetual debt instruments [part of additional tier I capital], tier II capital bonds and long-term bonds [financing of infrastructure and affordable housing] up to a total amount of ₹50,000 crore in the period of next 12 months through private placement mode," it said in a filing. The bank said its board would consider the proposal on April 20.

## RIL denies links to \$1.2 billion money laundering probe

Case relates to over-invoicing services, works for pipeline

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI

Reliance Industries Limited (RIL) has denied any links to a \$1.2-billion money-laundering case being probed in the Netherlands.

The allegation was Dutch pipeline company, A Hak, NL, earned \$1.2 billion in profit by over-invoicing its services and works rendered to Reliance Gas Transportation Infrastructure Ltd. (RGTL), now known as East West Pipeline Ltd. (EWPL).

This money was allegedly 'creamed-off' to Singapore-based Biometrix Marketing Limited, a company reportedly linked to RIL. Biometrix is the same firm that the Indian tax authorities are probing for the ₹6,500 crore investments made in firms belonging to RIL or its promoter group in 2007-08.

Asked for comments, an RIL spokesperson said, "RIL or any of its subsidiaries neither set up any gas pipeline in 2006, nor have contracts with any Netherlands com-

pany for setting up of any gas pipeline. Hence, the report cannot relate to RIL. RIL has always complied with all rules, regulations and applicable laws and any suggestion of impropriety... is emphatically denied."



dian tax authorities are probing for the ₹6,500 crore investments made in firms belonging to RIL or its promoter group in 2007-08.

Later, it was hived off into an 'independent' firm controlled fully by Mukesh Ambani and renamed EWPL. Last month, Canadian investor Brookfield-led India Infrastructure Trust agreed to buy EWPL for ₹13,000 crore.



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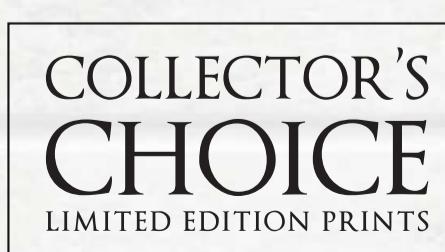
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# Rahul holds firm, guides Kings home in tense finish

Mayank, too, chips in during the chase; Sunrisers struggle early on, but a patient knock by Warner helps them post 150

UTHRA GANESAN  
MOHALI

Kings XI Punjab returned to home comfort and winning ways, leapfrogging to the third spot in the table with a six-wicket win over Sunrisers Hyderabad here on Monday, despite a late mini-collapse in a below-par chase of 151.

The host appeared to have learnt its lessons in pacing the chase, Mayank Agarwal and K.L. Rahul ensuring there would be no hiccups at the finish a second time.

The duo did not let the early dismissal of Chris Gayle affect the scoring rate, making individual half-centuries and adding 114 for the second wicket to put the host in control. The only difference was the routes they took – Rahul preferring strokes along the ground, and Mayank going the aerial way.

They seemed to be playing on a different pitch from what the SRH batsmen had struggled on, and the conditions did not make it any easier for the visitors. Dew helped the ball come on to the bat better and race to the

boundary faster.

Sunrisers' fumbles in the field only compounded the problems, in particular the sitter dropped by Yusuf Pathan off Mayank with the batsman on 42 and Kings needing 37 for victory. Though the hosts lost three wickets in the final three overs for 16 runs, the Rahul-Mayank stand had done enough.

## Uncharacteristic

Earlier, it was an uncharacteristically slow knock by Warner, who remained unbeaten on 70 with six hits to the boundary and one over it. In fact, the Sunrisers innings had a grand total of two sixes – the other one by Deepak Hooda off the last ball of the innings. Hooda's 14 runs off the final three deliveries saw Sunrisers touch 150.

The presence of Warner did give Sunrisers the anchor it needed after losing Jonny Bairstow in the second over. The middle-order, which had crumbled in the previous game against Mumbai Indians, made amends. Vijay Shankar didn't attempt flashy shots, instead favouring a strenuous partnership. Manish Pandey, mixing caution with aggression, kept the scoreboard ticking.

However, at 50 for one in 10 overs, R. Ashwin's decision to put Sunrisers in

## Innings scan

SRH	Dots	KXIP
43		40
12	Fours	11
2	Sixes	5
27/1	PP	38/1
7.50	RR	7.61

## Next assignment

KXIP: April 10: vs MI Mumbai, 8 p.m.

SRH: April 14: vs DC, Hyderabad, 8 p.m.

## Top of the charts

### ORANGE CAP

David Warner (SRH)  
Matches: 6 | Runs: 349  
HS: 100\* | S/R: 146.63

### PURPLE CAP

Kagiso Rabada (DC)  
Matches: 6 | Wickets: 11  
BB: 4/21 | Econ.: 7.55

\*after the KXIP-SRH match on April 8

## Home sweet home

7 This was KXIP's seventh consecutive win at Mohali



looked right. Warner struggled to find the gaps and the pitch stayed slow and low, making strokeplay difficult. His 50 off 49 balls was his slowest IPL half-century.

Vijay Shankar nicked Ashwin to Rahul in the 11th over and Mohd. Nabi was run out

1 Warner's slowest 50 in the IPL (49 balls), replacing the 45-ball effort against KXIP (Hyderabad, 2017)

2 No. of times three Afghanistan players (Nabi, Rashid and Mujeeb) have played in the same IPL game - SRH vs KXIP (2018) and KXIP vs SRH (2019)

7 Warner has scored seven fifties in his last seven innings against KXIP - 58 (41b), 81 (52b), 59 (31b), 52 (41b), 70\* (54b), 51 (27b) and 70\* (62b)

by the KXIP skipper who deflected a shot from Warner to the stumps. The Afghanistan player had backed off almost too far down the pitch. It looked like the Sunrisers bowlers wouldn't have enough to defend, and that's exactly what happened.



Mr. Cool: Rahul kept his nerve to take the side through with a ball remaining. • AKHILESH KUMAR

# Super Kings not overtly focused on containing Russell

S. DIPAK RAGAV  
CHENNAI

Two teams with different philosophies and approaches to T20 cricket find themselves in the top-half of the points table after one-third of the season.

Going into their sixth match at the M.A. Chidambaram Stadium here on Tuesday, Chennai Super Kings and Kolkata Knight Riders have four wins each, with the latter ahead thanks to a healthier net run-rate.

While CSK has depended on collective effort, largely led by spinners, KKR has managed to win from tough situations thanks to Andre Russell's heroics.

After starting with two easy wins, CSK had to work hard for its victories against Rajasthan Royals and Kings XI Punjab. It came about because of its ability to win key moments of a game under pressure.

The focus on Tuesday will be on how the home team contains Russell, who has been in marauding form – scoring 207 runs off just 77 balls at a strike rate of 268.8.



Key players: CSK skipper M.S. Dhoni will hope Imran Tahir and Harbhajan Singh turn it on against the KKR batsmen on Tuesday. ■ RAGU

The fact that CSK's bowling, especially at the death, is thin and something the team is well aware of, means it might have to rely on its spinners on friendly condi-

tions to get him out as early as possible.

CSK coach Stephen Fleming though said while Russell has played a key role, the team wouldn't be too fo-

cused on the all-rounder saying, "We've got to be careful we don't focus overly on Russell. In a team that has (Chris) Lynn, (Dinesh) Karthik and (Robin) Uthappa,

he makes the bowler alter his plans, plays on his mind. The margin of error against Russell is very low – and the bowler can run out of options. If it is a length ball, Russell uses his long reach, goes through with the swing and can send the ball on a flight between long-on and square-leg.

The shifting of the weight to either leg is done effortlessly by this West Indian. Even on those occasions when he is committed on the front foot and the pace-man drops it short, Russell can quickly change plans, shift weight and flash the ball past point or hook and pull it, depending on the line.

**Heavy bat**  
He has grown stronger, uses a heavy bat, practises range-hitting and no ground is big enough for him. Left-arm spin or leg-spin could be a useful ploy against this marauder. But then, Russell is running hot these days.

If the ball is really full, it is not uncommon to see him move still deeper into the crease, get under the sphere

# Indian squad for ICC World Cup to be picked on April 15

IPL final in Hyderabad if Chennai fails to get clearance

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI

The Indian squad for the ICC World Cup will be selected on April 15 in Mumbai, the CoA decided on Monday. It has also given a one-week deadline to TNCA to get required clearances for keeping the IPL final in Chennai.

The Committee of Administrators (CoA), along with three BCCI office-bearers, met in the Capital to discuss various issues related to the IPL and Cricket Operations.

The last date for announcing the World Cup squads is April 23 but the BCCI has decided to announce it eight days prior to the scheduled date. The World Cup will begin on May 30 in the United Kingdom.

The decision was informally taken at an earlier date but was announced on Monday.

Meanwhile, Chennai Super Kings will feel a bit un-

## The takeaways

■ India's World Cup squad to be announced in Mumbai on April 15  
■ TNCA given one week to sort out empty stands issue. Hyderabad and Bengaluru kept on standby for IPL playoff games  
■ BCCI set to get ₹2.09 crore from Cricket Australia after reconciliation of accounts for last 10 years

comfortable after BCCI zeroed in on Hyderabad as the stand-by venue for the May 12 final.

**'Get clearances'**  
"We have given them a week's time to get clearances for the three closed stands. If they fail to procure the certificates, the final will be shifted to Hyderabad, and

the playoff and eliminator will move to Bengaluru. Since Sunrisers was runner-up in 2018, it host the final," said a senior BCCI official.

The CoA also decided on the format of the mini Women's IPL which will be played in Visakhapatnam and Bengaluru. Three teams will figure in four games, including the final.

# Russell is much more than a six machine

He has found ways to maximise the impact of his power-game



Scourge of bowlers: Andre Russell's monstrous hitting has often left the opposition stunned. ■ MURALI KUMAR

S. DINAKAR  
CHENNAI

Andre Russell is not just a big, mean machine that churns out sixes. There is a lot of thought process behind his mayhem in the middle.

When he surfaced in the international cricket in 2010, Russell was essentially a fast bowler – he could generate considerable speed – who could also swing his bat around.

Now, he is a force of nature in the climactic stages of a T20 innings, blowing away the opposition attacks, clearing enormous ground with his brutal blows.

The transformation in his batting is striking. He has found ways to maximise the impact of his power-game.

**Manipulating the crease**  
Just look at the manner Russell manipulates the crease. There are times when he stands well behind the line to get under the yorkers and pick it up on the half-volley.

And he is able to execute these strokes because of his terrific bat-speed and strong wrists that enable him get under the ball.

If the ball is really full, it is not uncommon to see him move still deeper into the crease, get under the sphere

and dismiss it into the stands.

The 30-year-old's big back swing and the stability of his legs, that are spread wide to create a strong base and utilise the ground forces, lend greater potency to his strokes.

He makes the bowler alter his plans, plays on his mind.

The margin of error against Russell is very low – and the bowler can run out of options.

If it is a length ball, Russell uses his long reach, goes through with the swing and can send the ball on a flight between long-on and square-leg.

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## Lara sees Sehwag in Shaw's batting

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI

Prithvi Shaw's phenomenal talent has been much talked-about and the latest to join the bandwagon is none other than Brian Lara who has found shades of "Virender Sehwag" in Mumbai youngster's batting style.

Just like Sehwag, Prithvi is also a fierce cutter of the ball and his short-arm pull at times is a carbon copy of the 'Nawab of Najafgarh'.

**Amazing maturity**  
Lara was all praise for young Shaw's approach. "I see more of Virender Sehwag in Prithvi Shaw's style of batting and think his maturity is amazing," Lara told Star Sports Select Dugout.

Lara was impressed watching Prithvi score a hundred on his Test debut in Rajkot last year.

"I saw him play against the West Indies last October and he scored a lot of runs," he said.

"I think he has been in the IPL for a couple of years and is a senior player already. A lot is expected of him, he is in a big man's game now and has got to do what is necessary."



Special bond: Skipper Kohli and coach Shastri are all set to continue their partnership.

VIJAY LOKAPALLY  
NEW DELHI

The Indian team's existing support staff, led by chief coach Ravi Shastri, stand a good chance of getting an extension. The authorities are reportedly happy with their work and are inclined to stretch the contract beyond the forthcoming World Cup.

Shastri, who succeeded Anil Kumble in July 2017, was offered a two-year contract which comes to an end after the World Cup. India, after losses in two back-to-back series in South Africa and England last year, went on to register its first ever Test series win on Australian soil.

Shastri had termed the Australian triumph as greater than the 1983 World Cup

feat, a comment which did not find favour with many of his teammates who were part of that epic win.

The support staff is learnt to have been sounded to continue with the team for the West Indies tour soon after the World Cup.

India is scheduled to play two Tests, three ODIs and three T20 matches. Incidentally, India's last visit to the West Indies, in June-July 2017, had come after the Champions Trophy loss to Pakistan with Kumble not travelling with the team.

The support staff, comprising batting coach Sanjay Bangar, bowling coach Bharat Arun and fielding coach R. Sridhar, was handpicked by Shastri.

If the Committee of Admini-

## Points table

Team	M	W	L	NR	PTS	NRR
Kolkata Knight Riders	5	4	1	0	8	1.058
Chennai Super Kings	5	4	1	0	8	0.159
Kings XI Punjab	6	4	2	0	8	-0.061
Sunrisers Hyderabad	6	3	3	0	6	0.810
Mumbai Indians	5	3	2	0	6	0.342
Delhi Capitals	6	3	3	0	6	0.131
Rajasthan Royals	5	1	4	0	2	-0.8

## TV PICKS

IPL: Star Sports 1, 2 &amp; Select 1 (SD &amp; HD), 8 p.m.

Super Cup: Star Sports 3, 8.30 p.m.

Champions League: Sony Ten 1, 2 (SD &amp; HD), 12.30 a.m.

(Wednesday)

## IN BRIEF



## Muguruza retains Monterrey Open title

MONTERREY (MEXICO)

Spain's Garbine Muguruza successfully defended her Monterrey Open title when an injured Victoria Azarenka retired in the final on Sunday. Second seed Muguruza was leading 6-1, 3-1 when Azarenka was unable to continue because of a leg injury. REUTERS



## Warriors clinch top spot in Western Conference

LOS ANGELES

Golden State Warriors clinched the Western Conference's top seeding with a victory in its final regular-season contest against Los Angeles Clippers 131-104 on Sunday. Elsewhere, Houston Rockets continued its three-point assault, draining a record 27 in a 149-113 win over Phoenix Suns. Rockets broke their own league single-game record with the help of 30 points from James Harden. AFP



## Keys downs Wozniacki to claim Charleston crown

CHARLESTON

Madison Keys claimed the first clay-court title of her career on Sunday with a 7-6(5), 6-3 defeat of Caroline Wozniacki at the Charleston Open. It marked the fourth title of Keys' career and her first since winning at Stanford in 2017. She defeated three Grand Slam champions — Jelena Ostapenko, Stephens and Wozniacki — on her way to the title. AFP

## Chinese girls down India 2-1

KUALA LUMPUR

Pari Singh won her match but India was beaten 2-1 by China in a group-D league match of the Asia-Oceania World Junior under-14 girls' tennis tournament here on Monday. The results (league): China bt India 2-1 (Zou Ruirui bt Veda Raju Papurna 6-3, 6-1; Sun Liang lost to Pari Singh 2-6, 6-7(2); Hou Yanan &amp; Zou Ruirui bt Veda Raju Papurna &amp; Pari Singh 6-2, 6-2).

## Reid is Team India chief coach

Will join the team at the national camp in Bengaluru

## HOCKEY

UTHRA GANESAN  
MOHALI

Hockey India, on Monday, confirmed the appointment of Graham Reid as chief coach of the India men's hockey team.

The 54-year-old Reid is likely to join the team midway through the national camp in Bengaluru that commenced on Monday.

While Reid's name had been doing the rounds for a while now, his appointment was all but confirmed when HI and the Sports Authority of India (SAI) forwarded it for final clearance to the Sports Ministry late last month.

## Differences sorted out

There had been reports of differences over his salary but the federation has now ended all speculation. Unlike previous coaches, he would be moving base to Bengaluru with his family.



On board: John Reid brings to the table his vast experience as coach of Australia and the Netherlands. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

"Graham Reid is backed by a successful career as a player."

He also comes with strong coaching experience, having worked with the Australian

and the Netherlands national teams.

"We are hopeful his experience and expertise will help the Indian team achieve desirable results leading up

to and at the Tokyo Olympics," HI president Mohd. Mushtaque Ahmad said.

Reid was part of the Australian side that won silver at the Barcelona Olympics.

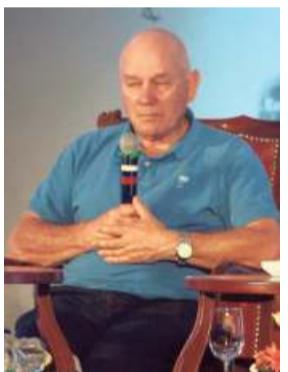
## Graham Reid gets Charlesworth's backing

UTHRA GANESAN  
MOHALI

The Indian men's month-long hockey camp began coach-less on Monday morning, but by evening new chief coach Graham Reid's appointment was confirmed by Hockey India.

Reid's appointment had been held up by the Sports Ministry following differences over his salary. But even before the news of his confirmation became official, Reid received a vote of confidence from Ric Charlesworth, the man considered the undisputed guru of modern hockey.

Reid was assistant to Charlesworth with Australia for six years before the latter called it a day after winning the 2014 World Cup. Reid was asked to step into the set-up.



Ric Charlesworth. ■ FILE PHOTO

and some polishing to take the next step," he said.

Interestingly, Charlesworth also hoped former National coach Harendra Singh would be part of the set-up.

"Reid is a good collaborator and will be able to work with those already there — I expect Harendra might be able to contribute too," Charlesworth said.

Also interesting would be to see how Reid handles the senior players in the side under the current policy of 'younger legs'.

## Word of caution

Charlesworth had axed the likes of Jamie Dwyer after 2014 to build a new Aussie team for Rio but Reid brought them back, insisting there was no substitute for experience.

Charlesworth, however, had a word of caution. "I believe they need to give Reid the time to make a difference."

"The biggest threat is he may not be given the time to polish this team — he needs to start soon," he said.

## Anand draws with Grischuk

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
SHAMKIR (AZERBAIJAN)

India's Viswanathan Anand played out an easy draw with Alexander Grischuk of Russia, while Norwegian Magnus Carlsen raced ahead with a crushing win over out-of-sorts Dutchman Anish Giri in the seventh round of Shamkir chess tournament here.

The results (sixth round): V.

Anand (Ind, 3.5) drew with Alexander Grischuk (Rus, 3.5); Teimour Radjabov (Aze, 3.5) drew with Veselin Topalov (Bul, 3.5); Shakhriyar Mamedyarov (Aze, 2.5) drew with Ding Liren (Chn, 3.5) Magnus Carlsen (Nor, 5) bt Anish Giri (Ned, 2); David Navara (Cze, 3.5); drew with Teimour Radjabov (Aze, 3.5).

and some polishing to take the next step," he said.

Interestingly, Charlesworth also hoped former National coach Harendra Singh would be part of the set-up.

"Reid is a good collaborator and will be able to work with those already there — I expect Harendra might be able to contribute too," Charlesworth said.

Also interesting would be to see how Reid handles the senior players in the side under the current policy of 'younger legs'.

The champion has a 20-point advantage on second-placed Napoli, which it has beaten in both head-to-head clashes, with seven games to

go. Juventus, which beat AC Milan 2-1 on Saturday, needed Napoli to lose to win the Scudetto for the 35th time, ahead of its Champions League quarterfinal first leg against Ajax next week.

A draw next weekend at SPAL would be enough for Massimiliano Allegri's side to win the title which would be the first in Italy for Cristiano Ronaldo.

Despite its numerical advantage, Napoli struggled to

## Napoli held by Genoa

Result puts Juventus coronation on hold

## EURO LEAGUES

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
MILAN

Napoli drew 1-1 with 10-man Genoa on Sunday to ensure that Juventus will have to wait another week to seal an eighth consecutive Serie A title.

The champion has a 20-point advantage on second-placed Napoli, which it has beaten in both head-to-head clashes, with seven games to

go. Juventus, which beat AC Milan 2-1 on Saturday, needed Napoli to lose to win the Scudetto for the 35th time, ahead of its Champions League quarterfinal first leg against Ajax next week.

A draw next weekend at SPAL would be enough for Massimiliano Allegri's side to win the title which would be the first in Italy for Cristiano Ronaldo.

Despite its numerical advantage, Napoli struggled to

contain the visitor which inflicted the only league defeat this season on Juventus last month.

Genoa went a man down when Stefano Sturaro was sent off on 28 minutes following a VAR review for a diving studs-up tackle on Allan.

The results: La Liga: Real Betis 2 (Lo Celso 11, 63) bt Villarreal 1 (Funes Mori 13). Serie A: Napoli 1 (Mertens 34) drew with Genoa 1 (Lazovic 45+3).

## Souvenirs issue: Mohun Bagan forms panel

Complaints received from ex-players

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
KOLKATA

Avika Sagwal upset fifth-seeded Renne Singla 6-7(5), 7-6(5), 7-5 in a closely-fought women's singles first round contest in the Zee Bangla Central Excise Open AlTA National ranking tournament at the Bengal Tennis Association courts here on Monday.

## Important results (first round):

Men: Anshu Kumar Bhayan bt Arghya Das 4-6, 6-1, 6-1; Parikshit Somani bt Shivam Dalma 6-7(5)-6-2, 6-2; Prithvi Sekhar bt Tarun Anirudh Chiklakalapudi 6-1, 6-1; Faisal Qamar bt Sahil Gaware 6-3, 6-4; D. Suresh bt Vivek Gautam 6-1, 6-3; Mohammed Fahad bt Rishi Reddy 2-6, 6-4, 6-1.

Women: Shreya Chakraborty bt Akshala Kumar 6-0, 6-1; Dameria Sunskriti bt Rupakata Mukherjee 2-6, 7-5, 6-1; Avika Sagwal bt Renne Singla 6-7(5), 7-6 (5), 7-5; Ayushi Singh bt Shatavisha Ghosh 6-3, 7-6(5); Aarthi Munian bt Dhwanee Kumar 7-6, 6-3; Vanishi Chaudhary bt Medhavi Singh 6-2, 6-0.

plaints of missing and damaged souvenirs earned by ex-Indian players (who played for the team).

"Several souvenirs were returned to their rightful owners but they complained that many other important souvenirs are missing."

"The Executive Committee has formed a six-member committee to investigate and find the whereabouts of these prestigious material," said a statement.

## Indian boys outplayed

SPORTS BUREAU  
BANGKOK

The Indian boys failed to

win a set as New Zealand recorded a 3-0 victory in the opening league match in group-D, in the Asia-Oceania Junior Davis Cup under-16 tennis tournament here on Monday.

The sixth seeded India

will next play Indonesia, before taking on the third seed Australia.

The results (league): New Zealand bt India 3-0 (Jay Friend bt Jay Malik 6-4, 6-3; Corban Crowther bt Divesh Gahlot 6-0, 6-3; Corban Crowther &amp; Aukly Wang bt Sushant Dabas &amp; Ajay Malik 7-6(2), 6-1).

## Ayush nets for Delhi

SPORTS BUREAU  
LUDHIANA

Delhi edged Meghalaya 1-0 as the final round of the 73rd National football championship for the Santosh Trophy commenced here on Monday. Ayush Adhikari scored the only goal of the game in the 18th minute of the Group A encounter.

The results: Group A: Delhi 1 (Ayush Adhikari 18) bt Meghalaya 0; Services 1 (P.C. Lalawmnia 54) drew with Goa 1 (Lalawmpuia 51).

## Always wanted to visit Camp Nou: Dravid

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
BARCELONA

Former India captain Rahul Dravid ticked one of the items on his bucket list when he watched Lionel Messi play at Camp Nou.

Dravid, who is on vacation in Spain, took time out on Sunday to watch a La Liga match. "It's one of the things I've always wanted to do. To come to Camp Nou, watch a football match and

to be here, experience the atmosphere is absolutely electric," Dravid told fcbarcelona.com.

"It's incredible, I mean to be able to watch people like (Lionel) Messi and (Luis) Suarez play live is fantastic. So thanks to Barcelona FC for the hospitality, it's been excellent."

He was also presented a jersey which had his name on the back.

Valuable keepsake: Rahul Dravid getting a customised Barcelona jersey from the club president Josep Maria Bartomeu, left, and vice-president Jordi Mestre.

■ PICTURE COURTESY: TWITTER.COM/FCBARCELONA

Son Heung-min Tottenham Scored first goal in Spurs' new stadium

ENGLISH RIVALS: Tottenham and Manchester City set to meet for first time in Europe — pair have been Premier League title challengers in recent years. City edging domestic head-to-head with 61 wins to Spurs' 60 victories

Last five Premier League meetings:

Oct 2018 Tottenham 0-1 Man City Apr 2018 Tottenham 1-3 Man City Dec 2017 Man City 4-1 Tottenham Jan 2017 Man City 2-2 Tottenham Oct 2016 Tottenham 2-0 Man City

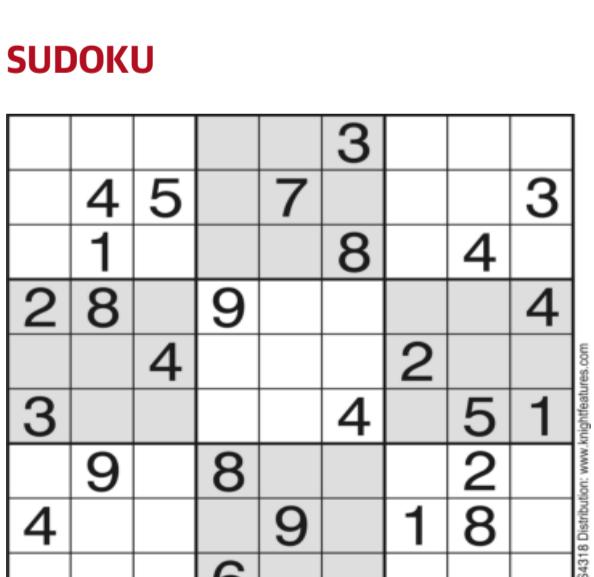
Sources: UEFA, Gracenote Picture: Getty Images

HOME COMFORTS: Spurs aim to continue streak of European home form after winning last three games at Wembley against PSV, Inter and Dortmund

Spurs: Home in Champions League

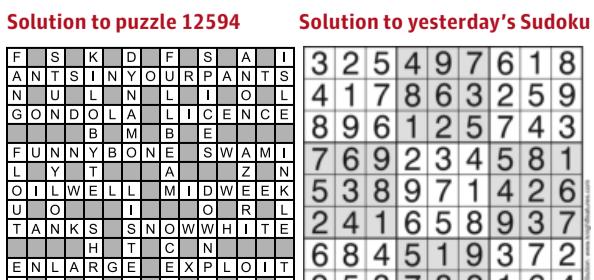
L5 D1 © GRAPHIC NEWS

## SUDOKU



DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★☆

## Solution to puzzle 12594 Solution to yesterday's Sudoku



No S5418 Distribution: www.knightfeatures.com

## FAITH

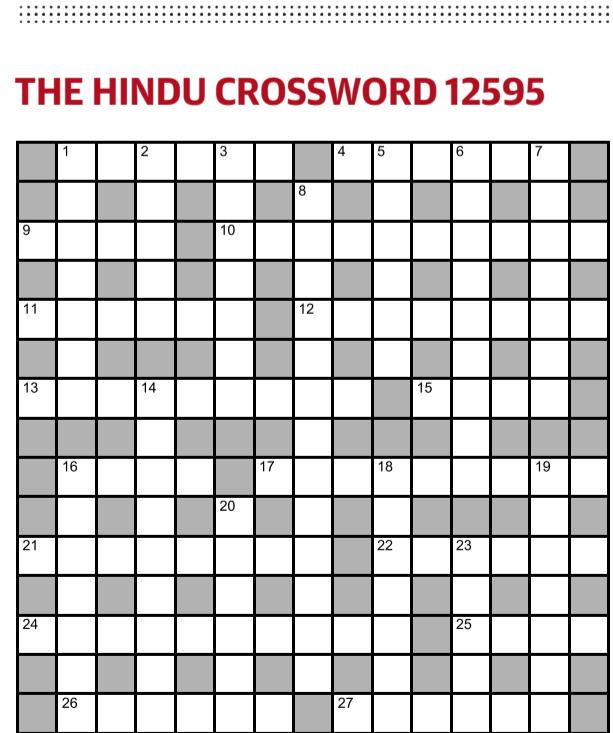
## Realising Paramatma

The devas and Brahma go to the abode of Lord Vishnu. Srimad Bhagavatam gives us Brahma's praise of Vishnu, said Akkarakkanni Srinidhi in a discourse. Brahma praised Vishnu thus: "Samsara results because of punyas and papas. In this wheel of samsara, the ten indriyas and five pranas are the spokes. The qualities of sattva, rajas and tamas constitute the hub of the wheel. The five elements — Earth, water, fire, wind and ether — the mind, the intellect and the ego make up the rim of the wheel. This wheel has a fleeting existence like lightning. It disappears as quickly as lightning."

Learned men say that You are the moving force behind this samsara wheel. But You Yourself never change. You remain the same always. Since You are resident inside every jivatma, You are referred to as Paramatma. To You we surrender. Your divine abode — Paramapada — is always satvic. It is beyond this Prakrti. It cannot be seen by those caught up in samsara. Qualities like raga (desire), etc are not to be found there. Nityasuris reside there. Paramapada has no boundaries. To reach Your abode, learned men resort to yogic practices. You are present in all creatures. There is no Purushartha worth aspiring for, except You. None can know You, unless You will it. Although You reside in everything, You are untouched by the qualities of these entities. Here are the celestials with me. I am not capable of comprehending You or Your greatness.

The same goes for the devas too. How then can asuras with their tamasic and rajasic qualities understand Your greatness? The four kinds of gross bodies (sthula sareera) namely — jarAyuja, andaja, svadaja, udbhija — were made by You. You are not dependent on anyone. You have inordinate wealth. You are Parabrahma, praised by Purusasukta."

## THE HINDU CROSSWORD 12595



## ACROSS

- 1 Community: closer to locality? (6)
- 4 Impress Middle East coming back to bully (6)
- 9 Literally impacts, say pronunciation, for starters (4)
- 10 Top honcho, perhaps in Romanian capital with foreign emigrants (10)

## DOWN

- 1 Current trend is to pick up language in church (7)
- 2 Dismiss nuns eating sandwiches (6)
- 24 Stick around, keen to have Indian diet, say (10)
- 25 Run away in order to marry host (4)
-

## IN BRIEF



Djokovic heads into clay season as World No. 1

PARIS Novak Djokovic moves into his 20th week as World No. 1 on Monday as the clay season gets under way. The Serb is almost 2,500 points ahead of Rafael Nadal. Japan's Naomi Osaka maintained a slender lead over Romanian Simona Halep at the top of the WTA rankings released on Monday. Osaka now sits 185 points ahead of Halep, with Czech pair Petra Kvitová and Karolina Plíšková in third and fourth. AFP



Caparros suffering from leukemia

SEVILLE Sevilla coach Joaquín Caparros announced on Sunday that he has chronic leukemia but says the condition is under control and will not prevent him continuing in his job. "I have chronic leukemia," Caparros said at a post-match press conference. "I have caught it early and can live a normal life. I want to enjoy my job and for everyone to stay calm. I've had no treatment and am grateful for the club giving me the opportunity [to continue coaching]," he said. AFP



KO CLAIMS FIRST MAJOR TITLE AT ANA INSPIRATION LOS ANGELES Reigning Rookie-of-the-Year Ko Jin-young captured her first Major title on Sunday, holding off fellow South Korean Lee Mi-Hyang to win the ANA Inspiration by three strokes. Ko, who is in her second year, finished with a 10-under 278 for her fourth LPGA title. Ko celebrated her win by taking the traditional dip with her caddie in Poppie's Pond — the water hazard located off the right and back of the green on the 18th. AFP

**Coach will be appointed at the earliest:** Praful Patel



Praful Patel. ■ AFP

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA NEW DELHI The All-India Football Federation (AIFF) president Praful Patel may consider appointing a big name as the national team coach only if the candidate fits the criteria and the appointment may be done at the earliest.

The AIFF has received more than 250 applications for the top job, which is vacant after Stephen Constantine resigned following India's failure to make the knockouts of the AFC Asian Cup.

"If the candidate fulfills the criteria, what we are looking at, and if he is well-qualified, then we can think of that (appointing a big name)," the AIFF chief said.

"The appointment will be made as soon as possible, maybe by the end of this month."

The list of applicants for the Indian coaching job also includes candidates from the ISL and I-League.

# Siddharth Desai is prize catch

Telugu Titans picks up last season's best debutant for ₹1.45 crore

## PKL AUCTION

NANDAKUMAR MARAR  
MUMBAI

Raider Siddharth Desai has moved up the ranks, in terms of value at the Pro-Kabaddi League Season-7 player auction.

In only his second season as pro, the Kolhapur-born player (base price ₹30 lakh) was picked up by Telugu Titans for a staggering ₹1.45 crore on Monday. Last season's highest earner, Monu Goyat (₹1.51 crore) moved to UP Yoddhas for ₹93 lakh.

Puneri Paltan and Tamil Thalaivas were involved in a frenetic three-way bid for the former U Mumba sensation, Desai. Named the 'Best debutant' last season for his power-packed raiding and speed, Desai will team up with Iranian coach Gholamreza Mazandaran again.

Titans convinced the only foreign head coach in PKL to switch from U Mumba and bid successfully for the 28-year-old player, a crowd-puller in his own right.

Thalaivas came close at ₹1.44 crore before Titans sealed the deal. U Mumba did not execute the Final Bid

Match card. Each of the 12 teams is allotted a purse of ₹4.4 crore to recruit a minimum of 18 and maximum 25 players.

Paltan used the Final Bid Match card to bring back reputed raider Nitin Tomar for ₹1.2 crore, the second highest bid. Thalaivas had beaten off challengers to get the player, only to see him taken away on a technical point.

Tomar represented Pune last season, so the team held the right to match the highest bid by any other franchise for a former player released into the pool.

Thalaivas got Rahul Chaudhari for ₹94 lakh in a straight bid.

Nineteen domestic players went under the hammer. Iranian Esmail Nabibakhsh, taken by Bengal Warriors for ₹77.75 lakh, became the second-highest paid foreigner (Fazel Atrachali at ₹1 crore last season) is the topper.

Several team managements used the Final Bid Match card to retain stars released earlier into the pool.

Those returning to last season's squads were Ravinder Pahal (Dabang Delhi), Girish Ernak (Paltan), Jai-

## Top picks

(CATEGORY A DOMESTIC)  
Siddharth Desai (₹1.45 crore, Titans)  
Nitin Tomar (₹1.20 crore, Paltan using Final Bid Match)

Rahul Chaudhari (94*, Thalaivas)	Chandran Ranjeet (70, Delhi using FBM)
Monu Goyat (93, UP Yoddha)	Shrikant Jadhav (68, Yoddha using FBM)
Sandeep Narwal (89, U Mumba)	Ravinder Pahal (61, Dabang Delhi using FBM)
Mahender Singh (80, Bengaluru Bulls using FBM)	Rishank Devadiga (61, Yoddha using FBM)
Surender Nada (77, Patna Pirates)	Vishal Bharadwaj (60, Titans using FBM)
Prashanth Kumar Rai (77, Haryana Steelers)	Surjeet Singh (56, Paltan)
Parvesh Bainswal (75, Gujarat FortuneGiants)	Ran Singh (55, moves to Tamil Thalaivas)
	Amit Hooda (53, Jaipur Pink Panthers)
	Jaideep (35, Pirates)
	Girish Ernak (33, Puneri Paltan using FBM)

## FOREIGN PLAYERS (TOP FIVE)

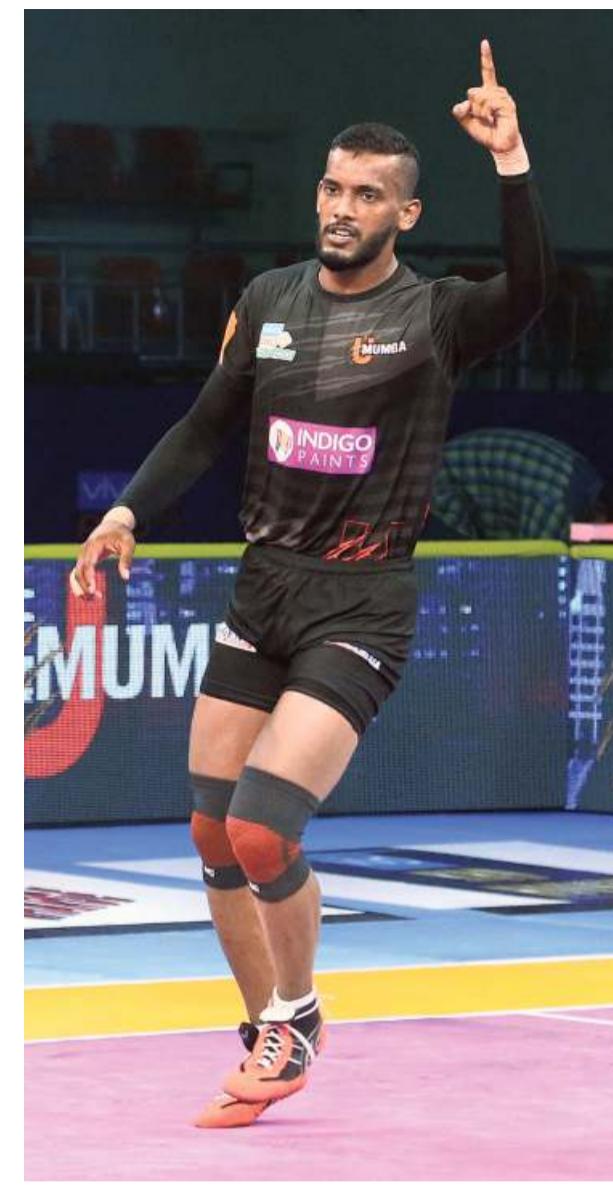
Eshmaiel Nababaksh (Iran) 77.75, Bengal Warriors  
Abozar Meghani (Iran) 75, Titans  
Jang Kun Lee (South Korea) 40, Pirates  
Eshmaiel Maghsoudlu (Iran) 35, Pirates  
Dong Geon Lee (South Korea) 25, U Mumba

\* all rupees in lakh

deep (Patna Pirates), Mahender Singh (Bengaluru Bulls), Parvesh Bainswal (Gujarat FortuneGiants), Vishal Bharadwaj (Titans), Chandran Ranjith (Dabang), Nitin Tomar (Paltan), Rishank Deva-

diga (UP Yodhas) and Shrikant Jadhav (Yodhas).

Last season, five domestic players earned upwards of ₹1 crore, a season later only two have made the *crorepatis* club.



**Value for money:** Siddharth Desai's power-packed raiding in the first season has reaped rich dividends. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

## Krishna Nagar wins two golds

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
DUBAI

Asian Para Games bronze medallist Krishna Nagar of India won two gold medals at the second Fazza-Dubai para badminton international championships here on Sunday.

A day after upsetting World No. 1 Jack Shepherd in the men's singles SS6 semifinals, Nagar pulled off the second upset in as many days when he defeated England's World No. 2 Krysten Coombs 20-22, 25-23, 21-12 in the most exciting final of the day, that went over an hour.

"This is the biggest win of my career," an elated Nagar said before he went on to make it two-for-two, winning the mixed doubles title along with Raja Magotra.

Team India had a good run, at the event finishing with nine medals including four golds on Sunday.

Among others, World No. 1 Pramod Bhagat and Parul Parmer took the gold in SL3 men's and women's singles. However, Asian Para Games winner Tarun went down to French World No. 1 Lucas Mazur in straight games 13-21, 17-21 in men's singles SL4 final.

## Chris Cowdrey — a less demonstrative auctioneer



Chris Cowdrey.  
■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Player auction is a fantastic new concept, says former England cricketer

G. VISWANATH  
MUMBAI

Chris Cowdrey had his own way of being less demonstrative while conducting the VIVO ProKabaddi League Auction 2019 at a South Mumbai five star hotel on Monday.

Picking a card from a bag held by his wife, the former cricketer-turned-auctioneer, Chris was business-like, saying: "Anybody wants to kick me off... I am asking for ten (₹10 lakh), he is going back in

once, twice and done".

The gavel is hit hard on the sound block and this time the little-known player goes unsold.

But Chris had a busy morning session as franchises bid hard for Iran's Mohammad Esmail Nabibakhsh and Abazar Meghani.

Having done the PKL auction for the first time last year, most in the 12 franchises knew who Chris was — son of the celebrated England

cricketer and captain, the late Colin Cowdrey. Chris, now 61, played for Kent and made his Test debut against India at the Wankhede Stadium in 1984.

Talking to *The Hindu* he said: "I do a lot of charity auctions in the UK, mainly children's."

"This thing is quite new, I did this last year."

**New concept'**

"It's a fantastic new concept

to us English people because you are not bidding money for a cause, but actually to buy a player for a franchise.

It's very different and exciting. I watch the game, but it doesn't make any difference to the auction.

"My job is only to put it out there and see who wants to bid. It's not for me to say 'I think he is a good player. I have done mainly cricket auctions, cricket memorabilia, but nothing like this.'

## Chennai starts well

## SHOTGUN WC

SPORTS BUREAU  
AL AIN (UAE)

Olympian Kynan Chenai shot 49 following rounds of 24 and 25 in trap in the shotgun World Cup on Monday.

However, there was stiff competition, in a strong field of 142 shooters, as 11 shooters shot the perfect score of 50 in two rounds, while 22 others were on 49.

Prithviraj Tondaiman shot 48, following rounds of 24 and 24. He was on par

with 29 others on 48.

In women's trap in which Carole Cormener of France and Kirsty Barr of Britain won the Olympic quota places with the gold and silver medals respectively. Shagun wound up well with rounds of 23 and 25, but had dropped eight birds earlier in the first three rounds.

**The results: Women's trap:**

1. Carole Cormener (Fra) 44 (121); 2. Kirsty Barr (GBR) 41 (120); 3. Silvana Stancio (Ita) 33 (121); 26. Shagun Chowdhary 115; 50. Rajeshwari Kumari 109; 69. Varsha Varman 92.

## Goa is the next hurdle for Chennai City

The latter is expected to be high on confidence

## SUPER CUP

AMITABHA DAS SHARMA  
BHUBANESWAR

Chennai City FC, having sprung the biggest surprise of the tournament by knocking out holder and ISL champion Bengaluru FC in the quarterfinals, the I-League winner now has the task of challenging ISL runner-up FC Goa in the first semifinal of the Hero Super Cup at the Kalinga Stadium here on Tuesday.

Chennai City has shown great discipline and tactical efficiency in the previous two rounds. The team has come out of the underdog status, evident from the way it prevailed over FC Pune Ci-

ty (pre-quarterfinals) and then against Bengaluru FC.

With these wins, City is expected to be high on confidence while taking on the might of FC Goa, the two-time ISL runner-up.

With a trophy eluding it ever since it was founded in 2014, the Super Cup crown is high up in the priority of FC Goa, which has promised to go full steam in the match.

The side will be missing its key Spanish player in the creative front, Edu Bedia, due to suspension, but head coach Sergio Lobera said that would not affect the side.

"It is true that Bedia is an important player. It will be one weakness for us, but tomorrow (Tuesday) we will put up a team that will be

competitive enough to try and reach the final," Lobera said, while suggesting midfield Hugo Boumous is the likely replacement.

Chennai City will be banking on its tested combination of the Spanish troika — Pedro Manzi, Sandro Rodriguez and Nestor Gordillo — that has spearheaded the team's fortune. With M. Regis suspended, Charles Anandraj will possibly make his way back in the side.

"On paper we are not the favourite as compared to the strengths of our opponent.

"But when we go to the pitch, we try to give our best and you have seen what has happened so far," said Chennai City head coach Akbar Nawas.

## Sindhu hopes to find form

Sixth-seeded Saina pitted against fast-rising Kjaersfeldt

## SINGAPORE OPEN

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
SINGAPORE

P.V. Sindhu will look to shrug off the disappointment of her recent early exits when she spearheads the Indian challenge at the \$355,000 Singapore Open, starting here on Tuesday.

Sindhu has looked off colour in the last few weeks.

She made a first-round exit at the All England and lost in the second round of the Malaysia Open, losing to Korea's Sung Ji Hyun both times.

She entered the semi-finals at the India Open but went down to He Bingjiao of China despite holding advantage in the first game.

She begins her campaign against Indonesia's Lyanny Alessandra Mainaky.

"The appointment will be made as soon as possible, maybe by the end of this month."

The list of applicants for the Indian coaching job also includes candidates from the ISL and I-League.



**Focused:** P.V. Sindhu will have to put behind her recent disappointments to do well at the Singapore Open. ■ AFP

injury to Carolina Marin of Spain in the final.

She also entered the quarterfinals at All England after battling through a pancreas infection.

She returned at the Malaysia Open but went down in the first round.

The sixth-seeded Indian will now have to be careful when she plays a fast-rising Line Hojmark Kjaersfeldt of

Denmark in the opening round here.

K. Srikanth will continue his quest to break his title jinx when he begins his campaign against a qualifier.

H.S. Prannoy will face France's Brice Leverdez, while Swiss Open finalist B. Sai Praneeth has a tough fight ahead against World No. 1 and top seed Japan's Kento Momota.

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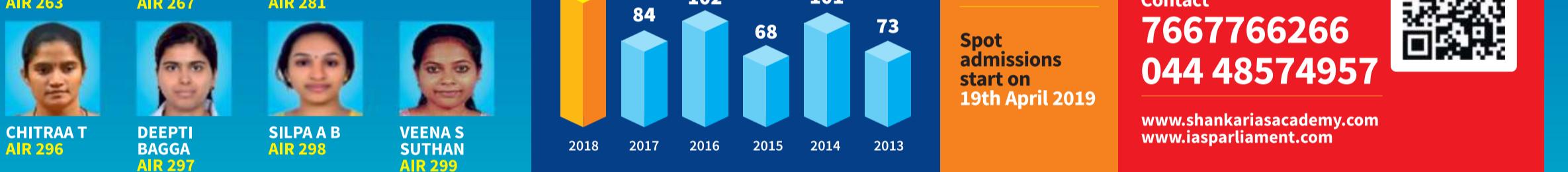
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# DELHI METRO



## 'Acche din nowhere'

Hundreds of unemployed workers talk about hardships as their wait for 'acche din' continues [Page 2](#)



## 'Chor and chowkidar'

The upcoming LS poll will be a contest between 'chor and chowkidar', says Manoj Tiwari [Page 2](#)



## 'No steps on air pollution'

The NGT pulls up the DPCC for failing to take steps to curb air pollution in the Capital [Page 3](#)



## The fabulous

The designer, Farah Khan, traces her bejewelled journey in her début book [Page 4](#)

### IN BRIEF



#### Teenager robs cashier of ₹5 lakh, arrested

A 19-year-old member of Kapil Sangwan gang and his accomplice have been arrested for allegedly shooting at a school's cashier and robbing her of over ₹5 lakh in Dwarka on April 4, the police said on Monday. DCP (Dwarka) Anto Alphonse said the accused have been identified as Mayank and Atul Pradhan. During interrogation, Atul said that he was given the task by the wife of Joginder Dalal, a member of Kapil Sangwan gang who is in Tihar jail.

**CITY ▶ PAGE 3**

#### Air quality of Delhi-NCR

Delhi	264	Gurugram -
Ghaziabad	281	Faridabad -
Noida	270	Greater Noida 280
Good 0-50	■ Satisfactory 51-100	■ Moderate 101-200
Poor 201-300	■ Very poor 301-400	■ Severe 401

AIR QUALITY INDEX AT 4 P.M. YESTERDAY (AVERAGE OF PAST 24 HOURS) | SOURCE: CPCB

## Centre's reply sought on Johnson & Johnson plea

On compensation for faulty hip implants; no steps till next hearing: HC

#### STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Monday sought response of the Centre on Johnson and Johnson's plea challenging the orders by which it was directed to compensate patients who received faulty hip implants made by the company.

Justice Vibhu Bakheru asked the Centre's counsel to take instruction on Johnson and Johnson's submission that it was willing to pay ₹25 lakh as compensation to the patients who were affected by its hip implants.

The High Court also asked authorities not to take any steps against the company till the next date of hearing.

In its plea, the company contended that the Centre has no jurisdiction under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act to fix and enforce the compensation.

Johnson and Johnson has challenged the Centre's



pending in the High Court.

#### Replacement implants

It challenged the compensation formula worked out by expert committee headed by R.K. Arya, Director, Sports Injury Centre. It has also sought quashing of the report of another committee headed by Arun Agarwal, Professor of ENT, Maulana Azad Medical College, which was appointed by the Health Ministry for looking into the allegations of faulty hip replacement implants.

According to the Arya committee report, compensation payable to patients would be determined in terms of the disability by the faulty hip implants in relation to their age.

A public interest litigation (PIL), which was earlier before the Supreme Court, has alleged that faulty hip implants have been fitted into the bodies of 4,525 Indian patients.

The company said the Centre's order fixing the compensation was based on formula and set of expert committees' recommendations, which have already been challenged by it and are

## Midsummer day's dream



**Pot dealer:** Earthen pots being sold by the roadside on a hot afternoon in the city. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

## Plea against Mufti, Farooq contesting Lok Sabha poll

Asks EC to ban them for 'seditious' comments

#### STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

A plea moved before the Delhi High Court has sought direction to the Election Commission to ban National Conference's leaders Farooq Abdullah, Omar Abdullah and Peoples Democratic Party's Mehbooba Mufti from participating in the Lok Sabha poll.

The plea filed by advocate Sanjjiv Kkumaar has claimed that the recent statements made by three Jammu and Kashmir politicians in public and social media were allegedly seditious.

**Mockery of democracy?** "Will it not be a mockery of democracy to allow those people and parties to participate in the Lok Sabha election when people/par-

ties openly call for sedition to divide Mother India on the basis of religion [Muslim majority] and two Prime Ministers [for Jammu and Kashmir and the rest of India]..." the petition said.

It also sought a direction to book them under various charges, including sedition and inciting hatred, of the Indian Penal Code and the Information Technology Act.

**No faith in Constitution** Advocate Kkumaar said the three politicians "have no faith in the Indian Constitution and hence they and their party PDP and NC should be barred from participating in Lok Sabha election".

The plea is yet to come up for hearing before the High Court.

## CBI calls Sajjan Kumar 'kingpin' of 1984 anti-Sikh riots, opposes bail

Apex court asks probe agency to apprise it of the trial status

#### LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

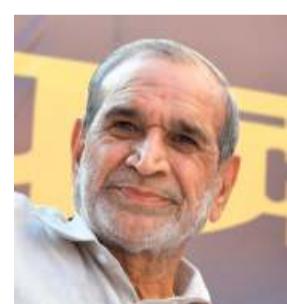
NEW DELHI

The CBI objected to grant of bail to former Congress party leader Sajjan Kumar, saying he is behind the "gruesome" massacre of Sikhs in the 1985 riots in the Capital.

The 73-year-old Kumar was sentenced to life by the Delhi High Court on December 17 for murder in a Delhi anti-Sikh riots case. He has appealed to the Supreme Court and sought bail.

**'Travesty of justice'** But the CBI, represented by Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, said Kumar is facing trial in another 1984 riots case and it would be a "travesty of justice" to enlarge him on bail now.

Mr. Mehta described Kumar as a "kingpin" while arguing against bail before a Bench led by Justice S.A. Bobde on Monday. "This is a gruesome offence of massacre of Sikhs. He [Kumar] was the leader and the kingpin of this," Mr. Mehta submitted. The case in which



**Today, you [Kumar] are convicted by the High Court. It is not a charge by police. We cannot treat it lightly**

JUSTICE BOBDE

Kumar is convicted and sentenced relates to the killing of five Sikhs in Delhi Cantonment's Raj Nagar Part-I area of south-west Delhi on November 1 and 2, 1984, and burning down of a Gurudwara in Raj Nagar Part-II.

Anti-Sikh riots broke out after the assassination of then prime minister Indira Gandhi on October 31, 1984, and the Bench asked the CBI to further apprise it of the status of the trial and scheduled the bail hearing for April 15.

by her two Sikh bodyguards. Kumar's counsel, however, countered that he had earlier been granted anticipatory bail. He said his client has been in jail for the past three months.

However, the Bench was also told by one of the advocates that Kumar was a sitting MP in 1984 and several Sikhs were killed during the riots in his constituency.

When Kumar's counsel referred to the merits of the case, Justice Bobde stopped him, saying "we do not know why you are inviting our attention to the facts of the case... Today, you [Kumar] are convicted by the High Court. It is not a charge by police. We cannot treat it lightly".

The court asked about the status of trial of the ongoing trial in the second case. Mr. Mehta said it was at the stage of recording of prosecution evidence.

The Bench asked the CBI to further apprise it of the status of the trial and scheduled the bail hearing for April 15.

## SDMC, activists make meat vendors aware of laws

Conduct workshop to regulate meat shops, curb illegal slaughter in the Capital

#### SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The South Delhi Municipal Corporation (SDMC) and the Federation of Indian Animal Protection Organisations (FIAPO) came together to conduct a workshop with meat shop vendors to raise awareness on the laws governing the trade.

The participants included vendors from Hauz Khas, Malviya Nagar, Hauz Khas, Safdarjung Enclave, and Mehrauli wards. With this, they aim to accelerate the mandate regarding the regulation of meat shops and curb illegal slaughter in the city.

This progressive workshop was organised by the South zone of SDMC in collaboration with FIAPO to curb the violation of rules, regulations and guidelines by the meat vendors," said executive director of FIAPO Varda Mehratra.

**Animal cruelty** Ms. Mehratra added, "The sessions held recently was aimed at creating awareness and sensitivity amongst the participants towards issues of animal cruelty in the city.

The Slaughter House



The SDMC and FIAPO organise workshop for meat shop vendors in the city. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

**The session was aimed at creating awareness and sensitivity among the participants towards issues of animal cruelty**

VARDHA MEHRATRA  
Executive director of FIAPO

Rules (2001) under Prevention to Cruelty to Animals Act 1960, Delhi Municipal Corporation Act 1957 and Prevention of Food Adulteration Act 1954 were found being violated in many local meat shops in South Delhi. Veterinary inspectors of the

department were also present at the session and induced the meat vendors about the various rules and regulations that are mandatory to be followed by them.

**Waste management** "The session focused on discussion on curbing animal cruelty in meat shops, water and land pollution by managing waste generated in their shops and maintaining good hygiene standards.

The vendors were educated on the laws and regulations to be followed within their shops and the severity of punishments of the violations of these laws," noted a release issued by FIAPO.

Maninder Pratap Singh Sodhi, deputy director of veterinary services, South zone, SDMC said: "We want such counselling sessions to be held regularly and these will definitely help make aware the meat shop owners about the various laws governing the meat shops. Our focus is on educating them to understand the correct and necessary practices to not exercise animal cruelty."

During probe, they revealed that the drug was delivered to them by a resident of Manipur on the directions of Manoj, a resident of Bihar. Thereafter, a team was sent to Bihar and Manoj was arrested on April 5. On the instance of the accused, Hasim was arrested from Bawana on April 6, the DCP said.

## Drugs worth over ₹200 cr seized, 4 held

#### STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

Four men were arrested and 50 kg of drugs worth more than ₹200 crore in the international market was recovered from their possession, the police said on Monday.

The accused have been identified as Mohammad Sufiyan (31), Mohammad Ismail (49), and Hasim (30), residents of Barabanki in Uttar Pradesh and Manoj Kumar Das (50), a resident of Begusarai in Bihar, they said.

Based on a tip-off, they arrested Sufiyan and Ismail when they came to supply drugs to one of their contacts on April 4, DCP (Crime) Sanjeev Kumar Yadav said.

During probe, they revealed that the drug was delivered to them by a resident of Manipur on the directions of Manoj, a resident of Bihar. Thereafter, a team was sent to Bihar and Manoj was arrested on April 5. On the instance of the accused, Hasim was arrested from Bawana on April 6, the DCP said.

## IN BRIEF



## IIT-D-incubated start-up under internal probe

NEW DELHI  
IIT-Delhi on Monday said that it had come to their notice that institution-incubated start-up Sanfe (Redroombotechnology Private Limited) had falsely claimed that their product Sanfe period pain relief roll on was FDA approved. "An internal inquiry has been initiated against Sanfe founders and a show-cause notice has been issued to them. Based on the inquiry report, action would be taken," the institute said in a statement. STAFF REPORTER

## HC stays JNU's decision on two professors

NEW DELHI  
The Delhi High Court has put on hold JNU's resolution debarring two of its Professors from participating in the university's Executive Council (EC) meetings, saying on first impression, it appears to be contrary to the university's statutes. Justice Vibhu Bakshu stayed the minutes of the EC's 278th meeting to the extent that it debarred the professors from participating in future meetings of the academic body. PTI

## NHRC notice to Delhi govt on ration cards

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) on Monday, while issuing a notice to the Chief Secretary of Delhi, took suo motu cognisance of a report that ration cards elude 30-odd families in the same building of East Delhi where three minor girls had died of starvation eight months ago.

In a statement, the NHRC said it had issued a notice to the Chief Secretary, Government of NCT of Delhi, to submit a detailed report, including action taken after the deaths of the minor girls by the department concerned, and the present status of the applications pending for issuance of ration cards and status of the Public Distribution System along with basic amenities in the area. It has asked for a response within four weeks.

The Commission said it had also observed that the contents of the news report were quite disturbing that even after the death of three young girls due to starvation; seemingly the authorities in the Delhi government had not woken up.

"Apparently, the innocent people have become victims of the State's apathy and inhuman approach. This is a serious case of violation of Right to Food of the poor people," the NHRC said.

## Focus is on inclusion of marginalised voters: Delhi CEO

Poll panel undertaking special drives to enrol them

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

With special drives for homeless people, persons with disabilities (PwD) and people falling under the "third gender" category, Delhi Chief Election Officer (CEO) Ranbir Singh on Monday said that inclusion of marginalised sections of society in the electoral rolls was being focused upon.

Last weekend, a drive was undertaken to enrol homeless people living in shelters run by the Delhi government.

The CEO said that from four districts, forms were collected from 1,922 people. Data from the rest of the seven districts had not come in, he said.

Election officials are also undertaking a drive to promote participation of person

## Finding work on their minds in election time

Hundreds of daily wage labourers talk about hardships faced by them in the city as their wait for 'acche din' continues

SHINJINI GHOSH  
NEW DELHI

Small groups of men can be seen approaching any and every vehicle on the Basai Road near Shiv Murti Chowk in Gurugram.

They are the reserve army of the unemployed seeking wages for work that dot the National Capital Region.

At Gurugram's Labour Chowk, hundreds are awaiting their turn for the day's employment, which will get them anything between ₹250 to ₹400 and on, 'acche din', a sum of ₹600.

"There are days when we get paid nothing despite working for the entire day. Yahan toh gulaami chal rahi hai," rues 50-year-old Surendra who is a regular at the Basai Road Labour Chowk for three decades now.

Hailing from Azamgarh in Uttar Pradesh, Suresh like the many others have left behind his family in search of employment with the hope of contributing more to the family income.

## Unfulfilled promises

"We have small farms back home but there is hardly any substantial income to sustain the entire family. Here we offer our services for various kinds of construction work but sometimes the contractors do not even pay and when we ask for what we deserve, they start hitting us and shoo us away. Gareeb ka koi nahi sunta iss desh main [No one listens to the poor in our country]," he says.

Shafique-ul-Hasan, who

hails from Agra and has been a daily wage labourer for five years, adds, "It's only before election that you will find politicians washing our feet and eating with us. Have you ever seen Narendra Modi meet a single poor person?"

Raj Bahadur, a fellow daily wage earner, says, "Even the ₹15 lakh in our accounts which he promised, has not even reached us. Not even ₹5,000 is in our bank accounts yet."

For Asha Devi, the need to seek employment began a decade back when the family of six needed an extra helping hand. Since then she has been a regular at the Labour Chowk near the Noida Sector 16 metro station.

**No identity sans cards'** The Jhansi resident says, "We come here around eight in the morning and wait till noon. If we do not get work then we head back home. There are days when we have to make do with ₹350 a day. What can we say about the government? The BJP government has done nothing for us. While promises are being made about Ayushman Bharat and other schemes, here we are struggling to get our labour cards made without which we have no identity whatsoever."

Kranti Devi (43) adds, "We hear that there are housing schemes of the government as well. Lekin humara ghar toh waisa ka waisa hi reh gaya [But our houses have remained the same]. We left our villages as the farms had



A group of workers waits for work at Labour Chowk in Gurugram on Monday. ■ MANOJ KUMAR

dried up but unfortunately the work here has also dried up."

## On demonetisation

Rajrani, one of the few other women who are seen at the Chowk says, "The demonetisation period destroyed us completely. There was no work and this place was overcrowded with people looking for some source of earning. We could not even leave our spots to drink water fearing that someone else will occupy it. The days were spent by looking for jobs and then at night the men would sleep outside banks."

For Arpit Tiwari, a Bulandshahr resident and a BSc graduate, uncertainty looms as he has been forced to work as a daily wage labourer after he lost his job two years ago.

**We left our villages as the farms had dried up but unfortunately the work here has also dried up**

KRANTI DEVI  
Daily wage labourer

"Despite having a degree I have no employment and come to Labour Chowk in search of some employment. Kya faayda vote karne ka agar humara kuch nahi huya toh? [I will not vote as nobody really cares about what is happening to us.]" he asks.

Those at Sevpuri Chowk in Geeta Colony however argue that even though the move disrupted their work "for a few days," the Prime Minister's demonetisation move has been beneficial to

the country.

"The best thing about Mr. Modi is that woh nah khaatey hain na khaaney detey hain. Look at the Congress government in the past...they were busy in all sorts of corruption. Nobody even cared about us. At least with demonetisation the black money was caught," says Ramesh Kumar from Uttar Pradesh.

**Improved facilities** Sonu Kumar, a Bulandshahr resident, earns anything between ₹500 and ₹1,000 a day by engaging in work related to plumbing, carpentry, painting and so on.

Agreeing to Ramesh Kumar, he adds, "Thanks to the government we have proper toilets in the village. The ambulance service has also become prompt and arrives in

five minutes. Pehle kahan tha yeh sab? Just think about it, Modiji went to the extent of attacking Pakistan just for the country. What else do we need? The Gandhis and Yadavs have done nothing for us."

**Migrants on voting** With the general election round the corner do the migrants intend to head home?

When asked, Om Prakash another Uttar Pradesh resident vehemently replies in the affirmative.

"Obviously we will go. It's just a day and missing out on one day's work is fine. But it is important to vote into power someone who will work for us," he says.

However, for Birender Kumar from Nalanda in Bihar, going back home to vote is more than "just a day".

"Paisa hona chahiye na ghar jaane ke liye? How are we to go home if we have no money? There are days when we earn only ₹100-150 despite waiting here the whole day till 6 p.m. The income from the farms is not enough so we have to spend almost our entire lives doing mazdoori. We cannot afford to go back to Bihar just to vote. We need to accumulate whatever little money we get," says Birender who was found waiting at the Labour Chowk in Okhla Phase II.

Sant Ram (57) from Gorakhpur remarks, "No politician cares about us. Every five years, the government should change. But all we can do is hope that our situation will improve."

**AAP capable of winning all seats in Delhi, says Gopal Rai**

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

Aam Aadmi Party leader Gopal Rai said that his party is capable of winning all seats in the Capital without an alliance with the Congress.

He was reacting to a statement made by Congress leader Randeep Surjewala in which he said that his party was not in talks with AAP or any other party for an alliance in Haryana and Punjab.

## State of confusion'

"If the Congress is confident of winning in Punjab without an alliance, AAP is also capable of winning all the seats in Delhi on its own. I would like to ask Mr. Surjewala if the Congress had forgotten about its loss in the bypoll in Jind," Mr. Rai said.

He said that the Congress seemed to be self-obsessed and is in a state of confusion.

"AAP took the decision to contest on 35 seats in different States as it felt it could defeat the BJP in these seats. The Congress, however, is ready to lose these seats as it is reluctant to form an alliance," Mr. Rai said.

It should be recalled that AAP had said it was willing to have an alliance with the Congress only if the two parties fight the Lok Sabha poll jointly in Haryana and Chandigarh too.

## It is a contest between chor and chowkidar'

Delhiites will decide which role suits which party, says Tiwari hitting out at AAP

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

The upcoming Lok Sabha election will be a contest between 'chor and chowkidar', and the citizens of the Capital will decide which political party fits which role, Delhi BJP president Manoj Tiwari said here on Monday.

Speaking at a public meeting at north-west Delhi's Wazirabad here, the North-East Delhi MP took the opportunity to reiterate the works undertaken by the Narendra Modi government at the Centre. "People who level baseless charges will be taught a lesson. Delhiites will decide who is the chor and who is the chowkidar," Mr. Tiwari said.

## Works under BJP

"Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government and all the seven MPs of Delhi have constructed various roads in Delhi at the cost of ₹50,000 crore, completed the metro rail projects and also cleared the way for the Metro phase-IV which resulted in better connectivity between Delhi and NCR through metro services," he said.



BJP supporters during the release of the party manifesto for the upcoming Lok Sabha election, at the party headquarters in New Delhi on Monday. ■ SANDEEP SAXENA

He further said, under the Mudra loan scheme, the youth was provided opportunities for employment and self-employment, free medical care of ₹5 lakh was introduced for the poor in addition to free gas connections under the Ujjwala Yojana and bank accounts under

the Jan Dhan Yojana. Mr. Tiwari also targeted Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and the Aam Aadmi Party for making "false promises".

"In order to grab power, Mr. Kejriwal had made false promises to implement the Lokpal to fight against corruption, security to women,

CCTV cameras, 500 new schools, new colleges, free drinking water and electricity supply at cheap rates. After coming to power, his MLAs and Ministers were found indulging in Hawala transactions, corruption, rapes and other serious crimes," he alleged.

He also said the war room

had brought out a report, which stated that the public meetings had successfully conveyed the party's message to many people.

However, it also said that Delhi had a large working population that was unable to attend these public meetings.

The success of the cam-

## BJP manifesto is full of false promises, say AAP and Cong

People will not believe a single promise of the party: Dikshit

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal called the BJP's manifesto that was launched on Monday a "fresh set of 'jumbas' without telling the country what was the fate of its 2014 jumbas".

Delhi Congress president Sheila Dikshit also said that the BJP manifesto was full of hollow promises and false claims without having any substance that would be beneficial to the people.

"Modi-Shah don't have the courage to speak on why demonetisation was done, what happened to two crore jobs and why farmers were pushed towards destruction," Mr. Kejriwal said.

He added that the BJP had promised full statehood for Delhi in the 2014 Lok Sabha election, but had now re-

versed its stand on the important issue.

"Now you have removed Delhi statehood from your manifesto altogether. You have deceived the people of Delhi. It is clear that you lie in the manifesto. How can the people trust your manifesto?" Mr. Kejriwal questioned.

Ms. Dikshit said, "The people of the country have un-

derstood Prime Minister Narendra Modi's falsehood and his bundle of lies, and the voters have now lost all faith in him, and his hollow promises."

She added that the trust that the people had reposed on the BJP to deliver in 2014 had been completely shattered as the Modi government could not fulfil even a single promise. It had betrayed the people and hence they will not believe a single promise in the BJP manifesto this time.

"The BJP manifesto cannot come anywhere near the Congress manifesto as the latter has many schemes to address the problems of the poor, farmers, labourers, women, unemployment, traders and small and medium-level businessmen," Ms. Dikshit said.

## BJP Mahila Morcha protests against govt

Members form human chain at ITO

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

The Delhi BJP Mahila Morcha on Monday protested against the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP)-led Delhi government for its "failure" to implement the Ayushman Bharat Yojana in the Capital.

The protesters formed a human chain at ITO here.

Led by Morcha's president Poonam Parashar Jha, the protesters accused Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal of "cheating" the people of the Capital and suggested that he wake up from "his deep slumber" or resign from his post.

"The innocent people of Delhi were cheated by Kejriwal's false image of a crusader against corruption and as a fighter for the Jan Lokpal. They gave him a massive mandate and he came to

power in Delhi. During the last four years of Kejriwal's rule, the people of Delhi have been disappointed," Ms. Jha said.

"PM Narendra Modi introduced the Ayushman Bharat scheme for the medical care of the common man...due to the anarchic character of Kejriwal, this scheme has not been implemented in Delhi and the people have been deprived of its benefits," she said.

Ms. Jha questioned Mr. Kejriwal, who she accused of "misleading the people in the name of full statehood", for not implementing the "largest scheme of the country" framed for the welfare of the people of Delhi" by obstructing the implementation of the scheme.

## IN BRIEF

**Rail Vikas Nigam Ltd. celebrates Annual Day**NEW DELHI  
The Rail Vikas Nigam Limited under the Ministry of Railways celebrated its 16th Annual Day at Air Force Auditorium in Subroto Park on April 6. Piyush Goyal, Minister of Railways and Coal, was the chief guest at the event. STAFF REPORTER**School fee hike order: HC extends interim stay**NEW DELHI  
The Delhi HC on Monday extended its interim stay on a single-judge Bench's order allowing private unaided schools in the Capital to hike their fees to implement recommendations of the Seventh Central Pay Commission on salaries of teachers and other employees till April 30. STAFF REPORTER

# NGT raps DPCC over failure to curb air pollution in the Capital

DPCC's power may be transferred to CPCB if steps not taken, warns green panel

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has pulled up the Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC) for failing to take steps to curb air pollution in the Capital. Directing the Delhi Chief Secretary to look into the issue, the green panel warned that the Centre may be asked to transfer power of the DPCC to the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) if the State pollution monitoring body continues to "defeat law".

Noting that the DPCC has failed to take action in a number of matters related to pollution in the national capital, a Bench headed by NGT Chairperson Justice Adarsh Kumar Goel said, "No officer or authority can be allowed



NGT has asked the Chief Secretary to take steps for proper manning and effective functioning of the DPCC. ■ FILE PHOTO

to defeat law in the manner it is being done on regular basis by the DPCC."

"In such a situation, option may also have to be explored for action under [relevant rules] whereby the Central Government may handover the functions of

defiant DPCC to the Central Board," the Bench said.

Noting that the Chief Secretary had earlier been apprised of failure on the part of the DPCC's functioning, the Bench also asked the officer to "take remedial measures about proper manning

and effective functioning of the DPCC".

Coming down heavily on the DPCC, the Bench said, "The tribunal may have to consider whether a statutory authority, which is repeatedly failing to perform its duties should continue in position as one of the reasons which is contributing to unabated pollution in Delhi resulting in large deaths and diseases is the failure of statutory authorities to perform their duties."

The Bench added, "In absence of responsiveness of the statutory authorities who have to carry out the orders of this tribunal, mere passing of paper orders will not advance the purpose for which this tribunal has been constituted."

## Man, brother-in-law attempt to extort ₹2.5 cr, held

Prime accused used to work at victim's printing press; case registered

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

Two persons, including a former employee of a printing press have been arrested for allegedly trying to extort ₹2.5 crore from the press owner in north-west Delhi's Model Town, the police said on Monday.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (North-West) Vijayanta Arya said that the accused have been identified as Aman Kumar Jha (30), a resident of Kirari and a graphic designer by profession, and his brother-in-law Aman Tiwary (20), a resident of Jamshedpur who is pursuing BBA.

The police said that complainant Harish Mittal received a call on his mobile wherein the caller demanded ₹50 lakh from him. Scared, the victim contacted his friend Ajay Chauhan who further got in touch with the



The accused in police custody. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

caller for negotiation. "The friend tried to convince the caller that Mr. Mittal could not pay such a huge amount. The caller said Mr. Mittal would die if he did not pay the amount," Ms. Arya said.

The accused also said that for every negotiation call made by the victim or his friend, the accused would increase the amount by ₹50 lakh, which finally stood at ₹2.5 crore, the police said.

The matter was then re-

ported to the police on April 5 and a case under Section 387 (putting person in fear of death or of grievous hurt in order to commit extortion) of the Indian Penal Code was registered.

The police also said that they had provided round-the-clock security to Mr. Mittal and asked him to continue negotiating with the caller, while the investigation was going on. "Details of all the employees at the print-

ing press and at home were sought to see if there was any link between them and the caller. The location of the call was later traced to Jamshedpur after which a team was sent there," Ms. Arya said. Raids were conducted at certain locations in Jamshedpur after which the accused were arrested on Sunday.

During interrogation, Aman told the police that he had worked at the printing press for two months in 2018 and thought that it would be easy to extort money from the victim. "Aman was unemployed and his wife had also left him and gone to her parents' house. He was in need of money and therefore planned the extortion along with his brother-in-law. He was sure that Mr. Mittal would not report the matter to the police," Ms. Arya added.

Though victim Rajesh Kumar and eyewitness Gorak Nath refused to identify the accused who were arrested from the spot, Sessions Judge Ravi Kumar Sondhi turned down the defence counsel's contention that his clients were implicated after he failed to cross-examine the duo. Mr. Sondhi also

## 2 get 10-year imprisonment for snatching ₹500

₹25,000 fine imposed; accused also snatched victim's voter identity card

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
GURUGRAM

The district and sessions court here has sentenced two persons to 10-year imprisonment and imposed a fine of ₹25,000 on each of them for allegedly snatching ₹500 from a factory worker two years ago.

The two were tried on the charges of 379 B (snatching and use of force) and 205 (false personation for purpose of act or proceeding in suit or prosecution) of the Indian Penal Code.

Though victim Rajesh Kumar and eyewitness Gorak Nath refused to identify the accused who were arrested from the spot, Sessions Judge Ravi Kumar Sondhi turned down the defence counsel's contention that his clients were implicated after he failed to cross-examine the duo. Mr. Sondhi also



took into account the fact that the accused did not say anything that would suggest that the police had implicated them.

**7 witnesses examined**  
The prosecution examined seven witnesses to prove its case.

Mr. Sondhi said the prosecution proved with cogent and reliable evidence that

the accused attacked the victim and snatched cash and voter ID card from him.

Rajesh Kumar, staying on rent in Bassi Kusla colony, was on his way home from a factory in Industrial Model Township in Manesar Sector 3 where he worked, on July 23, 2017 when two men allegedly held him at a chowk near Bass village around 1.30 a.m. and charged on him with sticks. The accused, later identified as Anoop and Kuldeep, snatched ₹500 from the victim and his voter ID card. They also hit Rajesh on the neck. When Rajesh screamed for help, a police patrolling team caught the accused and the cash and the voter ID card were recovered.

Anoop initially introduced himself to the police as Ramphal to mislead them. He was tried under Section 205 along with Section 379B of the IPC, but was later acquitted of the charges under Section 205.

Though the defence counsel pleaded with the court to show leniency in quantum of the sentence, Public Prosecutor Anurag Hooda demanded maximum punishment for the accused saying such cases were on the rise and the punishment must be exemplary to deter budding criminals.

Mr. Sondhi said there was no scope for leniency since the minimum imprisonment under the law was 10 years with a fine of ₹25,000.

The Haryana government had amended Indian Penal Code in October 2015 to add Section 379 B (I) and (II) making snatching using force punishable with minimum imprisonment of 10 years and fine of ₹25,000.

## Eatery owner shot at after tiff with customer; none arrested

Accused alleged victim had hidden his mobile phone

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

The owner of an eatery was shot at by a customer after an argument broke out over alleged concealing of accused's mobile phone, in New Ashok Nagar last week, the police said on Monday.

The police received a call around 5 p.m. and were informed that a man had been shot at in front of Peeli Kothi in New Ashok Nagar.

A police team rushed to the spot after which the injured man was taken to LBS Hospital for treatment where doctors stated him to be out of danger.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (East) Jasmeet Singh said that the eatery shop owner, Gaurav (29) was not on his seat when a customer visited his shop on Friday. The customer put his mobile on charging at the pow-

er plug near the owner's seat and went inside and ordered food.

Meanwhile, Mr. Gaurav came back to his seat and was surprised to find a mobile phone there. Unaware of whom the phone belonged to, he kept it in his drawer.

"When the customer returned to get his mobile phone, he did not find it at the place where he had kept it. He dialled his own number and when the phone rang, he realised it was inside the owner's drawer. He charged at the owner for concealing his phone," said Mr. Singh.

It lead to a heated argument between them, and the customer left the eatery threatening Mr. Gaurav that he would come back to teach him a lesson.

"The customer returned

to the eatery with two more persons. They again had an argument when with the owner after which one of them whipped out a pistol and shot at Mr. Gaurav on the right arm," said Mr. Singh.

The accused fled the spot as the owner started bleeding profusely. The staff of the eatery then informed the police about the incident.

**Case registered**  
"We have registered a first information report under Indian Penal Code Section 307 (attempt to murder) and Arms Act at New Ashok Nagar police station. We are examining CCTV footage to get identify the accused. It seems that the suspects live nearby. The case is under investigation," said Mr. Singh.

It lead to a heated argument between them, and the customer left the eatery threatening Mr. Gaurav that he would come back to teach him a lesson.

"The customer returned

## Teen robs cashier of ₹5 lakh, held

Accomplice also held; hunt on for woman who gave contract

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

A 19-year-old member of Kapil Sangwan gang and his accomplice have been arrested for allegedly shooting at a school's cashier and robbing her of over ₹5 lakh in Dwarika on April 4, the police said on Monday.

DCP (Dwarka) Anto Alphonse said that the accused have been identified as Mayank and his friend Atul Pradhan.

The police received a call around 4 p.m. on April 4 and were informed that a woman had been shot at and robbed of ₹5 lakh. When they reached the hospital, they were told that the victim was a fee collector at a private school and had gone to the bank to deposit money with a colleague. However, since the server was down she decided to return to the school when the incident happened.

"When she was near the school, a boy, who was already

standing there brandished a pistol asking her to give her the bag containing the money. When she resisted, he shot at her, took the bag and fled on his scooter," Mr. Alphonse said. When the CCTV footage of the incident was scanned the police got the registration number of the scooter. "The scooter was found registered in the name of one Mahipal Singh, a resident of Najafgarh. A raid was conducted and the scooter was seized," he said.

Atul was arrested from Bindapur at Jaideep's instance. During interrogation, he said that he was given the task by the wife of Joginder Dalal alias Leela, a member of Kapil Sangwan gang who is lodged in Tihar jail.

scooty to his friend Mayank. Mayank told the police that he had given the scooter to Atul. "Atul's details were found from Mayank's phone. His number was traced. The police were then led to one Jaideep who said Atul had been forcibly using his number," the officer said.

Atul was arrested from Bindapur at Jaideep's instance. During interrogation, he said that he was given the task by the wife of Joginder Dalal alias Leela, a member of Kapil Sangwan gang who is lodged in Tihar jail.

dy standing there brandished a pistol asking her to give her the bag containing the money. When she resisted, he shot at her, took the bag and fled on his scooter," Mr. Alphonse said. When the CCTV footage of the incident was scanned the police got the registration number of the scooter. "The scooter was found registered in the name of one Mahipal Singh, a resident of Najafgarh. A raid was conducted and the scooter was seized," he said.

Atul was arrested from Bindapur at Jaideep's instance. During interrogation, he said that he was given the task by the wife of Joginder Dalal alias Leela, a member of Kapil Sangwan gang who is lodged in Tihar jail.

The police received a call around 1.30 p.m. When the police reached the spot, the woman was found dead with a cloth tied around her neck," Mr. Mishra said.

"There was no sign of forced entry. Her gold rings, bangles and chain were missing," Mr. Mishra said. The victim's body has been sent for a post-mortem.

The police said that the victim's husband was not at home when the incident happened. "It is suspected that the murder is a result of a robbery but the case is being investigated from all angles," said a senior police officer.

## 2 ex-SC employees sent to 7-day police custody

Posted wrong information on SC site

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

The Patiala House Court on Monday sent two former Supreme Court employees on seven-day police custody. They were arrested on Sunday by the Delhi police for allegedly posting wrong information on the apex court's website related to a case involving Reliance Communications chairman Anil Ambani.

The police said that on March 1, Registrar of the Supreme Court registered a complaint against two of their employees for forging documents. An FIR was also registered into the matter and an investigation was taken up.

**Dismissed earlier**

The accused, identified as Court Master Manav Sharma and Assistant Registrar Tapan Kumar Chakraborty, who were arrested on Sunday, had been earlier dismissed by Chief Justice of India, Ranjan Gogoi.

The accused have been arrested by the Crime Branch wing of Delhi Police after they registered an FIR against them under sections of cheating and forgery.

The accused allegedly uploaded an order, which stated that Mr. Ambani's presence in a case had been dispensed with despite the court ordering that he be present for the next hearing, the police also said.

The accused persons are currently being interrogated, they added.

The Supreme Court had sacked the two court officials for tampering with its January 7 order on the issue of personal appearance of the Reliance Communications chairman in connection with the two employees.

Taking note of the fact, an order was passed by the Chief Justice of India on administrative side, dismissing the two employees.

## DELHI TODAY

**Book Launch:** Author Norma Levine will launch her book "The Spiritual Odyssey of Freda Bedi". The release will be followed by a discussion with eminent Buddhist masters, and close associates and friends of Freda Bedi at C.D. Deshmukh Auditorium, India International Centre (IIC), 3 p.m.**Exhibition:** "Harmony" - solo show of artworks by Anil Gaikwad at Shridharani Art Gallery, Triveni Sangam, 205, Tansen Marg, 11 a.m. - 7 p.m.**Exhibition:** "Never let me go", recent art works by Dr Balesh Jindal at Visual Arts Gallery, India Habitat Centre (IHC), 11 a.m. - 7 p.m.**Screening:** Budding Italian Film Directors' Festival. Screening of Gil Ultimi butteri, an Italian documentary film, directed by Walter Bencini, at Gulmohar Hall, India Habitat Centre (IHC), 7 p.m.

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

Following a plea alleging erosion of the Yamuna floodplain in Sonipat due to movement of heavy vehicles in the area, the National Green Tribunal (NGT) has constituted a committee to look into the allegations and submit a report on the same.

The committee will comprise Principal Secretary of the Haryana Irrigation and Water Resources Department, Member Secretary of

the Haryana State Pollution Control Board and Director of the Mines and Geology Department, said a Bench headed by NGT Chairperson Justice Adarsh Kumar Goel.

The directions came when the green panel was hearing a plea which said that the policy of permitting heavy vehicles in the embankments of the river is "destroying the ecology." "At the behest of mining companies, the Irrigation and Flood Control Depart-

ment is not taking remedial action and permitting heavily loaded trucks to operate in the embankments of the river. Though there is a provision against operation of vehicles from July to September, this safeguard is also not being observed..." This is a violation of 'precautionary principle' of environment law," the plea alleged.

Directing the committee to submit a joint report, the NGT said that it has to be submitted within one month.

## Plea on erosion of Yamuna floodplain: NGT forms body to look into matter

Movement of heavy vehicles destroying the ecology: petition

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

Following a plea alleging erosion of the Yamuna floodplain in Sonipat due to movement of heavy vehicles in the area, the National Green Tribunal (NGT) has constituted a committee to look into the allegations and submit a report on the same.

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## UPSC aspirant held for raping woman, sharing obscene pictures

Victim says she met the accused through Facebook in 2017

HEMAMI BHANDARI  
NEW DELHI

A civil services aspirant has been arrested for allegedly raping and sharing obscene pictures of a 24-year-old music teacher on social media in north-west Delhi's Adarsh Nagar.

Deputy Commissioner

From rare gemstones to architecture and royal influences, the designer traces her bejewelled journey in her début book

# The fabulous jewels of Farah Khan



SURYA PRAHULLA KUMAR

**The crown affair**  
"I designed the crystal-studded Goddess crown for Swarovski's Runway Rocks in 2008. A few years later, Beyoncé's stylist picked it up [for the American singer-songwriter] to wear when shooting the artwork for her album, 4. Though I didn't meet her, it was amazing."

Scrolling through the beautifully curated, lavishly illustrated book (edited by Paola de Luca, friend and CEO of trend forecasting company, The Futurist), I realised why Farah, 49, calls herself "an alchemist who captures moments and transforms them into objects of art". Photographs of her handcrafted 18-karat gold jewels and gouache renderings of her designs are interspersed with

whimsical images of landscapes, animals and architecture (some captured on her phone), works of artists like Manjunath Kamath and Chie Yoshii, and photographers like Ganesh Vanare – all of which inform and inspire her work – steering a visual tale of her evolution.

"I'm often asked where I get my inspiration from, but there is only so much words can convey," Farah tells me, over phone from New York. "This book is an open conversation, an interaction with intellectual dialogue that nourishes creativity."

**It's elemental**

A designer to the stars – her creations have been worn by everyone from Kareena Kapoor and Sania Mirza to Serena Williams – Farah has been perfecting her craft for 25 years. And

**Colour me pink**

"I love being in love, and sharing that euphoric feeling with the world through my designs. Using the myriad shades of a rose, from playful pinks to velvety creams and blushing reds, I write my love stories with gemstones like these rare pink morganites and precious metals like rose gold."



"My jewels hark back to a romantic past but they voice the language of the now. I draw deeply from the rich repertoire and intoxicating history of Indian jewellery design and contemporise these with modern hues and textures. I've re-imagined the classic rose in the 'La Grandiose' necklace, but with petals carved from rubellites and aquamarines."



"Juicy sorbet colours and flirty lilac-pinks, like this brilliantly-faceted kunzite gemstone, bring lightness and a sense of fun to statement pieces."

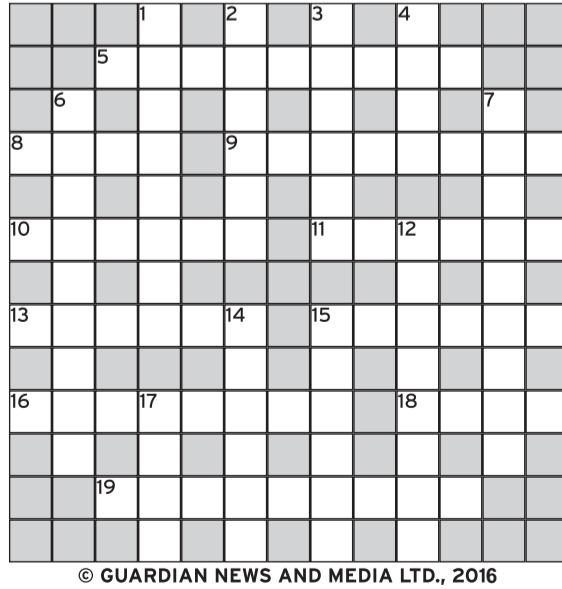


real Vision, "where I take inspiration from the colours, textures and the contradictions of cities" for graphic jewels.

"I wanted to show my different design directions," she explains, pointing out how the book is peppered with quotes from Rumi and other poets, and her own writings (printed as handwritten notes). "I wanted to make it engaging, to say that there are so many facets of expression. This is my world; I am living what I'm saying."

**Looking to diversify**

Even as it looks back, the book also hints at what's to come. Farah, who studied jewellery design and gemmology at the Gemological Institute of America, launched her first collection of lifestyle products last year, at the Vogue Wedding Show – a line that included bejewelled scarves, scented candles and hand-painted wall plates. "I consider myself a designer, not just a jewellery designer," she says. "Soon I'll be venturing into other areas of design, be it interiors, graphics, or even beauty and make-up."

**POOCH CAFE****HAGAR THE HORRIBLE****TIGER****WUMO****PEARLS BEFORE SWINE****THE GUARDIAN QUICK CROSSWORD-13039**

skiing turn (8)  
14 Footpaths in the wild (6)  
15 Courage (6)  
17 Mitt (4)

Solution will appear in Delhi Metro dated April 10, 2019.  
Solution No. I3038

- Across**  
5 Grief (9)  
8 Intelligence (abbr) (4)  
9 Extramarital sex (6)  
10 Hornet (anag) –  
11 Keep (6)  
13 Liveliness (6)  
15 Water down (6)  
16 Broadcasting (2,3)

- 18 Rodents (4)  
19 Short gags (3-6)  
**Down**  
1 The moment of truth? (4,4)  
2 Mysterious (6)  
3 Cat – car (6)  
4 Come again? (4)  
6 Perfectly healthy (2,3,4)  
7 Truce (9)  
12 Meet Karl (anag) –

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