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2018	99 (Expected)	154	
2017	105.34	154	
2016	116	152	
2015	107.34	168	
2014	205 (incl. CSAT Marks)	162 (GS) + 140 (CSAT)	
2013	248 (incl. CSAT Marks)	168 (GS) + 148 (CSAT)	

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### NEARBY



#### New corridor of Delhi Metro's Pink Line opens

NEW DELHI Union Minister Hardeep Puri and Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia on Monday inaugurated the Lajpat Nagar-Mayur Vihar Pocket 1 corridor of the Delhi Metro's Pink Line. With the opening of this 9.7-km stretch, travel time between south Delhi and east Delhi has been reduced significantly. With the corridor becoming operational, the Metro network is now 327 km long with 236 stations.

DELHI METRO ► PAGE 1

### Ringing in 2019



Colourful start: Fireworks explode over the Sydney Harbour during New Year's Eve celebrations. Australia's largest city put on its biggest-ever fireworks display on Tuesday. ▶ AP

## Govt. rejects demand to send triple talaq bill to House panel

Impasse stalls Rajya Sabha; debate to resume on Wednesday

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The government on Monday rejected the Opposition's demand in the Rajya Sabha to send the contentious Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Bill, 2018, to a joint select committee for further scrutiny.

The House was adjourned after heated exchanges between the treasury and Opposition benches.

The Bill will be taken up again on Wednesday, when the House meets after a

break for New Year's Day. The legislation was cleared by the Lok Sabha on Friday.

#### Uncertain numbers

The government is in an uncomfortable position, with at least three parties, including NDA ally Janata Dal (United), opposed to the legislation.

According to sources, 25 members – 13 from the All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) and six each from the Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS) and

the JD(U) – may walk out or abstain if a vote is called. The AIADMK and the TRS have rarely voted against any government legislation.

The Biju Janata Dal (BJD), which has maintained equidistance from both the government and Opposition blocs, is backing the Bill.

The Opposition is confident of the support of 116 members out of the total strength of 245.

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 10

A WORRY FOR BJP ► PAGE 10

used to New Year's Day. The legislation was cleared by the Lok Sabha on Friday.

REVIEW BY G. RAJPUT

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DELI METRO ► 6 PAGES

## Sonia, Rahul never interfered in defence deals, says Antony

Modi pursuing 'vendetta politics without an iota of truth'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Former Defence Minister A.K. Antony on Monday said the Gandhi family had never interfered in any defence deals during the UPA regime and accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government of pursuing "vendetta politics without an iota of truth."

#### 'Manufacture lies'

He accused the government of using the investigating agencies to "manufacture lies" and the BJP of "spreading lies."



A.K. Antony and Randeep Singh Surjewala, right, addressing a press conference on Monday.

■ R.V. MOORTHY

The Congress fielded Mr. Antony, known for his clean image, to defend its leadership after the BJP stepped up its attack on the Gandhi family.

"I would like to say categorically that Sonia and Rahul never showed any interest... never interfered in the AgustaWestland deal. During my entire tenure as Defence Minister, they never interfered in any defence deals," he told reporters.

"The government and the BJP are misusing agencies to manufacture lies. I am surprised to know that the present government is spreading lies...is trying to manufacture something out of nothing," he said.

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 10

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DELHI Timings	
TUESDAY, JAN. 01	
RISE 07:14 SET 17:36	
WEDNESDAY, JAN. 02	
RISE 07:14 SET 17:36	
RISE 03:41 SET 14:54	
THURSDAY, JAN. 03	
RISE 07:14 SET 17:37	
RISE 04:38 SET 15:36	

**Delhi Weather**

max min

Delhi City 22 04

Safdarjung 22 04

Palam 22 06

Delhi Pali Today

21°C Clouding will increase

during the day. Pollution levels

will remain very poor.

**Delhi Pali Tomorrow**

20°C Partly cloudy sky and

pleasant day is likely. Marginal

decrease in pollution level is

expected.

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**Mamata announces scheme for farmers****SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**

KOLKATA

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Monday announced a scheme for farmers in the form of a crop neutral investment support on the lines of Telangana's Rytu Bandhu scheme.

Under the scheme 'Krishi Krishak Bandhu', the State Agriculture Department will offer an investment support of ₹5,000 to every farmer, per acre of his land in two installments for either Rabi or Kharif crops in a year.

# Patnaik's New Year gift to Odisha farmers

Launches KALIA scheme; to cover 92% of cultivators

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**

BHUBANESWAR

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik launched the Krushak Assistance for Livelihood and Income Augmentation (KALIA) scheme to accelerate agricultural prosperity and to reduce poverty in Odisha on the New Year Eve on Monday.

The scheme, announced on December 21, will cover 92% of the cultivators, loanee and non-loanee farmers, sharecroppers and landless agricultural labourers.

Mr. Patnaik released the logo and website of the scheme, a list of 21.40 lakh small farmers and a draft farmers' benefit list of one lakh actual farmers.

He urged the Departments of Agriculture, Cooperation and Panchayati Raj to work in mission mode to ensure that not a single farmer was left out in the scheme.

To begin with, the farmers will be provided ₹5,000 each to take care of the initial investment for the current Rabi season. In a full year, all the small and marginal farmers will receive ₹10,000 for Kharif and Rabi combined. The final list of all beneficiaries will be prepared in the next phase from the gram panchayat level.

The farmers can know about details of the KALIA scheme during the People's Empowerment - Enabling Transparency and Accounta-



Naveen Patnaik during the launch of night meal scheme in Bhubaneswar on Monday. ■ PTI

bility (PEETHA) camps being organised between January 15 and January 20 at gram panchayat level. The PEETHA camp also will be organised from February 15 to 20 and from March 15 to 20, 2019.

The letters about extension of financial assistance to eligible small and marginal farmers will also be handed over during the PEETHA camp.

The State level committee, Implementation committee, District level committee and Block level committee have been formed for monitoring and overseeing smooth implementation of the scheme.

As regards landless agricultural households, financial assistance of ₹12,500 will be provided to each for agricultural allied activities such as small goat rearing unit, mini-layer unit, duckery un-

**Night meal**

Meanwhile, Mr. Patnaik inaugurated the night meal facility at as many as 54 Aahar centres located near government hospitals across the State. Aahar centres are being run in 76 municipal areas of the State providing noon meal comprising cooked rice and dalma at places of public congregations at ₹5.

its, fishery kits for fisherman, mushroom cultivation and bee-keeping etc.

Besides, the vulnerable cultivators/landless agricultural labourers will get financial assistance of ₹10,000 per family per year to enable them to take care of their sustenance.

An amount of ₹10,180 crore will be spent under KALIA over a period of three years till 2020-21. Crop loans up to ₹50,000 will henceforth be interest free.

## Six killed in two accidents in Odisha

Death rate per 100 accidents in Odisha is 44, while the national average is 29

**STAFF REPORTER**  
BERHAMPUR

Four persons died and two were seriously injured when the four-wheeler they were travelling in met with an accident in Kashipur block of Odisha's Rayagada district on Sunday night.

The accident occurred at 1 a.m. near Tapayat under the Tikiri police station limits. According to the police, perhaps due to dense fog, the driver of the SUV lost control and rammed a roadside tree.

On December 27, a car carrying a family from Bhubaneswar on its return journey from a picnic at Sanaghagara waterfall met with an

## Centre extends AFSPA in Nagaland

Home Ministry notification declares entire State 'disturbed' for 6 more months

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**

NEW DELHI

The entire State of Nagaland has been declared 'disturbed area' for six more months, till June-end, under the controversial AFSPA, which empowers security forces to conduct operations anywhere and arrest anyone without any prior notice.

In a notification, the Home Ministry said the Central government is of the opinion that the area comprising the whole of the State of Nagaland is in such a disturbed and dangerous condition that the use of armed forces in aid of civilian power is necessary.

"Now, therefore, in exercise of the powers conferred by Section 3 of the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958 (No. 28 of 1958), the Central government hereby declares that whole of the said State to be a 'disturbed area' for a period of six months with effect from 30th December, 2018, for the purpose of that Act," the notification said.

A Home Ministry official said the decision has been taken as killings, loot and extortion have been going on in various parts of the State which necessitated the action. There have been demands from various organisations in the Northeast as well as in Jammu and Kashmir for repealing the controversial AFSPA, which, they say, gives 'sweeping powers' to security forces.

The AFSPA has been in force in Nagaland for several decades. It has not been withdrawn even after a framework agreement was signed on August 3, 2015, by the Naga insurgent group NSCN-IM general secretary Thuingaleng Muivah and government interlocutor R.N. Ravi in the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The framework agreement came after over 80 rounds of negotiations spanning 18 years with the first breakthrough in 1997 when the ceasefire agreement was sealed after decades of insurgency in Nagaland.

## Bidding adieu



Last sunset: Visitors enjoying a camel ride at the Puri beach in Odisha on Monday. ■ BISWARANJAN ROUT

## Tripura resumes trade with Bangladesh

Two-day break was taken due to polls

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**

AGARTALA

Tripura resumed trade with Bangladesh on Monday following a two-day hiatus at the check posts in view of elections in the neighbouring country, an official said.

Bangladesh went to polls on Sunday to elect a new Parliament, the results of which were declared on Monday morning.

The ruling Awami League-led alliance cruised to victory, bagging 260 seats in the 300-member House.

All seven land customs stations in the State, closed since Saturday, recommenced operations along the border, P.K. Joardar, Assistant Commissioner of Customs Department (Tripura circle), said.

"There was no official communication from Bangladesh and we kept our offices open, but there was no trade along the Indo-Bangla border," he said.

Tripura imports fish, cement and plastic products from Bangladesh while exporting rubber latex, bamboo-based products, broomstick and soybean seeds, CNG-run vehicles and maize to the country.



Tripura CM Biplab Deb ■ FILE PHOTO

## 19 Maoists killed in Odisha in 2018: DGP

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**

BHUBANESWAR

At least 19 Maoists were killed, 39 arrested and 27 others surrendered during the year 2018, Odisha Director General of Police P.R. Sharma said on Monday.

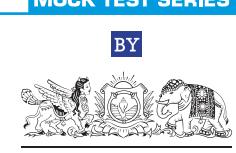
Mr. Sharma said the overall Left Wing Extremism situation remained under control even as there was need to flush out Maoists from parts of Malkangiri, Koraput, Kalahandi, Rayagada, Kandhamal and Nuapada districts.

The DGP also said that a sum of ₹68.91 crore has been provided in the State budget, for modernisation of the police force, during the 2018-19 fiscal.

The Economic Offences Wing of Odisha Crime Branch registered 28 cases in the year 2018 and arrested 103 persons, the DGP said.

The security personnel had seized 40 weapons, including two AK-47 rifles,

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### Cleaning cancer away

Meet Shekar, founder of the Viswajayam Trust that has adopted the Government Cancer Hospital in Royapettah and provides housekeeping services free of cost.

Shekar says that this Trust was set up in July 2013 with the intent to provide clean and hygiene services to hos-

pitals. "Hygiene is extremely important for hospitals and of greater significance to cancer hospitals. We started small by providing housekeeping services for just two floors in the Royapettah hospital. Gradually we started covering all six floors covering nearly 90,000 sq feet," says Shekar. Viswajayam Trust also provides such services to the Adyar Cancer Institute, but at a much smaller scale, offering cleaning services for around twenty toilets in their establishment.

The disinfectants that are usually used contain harmful chemicals which are not safe for the patients. However, she adds, "Our housekeeping services try to eliminate the deaths caused by these infections," says Shekar.

Shekar continues to dream big and wants to see every hospital receive such housekeeping services, particularly in the cancer wards. Under My Watch is an initiative by The Hindu that celebrates conscious and responsible citizens who make India better, one small act at a time. Tell us your story and get a chance to be featured in The Hindu.

SUBMIT YOUR STORY AT [WWW.THEHINDU.COM/UNDERMYWATCH](http://WWW.THEHINDU.COM/UNDERMYWATCH)

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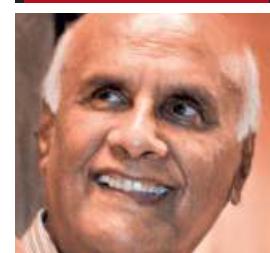
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IN BRIEF



Veteran Kannada actor Loknath passes away

BENGALURU  
Veteran Kannada theatre and film actor C.H. Loknath, who essayed a variety of roles in over 600 films and acted in hundreds of plays, died here on Monday. He was 92. He is survived by four daughters and a son. Loknath suffered a cardiac arrest in the morning, according to his son Ashwin. The mortal remains were kept at Ravindra Kalakshetra for public viewing. Hundreds of theatre and film personalities paid their last respects to Loknath.

Kerala govt. to intervene to solve church crisis

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM  
Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan said on Monday that the government would talk to the Orthodox and Jacobite factions in the Malankara Church to settle the conflict between the two over the administration of a few parishes. The Orthodox faction accuses the State government of having failed to implement the Supreme Court order of July 3 that gave it the right to administer a significant number of churches.

103 boys fall sick after dinner, taken to hospital

BENGALURU  
At least 103 residents of the State Home for Boys on Hosur Road were taken to a hospital after they fell sick after dinner on Saturday. One of the boys alerted the staff after spotting a lizard on a dinner plate. The staff took all 103 children to the Indira Gandhi Institute of Child Health. By Monday evening, 100 boys were discharged, while three were kept under observation as they complained of stomach ache, officials said.

# Plea to defer Hyderabad HC division

A.P. advocates body moves SC citing lack of infrastructure; State had said judges okay with interim facility

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL  
NEW DELHI

The Andhra Pradesh High Court Advocates Association in Hyderabad on Monday moved a petition in the Supreme Court to defer the implementation of a notification, issued on December 26, bifurcating the Hyderabad High Court into the Andhra Pradesh and Telangana High Courts.

From January 1

As per the notification, the two separate High Courts have to start functioning from January 1.

The petition is likely to be listed for hearing before the Supreme Court on January 2.

The petition urged the court to delay the bifurcation till the new premises for the Andhra High Court in the capital city of Amaravati were completed.

The High Court is now set to function from temporary premises till the construc-



Bidding farewell: Employees of the High Court in a bus set to leave for Amaravati, in Hyderabad on Monday. ■ G. RAMAKRISHNA

tion work is over.

The petition sought urgent orders and said the plea would be rendered infructuous if the two High Courts were allowed to function from January 1.

Judges satisfied'

The petition comes despite the fact that Andhra Pradesh had informed the Supreme Court that the judges, who

would preside over the courtrooms of the new High Court, were satisfied with the facilities in an interim building complex which would house the High Court till a permanent building was constructed.

The state government had submitted that a Full Court of the High Court approved the proposal after the inspection committee of judges submitted a report.

Senior advocate Fali Nari-

MARRI RAMU  
HYDERABAD

Sentiments and emotions filled the front yards of the Hyderabad High Court building as its nearly 300 employees boarded buses bound for Vijayawada on Monday. They were allocated to the newly constituted Andhra Pradesh High Court which will start functioning

from New Year day.

More than the over 225 km journey, all of them were apparently upset over leaving the Hyderabad HC which they served for years.

Office boys and attenders had a tough time loading vehicles with heaps of files. Some of them had to finish the work and get into the buses for Vijayawada.

man for Andhra Pradesh had also made a statement that the government would be hiring villas to take care of the residential needs of the judges at Amaravati.

The court had taken on record the submissions made by the Andhra government that a "very big complex known as Justice City is under construction" in Amaravati.

This complex would

house the High Court, subordinate courts and even some tribunals. It would also have provision for the construction of a residential complex for the High Court and lower court judges.

The interim building for the Andhra Pradesh High Court, the Supreme Court recorded, is only an "ad hoc arrangement till the Justice City gets completely constructed".

# Ramesh Jarkiholi may soon quit Cong.

Reportedly getting ready to join BJP

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
BENGALURU/BELAGAVI/BALLARI

The Congress seems to be staring at trouble with more legislators joining the ranks of former Karnataka Minister from Belagavi Ramesh Jarkiholi, who is now reportedly getting ready to switch to the Opposition BJP camp.

The move of the former Minister, who is likely to tender his resignation to membership of the Legislative Assembly as well as the Congress after Makara Sankranti, is expected to make the Janata Dal (Secular)-Congress coalition uneasy.

Can't be reached

While Mr. Jarkiholi has remained incommunicado for over a week now, one of his close aides and Congress legislator from Athani Mahesh Kumatavalli on Monday expressed solidarity with the former.

Incidentally, Congress MLA for Ballari (ST) B. Nagendra, allegedly upset over missing out on Cabinet berth, is reported to be with Mr. Jarkiholi.



Ramesh Jarkiholi

Mr. Jarkiholi.

Sources in the Congress said that Mr. Jarkiholi, who is miffed with the party leadership after he was dropped from the Ministry in the latest Cabinet reshuffle, is expected to join the BJP.

Mr. Jarkiholi is alleged to be in communication with the BJP's Central leadership. BJP State president B.S. Yeddyurappa's recent extended stay in New Delhi has intensified the speculation of Mr. Jarkiholi meeting top BJP leaders to discuss his possible defection.

# 2 ex-Karnataka CMs continue Twitter war

horse is neither brave nor a hero," Mr. Gowda had tweeted, taking a dig at Mr. Siddaramaiah.

On Monday, Mr. Siddaramaiah responded, mocking Mr. Gowda for having run away from the Chief Minister's post in 11 months.

Before a series of tweets in response to Mr. Siddaramaiah's remarks, Mr. Gowda asked: "When did you become impatient about your politics being criticised? Is it the effect of your loss in Chamarajanagar or is it a reflection of your mind after losing the Chief Minister's chair?"

# Jagan to shift to Amaravati by Jan.-end

SANTOSH PATNAIK  
VISAKHAPATNAM

YSR Congress Party president and Leader of the Opposition in the Assembly, Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy will shift his residence from Lotus Pond in Hyderabad to Vijayawada-Amaravati capital region by January-end.

The decision seems to have been taken with an eye on the general elections likely to be held in the next few months.

A senior leader of the party told *The Hindu* here on condition of anonymity on Monday that Mr. Reddy would hold consultations with his close associates, office-bearers and elected representatives to work out the modalities of shifting his residence and the party headquarters to Tadepalli where construction of the building is going on at a brisk pace.

The meeting is likely to be held after the conclusion of the YSRCP chief's 3,000 km-plus walkathon across the State on January 9 at Ichchapuram on the Andhra-Odisha border.

The walkathon, named 'Praja Sankalpa Yatra' aimed at establishing contact with the people, had completed the milestone of 3,100 km on the 28<sup>th</sup> day at Anandapuram Cross in Vizianagaram district on October 8.

After rejecting the State government's offer for allotment of land, Mr. Reddy had decided to build a well-designed office-cum-residence at Tadepalli – a riverfront village – on his own.

Candidates' list  
The building is coming up on the land belonging to a film producer, who is said to be a ticket aspirant for the Assembly.

After completion of the padayatra, the party is also expected to release the first list of candidates.

# LDF's women's wall today

Claims that it has mobilised 31 lakh participants

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The Left Democratic Front (LDF) has mobilised its workers in strength to ensure that the proposed women's wall on Tuesday for gender equality manifests as an emphatic proclamation of its political might on New Year's day.

The ruling front's flagship public programme is also being viewed as a flexing of its political muscle ahead of the Lok Sabha election in 2019, and a rebuff to the Hindu Aikya Vedi-sponsored 'Ayyappa Jyothi' on December 26.

The wall is set to unfold

tions, notably the Nair Service Society (NSS).

The LDF has claimed that it will nevertheless assemble 31 lakh women in an unbroken 640-km-long human wall spanning the State from Kasaragod in the north to Thiruvananthapuram in the south. The wall will stretch out between 4 p.m. and 4.15 p.m. across the length of Kerala almost simultaneously.

As many as 176 organisations, including the Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana (SNDP) Yogam and the Kerala Pulayar Maha Sabha, have declared their support for the wall.

Students forming a human wall in Kannur on Monday. ■ S.K. MOHAN

across Kerala amidst strident criticism from the Opposition and in the face of the threat of a boycott by prominent social organisa-

# Chill zone



Popular hangout: Lambasingi in the Agency area of Visakhapatnam, a tourist haunt, is said to have recorded zero degree Celsius on Monday after a gap of nearly seven years ■ K.R. DEEPAK

# No graft in Vizhinjam project, says commission

Gives clean chit to Oommen Chandy and others

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

A three-member Judicial Commission that inquired into the pact signed by the previous United Democratic Front government with Adani Vizhinjam Ports Ltd. for the Vizhinjam International Multipurpose Deepwater Seaport has concluded that there was "no corruption associated" with the State's dream project and that there was "no misuse of political power".

Giving a clean chit to Congress leader and former Chief Minister Oommen Chandy and others, the Commission, headed by former judge of the High Court C.N. Ramachandran Nair, noted that no one had raised allegations against Mr. Chandy nor given any proof



Oommen Chandy

in this regard to the Commission.

Report submitted

The report was handed over to Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan here on Monday by Mr. Nair.

Former Union Secretary for Shipping K. Mohandas and P.J. Mathew, a former Indian Audit and Accounts Service officer, were the other members of the commis-

sion, appointed under the Commission of Inquiry Act.

The inquiry was ordered by the LDF government against the backdrop of the observations made by the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) in his report on the lapses on the part of the government while signing the pact. The CAG's report had mentioned that the State's interest was not protected in the pact and that by extending the contract period of the project by 40 years, the Adani Group would gain extra income of ₹29,217 crore. The Commission concluded that the Union and State governments had in the initial stages come to the view that the project was not viable and that viability gap funding was provided.

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Dr. Punnakkadu told *The Hindu* that the GPGD guidelines proposed planting of a sapling each in the church compound during important functions and to commemorate the visit of important personalities.

After wedding services, the newly wedded couple would have to plant a sapling in the church compound. Saplings could also be planted in memory of a dead member, he said.

The CSI Ecological Concerns Department headed

by Mathew Koshy Punnakkadu developed the 12-point GPGD guideline document. It aimed at a sustainable development model by promoting green congregations at all its 16,000 parishes.

All parishes were supposed to abide by the protocol and effectively participate in the green discipleship of the church, the moderator said.

Dr. Punnakkadu told *The Hindu* that the GPGD guidelines proposed planting of a sapling each in the church compound during important functions and to commemorate the visit of important personalities.

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The CSI Ecological Concerns Department headed

# Kurnool enters aviation era

Trial run of Orvakal facility goes off smoothly

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

KURNool

The trial run of the Orvakal Greenfield airport was conducted successfully on Monday morning. An aircraft of Turbo Aviation took off from Hyderabad and landed at the airport, 26 km from the city. The trial run was conducted in the presence Principal Secretary (Energy) Ajay Jain.

The Air Traffic Control Tower, passenger lounge and administrative buildings are ready along with the 3,500-meter runway.

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu is likely to formally inaugurate the airport on January 8, according to officials. The airport is being developed in 1,000 acres with ₹100 crore as initial investment.

The airport was developed by the Andhra Pra-

be readied to operate commercial flights from April 1,

Kurnool will get air connectivity to Kadapa, Hyderabad and Vijayawada and bring passengers from Nandyal, Anantapur and other small towns in the region.

With the airport likely to

host Air Traffic Control Tower, passenger lounge and administrative buildings are ready along with the 3,500-meter runway.

Kurnool is the second largest district in the State with an agriculture economy contributing to 36% of the GDP.

The State government is planning to develop Kurnool as a hub for mineral-based industries and food processing, the officials said.

With the airport likely to

host Air Traffic Control Tower, passenger lounge and administrative buildings are ready along with the 3,500-meter runway.

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With the airport likely to

# Kerala church to fulfil ecological vows

Church of South India adopts 'Green Protocol for Green Discipleship'

RADHAKRISHNAN KUTTOOR

PATHANAMTHITTA

Anjay and Nisha, a young couple who got married at the St. Thomas CSI Church at Punnakkadu, near Kozhikode, the other day got the privilege of becoming the first to comply with the green protocol guidelines of the Church of South India (CSI).

The couple planted a pair of jackfruit saplings on the church premises during their wedding ceremony. CSI moderator Bishop Thomas K. Oommen, who was the chief celebrant of the service, blessed the two saplings.

Former Rajya Sabha Deputy Chairman P.J. Kurien and general secretary of the CSI Synod Bishop D.R. Sadananda were the guests of honour.

The CSI Synod had ap-

## IN BRIEF



Chamling urges people to uphold peace in Sikkim

GANGTOK

Sikkim Chief Minister Pawan Kumar Chamling on Monday urged the people to uphold the hard-earned peace, goodwill, security and freedom that prevails in the State. "May Sikkim be kept from destruction, unrest and hatred from racial, communal and religious differences," Mr. Chamling said in his message on New Year's Eve. PTI

## Three killed, 12 injured in U.P. road accident

BHADOHI

A pickup van carrying 15 passengers overturned here, killing three people and injuring 12 others, the police said. The passengers were returning to Mirzapur on Sunday after attending a programme when the accident occurred at Jagannathpur village. The van driver lost control of the vehicle while trying to save a motorcycle rider. PTI

## Cold wave subsides in Himachal Pradesh

SHIMLA

Cold wave conditions slightly subsided and minimum temperature increased on Monday in Himachal Pradesh, the Meteorological Department said. Snowfall is predicted in high and middle hill regions in the State, including Shimla, Mandi, Kullu, Chamba, Solan, Sirmour and tribal Kinnaur, Lahaul and Spiti on January 1 and 2. PTI

## Man found dead at market in Rajasthan

JAIPUR

A 25-year-old man was found dead at Muhana mandi in the State on Monday morning, the police said. The deceased was identified as Raju Pahadia, a resident of Rampura road. The body was found with its throat slit. It has been shifted to hospital for post-mortem, said the police. PTI

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## 2018 was a landmark year for BJP, women in Northeast

National Register of Citizens in Assam, illegal mining in Meghalaya made headlines

RAHUL KARMAKAR

GUWAHATI

The Bharatiya Janata Party expanded its footprint across the Northeast in 2018 by forming coalition governments in Manipur, Nagaland and Tripura. But a regional party, Mizo National Front, struck the final blow in Mizoram to make the region "Congress-free".

The year was also the best and the worst for women in the Northeast. Assam's sprinter Hima Das made history for Indian athletics by striking gold in the 400m at the World U-20 Athletics championship in Finland and Manipur pugilist M.C. Mary Kom created a world record at 35 by winning her sixth gold at the World Women Boxing championship. Assam's Rima Das became a household name when her low-budget film *Village Rockstars* got the best national film award and was nominated as India's entry for the Oscars in the best foreign films category.

On the flip side, Meghalaya-based activists Agnes Kharshiing and Amita Sangma battled for life after members of alleged coal mafia assaulted them for following and documenting illegally stacked coal and coal-laden trucks. The assault on them and a mishap in an illegal mine at Ksan in the State's East Jaintia Hills district a month later put the spotlight on an unholy nexus that encourages coal mine owners - many of them lawmakers - flout an April 2014 ban by NGT on 'rat-hole' mining with impunity.

**NRC, Citizenship Bill**  
The issue that hogged the headlines was that of exercise to update the National



BJP supporters celebrate the party's win in Tripura elections. The BJP ended 25 years of Left rule in the State. ■ FILE PHOTO

Register of Citizens in Assam and the Narendra Modi government's bid to pass the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2016, that seeks to legitimise the stay of non-Muslims who migrated from Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan till December 2014 due to alleged religious persecution.

The defining moment of the NRC exercise began past the midnight of December 31, 2017, with the publication of the first draft that accommodated 1.39 crore out of the 3.29 crore applicants. The complete draft was released on July 31 with the names of 40.07 lakh people left out of the list. The claims and objections round for the excluded to be back on the list by producing relevant proof of citizenship ends on December 31.

The crowning glory for Assam was the appointment of Ranjan Gogoi, the man at the helm of the Supreme Court-monitored NRC, as the first Chief Justice of the apex court from the Northeast.

The BJP, which began its 'saffron surge' in the region by winning the Assam elec-

tions in 2016, formed the government in Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh in 2017. In March, it swept the Left Front out of Tripura, ended Congress rule in Meghalaya with the help of regional allies, and chose a new regional partner to continue the NDA reign in Nagaland.

But the BJP's gamble on ethnic minorities did not quite come off in Mizoram. The MNF - a member of the BJP-led North East Democratic Alliance - ended the 10-year rule of the Congress to return to power.

The BJP in Assam saved the blues for the party in Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan to win 41% seats in the panchayat polls. This indicated that the anger in Assam against the Citizenship Bill did not have much impact on the rural electorate.

But the Bill was seen as one of the reasons of the perceived resurgence of extremist groups such as the United Liberation Front of Asom-Independent. Security forces blamed the outfit for killing five Hindu Bengalis, the

seen as beneficiaries of the Bill, in eastern Assam's Tinsukia district.

## Connectivity and wildlife

Connectivity in the Northeast came a long way with a slew of highway and railway projects having been undertaken or completed. The highlight was the inauguration of the 4.94 km Bogibeel Bridge, India's longest rail and road span, across the Brahmaputra river and the construction of the piers of the world's tallest railway bridge on the Srimbam-Impah railway line under way.

The year also saw hurdles such as land acquisition being removed for Hollongi, the first major civilian airport project in Arunachal Pradesh.

Inland water connectivity too received a boost with two barges carrying 1,233 tonnes of bagged fly ash from Bihar reaching Guwahati's Pandu port in less than a month to rekindle hope for a transport system that had virtually ended with Partition in 1947.

The Centre also signed a protocol with Bangladesh, which will allow Indian ships to access Mongla and Chittagong ports in the neighbouring country.

But the expansion of railway and road network has been at a cost - shrinking of space for wildlife leading to train-hits. The resultant man-elephant conflicts have claimed the lives of 67 elephants and 75 humans.

The year ended for Assam recording more human deaths due to conflict with animals than natural disasters. Data with the Assam State Disaster Management Authority said floods and landslides killed 53 people in 2018.

## 5 dead, many injured in Muzaffarpur factory fire

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
PATNA

At least five persons were feared dead and over half a dozen were injured on Monday in a fire that broke out at a food processing factory in Muzaffarpur district of Bihar.

The fire broke out at the Tirhut food processing unit located in Wajitpur-Chaknurain village under the Bochaha police in the small hours of Monday. More than 30 workers were said to be sleeping on the second floor of the factory when the incident happened. "The exact number of causalities can only be ascertained after the debris is removed from the site...

Those injured have been admitted to the Sri Krishna Medical College and Hospital in Muzaffarpur," said Senior Superintendent of Police Manoj Kumar.

The condition of some of the injured workers are said to be critical. "The toll could go up," said Navin Kumar, a police officer.

Recounting the incident, Biju Baitha, a factory worker who is admitted to SKMCH, said: "I woke up hearing a scream and found myself surrounded by fire. I didn't know what was happening and jumped out of the window."

Senior district officials, including District Magistrate Mohd. Sohail and Mr. Kumar, are camping at the site to monitor the rescue operations.

Witnesses said charred bodies of five people were recovered from the debris. The reason behind the fire is yet to be ascertained.

The district administration has announced a compensation of ₹4 lakh to the family members of each of the deceased.

## WEATHER WATCH

RAINFALL, TEMPERATURE &amp; AIR QUALITY IN SELECT METROS YESTERDAY



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

**Forecast for Tuesday:** Cold/severe cold wave conditions likely in many/some/isolated parts over Odisha, Telangana, north interior Karnataka, Bihar, Jharkhand, central Maharashtra, Vidarbha, east Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, north coastal Andhra Pradesh, north Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	....	27.6.....	9.2	Kozhikode	....	33.9.....	24.4
Ahmedabad	....	28.7.....	11.8	Kurnool	....	30.6.....	16.7
Aizawl	....	24.6.....	11.6	Lucknow	....	21.9.....	5.2
Allahabad	....	23.1.....	5.2	Madurai	....	31.0.....	22.2
Bengaluru	....	27.6.....	15.8	Mangaluru	....	36.0.....	21.0
Bhopal	....	24.0.....	6.9	Mumbai	....	32.2.....	15.4
Bhubaneswar	....	27.2.....	9.5	Mysuru	....	27.7.....	16.8
Chandigarh	....	20.2.....	4.3	New Delhi	....	22.2.....	3.8
Chennai	....	28.5.....	21.8	Patna	....	23.2.....	7.0
Coimbatore	....	30.0.....	19.8	Poona Blair	....	29.5.....	21.4
Dehradun	....	23.1.....	5.0	Puducherry	....	28.4.....	18.6
Gangtok	....	14.0.....	6.3	Pune	....	27.6.....	6.9
Goa	....	34.0.....	19.5	Raipur	....	25.7.....	9.1
Guwahati	....	25.0.....	8.3	Ranchi	....	21.6.....	6.1
Hubballi	....	27.0.....	15.0	Shillong	....	17.7.....	7.2
Hyderabad	....	27.5.....	9.5	Shimla	....	16.3.....	5.6
Imphal	....	22.5.....	1.6	Srinagar	....	11.6.....	6.6
Jaipur	....	23.0.....	5.6	Trivandrum	....	30.3.....	23.4
Kochi	....	32.2.....	23.6	Tiruchi	....	30.3.....	21.4
Kohima	....	15.7.....	4.0	Vijayawada	....	27.5.....	15.8
Kolkata	....	24.2.....	12.2	Visakhapatnam	....	26.5.....	16.0

(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 75 103 .26 .144 .... ■■■■■  
Bengaluru ..... 25 .41 .165 .... ■■■■■  
Chennai 29 .15 .59 .200 .... ■■■■■  
Delhi 29 .86 .163 .446 .413 .... ■■■■■  
Hyderabad .6 .93 .35 .153 .135 .... ■■■■■  
Kolkata 16 103 .12 .360 .250 .... ■■■■■  
Lucknow 46 .93 .23 .407 .... ■■■■■  
Mumbai 37 109 .93 .180 .162 .... ■■■■■  
Pune ..... .... .... .... .... .... ■■■■■  
Vishakhapatnam .... .... .... .... .... .... ■■■■■

In observation made at 4 p.m., Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 443 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Vijayawada recorded a score of 70

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

**SO<sub>2</sub>:** Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

**NO<sub>x</sub>:** Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

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

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

## WATER SUPPLY DIVISION, CIVIL ENGINEERING DEPTT.

## NEW DELHI MUNICIPAL COUNCIL

## ROOM NO. 231, SHAHD BHAGAT SINGH PLACE, NEW DELHI

## e-procurement Tender Notice

Tender ID No. 2018\_NDMC\_164515\_1

Name of Work: Repair and Maintenance - Infrastructure Assets.

Sub-Head: Disconnection / Connection from the existing Water Supply Network to newly developed network in B.K. Dutt Colony.

Estimated cost : ₹7,31,123/-

Date of release of above tenders through e-procurement solution

Last date/time for receipt of above tenders through e-procurement solution

Further details can be seen at <https://govtprocurement.delhi.gov.in>

Note: To participate in e-tender in NDMC, registration with e-tendering system, Government of NCT of Delhi is mandatory.

EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (W/S)  
NDMC, New DelhiTHE HINDU  
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## IN BRIEF



## Centre gives ₹1,146.12 cr. more for cyclone relief

CHENNAI

A high-level committee, chaired by Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh, on Monday approved an additional ₹1,146.12 crore to Tamil Nadu from the National Disaster Response Fund for relief in the districts ravaged by Cyclone Gaja.

## Tiruvarur bypoll in T.N. on January 28

CHENNAI

The Election Commission on Monday announced that the by-election to the Tiruvarur Assembly constituency would be held on January 28, 2019. Counting of votes is scheduled for January 31.

The bypoll was necessitated by the death of DMK leader and former Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M. Karunandhi on August 7 last year.

## Meghalaya man charged with killing monkey

GUWAHATI

The police in Meghalaya's West Garo Hills district arrested one Sengkud Sangma for killing, cooking and eating a rhesus macaque – a protected primate species – following a complaint by People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals. The police said he was arrested under Sections of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 and will be produced in court soon.

## Octogenarian lynched on suspicion of witchcraft

AGARTALA

Tribal villagers hacked to death an octogenarian man, a doctor, who was allegedly practicing witchcraft, police said on Monday. The bizarre incident occurred at a hamlet in Atharamura hills, 86 km east of Agartala. Police have arrested three people, while five others named in the FIR are on the run.

## ASI declared 6 monuments of national importance in 2018

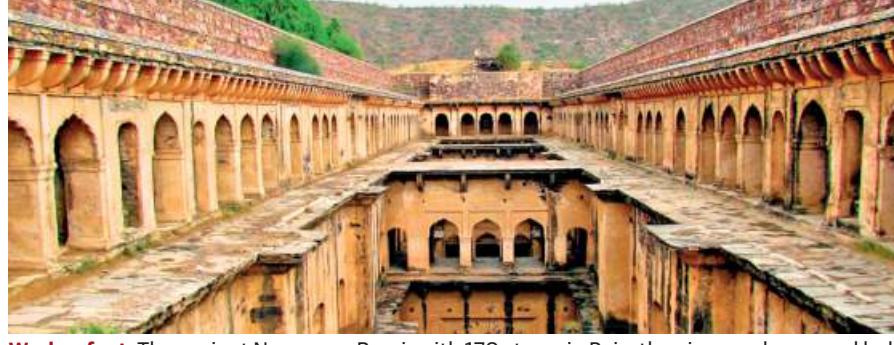
Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu have the highest number of sites maintained by the Archaeological Survey of India

SHIV SAHAY SINGH  
KOLKATA

The 125-year-old Old High Court Building in Nagpur, Maharashtra, and two Mughal-era monuments in Agra – Haveli of Agha Khan and Hathi Khana – are among the six monuments declared protected and of national importance by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) in 2018.

## Heritage sites

The ancient Neemrana Baori in Rajasthan's Alwar district; the Group of Temples at Ranipur Jharail in Odisha's Bolangir; and the Vishnu Temple in Kotli, Pithoragarh district, Uttarakhand, are the three other monuments that have been listed.



**Works of art:** The ancient Neemrana Baori, with 170 steps, in Rajasthan is a much-revered holiday destination; and right, the Bombay High Court premises at Nagpur. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

In 2016 and 2017, no new monument was included in the list of sites of national importance. The last monument to be included in the list, in 2015, was the Vishnu Temple in Nadavayal in Kerala's Wayanad district.

The list was presented in

the Lok Sabha on December 24, 2018, by the Ministry of Culture in response to a question by the Shiv Sena MP from Ratnagiri, Krupal Balaji Tumane. Replying to the question, the Ministry said that the ASI takes up a survey for documenting/report-



ing ancient monuments/sites through exploration, and that a village-to-village survey and conservation of monuments is a continuous process.

According to the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains

Act, 1958, an "Ancient Monument means any structure, erection or monument, or any tumulus or place of interment, or any cave, rock-sculpture, inscription or monolith which is of historical, archaeological or artistic interest and which has been in

existence for not less than 100 years."

There were 3,686 centrally protected monuments/sites under the ASI in the country; the number has now increased to 3,693. Uttar Pradesh (745) monum-

(506) and Tamil Nadu (413) have the highest number of ASI-maintained sites.

According to information available with the Ministry of Culture, about 321 of these centrally protected monu-

ments/sites), Karnataka

## Price of open market LPG refills slashed

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

In what comes as a New Year's gift, the government on Monday slashed non-subsidised LPG price by ₹10.50 per cylinder.

"The price of non-subsidised LPG at Delhi will decrease by ₹10.50 per cylinder w.e.f. January 1, 2019, due to fall in price of LPG in international market and strengthening of U.S. dollar-rupee exchange rate," the Indian Oil Corpora-

tion said in a statement.

Consumers will now pay ₹689 per unsubsidised cylinder, down from ₹809.5.

## Subsidy-led cut

"As domestic LPG prices are subsidised, the effective price to consumer will reduce by ₹5.91/cylinder (from ₹500.90 in December 2018 to ₹494.99 for January 2019)," the IOC said.

## Stalin presses for CBI inquiry into Jaya's death

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI

DMK president M.K. Stalin on Monday said that only an inquiry by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) would solve the mystery surrounding the death of former Chief Minister Jayalalithaa.

Talking to reporters, he said it was his view that the commission headed by retired Madras High Court Justice Arumughamswamy won't be able to bring out the truth. Asked about Law Minister C.Ve. Shanmugam's allegation that mystery shrouded the death of Jayalalithaa, the DMK leader said he had seen the Minister's interview. "I demanded a CBI inquiry... but I was criticised. The CBI alone can bring out the truth," he said.

Again, the Sabarimala judgment, which struck down a ban on women of menstruating age from undertaking the pilgrimage, was delivered by a Constitu-



The review Bench formed by Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi has five members.

tion Bench of five judges. The Review Bench formed by Chief Justice Gogoi is also a five-judge Bench. The Supreme Court decision in the Central Board of Dawoodi Bohra Community holds that a Bench of co-equal strength on its own cannot overrule a judgment of a Bench of coordinate number of judges.

So, a five-judge Bench can-

not overrule another five-judge Bench's verdict. In case the Sabarimala verdict has to be overruled, the Supreme Court would have to form a larger Bench of seven judges.

## Landmark order

The Kesavananda Bharati judgment was delivered by a 13-judge Bench – the largest Constitution Bench in the history of the Supreme Court – on April 24, 1973. Through a wafer-thin majority of 7:6, the 13-judge Bench formulated that the Basic Structure of the Indian Constitution cannot be altered by Parliament through amendments.

The Review Bench with Chief Justice Ray had also comprised 13 judges. If at all, the Kesavananda Bharati judgment had to be set aside, it would have been necessary to set up a Review Bench of 15 judges.

In his biography of Nani Palkhivala called *The Courtroom Genius*, senior advocate Arvind Datar described the 1975 attempt to review the Kesavananda Bharati verdict as a "clumsy attempt." Palkhivala had argued for the petitioners in the Kesavananda Bharati case and against its review.

Finally, the 49 review petitions challenging the Sabarimala judgment question the very content of the verdict.

This again is quite similar to how the Kesavananda Bharati review had questioned the core of the 1973 landmark verdict. The question framed in the review was "whether or not the basic structure doctrine restricted Parliament's power to amend the Constitution."

Review of any Supreme Court decision is rare. It is rarer still to examine review petitions filed against a Con-

stitution Bench judgment. That too, in the open court. Review petitions are usually decided by circulation in judges' chambers.

## Antulay judgment

The philosophy behind a re-

view is explained in the A.R.

Antulay judgment of the Supreme Court wherein the court admitted that it can be fallible. "To err is human. Courts including the apex one are no exception," the court had acknowledged.

Advocate Kaleswaram

Raj said the situation was rare as a Constitution Bench is itself formed to finally settle the law.

"When there is a diffe-

rence among smaller Benches on what law is, the question of law is referred to a Constitution Bench for a final opinion... to review a Constitution Bench judgment is rare," he said.

## Home buyers fear dilution of Real Estate Act

Ministry plans changes, without Parliamentary approval, under 'Removal of Difficulties' clause

PRISCILLA JEBARAJ  
NEW DELHI

The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) is planning to effect changes to the RERA (Real Estate Regulatory Authority) Act, 2016, invoking the 'Removal of Difficulties' clause, which would obviate the need for Parliamentary approval.

The window for such a process ends on May 1, 2019. However, home buyers fear this will dilute the Act's pro-consumer provisions.

## Slew of suggestions

A number of suggestions to change the Act and to improve implementation were made during four regional



**More time sought:** A property in Greater Noida. Builders have demanded that the maximum period for extension of project registration be extended beyond 12 months. ■ RAMESH SHARMA

workshops held over the last few months. MoHUA secretary Durga Shanker Mishra said on Monday. Representatives from State RERAs, consumer and home buyer fed-

erations, as well as builder and real estate groups, had participated in the workshops.

"We have compiled the suggestions and we will see

which of these changes can be made through the Removal of Difficulties clause," said Mr. Mishra, adding that a committee set up for the purpose would meet on January 3. Its recommendations would then be sent to the Secretary and the Minister for approval.

Section 91 of the RERA Act gives the Centre power to issue orders to remove difficulties in implementing the Act.

## Cause for concern

Abhay Upadhyay, president of the Forum for People's Collective Efforts set up to protect home buyers and facilitate RERA implementa-

tion, is a member of that panel, but believes that making major amendments under the guise of a Removal of Difficulties order will be counter-productive.

"Builders are demanding amendments to definitions that will change the very fabric of the Act," he said.

The Act was passed by the Parliament and received the President's assent in March 2016. Certain sections, including Section 91, were notified on May 1, 2016. Others were notified on May 1, 2017.

"The government seems to be arguing they can continue to amend sections notified in 2017 until May 2019," said Mr. Upadhyay.

1. The Pharmacy Council of India (PCI) invites applications for starting of new pharmacy course(s) including additional course(s), increase in intake capacity and extension of approval from 2019-2020 academic session through the PCI web portal [www.pci.nic.in](http://www.pci.nic.in). A user manual for filling up the application is available on Council's website.
2. The portal shall open from 1.1.2019 to 31.1.2019 and institutions are required to submit the applications with the prescribed documents within the stipulated time period only.
3. Please note that –
- no offline applications shall be entertained by the PCI and will be summarily rejected.
  - even existing institutions which are already approved for future sessions have to register and submit the SIF by paying necessary fees.
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PHARMACY COUNCIL OF INDIA  
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WEBSITE : [www.pci.nic.in](http://www.pci.nic.in)

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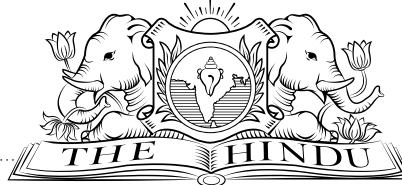
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DR/08	Technician/C (X-Ray/Radiography)	One (01)	₹ 25500 (Level 4) + allowances as admissible under Central Govt. Rules	HSC (10+2) Science with minimum 60% marks and plus one year Medical Radiography/X-Ray Technique Trade Certificate with 2 years experience in Medical Radiography/X-Ray.

The facility of online application will be opened from



## Hasina's triumph

After the Awami League landslide, she must repair Bangladesh's bitter political divisions

**B**angladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's party was always going to win Sunday's parliamentary election. She remains immensely popular, her government sought a fresh mandate with a formidable record of economic growth and social progress and her party, the Awami League, set the agenda for the election and dominated the campaign. Still, the scale of the victory would have taken even her supporters by surprise. The party's Grand Alliance won 288 of the 299 seats contested, more than the 234 seats it won in 2014 when the Bangladesh Nationalist Party boycotted the poll. This time, the Opposition coalition Jatiya Oikya Front, led by the BNP, secured only seven seats. But there are conflicting claims about the way the election was conducted. As soon as the results were known, Khaled Hossain, the leader of the Opposition coalition, called it a farcical election and demanded that the Election Commission call a fresh poll. More than 40 Opposition candidates pulled out of the race after voting began on Sunday, alleging rigging. However, the Election Monitoring Forum and the SAARC Human Rights Foundation, which includes both local and international observers, said in its preliminary evaluation that the election was "much freer and fairer" than previous ones. In the past, Bangladesh had seen governments declining to hold elections, one being cancelled and called again, and others being delayed amid violence. This time the election was called on time. Participation was higher, with the turnout at 66%, compared to 51% in 2014.

The challenge before Ms. Hasina is daunting. To begin with, she has to heal a country rattled by political divisions and violence. The government and the Election Commission could have held the election without being open to charges that it was manipulated. There was a crackdown on the Opposition in the run-up to polling day. Pro-Opposition websites were taken down, thousands of activists were jailed, and political violence was unleashed to target BNP members. The situation was so grave that even one of the election commissioners said there was no level playing field. The Election Commission should conduct a fair investigation into allegations of rigging to restore faith in the poll process. Ms. Hasina should reach out to the Opposition. Her otherwise impressive record has been marred by her government's authoritarian character. The victory is a chance for Ms. Hasina to mend her ways, to be more inclusive and run a government that respects the rule of law, the basic rights of citizens and institutional freedom. For India, Ms. Hasina's victory is good news. New Delhi and Dhaka have deepened economic, security and strategic ties under her leadership. This should continue, no matter what the general election outcome in India in 2019.

## A liberal move

Rajasthan strikes a blow for democracy by removing educational criteria for local polls

**A**mong the first decisions taken by Ashok Gehlot's government after assuming power in Rajasthan was to scrap minimum educational requirements for candidates contesting local body elections. This is a progressive move and will restore the right to contest, at least in theory, to a large section of the population in the State, where the literacy rate, according to the 2011 Census, was 52% for women and 79% for men. The previous government headed by Vasundhara Raje had stipulated, first through an ordinance in December 2014 and then through the Rajasthan Panchayati Raj (Amendment) Act passed in 2015, educational prerequisites to stand for local polls. It was made mandatory for candidates contesting for the post of sarpanch to have cleared Class 8, and for those in the fray in zila parishad and panchayat samiti elections to have passed Class 10. The move was ill-considered from the very beginning. At the time, the amendment was seen as a bid by the then BJP government to lower the average age of those in the fray based on the assumption that its voters tended to be younger. It was, however, an act of paternalism that militated against the basic assumptions of a liberal democracy. It penalised the people for failure to meet certain social indicators, when in fact it is the state's responsibility to provide the infrastructure and incentives for school and adult education. And it defeated the very purpose of the panchayati raj institutions, to include citizens in multi-tier local governance from all sections of society. These requirements had the effect of excluding the marginalised.

The Rajasthan government's decision should also force a rethink in Haryana, where the newly sworn-in BJP government had, also in 2015, legislated a series of eligibility requirements for panchayat elections, including education levels and a functional toilet in the candidate's home. The Haryana Panchayati Raj (Amendment) Act, 2015 was upheld that year by the Supreme Court in *Rajbala v. State of Haryana*. And the temptation to expand educational eligibility requirements remains. Union Women and Child Development Minister Maneka Gandhi, for instance, has previously spoken of persuading other Chief Ministers to take the cue from Rajasthan and Haryana, as an incentive for women to study. The decision of the new Congress government in Rajasthan should force a recasting of the debate on finding ways and means by which elected bodies are made more representative. In a liberal democracy, governments must desist from putting bars on who may contest, except in exceptional circumstances, such as when a candidate is in breach of particular laws. To mandate paternalistically what makes a person a 'good' candidate goes against the spirit of the attempt to deepen democracy by taking self-government to the grassroots.

# Diary of the year to come

A cluster of anniversaries exhorts all Indians to be true to their conscience in 2019



GOPALKRISHNA GANDHI

**A**s one year dips and another dawns, a calendar of anniversaries is un-scrolled. In India, this happens with the hectic intensity of a traffic jam. The year that begins today is the 150th anniversary of the birth of Mahatma Gandhi and the death of Mirza Ghalib.

### Hundred years ago

What is notably the 100th anniversary of? Curiously, not of historic persons as much as of three historic happenings. First, a much-hailed enactment, the Government of India Act of 1919, which increased the participation of Indians in the Government of India. Second, a much-hated law, Anarchical and Revolutionary Crimes Act of 1919, known notoriously as the Rowlett Act or Black Act, which entrenched war-time restrictions on civil liberties – indefinite preventive detention or judicial review of those suspected of terrorism, trial without juries, jailings without trials. Third, a national trauma that arose from the vortex of protests against the Rowlett Act – the massacre by army bullets of 379 according to the Raj, and some thousand men, women and children according to the Indian National Congress, at Jallianwala Bagh, Amritsar. Terrorism is wrong, Gandhi and other leaders said, violence evil. But are the civil liberties of a whole people to be frozen? Rabindranath Tagore returned his knighthood a hundred years ago, this year. But scores of other 'Sirs' and 'Rai Bahadurs' did not.

So this is the centenary of so-

mething that brought enshamed India some hope, as well as huge despair and, hauntingly, mass death. And it is also the centenary of heroic courage, of sacrifice.

And 50th? This is the 50th anniversary of the Gujarat riots of September-October 1969, that involved massacre, arson and looting said to constitute "the most deadly Hindu-Muslim violence since the 1947 partition of India". Out of the 512 deaths reported in police complaints, 430 were Muslims. Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, then nearly 80, visited India that year. A guest of the state and of the people of India, he fasted for three days for communal peace, went to Ahmedabad to see things for himself. In his acceptance speech while receiving the Jawaharlal Nehru Award for International Understanding, he repeated to the audience what a Muslim girl in Ahmedabad had told him: "Muslims were being asked by Hindu communalists to leave the country or live like untouchables." And in an address to a joint session of Parliament, he was brutal in his assessment: "You are forgetting Gandhi the way you forgot the Buddha." This is the 50th anniversary of that chastisement.

### Two sides of 1984

Thirty-five is not a particularly memorable number but when an event is of some moment, its 35th anniversary carries something of that moment's star-dust. This year marks the 35th anniversary of one such.

The year was 1984, the month April. Squadron Leader Rakesh Sharma of the Indian Air Force was going round the earth aboard the Salyut 7 Orbital Station (*picture*). He was the first Indian to be in outer space. The ISRO-Intercosmos Indo-Soviet space programme had put six men into space, five from the U.S.S.R. and our own Rakesh, then all of 35



years old. Rakesh received a satellite call from India's Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. She asked Rakesh, "Upar se apko Bharat kaisa dikhata hai? (How does India seem to you from up there?)" Footage shows the hero-in-motion slightly startled by the question but collecting himself in a moment to respond reflectively: "Sare jahan se acha (Better than all the world)." That immortal half-line from Allama Iqbal's song reverberated through the air-waves into millions of homes watching the first-ever Indian orbiting the planet we live in. And as the nation heard and saw him, a sense of India's greatness stirred within it. This year is the 35th anniversary of that dizzy moment.

Not a star twinkles over India as an envious eclipse veils it. We celebrate India only to be checked by our misfortunes.

Orbiting with stars Rakesh Sharma did not know that India had a date with another 'star' within two months that very year – Operation Blue Star, leading to Indira Gandhi's assassination and the killing of anything between 8,000 and 17,000 Sikh Indians at the hands of fellow Indians. Large numbers of Indians reached out to the victims, taking them to hospitals, sheltering them. And, most important of all, documenting their trauma to fight for them another day. But much larger numbers did no such thing. They stayed put, watching with glazed eyes.

This year is the 35th anniversary

sary of that tragic sequence as well. And so, as we enter another new year, a question to pose to ourselves is: Will India in 2019 look *sare jahan se acha*? Or will it be a blend of pleasure and pain, glory and shame? No one can tell. But if one may have anniversary wishes, this citizen-nobody does.

On this anniversary of hopes and of griefs, of courage and of cowring, we must look at the opportunities that knock at our country's great and gaunt gate. We must make the national elections due in a few months a great example of democratic self-assertion, making the weak self-assert. In 2019 the people of India must vote, even more emphatically than ever before, without succumbing to manipulation and to fear.

Seven years ago this year, speaking in the Constituent Assembly, B.R. Ambedkar said: "...it is quite possible in a country like India - where democracy from its long disuse must be regarded as something quite new - there is danger of democracy giving place to dictatorship. It is quite possible for this new born democracy to retain its form but give place to dictatorship in fact. If there is a landslide, the danger of the second possibility becoming actuality is much greater."

Why should we be so alert to the danger that he pointed out? Not just because an opportunity has come for effecting a change of government but because far-reaching, liberating changes are needed in the country.

### Meaning of liberation

What are these liberating changes? The first is the liberation of our public life from fear. Under Swaraj no less than under the Raj, fear can paralyse dissent, immobilise free speech, free association. It is not just an insecure state but insecure technico-commercial monopolies as well that are uncomfortable with

freedom. Threats to Right to Information (RTI) activists and whistleblowers and attacks on them, trolling of dissenters on social media and even murder, constitute democratic India's single greatest failure, shame. In the eighth decade of its independence, India ought to be afraid of nothing, save its conscience.

The second is the liberation of our politics from the stranglehold of money. Which, in effect, means saving our national resources from the darkness of deceit and exploitation. Money minted by illegal mining, unauthorised clandestine monopolies and brazen preference has a vice-like grip over our polity, particularly over our electoral politics. Money frustrates democracy, negates it. Ruling parties everywhere say, "Our hands are clean!" The Opposition says, "Show us your pockets." And when they change places, the charge changes direction.

The third – and most difficult – is the liberation of ethics from the hegemony of lifeless conformism. For far too long, centuries in fact, have custom, and callousness overwhelmed conscience in India. Routine and rote rule over humane instincts, making women, tribals, the Scheduled Castes, children, prisoners, the mentally challenged and physically unable exposed to danger. The same dulled sensitivity has rendered our wetlands, rivers, coasts and commons vulnerable to misuse, misappropriation. Whoever be the Asoka or the anti-Asoka on Magadha's throne, India's Bodhi-tree needs an enlightened One to sit by its root-bed and speak to it now, more than ever before, to be able to say to it to become not just '*sare jahan se acha*', better than all the world, but '*apne dil se sachha*', to its own self, true.

Gopalkrishna Gandhi is a former administrator, diplomat and governor

## Dead ends of specialisation

With a focus on expertise, polymaths are becoming rare in the 21st century



SUJATHA BYRAVAN

**A**mong scholars and knowledge makers in history, one can identify a large number of intellectuals whose interests lay in seemingly disparate spheres. A poet and philosopher could also be an astronomer, technical innovator and mathematician. A traveller and writer could be a linguist and painter. Consider for instance Al Khwārizmī, Ziryab, Leonardo da Vinci. Each person's many spheres of knowledge created a syncretic world view that contributed to a broad perspective, an easy ability to see connectedness among multiple domains of knowledge of the natural world and human interaction.

One might today refer to these as non-partisan points of view, neither left nor right, or generalised independent scholarship – indeed there seem to be few words to describe such people. While there still are some scholars interested in more than one domain, such as Noam Chomsky or Rama-chandra Guha, polymaths are rare in the 21st century. With greater

and deeper development of various fields of science, technology and even the social sciences, specialisation is inevitable and even necessary in the contemporary world. This has no doubt yielded many important, even life-saving results. But, the fetishising of "expertism" and its blinding righteousness contributes to a host of problems that are being called the Anthropocene.

### Distinct worlds

While polymaths are not in high demand, I suspect that the increasing call for cross-disciplinary and interdisciplinary knowledge is a recognition of this shortcoming without quite being able to label it. The tragedy of specialisation is that it leads members of the knowledge industry to see little beyond their bulwarks. And indeed, the world views of highly specialised domains are often so distinct that they have created not only disparate paradigms but distinct worlds. It, therefore, becomes difficult or impossible for an economist to appreciate the importance and value of biodiversity or why its loss is a major casualty (unless he or she tries to monetise it), or for an engineer to understand why decentralised solar power that allows greater democratisation among local communities is an opportunity to be grabbed instead of installing large solar parks by me-

ga-corporations. It also makes it near impossible for a molecular biologist to understand that more targeted and improved ways to cut and paste DNA is not the point being made by those concerned about genetically modified organisms. It is about ownership, biodiversity, science and soils – cross-cutting domains that super-specialists will not be able to see.

Never mind that corporate interests, personal promotion, careerism and pandering to their own vested interests create elite networks of corruption in different academic spheres. And these may of course confound arguments regarding specialisation and intellectual generalists. In a recent article in *The New York Times* Pankaj Mishra writes, "in their lust for power [Alfred Kazin] could see how intellectuals as accomplices of political elites were prone to confuse their private in-

terest with public interest."

With increasing specialisation, what one gets are experts who do not understand the connections between knowledge systems and ways of knowing. Instead of treating an approach to knowledge or a paradigm as simply a heuristic or a framework, they begin to regard it as fixed, offering specific solutions that cannot be argued against and carrying all truth. The limits of each knowledge system are not part of the training and their own blinkers are not apparent to them. Instead, one's own paradigm of analyses turns into the sole framework for study and its outputs the only possible truths.

### Current challenges

The principal challenges of the Anthropocene are the breakdown of the planetary boundaries. In fact, when this system was represented and described by scientists as the planetary boundaries of the natural world, there was opposition from social scientists. Upon their insistence, social structures have also been incorporated now into the system. This obvious necessity only points to the fact that there is so much fragmentation that specialists will not be able to see.

Never mind that geoengineers say that

we need to seed the upper atmosphere with exotic chemicals to cool the planet, there is rightly a

hue and cry from many quarters; when renewable energy experts call for more biomass plantations, others worry about the displacement of farmers, the reduction of food production and the loss of biodiversity. Of course, still other specialists insist that they have the right technology to produce food for the entire world in factory farms.

The academic system of rewarding greater specialisation has fed the knowledge industry and universities too prepare students in precisely this manner. Policy makers are listening to the experts seeking their guidance, thus coming full circle and promoting further fragmentation. The assault on nature from the ramparts of specialisation creates narrow reductionist viewpoints that are fiercely defended by specialists who seem to have a lot at stake in terms of careers and reputations. Those at the short end are (ironically) the most vulnerable creatures and humans on earth making up the vast connected webs of life. As Max Weber wrote in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*: "specialists without spirit, sensualists without heart; this nullity imagines that it has attained a level of civilisation never before achieved."

*Sujatha Byravan is a scientist who studies science, technology and policy*

## 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.

### Modern icons

Equating our icons with the nation itself was one of the greatest tragedies of India (Editorial page, "The travails of the modern icon", December 31). No party can claim the exclusive right of owning any freedom fighter; they all happened to be products of our freedom struggle. It is another tragedy that the party that won freedom for India has become a virtual fiefdom of a family. If the Indian National Congress had been disbanded, as advised by Gandhiji, it would have been one of the finest things to have happened to India and its politics.

C.G. KURIAKOSE,  
Kothamangalam, Kerala

### Gandhi and hope

As the writer of the article, "Gandhi and the audacity

of hope" (December 29), rightly says, it is the audacity of hope that made Gandhi stand out. Will India understand him or at least remember him in the right manner? In India's chase of the golden deer (the economy) the nation seems to be overlooking the message of this icon, who is remembered when it is convenient and forgotten when it is expedient.

K.R.A. NARASIAH,  
Chennai

**Blood transfusions**  
It is sad to know that in Tamil Nadu, a pregnant woman was transfused with suspected HIV-infected blood (Editorial, "HIV reality check", December 31). A prime reason cited for the transfusion was anaemia in late pregnancy. More than 60% pregnant women in India have this

preventable condition. Its common reasons are nutritional deficiency, hookworm infestation and frequent/multiple pregnancies. The primary mode of prevention is to identify vulnerable groups prior to pregnancy and treat them with simple measures such as health education and giving them iron supplementation. The government health system registers all pregnant women with the village health nurse and if haemoglobin is found to be deficient (less than 11 g), treated with oral iron tablets from the third month of pregnancy. Most anaemia is mild to moderate, which can be treated with iron tablets and a single dose of an anti-helminthic tablet. Women intolerant to oral iron may be given iron injections. Blood transfusion is needed in cases of severe anaemia identified late in pregnancy (after 34 weeks), acute blood loss during pregnancy and delivery and cardiac failure due to anaemia. Even after full screening of blood, the recipient is not 100% safe as the donor might have viral infection in a dormant state. There are also other risks. A blood transfusion demands all safety precautions.

Ds. P.R. REETA VIJAYA SELVI,  
Vellore, Tamil Nadu

■ The problem with blood banking in India is a paucity of transfusion medicine specialists or diploma holders trained in this speciality. The easiest solution would be to centralise blood banking activities to regional centres.

Blood storage facilities (rather than blood collection and processing) can be made available across hospitals in all small cities and towns that can be managed with staff who are under the direct control of their designated regional blood bank. This is also a system followed in most parts of the world.

Ds. R. SUTHANTHARA KANNAN,  
Coimbatore

**Dream win and year**  
The Indian cricket team moving into the new year on a bright note is heartening because it not only won the Melbourne Test but also retained the Gabba-Border trophy. However, as the show is still on, the comprehensive win has offered a golden opportunity for India to script history on Australian soil. It was Jasprit Bumrah's mesmerising spell in both innings well supported by

Ishant Sharma, Mohammed Shami and Ravindra Jadeja that put India on the winning track after Cheteshwar Pujara, Virat Kohli, Rohit Sharma and debutant Mayank Agarwal put up an impressive total. One looks forward to Sydney.

K.R. SRINIVASAN,

Secunderabad

**A titan falls silent**  
With the passing away of Mrinal Sen, the remaining leg of the tripod that held up meaningful Bengali/Indian cinema has given way. Sen never shied away from showcasing his political convictions through his films and without compromising on their artistic sensibilities. In the pantheon of greats, he has an exclusive seat.

# Agenda for the fourth term

The Sheikh Hasina government must go beyond economic progress to ensure rule of law and democracy



SYED BADRUL AHSEN

The people, as they say, have spoken in Bangladesh. Sheikh Hasina's party, which leads the Grand Alliance, has romped back to power for an unprecedented fourth term in office. The general election has given the Grand Alliance, or, more specifically, the Awami League, a huge majority in the Jatiya Sangshad, the country's Parliament, to a point where no effective Opposition is in sight.

While Awami League supporters are in a celebratory mood, the Jatiya Oikya Front has rejected the results and demanded fresh polls under a neutral government. Jatiya Oikya Front convener Kamal Hossain, around whose personality the Opposition came together to challenge what it called the authoritarianism of the government led by Ms. Hasina, has called Sunday's vote "farcical".

**The significance of this election**  
The political reality for Bangladesh at this juncture revolves around a couple of factors. First, for the first time in a decade, all the political parties took part in the election (the Bangladesh Nationalist Party, or the BNP, boycotted the 2014 election). In other words, this time voting was based on an inclusive election. Second, this was the first time a general election was held under a political government since the fall of the Hussain Muhammad Ershad military regime in 1990. The earlier stipulation of elections being supervised by a caretaker administration, introduced in the final stages of General Ershad's regime and carried on till the period of the Fakhruddin Ahmed-led military-backed caretaker government (between January 2007 and early 2009), was scrapped in 2011 through a constitutional amendment by the Awami League government which assumed office in January 2009. Despite protests from the Opposition against the move, the Hasina government remained unmoved. It stuck to the justified position that a government elected for five years cannot morally and logically hand over power to an unelected administration for



"In a country where politics has often been vulnerable to extra-constitutional interference and where national history has been massively distorted, Ms. Hasina has turned out to be the most powerful political leader in Bangladesh's story." Dhaka on polling day. ■

three months before a new elected government comes into office.

This election has drawn the usual criticism from the Opposition, which has alleged that candidates did not have a level playing field in the course of the campaign. Moreover, on election day, at a large number of polling centres across the country, polling agents of the Opposition were either not allowed to enter the polling stations or driven out of them by ruling party activists. Mr. Hossain and the BNP have cited these as the reasons for voting having been unfair and not free. The government has rejected the allegations. It has instead pointed to what it describes as a massive degree of popular support for Ms. Hasina and her government's development programmes.

## From trauma to victory

For Ms. Hasina, politics has been a long journey from personal trauma following the assassination of nearly her entire family in a violent coup in August 1975 to her rise to political prominence in the years since she took charge of the Awami League. She has been chief of the Awami League since 1981, when she was persuaded to return home from exile in India by senior party leaders, including Mr. Hossain. Her return galvanised a faction-ridden party into coming together as a strong political force, a feat which resulted in her leading it to electoral victory for the first time in 21 years in June 1996. Ms.

Hasina's assumption of office as Prime Minister was certainly significant from the perspective of Bangladesh's history. One of the earliest priorities for her government was a repeal of the infamous Indemnity Ordinance, promulgated in the post-coup circumstances and subsequently accorded legal sanction by a Parliament dominated by supporters of General Ziaur Rahman, Bangladesh's first military ruler. The ordinance had blocked any questioning of the coup as well as a trial of the assassins of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and his family in any court of law. Five of the assassins were tried and executed in January 2010.

That apart, the Hasina government took steps to bring some prominent Bengali collaborators of the occupation Pakistan army in 1971 to trial. These collaborators, belonging to the Jamaat-e-Islami and the Muslim League and rehabilitated by General Zia and given ministerial berths by Khaleda Zia, were tried by specially constituted war crimes tribunals and hanged. In effect, on Ms. Hasina's watch, the impunity which the 1975 assassins and 1971 collaborators had enjoyed was brought to an end.

## Steering the economy

To be sure, there have been questions regarding the government's treatment of the Opposition in the run-up to the election – cases filed against Opposition leaders and activists, laws seen as an impediment to

a free functioning of the media, etc. But it is the strength of its economic performance that the government has projected before the electorate, to a point where the international community, including the World Bank, has been appreciative of the strides made in the economy. Remittances from Bangladeshis working abroad have registered a significant rise, the ready-made garments industry has been performing well, growth has gone up, and massive infrastructure projects have been undertaken. In the field of foreign affairs, the government has based its approach to the outside world on pragmatism, thus successfully preserving a balance in Bangladesh's relations with India, China and Russia. The government has also found appreciation from the international community in its treatment of the Rohingya refugees – nearly 1 million refugees have found shelter in Bangladesh following their expulsion from Myanmar. It has gone out of its way to ensure the safety of the refugees even as it tries, rather fitfully, to strike a deal with Myanmar on the return of the Rohingya.

In a country where politics has often been vulnerable to extra-constitutional interference, as in the coups and counter-coups of the mid-1970s followed by the emergence of two military regimes in quick succession, and where national history has been massively distorted by those who exercised power between 1975 and 1996, Ms. Hasina has turned out to be the most powerful political leader in the country's history, after her father Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Her three terms in office, and now promised fourth, make her the longest-serving head of government in Bangladesh. There has been no alternative to her.

In the next five years, it will be the government's responsibility to go beyond an emphasis on economic progress to ensure rule of law and democracy, in the form of a properly functional Parliament, a free judiciary, and an efficient executive. Now that the election is behind her, Ms. Hasina looks to preside over the centenary of the birth of the country's founder in 2020 and the 50th anniversary celebrations of Bangladesh's independence in 2021.

Syed Badrul Ahsan is a journalist and columnist in Bangladesh

# Mainstreaming victims of crimes

It is time to make victim impact statements mandatory



G.S. BAJPAI

In *Mallikarjun Kodagil (Dead) v. State of Karnataka* (2018), the Supreme Court stressed the need to have a victim impact statement "so that an appropriate punishment is awarded to the convict". This throws up many issues that are of interest to the victims of crimes.

The term victim came to be defined in criminal law only in 2009 in India. The victim of a crime is never heard as a victim during the trial of a case, but as a witness. As the victim is represented by a prosecutor, her concerns as well as the impact of her victimisation remain unexpressed. By and large, the police, prosecutors and courts do not have any substantive legal obligation towards crime victims. Indifference to crime victims remains deep-rooted in the accused-centric criminal justice system. Secondary victimisation

takes place when the agencies of the criminal justice system treat victims of crime unfavourably, or marginalise them during the trial.

## Marginalised during trial

The trial process is organised in such a manner that the personal appearance of the victim at all the crucial stages is restricted. The victim is not present when charges are framed against the accused, when the accused is discharged, when bail is granted, when parole is considered, and when punishment or compensation is decided. On the other hand, the accused is always required to be present during all these stages. Crimes are registered in the form of sections of the Indian Penal Code (in numbers) which do not mean anything to the victims of crime in terms of their impact. Crimes do not impact all victims in the same manner. There is no way to assess the impact suffered by a victim. And whatever little is tried in this direction is always through a third party, such as a prosecutor or judge, who is invariably incapable of registering the aftermath of victimisation.

The UN 1985 Declaration of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power effectuated a movement for victim empowerment. That led to significant reforms in the criminal process. It enabled victims to have rights and reasonable protections, and assistance and participation in the

system. It also made a powerful plea to provide a voice to the victims of crime during the trial stage.

A victim impact statement is an answer to most of these concerns. It has the potential to alter the course of things for victims of crime in India. Victim impact statements are written or oral statements by crime victims, about how the crime has impacted them. Often, the family members and friends of victims also make written and verbal statements. Victim impact statements could provide information about the damage caused to victims by the crime, which is information that would otherwise not be available to the courts. Details of the financial impact of the crime – lost wages, medical or counselling expenses, transportation costs and damage to property, including a request for compensation or restitution – can also be included. Generally a victim is assisted to submit a detailed form, which is standardised for this purpose, through a prosecutor.

## Deciding the quantum of sentence

Hearing the victim in person or through a victim impact statement at the stage of sentencing could be crucial. After a criminal defendant is found guilty or pleads guilty and is convicted, a judge decides on the appropriate punishment. The decision about punishment is a complex one. The judge needs to consider the adequacy of the sentence as Indian laws do not follow a fixed punishment model. Instead, there is a scale of punishment and the court decides the quantum of punishment according to this scale. The Criminal Procedure Code, in Section 235(2), places a mandatory duty on the court to hear the accused on the question of sentence. The idea is to collect personal information and consider it while specifying the quantum of punishment. While this practice is laudable, it causes a huge disadvantage to the victim of the crime as the trial court is under no legal obligation to hear the victim. A victim impact statement will help the court take a balanced view at this stage. Hearing the victim during the sentencing will help the court decide the quantum of punishment as well as assess the amount of compensation to be ordered. The U.S., Canada, Australia, and many countries in Europe have made victim impact statements mandatory. It is time for India to do so too. The victim has a right to speak and the nation has a responsibility to listen.

G.S. Bajpai is Chairperson, Centre for Criminology and Victimology, National Law University Delhi & Editor, Journal of Victimology & Victim Justice

## SINGLE FILE

### Saving Kerala

It is not the religious validity of a court order, but the very mettle of society that is being put to test in Kerala now

SWAMI AGNIVESH

Kerala is at a crossroads. For the first time, the very essence of this progressive State, applauded as a model for the rest of India, is being put to test. Kerala did not achieve its enviable position of being a progressive, liberal and modern society without struggle or sacrifice. It was as recent as December 1892 when Swami Vivekananda was shocked by inhuman caste-based customs there.

The journey from that low point of social and spiritual degradation to being the most progressive society in India has been achieved with the help of radical reformers – Narayana Guru, Ayyankali, Sahodaran Ayyappan, V.T. Bhattacharji, Mannathu Padmanabha Pillai, and a host of visionary leaders in the freedom movement – who fought the evils of caste oppression and the various forms of discrimination that women in Kerala faced.

It is not the religious validity of a Supreme Court order, but the very mettle of society that is being put to test in Kerala now. To anyone observing developments around the Sabarimala face-off, it is obvious that the issue has been politically hijacked, even as the façade of religious fervour is maintained. It was to be expected that the RSS-BJP phalanx, which has been waiting for the kill for long, would sense in this the most opportune moment. By the candid admission of the State BJP President, the party is treating the Sabarimala issue as a political goldmine. A massive drama of deception is being thrust upon Keralites.

The RSS has also been inflicting a covert atrocity on Dalits and Adivasis in respect of their religions. The Adivasis aren't Hindus. They never were. They have their own religious forms of worship. Over the years, the RSS has worked in a calculated fashion to blot out their distinct religious heritage and identities. It is ironic that the very same RSS is now spearheading the movement to "save Sabarimala", wilfully overlooking the fact that Sabarimala belonged to the Adivasis, who have been driven out of its precincts.

The RSS-BJP agenda is not to save Sabarimala. It is to use Sabarimala. Lord Ayyappa, who was a forest deity worshipped by Mala Arayans, is valued only as a potent entry point into the hearts of Keralites. If Lord Ayyappa is sensitive to the pollution of menstruating women, he should be even more allergic to the hypocrisy of men.

Annexing the politics of Kerala is crucial for the RSS-BJP combine for the 2019 general election. The BJP may fare poorly in many north Indian States. The loss there can be compensated only if the politics of south Indian States is annexed. The desperation underlying this strategy is an indirect tribute to the good sense of Keralites. The RSS and the BJP know that Keralites cannot be hoodwinked politically. Religion, perhaps, is their point of vulnerability.

The writer is a social activist



## NOTEBOOK

### The man and his horrific crime

Meeting the 'tandoor murder case' killer and his family

HEMAMI BHANDARI

When I entered Sushil Kumar Sharma's drawing room one cold winter afternoon in December, he was wearing a deep blue jacket and sitting cross-legged on a cot, talking on the phone.

I waited nervously. Sharma is a former youth Congress leader and MLA, but he was no ordinary interviewee. He had been released from prison only a few days before our meeting, 23 years after he was arrested and then convicted for killing his partner Naina Sahni, also an aspiring politician.

The crime shocked the nation, but the gruesome manner in which Sharma disposed of Sahni's body was especially chilling. Sharma suspected that Sahni was having an affair. After a heated argument one night, he shot her dead. And then, to hide the crime, he chopped her

body into pieces and burnt it in a tandoor (clay oven) in a restaurant. The case led to non-stop chatter in newsrooms given that it involved a politician, an alleged affair, and a gruesome killing.

I have been a crime reporter for only over a year. Sharma's release naturally piqued my curiosity. What kind of a person was he then and how had he changed? Was he scary, as we imagine killers to be? Did a person who had once been so unimaginably vile have normal human emotions? Did he remember that night vividly? I wanted to meet Sharma, much to my mother's dismay. I spoke to the legal reporter who had covered his release. A few calls were made and I was on my way to Sharma's house in Delhi's Pitampura the next morning. I had previously reported murder cases from a distance. Sharma was the

first man I was going to meet who had been convicted of murder and released.

The house was locked from the inside. The family didn't want to entertain too many people. I peeped inside and saw Sharma's 80-year-old mother's smiling face. She looked at me and asked an attendant to unlock the door.

Greetings were exchanged and she pointed to the room where he was sitting. My heart skipped a few beats. Sharma finished his call and greeted me with a handshake and a smile. "There are two types of criminals," he began, his lawyer seated next to us. "Those who are naturally criminal-minded and those who do something in a rage." Sharma said he was full of regret, especially for making his parents' life "a living hell". He said he had contemplated suicide. "But I slowly learnt that I was suffering as a consequence

of my own actions and accepted that fact while in prison," he said.

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## FROM The Hindu ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO JANUARY 1, 1969

Six dead in Dacca firing

Maulana Bashmani, leader of the National Awami Party, said yesterday [December 30] his party would boycott the coming elections following a clash between his supporters and police in which three people were killed and another wounded yesterday when police fired at a mob in Hatirjheel Bazar, a Dacca suburb, according to an official communiqué. The mob had stoned a shop and attempted to free several people taken into custody by police, the communiqué said. Three more persons were killed in police firing in Mancherdi, Dacca district, to-day. Police were reported to have arrested four people in the Awami Party demonstration at Dacca in favour of a general strike. Speaking at Pabna, in East Pakistan, Maulana Bashani called on other parties to follow his lead and boycott the elections. Meanwhile President Ayub Khan has urged members of the ruling Pakistan Muslim League at Lahore to defend the regime against opposition attacks.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO JANUARY 2, 1919.

The Kaiser's Defenders.

The League of German men and women to protect William the Second's personal life and security has been formed in Berlin and has issued an appeal denying that its purpose is other than is described by the League's official name. The appeal exhorts diplomats and others to furnish information for the projected white book exculpating the ex-Kaiser from the guilt of the war. Prince Henry of Prussia was offered the Presidency of the League but declined saying that Hindenburg should be appointed. Prince Henry in accepting membership says that he expects to be called as a witness on behalf of his Imperial brother. The "Daily News" Munich Correspondent says that a Monarchist movement with the centre in Munich and ramifications in the country districts of Bavaria has been discovered. Forty arrests have been made including officers.

## CONCEPTUAL

### Kübler-Ross model

PSYCHOLOGY

This refers to the five emotional stages that a person usually goes through during a period of grief. They are denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. However, not all people who experience grief go through all these stages. Some people may skip past some of the stages. The duration of each stage of grief may also vary from person to person depending on various reasons. The Kübler-Ross model was first proposed by Swiss psychiatrist Elisabeth Kübler-Ross in her 1969 book *On Death and Dying*, based on her study of patients who were terminally ill.

## MORE ON THE WEB

The most-read articles of The Hindu in 2018

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FROM PAGE ONE

## Sonia, Rahul never interfered: Antony

The Congress and the BJP have been engaged in a bitter war of words since Saturday when the Enforcement Directorate told a Delhi court that Christian Michel, the alleged middleman in the AgustaWestland VVIP helicopter scam, had passed on a paper containing questions on "Mrs. Gandhi" to his counsel Aljo K. Joseph, a former Youth Congress office-bearer.

Mr. Antony said if the Congress had anything to hide, it would not have ordered a CBI probe or gone to Milan, Italy, to fight the case. "We took the decision to fight the case in Milan. Ultimately, we won the case and got the entire money from bank guarantees and advance," he said.

**Professional decision'**  
The former Defence Minister said the choice of AgustaWestland helicopters was

a "professional decision" taken by the Indian Air Force, the Special Protection Group and the Defence Ministry.

"We cancelled the contract and started proceedings of blacklisting. But after we left, the Modi government did nothing against AgustaWestland. Instead of acting against the company, they favoured it."

Mr. Antony said the BJP was trying to divert attention from the questions raised over the Rafale deal and avoid a joint parliamentary committee probe into it and that's why it was raising the AgustaWestland case.

Asked to comment on the BJP allegation that the Congress was jittery since Mr. Michel's extradition to India, Congress communication chief Randeep Surjewala said, "This is a case of *chor machaye shor* (the thief is making noise)."

## Govt. rejects demand to send Bill to panel

Monday's debate on the Bill started at two in the afternoon, with eight members of the AIADMK trooping into the well continuing their protests against the Central Water Commission's approval for the Mekadu Dam.

Trinamool Congress MP and floor leader Derek O'Brien then moved a resolution – signed by 11 MPs, including AIADMK's A. Navaneethakrishnan – to send the legislation to a select committee.

Mr. O'Brien pleaded with Deputy Chairman Hariavansh, who was in the chair, to take the sentiment of the House that was in favour of sending the Bill for further parliamentary scrutiny.

Leader of the Opposition Ghulam Nabi Azad, too, backed him by saying more than half the members supported the call. "The government tries to bulldoze every legislation through. Since this Bill did not go through one in the Lok Sabha, it should be sent to [a] select committee here," he

said. Junior Parliamentary Affairs Minister Vijay Goel interceded to say that the Congress-led Opposition which was stalling the Bill even as the government was ready for a debate.

**Ruckus again**  
Amid pandemonium, the House was adjourned at 2.10 p.m. for 15 minutes.

When the House reconvened, Deputy Leader of the Opposition Anand Sharma reiterated the demand, saying the Rajya Sabha does not exist merely to "rubber stamp" legislation cleared by the Lok Sabha.

Law Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad responded, saying the government was ready for a debate and to hear all suggestions proposed by the Opposition, but the Bill must not be put in limbo by sending it to a select committee.

He said even after the Supreme Court's judgement outlawed instantaneous divorce, an incident of triple talaq had been reported.

## Two Pak. intruders killed on LoC

"The fire-fight initiated by Pakistan was given a strong response and the exchange of fire continued the whole night," said the spokesman. "A few intruders managed to escape, taking advantage of the Pakistani firing and adverse weather conditions," he said.

Some intruders, he said, were seen wearing BSF and old Indian Army fatigues. The Army will ask Pakistan

to take back the bodies of the two intruders.

Akhbar Ayub, an Athmuqam-based disaster risk management officer in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, told the Pakistani media that "Indian Army shells were first aimed at Pakistan Army posts but later started pounding civilian installations at Athmuqam." He claimed a 27-year-old woman died in the shelling.

He said even after the Supreme Court's judgement outlawed instantaneous divorce, an incident of triple talaq had been reported.

## 4 policemen dismissed as rifles go missing in J&K

They were posted at a Congress leader's house in Srinagar

PEERZADA ASHIQ  
SRINAGAR

Four policemen were dismissed from service on Monday in Kashmir, a day after four service rifles went missing from the residence of a senior Congress leader in Srinagar.

A police spokesman said the personnel, posted as Special Police Officers (SPOs) at the Srinagar residence of senior Congress leader and MLC Mohammad Muzaffar Paray, were dismissed for "dereliction of duty and unauthorised absence."

Three policemen were from the security wing and one from the Sopore district police.

The move also coincided with the attachment of Se-



A jawan frisks people in Srinagar after the rifles went missing. ■ NISSAR AHMAD

nior Superintendent of Police (SSP), Security Kashmir, Maqsood-ul-Zaman, with the Security Headquarters in Srinagar. "Sajad Hussain, SSP Commandant JKAP-3rd Bn, in addition to his own duties, shall look after the work of SSP, Security Kash-

peezada Asiq.

## Ready for debate on Rafale: Cong.

A discussion will make it clear that the Opposition party is spreading lies, says Jaitley

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Congress on Monday said it was ready for a debate in the Lok Sabha on the Rafale deal, and requested Speaker Sumitra Mahajan to hold it on January 2.

"Jaitleyji has thrown a challenge... We are ready for debate on January 2. Please decide a time," said the Leader of the Congress in the Lok Sabha, Mallikarjun Kharge.

Mr. Kharge got up from his seat and made these remarks soon after the Lok Sabha passed a Bill to give its approval to an additional gross expenditure of ₹85,948.86 crore during the current fiscal ending March 2019.

### Demand for JPC probe

When the Lok Sabha met after the lunch break, Mr. Kharge reiterated the party's demand for a Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) investigation into the Rafale



**Break from din:** Congress leader Mallikarjun Kharge speaking in the Lok Sabha on Monday. ■ PTI

deal. At this point, Finance Minister Arun Jaitley told Mr. Kharge that the Opposition should allow the discussion on the supplementary grants, and said the government was prepared to give a reply.

When Mr. Kharge accused the Finance Minister of "run-

ning away" from discussion, Mr. Jaitley hit back stating that a discussion on the Rafale deal would make it clear the Congress was "spreading lies over the deal".

When the House was about to be adjourned for the day, Mr. Kharge reminded Ms. Mahajan of the de-

mand for a debate and sought time for it.

"You keep your challenges to yourself. Don't challenge me," an angry Speaker retorted.

Congress members were shouting slogans on the Rafale deal through the day and during the Zero Hour at

noon. Mr. Kharge raised the demand for a JPC investigation once again, and asked why the government was not disclosing the price of the fighter jets.

UPA chairperson Sonia Gandhi was present in the House.

Home Minister Rajnath Singh intervened and said that repeating the "same lie again and again will not make it a truth". BJP members too countered the Congress members with loud protests.

Amid the din, BJP member Ravindra Kumar Pandey raised the instances of jobs not being provided under the MGNREGA in Jharkhand. Bhratruhari Mahtab of the Biju Janata Dal raised the issue of UPSC candidates with a non-English medium background being affected by the introduction of the Civil Service Aptitude Test (CSAT) in the Civil Services examination.

## Ex-BJP MP Phule eyes rival camp

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
LUCKNOW

After quitting the BJP, Savitribai Phule, the Member of Parliament from Bahraich in Uttar Pradesh, has triggered speculation that she could join the Samajwadi Party and emerge as the joint candidate of the anti-BJP alliance in 2019.

Ms. Phule called on SP chief Akhilesh Yadav in Lucknow on Saturday. Talking to *The Hindu* on Monday, she said she "will go to any extent" to stop Mr. Narendra Modi from coming to power. "I have not yet joined the SP," the MP said, adding she would support the "mahagathbandhan", a possible alliance of the SP-BSP-RLD.

She quit the BJP accusing it of plotting to finish the Constitution.

## India sore at blackout at envoy's house

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI

Power supply to the residence of an Indian diplomat in Islamabad was cut for nearly four hours last Tuesday, following which the Indian High Commission passed the triple talaq Bill, the JD(U) voted with the treasury benches.

In a note verbae to the Ministry, the Indian mission said there was no electrical fault at the residence of the second secretary, suggesting power was cut deliberately, the sources said.

The incident comes amid Pakistan not granting gas connections to the new residential building of the Indian High Commission despite repeated requests.

## JD(U) stance a worry for BJP

NDA ally objects to clause in the triple talaq Bill that prescribes a jail term

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Janata Dal (U) has reservations over the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Bill, 2018, also known as the triple talaq Bill.

According to top sources in the party, the JD(U) has issues with the criminalisation clause in the Bill which has a provision of three years' imprisonment in case of triple talaq.

Sources also said the party wanted stakeholders from the Muslim community to be consulted over the Bill.

This is a setback for the government as the JD(U) as an NDA ally is not fully back-



**Bump ahead:** The JD(U) stand is a setback for the government as it does not have the numbers in the Rajya Sabha. ■ PTI

ing the Bill, especially in the Rajya Sabha, where the numbers situation is precarious.

"Senior leaders of the par-

ty were not in Delhi today so we cannot say if the JD(U) will entirely go with the Opposition demand for referring it to a Select Committee

but we have serious reservations on the Bill," said a senior MP from the JD(U). The last time the government passed the triple talaq Bill, the JD(U) voted with the treasury benches.

**Not on the same page**  
Party sources maintain that there is nothing new in their differences with the BJP on certain issues. "We have already expressed our differences with the BJP over the Ram Mandir issue as well as others," said the source.

The Rajya Sabha was adjourned till Wednesday and the battle over the Bill is expected to begin again then.

## JPC clears its report on citizenship Bill

At Monday's meeting, all 13 BJP members were present but only six of the Opposition made it

SOBHANA K. NAIR  
NEW DELHI

The Joint Parliamentary Committee on the Citizenship Amendment Bill 2016, which proposes citizenship to persecuted minorities – Hindus, Jains, Sikhs, Parsis, Christians and Buddhists – from Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh, is likely to table its report on January 7 on the penultimate day of the winter session of Parliament as the panel on Monday cleared the report rejecting all amendments moved by the Opposition.

At Monday's meeting, out of 30 members, all the 13 BJP members were present. And only six Opposition members were present. The draft report will be circulated on January 3 and it will be tabled on January 7. The Opposition is now planning to file dissent notes to the joint

committee's report.

The report will clear the decks for the legislation to become a reality. The Bill proposes citizenship to six persecuted minorities – Hindus, Jains, Sikhs, Parsis, Christians and Buddhists – from Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh who came to India before 2014.

### Resentment in Assam

There has been a strong resistance to the Bill in the BJP-ruled Assam as it would pave the way for giving citizenship, mostly to illegal Hindu migrants from Bangladesh who came after March 1971, in violation of the Assam Accord of 1985. Around 40 lakh people in Assam have been excluded from the final draft of the National Register of Citizens published in July.

Rejected amendments include those moved by Trinamool Congress MP Saugata Roy to make the legislation religion- and country-neutral. Mr. Roy said the Bill should not limit itself to six religions. It should instead say that any person who leaves his country due to religious, linguistic and ethnic discrimination should be

eligible for Indian citizenship. He also moved that Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan should not be the only countries named in it, since "we have huge number of refugees from Sri Lanka and Myanmar too".

The Opposition was stumped when the committee under the chairmanship of BJP MP from Meerut, R-

jendra Agarwal, called for a meeting on a day's notice.

The two BJP members from Assam, Ramen Deka and Kamalika Prasad Tasa, have been maintaining a studied silence on the Bill in the meetings of the committee. The BJP government in Assam is fiercely opposed to the Bill. The BJP's ally Asom Gana Parishad too has been protesting against it and has threatened to walk out of the alliance if the Bill is passed.

The committee has cleared an amendment moved by BJP MP Meenakshi Lekhi seeking to drop legal proceedings against six persecuted minorities. The amendment, if accepted, could mean that Bangladeshi Hindus lodged in detention centres in Assam, facing deportation or declared illegal foreigners would get relief.

## Gandhis have deep ties with Michel: Shah

Citing ED submission, he attacks Cong.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

BJP president Amit Shah on Monday launched a frontal attack on the Congress over the Enforcement Directorate's submission to a Delhi court saying the alleged middleman in the AgustaWestland deal, Christian Michel, has named UPA chairperson Sonia Gandhi and Congress president Rahul Gandhi under interrogation.

Mr. Shah accused the Gandhi family of having a "time-tested and deep" friendship with Mr. Michel. In a series of tweets, Mr. Shah sought to know why Mr. Michel passed on the details of questioning on Ms. Gandhi, an apparent reference to the UPA chairperson, to his lawyer.

"Does anyone know why

Christian Michel passed on the details of questioning on Ms. Gandhi to his lawyer? Did he want them to be passed on to Ms. Gandhi herself? Why?" Mr. Shah asked, referring to a slip being passed by Mr. Michel to his lawyer Aljo Joseph.

"Michel's lawyer has admitted that the paper was indeed passed on to him," Mr. Shah said.

## HC stops Bhim Army from holding meet in Pune

But outfit's chief is free to visit Bhima-Koregaon village

SHOUMOJIT BANERJEE  
PUNE

A day ahead of the 201st anniversary of the battle of Bhima-Koregaon, the Bombay High Court on Monday denied permission to the Uttar Pradesh-based Bhim Army to hold a public meeting on the Bhima-Koregaon clashes in Pune.

It, however, imposed no restriction on the outfit's fiery chief Chandrashekhar Azad 'Ravan' from visiting the village of Bhima-Koregaon, 30 km from Pune city, on January 1, on the battle's anniversary.

Group clashes marred the bicentenary of the battle last January.

Officials from the Pune police, who were present in the court, submitted that



they were not detaining Mr. Azad in Pune, despite a significant security shield outside his room in a city hotel.

Mr. Azad was to address the 'Bhima-Koregaon Sangharsh Mahasabha' at the city's SSPMS grounds.

"It is surprising that the court's refusal rested on technicalities like obtaining 'clearance' from the SSPMS ground authorities. The court never mentioned any possible 'untoward situation' arising out of Mr. Azad's presence – as was hinted to us by authorities," Bhim Army's Pune district president Datta Pol said.



A jawan frisks people in Srinagar after the rifles went missing. ■ NISSAR AHMAD

### High-security zone

The four service rifles were found missing on Sunday from the guard room in the high-security zone of Jawahe Nagar after one of the four SPOs reported it to the police.

The police, which launched an investigation, did not rule out the possibility of the weapons landing with militant outfits.

On September 31,

## IN BRIEF

V.K. Yadav is new  
Railway Board Chairman

**NEW DELHI**  
V.K. Yadav, General Manager, South Central Railway, has been appointed the new Railway Board Chairman. Mr. Yadav takes over from Ashwani Lohani, who retired on Monday. He belongs to the 1980 batch of the Indian Railway Service of Electrical Engineers. Mr. Lohani was appointed Chairman after A.K. Mital resigned in August, 2017, following the derailment of the Kaifiyat Express in Uttar Pradesh.

Rahul appoints 10  
AICC spokespersons

**NEW DELHI**  
Congress President Rahul Gandhi has approved the appointment of 10 new national spokespersons of the AICC. The spokespersons are Rajya Sabha MP Syed Naseer Hussain, Pawan Khera, Jaiveer Shergill, Ragini Nayak, Gourav Vallabh, Rajiv Tyagi, Akhilesh Pratap Singh, Sunil Ahire, Hina Kaware (MLA) and Sravan Dasoju.

# 'Offence committed in line of duty'

While acquitting 22 accused in Sohrabuddin case, the judge said they acted under 'colour of office'

SONA SAIGAL  
MUMBAI

While acquitting 22 of those accused of the killing of Sohrabuddin Shaikh, Kausar Bi and Tulsiram Prajapati, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) court earlier this month said: "The alleged offence was committed by the accused persons in discharge of their official duty and under the colour of office; even if it is assumed that the accused persons acted in excess of their official duty, then also they are entitled to claim protection of Section 197 (prosecution of judges and public servants) of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC)."

## Entitled to acquittal

The Hindu has a copy of the 358-page judgment, which says: "It is clear that the accused who are police officials and who were found doing the act and deed in discharge of their official duty, are entitled for the benefit as contemplated under Section 197 of CrPC."

## When evidence fails

The special CBI judge looking into the Sohrabuddin Shaikh fake encounter case, while acquitted the 22 accused, ruled that "even if the accused persons acted in excess of their official duty, then also they are entitled to claim protection of Section 197 (prosecution of judges and public servants) of the CrPC." Key points from the judgment



The CBI headquarters in Delhi

**On official duty:** The accused, as seen from the material in the chargesheet, were certainly acting in the discharge of their official duties

**CBI's negligence:** The entire investigation was targeted to act upon a script to achieve the goal to anyhow implicate political leaders.... The negligence of CBI towards material part of investigation clearly indicates that they hurriedly completed the investigation

**Evidence & hostile witnesses:** Judge S.J.Sharma said, "The evidence could not withstand the judicial scrutiny of the Court... I had the occasion of seeing the deposition of witnesses before this Court..., their statements were wrongly recorded by the CBI"

**The killers:** "It is a matter of regret that there is the reported killing of Sohrabuddin and Tulsiram Prajapati, which is going unpunished... but then the law does not permit the Court to punish the accused on the basis of moral conviction or suspicion alone"

are entitled for acquittal."

In his last judgment, judge S.J. Sharma said: "The accused, as seen from the material in the chargesheet, were certainly acting in discharge of their official duties. There is reasonable

connection between the 'act' and discharge of official duty... The accused were doubtlessly a 'public servant' when the alleged offence is alleged to have been committed."

Justice Sharma also said:

"The evidence could not withstand the judicial scrutiny of the Court."

## Sudhir Bhargava is new CIC chief

He has been a Commissioner since 2015

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

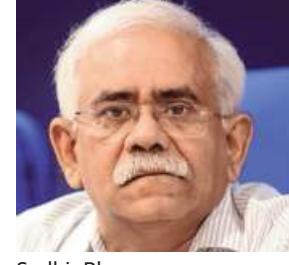
The government has appointed Sudhir Bhargava the new Chief Information Commissioner. Four new members have also been appointed to the Central Information Commission (CIC), taking its strength to seven. Four vacancies still remain.

The CIC is the highest appeal body under the Right to Information Act. It has been functioning with just three members since the former chief and several members completed their tenure last month.

Mr. Bhargava, a former Secretary to the Social Justice Ministry, will be sworn in by President Ram Nath Kovind on Tuesday. He has been a Commissioner since June 2015, and will take over as the ninth chief of the CIC. As all of his predecessors, he is a retired bureaucrat.

**New Commissioners**  
All four new commissioners are also retired bureaucrats. Yashwardhan Kumar Sinha was High Commissioner to the U.K. Vanaja N. Sarna was chief of the Central Board of Excise and Customs.

Suresh Chandra retired as Union Law Secretary earlier this year. Neeraj Kumar Gupta was Secretary in the Department of Investment

Sudhir Bhargava  
and Public Asset Management.

## Lack of transparency

Activists have slammed the government for a lack of transparency in the appointment process, as no details on the shortlist or the search committee have yet been made public. On December 13, the Supreme Court directed that such details be made available. "Once the commissioners take the oath of office, we will put the entire file on the process online. We have time until the next hearing date on January 22," a DoPT spokesperson said.

"What is the point of such post-facto information? The details should have been put out before the appointment was made to ensure transparency," said Anjali Bhadrawaj, co-convenor of the National Campaign for the People's Right to Information.

## Gujarat BJP chief tells Mistry to 'live in Pak'

For suggesting that border be opened

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
GANDHINAGAR

Gujarat BJP chief Jitu Vaghani on Monday asked senior Congress leader Madhusudan Mistry to "go and live" in Pakistan after the latter suggested that the India-Pakistan border at Suigam village in the State be opened to enable farmers to export their produce to the neighbouring country.

Hitting back, the Congress asked Mr. Vaghani to first explain why the BJP government at the Centre is "going soft" on Pakistan.

"Madhusudanbhai should go to Pakistan and live there," said Mr. Vaghani when asked to comment on the Congress leader's suggestion, which he had shared during a party rally held near Himmatnagar town in Sabarkantha district on December 29.

## For farmers' benefit

At that programme, the Raja Sabha MP from Gujarat had said that opening of the Indo-Pak. border at Suigam village in Banaskantha district would benefit farmers of three northern districts in the State.

"During my visit to Idar town some years ago, local farmers complained that their produce of tomatoes takes three days to reach the Wagah border [in Punjab]



Madhusudan Mistry

and lie there for another two days before reaching Pakistan. As a result, the farmers are not getting the desired price for the produce," Mr. Mistry had said.

Mr. Mistry further said he had told farmers in the past that the BJP government lacked vision.

Responding to Mr. Vaghani's barb at Mr. Mistry, Gujarat Congress spokesperson Manish Doshi said the BJP leader should first clear his party's stand on the "invitation extended by the Gujarat government to Pakistan for the upcoming Vibrant Gujarat Summit".

After the invitation was extended to Pakistan, office-bearers of the Gujarat Chamber of Commerce and Industry had claimed that it was only a "general circular" meant for around 285 global trade bodies, and the final invitation will be sent only after scrutiny.

## LS passes medical council Bill

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI

The Lok Sabha on Monday passed the Indian Medical Council (Amendment) Bill to allow a panel of eminent professionals to run the scam-tainted Medical Council of India (MCI) so that medical education can be regulated in the best manner.

The Bill seeks to replace an ordinance issued in September 2018.

Health Minister Jagat Prakash Nadda said this Bill superseded the MCI and the powers of the council had been vested in a Board of Governors (BoG). The BoG will have all eminent personalities and include directors of AIIMS and PG, Chandigarh. This board will continue to perform till a council is constituted, according to Mr. Nadda.

Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot has also handed over the Congress party's manifesto to the Chief Secretary with the direction that it should be treated as the State government's policy document. This Bill to replace the MCI with the National Medical Commission is pending in Parliament. "This Bill has been issued so that medical education can be regulated in the best manner," he said.

## Congress reverses BJP's decisions in Rajasthan

Move by government wins praise from civil society groups

MOHAMMED IQBAL  
JAIPUR

The Congress government's move, in its first Cabinet meeting here, to reverse some controversial decisions of the previous Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) regime in Rajasthan gives indication that the ruling party is readying for the 2019 Lok Sabha election. The Cabinet's prompt decision has come in for praise from civil society groups.

The Cabinet has taken a slew of decisions, ranging from the elimination of educational qualification for Panchayati Raj elections, the reopening of universities and removal of Deendayal Upadhyaya's logo from official documents to direct elections to the Mayor's post and the appointment of a committee on eligibility for the waiver of farmers' loans.

Health Minister Raghu Sharma said that the government would review all decisions taken in the past six months. Minister of State for

Ashok Gehlot  
Education Govind Singh Dosara has announced a review of school textbooks and other reference materials that were revised by the BJP.

The government has abolished the criteria of educational qualification of candidates for Panchayati Raj bodies, introduced by the BJP regime through an Ordinance in 2014, to ensure that each citizen gets the right to contest. The People's Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL) has welcomed the move, saying it had done away with a "highly discriminatory" provision that had led to the exclusion of 73% of the popula-

## Government of Kerala Published Tenders from 24-12-2018 to 30-12-2018

## Commissionerate of Land Revenue

Tender ID: 2018\_CLR\_248445\_2 \* Joint Commissioner \*

Supply and Installation of 5 KVAUPS \* Closing Date: 07-Jan-2019 \* PAC: Rs12987450

Tender ID: 2018\_CLR\_258137\_1 \* Joint Commissioner \*

Digitization of land records \* Closing Date: 12-Jan-2019 \*

PAC: Rs13000000

Visit <https://etenders.kerala.gov.in> for more details.

Ro.No:24-30/Dec/2018/PRD/(N)12

Issued By P.R.O(Water)  
Advt. No. J.S.V.640/2018-19

DEHLI JAL BOARD: GOVT. OF NCT DELHI  
OFFICE OF EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (PROJECT)WATER-II  
ROOM No.501, VARUNALA PHASE-I, 1, KAROL BAGH, NEW DELHI-110005,  
Telephone No.:011-2355473; E-mail address: eepw2.djb@nic.in

NIT No.03(2018-19)(EE)(Project)W-II

Name of the Work

Type of Contract

Bid Security/Earnest Money (Rs.)

Completion Period

Date of Issue of NIT

Last Date and Time for Issue of Bid Documents

Bill of Quantity (BOQ)

13.60 Crore

Amount of Bank Guarantee in favour of Delhi Jal Board

i) Construction Period:05 years

ii) Preparatory Period : 6 months

iii) O&M during construction period : 4.5 years

iv) O&M after construction period : 5 years

29/12/2018

26/02/2019 at 15:00 Hours

The Cost of work will be financed out of the Proceed of the ODA loan extended for the project by JICA and bidding procedure shall be in accordance with the guidelines for procurement under JICA ODA Loans.

Further details in this regard can be seen at "[www.delhijalboard.nic.in](http://www.delhijalboard.nic.in)" under "Expression of Interest" Link

EE(Project) Water-II

Issued By P.R.O(Water)  
Advt. No. J.S.V.640/2018-19

RPN/PR-434/2018

S.E. (Contracts-I)

Online e-Bid is invited in two parts for following item/works:

NIB No. RPVN/EHV/BN-9018001817, UBN-VPN1819WS0B02294: MODIFICATION OF EXISTING 220 KV D/C BEAWAR-BILAR & BEAWAR-RAS LINE AT BANGARAM (BEAWAR) FOR RAISING HEIGHT ON DFC DEPOSITS ACROSS LOC-344/4-5 (DFCC DEPOSITS WORK). Other details of NIB are available on website <http://rpvn.vsnl.com> and <http://vsnl.vsnl.com>. Bidder will have to obtain Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) as per IT Act2000 to sign their electronic bid. The offers which are not digitally signed will not be accepted. Extension or amendment, if any, will be uploaded on <http://energy.rajarajan.gov.in/vpn1>, <http://ppp.rajarajan.gov.in> and <http://proc.rajarajan.gov.in> website only.

Raj Samvad/C/18/4947

RPN/PR-434/2018

S.E. (Contracts-I)

On line e-Bid is invited in two parts for following item/works:

NIB No. RPVN/EHV/BN-9018001817, UBN-VPN1819WS0B02294: MODIFICATION OF EXISTING 220 KV D/C BEAWAR-BILAR & BEAWAR-RAS LINE AT BANGARAM (BEAWAR) FOR RAISING HEIGHT ON DFC DEPOSITS ACROSS LOC-344/4-5 (DFCC DEPOSITS WORK). Other details of NIB are available on website <http://rpvn.vsnl.com> and <http://vsnl.vsnl.com>. Bidder will have to obtain Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) as per IT Act2000 to sign their electronic bid. The offers which are not digitally signed will not be accepted. Extension or amendment, if any, will be uploaded on <http://energy.rajarajan.gov.in/vpn1>, <http://ppp.rajarajan.gov.in> and <http://proc.rajarajan.gov.in> website only.

Raj Samvad/C/18/4947

RPN/PR-434/2018

S.E. (Contracts-I)

Interested agencies may submit their application to the Managing Director, Cochin International Airport Ltd., Kochi Airport (PO), 683111 or on before 07/01/2019 for prequalification.

Managing Director

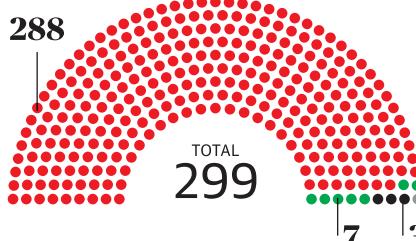
Online e-Bid is invited in two parts for following item/works:

NIB No. RPVN/EHV/BN-9018001817, UBN-VPN1819WS0B02294: MODIFICATION OF EXISTING 220 KV D/C BEAWAR-BILAR & BEAWAR-RAS LINE AT BANGARAM (BEAWAR) FOR RAISING HEIGHT ON DFC DEPOSITS ACROSS LOC-344/4-5 (DFCC DEPOSITS WORK). Other details of NIB are available on website <http://rpvn.vsnl.com> and <http://vsnl.vsnl.com>. Bidder will have to obtain Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) as per IT Act2000 to sign their electronic bid. The offers which are not digitally signed will not be accepted. Extension or amendment, if any, will be uploaded on <http://energy.rajarajan.gov.in/vpn1>, <http://ppp.rajarajan.gov.in> and <http://proc.rajarajan.gov.in> website only.

**Dominant win**

In an election marred by violence and allegations of repression against the Opposition, the Awami League won a thumping majority to return to power for a third consecutive term in Bangladesh

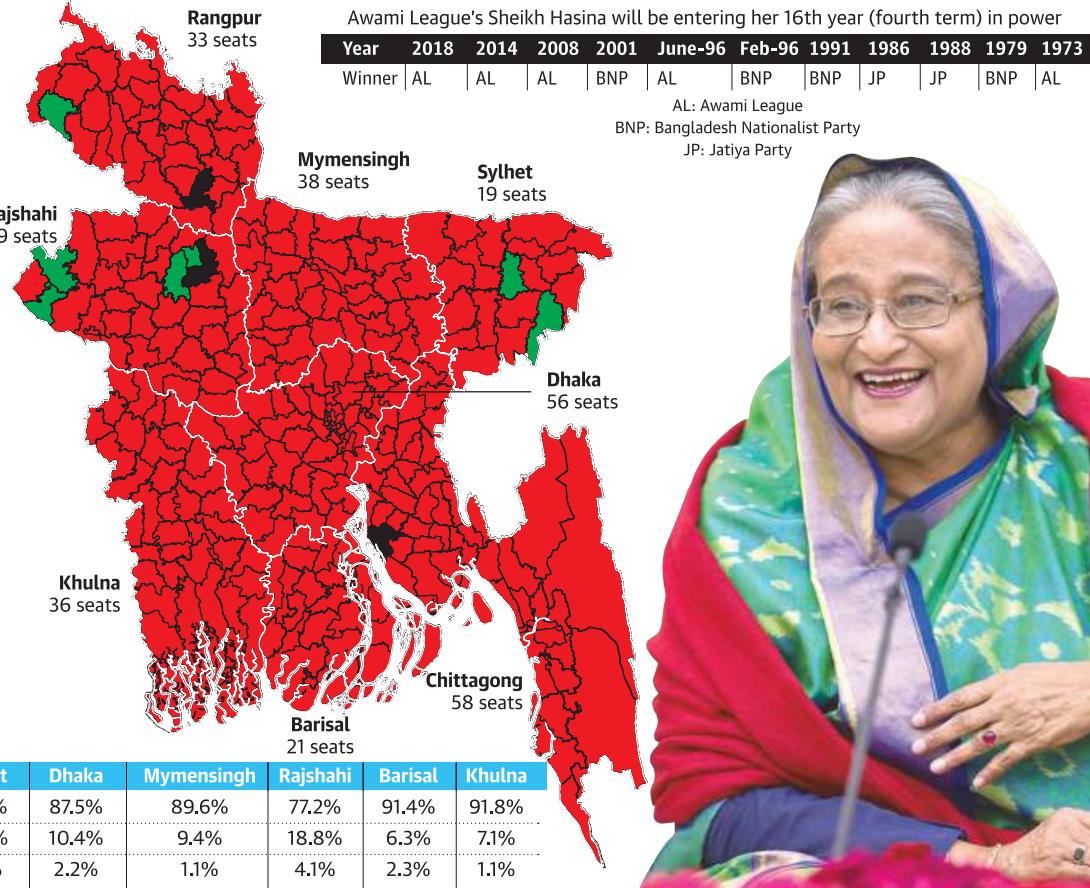
- Awami League-led coalition (Grand Alliance)
- BNP-led coalition (Jatiya Oikya Front)
- Others
- Re-poll to be held



By winning 96% of the seats across regions, the AL-led coalition has managed to register its most emphatic victory since the formation of Bangladesh in 1971

**REGION-WISE VOTE SHARE**

Alliance	Rangpur	Chittagong	Sylhet	Dhaka	Mymensingh	Rajshahi	Barisal	Khulna
Grand alliance	72.7%	83.4%	67.9%	87.5%	89.6%	77.2%	91.4%	91.8%
Oikya Front	23.5%	10.9%	29.9%	10.4%	9.4%	18.8%	6.3%	7.1%
Others	3.9%	5.6%	2.2%	2.2%	1.1%	4.1%	2.3%	1.1%



Compiled by VIGNESH RADHAKRISHNAN, SRINIVAS RAMANI



# Election was free and fair: Hasina

The Opposition has to blame itself for its debacle... my govt. will work for all, says Awami League leader

**SUVIJIT BAGCHI**

DHAKA  
Defending Sunday's parliamentary election, which the Opposition called "farical", Awami League chief and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on Monday blamed the Opposition for its electoral debacle.

She said her government's pro-people policies helped the party sweep the poll – the Awami League won more than 96% of seats in the National Parliament. The election was "free and fair", said Ms. Hasina.

"They [Opposition] have put up four to five candidates per seat and there were genuinely winnable candidates among them," said the Prime Minister. "There were winnable leaders, like Jiaur Rahman from

Dhaka Dhamrai. But they were not made candidates. How can you get more seats if you do not have proper candidates?" she asked.

"Actually, they were defeated due to their own fault. They are responsible for their defeat... only a few of their candidates were active and they refused to engage in propaganda [campaign] properly," said Ms. Hasina.

**'Terrorist activities'**

Among the other "problems" of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and the Jamaat-e-Islami, there were routine terrorist activities, which pushed them away from the people, the Prime Minister said.

"The BNP-Jamaat set fire on 3,900 vehicles in 2013-2015 and 500 people were

killed. Vehicles and trains were torched. [These are] terrorist activities and people rejected such activities," she said.

Ms. Hasina also gave a detailed account of the good work done by her government and said it will continue with the Awami League's model of development. "Our poverty has been reduced from 40 to 21%, per capita income has gone up to \$1,751 and growth is 7.86%." The fruits of this development has gone into the grassroots and people voted for us."

She repeatedly emphasised on the need to strengthen democracy. "Without a democratic system, we can't make progress and I believe in that. Accountability too is important and we do need to approach people in every

five years... and they do have the right to criticise us," Ms. Hasina said.

**'Fabricated cases'**

Answering a question on the fairness of the Election Commission, Ms. Hasina said that the Commission is "free to investigate" any kind of malpractices if complaints are lodged. Asked about reports that a ballot box was found outside a polling station in Chittagong, the Prime Minister said "such cases are fabricated". Pointing to the cancellation of polling at 22 stations out of 40,000 centres, she said "such cases are less than 1%".

She added that "there won't be any discrimination [even if one belongs to the Opposition] as far as her developmental projects are concerned... I will work for all."

However, Ms. Hasina did not make any firm commitment about reaching out to the Opposition. Giving the example of India, she said every political party needs a face. "In 2014, the Congress did not have one and they suffered in the elections, so did the Opposition [in Bangladesh]... they did not have a face."

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee congratulated Ms. Hasina on her victory. "Spoke to Sheikh Hasina Ji and congratulated her on the resounding victory in the Bangladesh elections. Wished her the very best for the tenure ahead," Mr. Modi tweeted.

**REUTERS**

WASHINGTON

U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren, a progressive Democrat, said on Monday that she has formed an exploratory committee to run for President in 2020.

The Massachusetts Senator, known as a liberal firebrand in her party, released a video in which she outlines her vision of a path to opportunity for all Americans, not just the wealthy.

"Every person in America should be able to work hard, play by the same set of rules, & take care of themselves & the people they love," she said in a Twitter post. "That's what I'm fighting for, & that's why I'm launching an exploratory committee for President. I need you with me."

**U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren. ■ REUTERS**

has been a strong voice in the Senate on financial issues and a self-described defender of the ordinary American against powerful interests.

Those themes were reflected Monday on her website, which portrays her as a product of the American dream that has slipped out of reach for too many Americans. "Elizabeth grew up on the ragged edge of the middle class in Oklahoma and became a teacher, a law professor, and a U.S. Senator because America invested in kids like her," it says.

Earlier this month, Julian Castro, 44, who served under President Barack Obama, said he was forming an exploratory committee and was and would announce his intentions on January 12.

# Senator Elizabeth Warren hints at 2020 presidential bid

Forms an exploratory committee for possible candidacy



U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren. ■ REUTERS

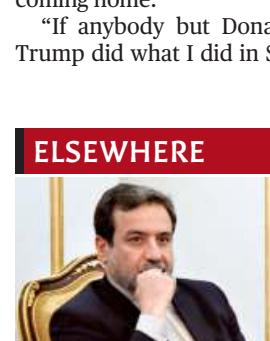
# A BOOK THAT DOES ALL THE TALKING

Table Talk is a collection of conversations with leaders like N Chandrasekaran, Shiv Nadar, Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw and many more. So, if you're looking for some thought leadership or just an interesting read, this one's for you.



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**ELSEWHERE****'Taliban delegation visited Tehran for talks'**

TEHRAN  
Iran said on Monday that the Afghan Taliban has visited Tehran for a second round of peace talks in just a few days. "Yesterday [Sunday], a delegation of Taliban [was] in Tehran and lengthy negotiations were held with Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister... [Abbas] Araghchi [in picture]," said spokesman Bahram Ghasemi. AFP

**American held over espionage, says Russia**

MOSCOW  
Russia said on Monday that its security services had detained a U.S. citizen in Moscow accused of spying, the latest in a series of espionage cases between Russia and the West. The FSB domestic security service said the American was arrested on Friday "while carrying out an act of espionage". AFP

# Mahinda Rajapaksa warns against separatist tendencies

Ex-President hints that TNA could try to win more autonomy



Sri Lanka's former President Mahinda Rajapaksa. ■ REUTERS

TNA's support to Mr. Wickremesinghe to end the recent constitutional and political crisis.

Mr. Rajapaksa was also hinting that the TNA would make use of the support to win political autonomy through devious means when Mr. Wickremesinghe introduces a new Constitution. "This country cannot be separated or divided, all must work in unison," Mr.

Rajapaksa said.

The TNA had backed President Maithripala Sirisena's victory in 2015 and anticipated action on introduction of a new Constitution that guarantees political freedom for the Tamils in the Northern and Eastern Provinces.

**Devolution of powers**

The TNA demands devolution of powers in the new Constitution to resolve ethnic issues. Sri Lanka's Tamil minority seeks a power devolution arrangement to give autonomy to the traditional Tamil regions in the north and east of the island.

The Tamils had stayed away from both the previous Constitution-making processes in 1972 and 1978. They had demanded 'self-determination' in 1976, which was later converted into a bloody military campaign by the LTTE.

# CCTV footage shows people carrying 'Khashoggi's body parts'

Images show men transporting bags near Saudi consulate

**AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
ANKARA**

A Turkish television station has broadcast CCTV footage showing men carrying cases and bags which it says contained slain journalist Jamal Khashoggi's body parts.

The images shown on A-Haber television late on Sunday feature three men carrying five suitcases and two large black bags into the home of the Saudi Consulate in Istanbul.

He was strangled before he was cut up into pieces by a team of 15 Saudis sent to Istanbul for the killing, according to Turkish officials.

The consul and the residence were searched by the Turkish authorities in killing that has tested Ri-

yadh's relations with the West. Citing unnamed Turkish sources, A-Haber said Khashoggi's dismembered body was inside the cases and bags.

Khashoggi was killed on October 2 shortly after entering the kingdom's consulate in what Riyadh called a "rogue" operation.

Saudi Arabia has also repeatedly rejected Turkish demands to extradite suspects connected to the murder of the journalist, a critic of the Crown Prince.

A-Haber said the bags and suitcases were put into a minibus which travelled the short distance from the consulate to a garage at the residence. The men are then seen taking them inside.

MARKET WATCH		
	31-12-2018	% CHANGE
Sensex	36,068	-0.02
US Dollar	69.77	0.25
Gold	32,270	-1.13
Brent oil	52.93	1.61

NIFTY 50		
	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	387.00	0.30
Asian Paints	1373.05	7.05
Axius Bank	619.90	-5.15
Bajaj Auto	2720.15	2.65
Bajaj Finserv	6476.95	-25.95
Bajaj Finance	2645.15	10.35
Bharti Airtel	312.50	-4.05
BPCL	362.75	-0.20
Cipla	519.50	-2.50
Coal India	240.75	-1.55
Dr Reddys Lab	2616.50	-5.40
Eicher Motors	23158.35	34.25
GAIL (India)	360.30	4.00
Gasim Ind	825.60	1.00
HCL Tech	964.35	6.00
HDFC	1968.35	-11.60
HDFC Bank	2121.70	-1.20
Hero MotoCorp	3104.25	-18.35
Hindalco	226.20	2.70
HPLC	253.25	-2.65
Hind Unilever	1819.65	-2.40
Indiabulls HFL	853.85	4.60
ICICI Bank	360.15	-0.60
IndusInd Bank	1599.30	16.05
Bharti Infralet	259.00	-4.00
Infosys	658.95	2.00
Indian Oil Corp	137.05	-1.15
ITC	281.65	-0.60
JSW Steel	206.75	8.65
Kotak Bank	1256.50	15.15
L&T	1437.55	-1.85
M&M	803.85	0.30
Maurti Suzuki	7465.50	-40.05
NTPC	149.05	-0.80
ONGC	149.90	-0.60
PowerGrid Corp	198.65	1.60
Reliance Ind	1121.25	-4.30
State Bank	295.90	1.10
Sun Pharma	430.50	5.30
Tata Motors	172.70	1.85
Tata Steel	521.05	8.20
TCS	1893.05	-3.00
Tech Mahindra	723.15	9.15
Titan	931.00	8.30
UltraTech Cement	3990.95	-14.00
UPL	758.25	-0.15
Vedanta	202.20	2.80
Wipro	330.85	0.80
YES Bank	181.80	0.35
Zee Entertainment	476.45	2.00

EXCHANGE RATES		
	TT BUY	TT SELL
CURRENCY		
US Dollar	69.76	70.08
Euro	79.82	80.20
British Pound	88.34	88.77
Japanese Yen (100)	63.18	63.48
Chinese Yuan	10.15	10.19
Swiss Franc	71.11	71.44
Singapore Dollar	51.06	51.30
Canadian Dollar	51.11	51.35
Malaysian Ringgit	16.79	16.88

Source: Indian Bank

BULLION RATES CHENNAI		
	Dec 31 rates in rupees with previous rates in parentheses	
Retail Silver (1g)	415.13	(413.13)
22 ct gold (1 g)	3017. (3016)	

# NPA ratios improve, but are still high: Das

Public sector banks need governance reforms: RBI report

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
MUMBAI

The gross non-performing asset ratio (GNPA) of commercial banks improved to 10.8% in September from 11.5% in March and is set to improve further to 10.3%, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) said in its Financial Stability Report on Monday.

This was the first half yearly decline in the ratio since September 2015.

"After a prolonged period of stress, the banking sector appears to be on course to recover as the load of impaired assets recedes; the first half-yearly decline in gross NPA ratio since September 2015 and improving provision coverage ratio, being positive signals," RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das wrote in the foreword to the report.

"Stress test results suggest further improvement in NPA ratio, though its current level remains still high for comfort," Mr. Das said.

The net NPA ratio also fell to 5.3% in September 2018 as against 6.2% in March 2018, RBI said in the report.

GNPAs of state-run banks improved to 14.8% in September 2018 from 15.2% in March 2018, while private sector banks' gross NPAs fell to 3.8% in September 2018 from 4% in March 2018.

Under the baseline scenario, the GNPA ratio of all banks may come down to 10.3% by March 2019 from 10.8% in September 2018, the report said.

The Governor acknowledged that some of the cases referred for resolution under the bankruptcy framework have lagged time-lines, but added that the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) will strengthen credit discipline.

"A time-bound resolution of impaired assets will go a long way in unclogging the credit pipeline thus improv-

## Cautious optimism

- After prolonged period of stress, banking sector appears to be on course to recover as load of impaired assets recedes
- Stress test results suggest further improvement in NPA ratio, though present level is still high for comfort
- Need to rebalance excessive credit growth, especially those funded by short-term liabilities
- Uptick in gross fixed capital formation along with oil price dip is positive for sustained growth
- First half-yearly decline in GNPA seen since September 2015
- GNPAs of public sector lenders improved to 14.8% in September 2018 from 15.2% in March 2018

proved, loan loss ratio of banks also increased to 5.1%.

The capital adequacy ratio (CAR) of state-run banks however declined from 11.7% to 11.3%, the report said.

## PCA framework helps

The restrictions imposed on 11 public sector banks under the prompt corrective action (PCA) framework has helped in reducing contagion losses on the banking system in case these lenders fail, the report said.

While Mr. Das noted that the banking sector is on "course to recovery," he added public sector banks need governance reforms.

The Governor acknowledged that some of the cases referred for resolution under the bankruptcy framework have lagged time-lines, but added that the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) will strengthen credit discipline.

"A time-bound resolution of impaired assets will go a long way in unclogging the credit pipeline thus improv-



ing the allocative efficiency in the economy," he said.

Mr. Das said the shift in credit intermediation from banks to non-banks has given the corporate sector a diverse choice of finance instruments but added non banking finance companies need to be more prudent on risk-taking. He also underlined the need to rebalance excessive credit growth, especially the one funded by short-term liabilities.

The high credit growth is "not stability enhancing," Mr. Das said. "The framework for oversight of financial conglomerates also requires closer attention."

On economic growth, Mr. Das said the slowdown in GDP growth to 7.1% is slower than expected, but pointed out to an uptick in gross fixed capital formation along with the dip in crude oil prices as a positive for sustained growth going forward.

Globally, the threat of trade war, which would have weakened growth prospects, has softened, he said.

While asset quality im-

# General elections, biggest overhang for equities in 2019: report

However, volatility due to political uncertainty can be an opportunity for investors to put money into equities for long term gains

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT		
MUMBAI		

Indian equities to deliver positive returns in 2019 but with "significant volatility" as the risk premiums could rise further to factor in political uncertainty as the general elections near in mid-2019.

It further states that while macro environment is still supportive for equities with robust high double-digit earnings growth expected, factors like rising margin pressures, stretched valuations relative to bonds, moderating flows and tighter liquidity are the potential risk factors.

The year 2018 saw the benchmark Sensex gain

about 5.91% or a little over 2,000 points. This was after it touched a new all-time high of 38,989.65 on August 29.

Incidentally, the gains of 2018 are much lower than the nearly 28% gain or 7,430 points that the benchmark registered in 2017. Meanwhile, the broader Nifty was up a marginal 331.85 points or 3.15% in 2018.

**Coalition government**

According to ICICI Securities, one of the key risks for the market in 2019 would be the possibility of a weak and unstable coalition govern-

ment, which could slow down economic growth though the brokerage believes that domestic macro

stability will be a key catalyst for market performance in the year.

Global financial major

# RBI reserves ratio among the highest'

Ratios of central banks of only South Africa and Russia are higher, says study

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

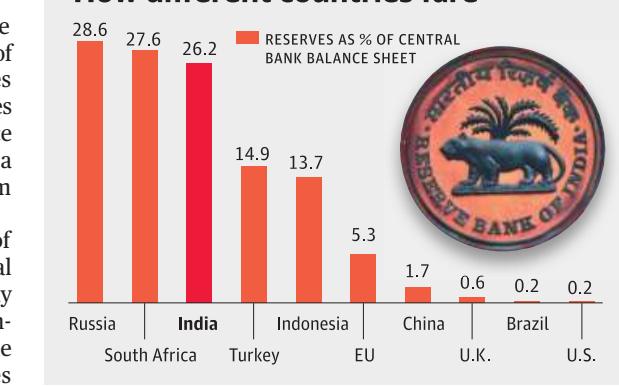
Analysis of the balance sheets of the central banks of 10 comparable economies shows that the RBI's reserves as a percentage of its balance sheet is among the highest, a report by consultancy firm Quantum Advisors found.

However, the bulk of these reserves are notional and thus their value can only be unlocked when the underlying assets are sold, the report added. This makes transferring the excess reserves to the government all the more difficult.

Finance Minister Arun Jaitley on Monday said that the government was not seeking the RBI's surplus to meet its fiscal deficit needs.

"This government has the best track record than any other previous government in managing the fiscal deficit," Mr. Jaitley said in the

## How different countries fare



Source: Quantum Advisors' analysis of annual reports of respective central banks

"On comparing their balance sheets, you do notice that the RBI indeed has higher reserves," the report said.

## Revaluation of assets

"But... the bulk of those reserves are arising out of the revaluation of its assets, i.e over the years as the rupee depreciated against the U.S. dollar, Great Britain Pound, euro etc, gold and foreign assets held by the RBI when translated into the current rupee value, leads to an increase in its asset value."

"For example, 100 billion invested in 2010 at USD/INR of 45, valued today at USD/INR of 70, will show a valuation gain when reported in INR terms," the report added.

The other two BRICS nations, China and Brazil, have reserve ratios of 1.7% and 0.2%, respectively.

## Fourfold jump in bank frauds: RBI

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
MUMBAI

There has been a fourfold increase in the quantum of money swindled by fraudsters from banks in the last four years, the Reserve Bank (RBI) said on Monday.

Looking at the progress in the first half of the ongoing fiscal, the pace of frauds seems to be continuing on the upward trajectory, RBI data showed.

In the financial stability report, the RBI said 5,917 frauds involving an amount of ₹41,167 crore were reported by the banks in fiscal year 2017-18, as against 4,306 frauds entailing an amount

## IN BRIEF

**HDFC raises home loan rate by 10 basis points**

**MUMBAI** Mortgage financier HDFC has increased the home loan rate by the 10 basis points (bps) with effect from January 1. For loans upto ₹30 lakh, the new rate will be 8.95% and for between ₹30 lakh and ₹75 lakh, it will be 9.10%. For loans over ₹75 lakh, interest rate will be 9.15%. Interest rates for women borrowers will be 5 basis points lower than the above rates.

**RCom, Jio extend asset sale pact validity**

**NEW DELHI** Reliance Communications and Reliance Jio announced that they have extended to June, 28, 2019, the terms of an agreement for the sale of wireless assets of the Anil Ambani-owned firm. The move comes at a time when Reliance Communication's spectrum sale deal is waiting for clearance from the Telecom Department. Senior officials of RCom and Jio had met the Telecom Secretary recently to discuss outstanding issues. PT

**Threefold rise in fund raising via NCDs in 2018**

**NEW DELHI** Indian companies raised over ₹29,300 crore by issuing non-convertible debentures (NCDs) to retail investors in 2018 to meet their business requirements, representing a threefold surge compared to the preceding year. NCDs are loan-linked bonds that cannot be converted into stocks and usually offer higher interest rates than convertible. According to SEBI data, companies mobilised ₹9,779 crore from this route last year. PT

# Eight new unicorns emerge in 2018

PE funding touches high, Flipkart deal helps offset year-end slowdown, says Venture Intelligence

**PEERZADA ABRAR**  
**BENGALURU**

Private Equity (PE) investments in India rose to the highest-ever level of \$33.1 billion in 2018, across 720 transactions, according to data from research firm Venture Intelligence.

PE investments had already surpassed the previous high – \$24.3 billion across 734 deals in 2017 – in the first nine months of 2018.

The huge investments, including venture capital funding in consumer Internet and mobile start-ups such as Swiggy and Byju's towards the year-end, boosted the total 2018 vault by 36% year-on-year. This data excludes the PE investments in real estate.

"The mid-year Walmart-Flipkart deal clearly re-ener-



**Revving up:** IT and ITES firms accounted for 32% of PE investments, raking in \$10.6 bn in 383 deals. ■ NAGARA GOPAL

gised international investors' appetite for mega bets in Indian Internet and mobile companies," said Arun Natarajan, founder, Venture Intelligence.

This has helped offset the slowdown in investments in

sectors such as financial services, manufacturing and infrastructure towards the year-end triggered by "nervousness in the public markets and the IL&FS scare," said Mr. Natarajan.

The year saw the emer-

gence of eight new 'unicorns,' or start-ups valued at more than \$1 billion, according to Venture Intelligence. These include hotel chain OYO, online insurance start-up PolicyBazaar, food delivery start-up Swiggy, Paytm Mall and education tech firm Byju's in the business-to-consumer segment.

**Udan, the fastest**

Apart from payments gateway BillDesk, the business-to-business entrants included software-as-a-service start-up Freshworks. Two-year-old business-to-business e-commerce platform Udaan became the fastest firm to reach the unicorn status.

IT & ITES companies accounted for 32% of the PE investment pie in 2018, attract-

ing \$10.6 billion across 383 deals. Swiggy raised \$1 billion in a funding round led by South African conglomerate Naspers. Japan's SoftBank led \$1 billion fund infusion into OYO. Digital payments firm Paytm raised \$445 million from SoftBank and China's Alibaba for its e-commerce business, Paytm Mall. Its parent company One97 Communications Limited also raised \$356 million from billionaire investor Warren Buffett's Berkshire Hathaway Inc.

The other large-ticket IT & ITES investments this year included the \$300 million attracted by BillDesk. PolicyBazaar raised \$236 million in a funding round led by SoftBank and Swiggy's rival Zomato raised \$410 million across two rounds.



**Aiming high:** About 400 textile units were set up in Solapur and the State plans to raise this to 2,000 by 2022. ■ M. BALAJI

## Maharashtra woos textile investors

Seeks to wean firms away from south

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
**MUMBAI**

Maharashtra has stepped up efforts to woo investment in the textiles sector from Tamil Nadu and Karnataka where integrated textile chains are grappling with several problems, including power shortage and niggles from the pollution control boards.

Textiles Minister Subhash Deshmukh has urged investors to invest in Maharashtra, which is planning to make Solapur the uniform and textiles hub of India.

To showcase the potential, the State government, along with Solapur Garment Manufacturing Association, is organising a three-day uniform, garment and fabric manufacturers' fair in Bengaluru from January 8.

In the last three years, since Solapur was projected as a uniform and textiles hub, about 400 textiles units have been set up in Solapur and the State government plans to raise this number to 2,000 by 2022.

"Our move is to give an equal opportunity to all stakeholders from the textiles industry to become a part of

it," Mr. Deshmukh said in a statement.

Satish Pawar, director, Solapur garments manufacturers association, said the city was gaining significance for garments trade and the uniform & garment exhibition would help it further.

The uniform manufacturing industry in India has an aggregate revenue of ₹18,000 crore, out of which ₹10,000 crore is generated from the manufacturing industry.

The rest ₹8,000 crore is through supplies to schools in the form of direct sales by local retailers.

Solapur is witnessing higher demand for school uniforms, kids garments, gents and ladies dresses because of easy availability of transportation, labour and raw materials," Mr. Deshmukh noted.

The government, in its new textiles policy in February last, announced a power tariff of ₹3 per unit for cooperative cotton mills and ₹2 per unit for power looms, cloth processing garment and hosiery units. The State had earmarked ₹100 crore for this purpose.

## Textiles, clothing eye revival in 2019

Industry has been impacted by muted demand, both global and domestic

**M. SOUNDARIYA PREETHA**  
**COIMBATORE**

The textile and clothing industry will end the year 2018 on a mixed note in both exports and the domestic markets, while expecting a revival in 2019.

"The year 2018 has been better than 2017, but not so good," said Sanjay K. Jain, chairman, Confederation of Indian Textile Industry. International demand was largely muted because of the threat of U.S.-China trade war and uncertainties. The domestic market did not pick up as expected.

**Stagnation in exports**

After almost four years of exports stagnating at about ₹37 billion, textile and clothing sector is looking forward to growth this financial year.



Exports grew 7% between April and November.

Exports between April and November this fiscal grew 7% in rupee terms compared with the year-earlier period though the growth was almost nil in dollar terms.

"This financial year, maybe, we will cross it marginally. But, we need a push," he said.

India's share in the global textile and clothing trade remains at 4%-5%. It is all a matter of competitiveness. India's competitiveness should improve, he added.

Apparel exports so far this financial year is down 12%. Annual apparel exports from India is nearly ₹17 billion, said A. Sakthivel, vice-chairman, Apparel Export Promotion Council.

It is ₹34 billion from Bangladesh, ₹21 billion from Vietnam, and ₹11 billion from Cambodia.

"These countries have duty-free access to many markets. "We (apparel) are not able to give competitive prices in the international market. We have a price disadvantage. We are yet to come out of the GST effect. The rupee value fluctuation is also high. The government should consider increasing the ROSL (Rebate of State Levies) rate," he says.

**Rising imports**

What is a matter of concern is increasing imports. Import of yarn, fabric and made-ups rose 13% in April-November this year, compared with the same period last year, Mr. Jain added.

With liquidity issues and stricter norms under Amended Technology Upgradation Fund Scheme (ATUFS), investments have been slow. Margins are under stress and bank finance is difficult to come. The ATUFS norms should be relaxed and liquidity should improve for investments to revive in the sector, say industry sources.

## IL&FS puts properties up for sale

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**  
**NEW DELHI**

Debt-laden IL&FS Group has further put up its properties for sale to garner funds in order to settle loan dues. It has invited bids from interested buyers for properties (commercial and residential) in Mumbai and one in Kolkata.

Properties on sale include a 1,376-square-feet residential unit located at upscale Malabar Hill, besides three commercial properties in Mumbai and commercial space in Kolkata.

The embattled infrastructure and financial sector major has asked bidders to submit their bids on or before January 15.

■ P. S. RAJENDRA

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Father' Rohit flies home



Rohit Sharma.

■ RYAN PIERSE/GETTY IMAGES

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT MELBOURNE

Rohit Sharma has left for home after the third Test to attend to his wife who has given birth to a baby girl.

The middle-order batsman, who notched up a half-century in the Indian first innings in the Boxing Day Test, will not play the fourth Test in Sydney, beginning January 3, a BCCI release said.

India has not named a replacement. Rohit will join the Indian ODI squad ahead of its series here starting on Jan. 12.

# Bumrah – the evolution of a match-winner

Unleashed into the Test arena at the right time, the paceman leaves the men facing him with physical and psychological scars

## OZ CHALLENGE

S. DINAKAR  
MELBOURNE

In November last year, India coach Ravi Shastri and bowling coach Bharat Arun had an important decision to make. They were convinced the Jasprit Bumrah was ready for Test cricket but were waiting for the right occasion to blood him.

Would Bumrah play in the three-Test home series against Sri Lanka that preceded the campaign in South Africa? Bumrah was held back.

It was felt the pitches in South Africa, with juice in them for the pacemen, would enable Bumrah get off to a sound start in Tests. And instilling belief in the youngster was crucial.

Both Shastri and Arun realised Bumrah's uniqueness; batsmen were picking him late. He had to be preserved for bigger battles, wrapped in cotton wool.

**Well begun...**  
And, when Bumrah was unleashed against South Africa early January, 2018, he made an immediate impact in Cape

Town. His first scalp in Tests was a big one. A.B. de Villiers attempted to drive a full length ball that came in and played on.

In the second innings, Bumrah dismissed Faf du Plessis with a vicious delivery that kicked off a length. And Quinton de Kock fell to a ball that climbed even as it nipped back sharply. Bumrah had arrived in Tests.

And now, after his conquests in the Boxing Day Test at the MCG, Bumrah has a whopping 48 wickets in nine Tests [three each in South Africa, England and Australia] at 21.02 with a strike rate of 47.4 this year.

### Rare breed

No Indian bowler has taken more wickets in overseas Tests in a year.

Bumrah has shaken up line-ups with his pace, bounce and variations. Down under, he has left the men facing him with physical and psychological scars, impressed the fans and captivated the Aussie media.

Match-winners come rare. All of Bumrah's three five-wicket innings hauls so far have fired India to Test victories.

Former Australian batting great Michael Clarke tweeted, "In the next few months, Bumrah will be the No. 1 bowler in all three formats."

World's leading batsman Virat Kohli conceded, "I don't want to be facing Bumrah."

No Indian paceman in recent memory has made such an impact. Bumrah powers through to the crease from a rather innocuous run-up, unleashes thunderbolts.

In Tests, he has more space and time to inflict damage with his whippy, quick-arm action.

The ball taking off from back of a length often strikes the batsmen on the knuckles, shoulder, chest or helmet.

And while the batsman is protecting his body, Bumrah can easily remove him with his subtlety. Velocity and craft is a dangerous combination. It's never easy when Bumrah targets the batsmen with deliveries in the high 140s kmph. And he can also easily take the pace off the ball.

Shastri, a shrewd judge of talent, knew Bumrah's value from the manner he was hounding batsmen with his

speed and variations in white ball cricket. And Arun's association with Bumrah – he has overseen his development at every stage – is a heartwarming tale in itself.

The technically-savvy Arun coached Bumrah in the under-19 camp at the NCA and was wise enough not to change his action, where, despite the load-up being so much far and away from the body, the arm was high and upright in release.

### Coaches' contribution

Bumrah, under Arun, gradually evolved. Work was done on his wrist position. And the coach tirelessly worked with Bumrah to find the ideal release point to send down the yorker.

Now Bumrah bowls a potent yorker at will. Arun understood Bumrah's body, knew he had to be stronger for the longer spells in Test cricket.

Strength and conditioning coach Shankar Basu worked on Bumrah to enable him withstand Test-match loads. His rise in the longer format has been rapid.

Now Bumrah and the Indian pace pack will be going for the kill at the SCG.



On the prowl: Jasprit Bumrah, according to former Australia captain Michael Clarke, is well on the way to becoming the top bowler in all three formats. ■ AP

## Smriti wins two ICC awards

Is both the Women's Cricketer and ODI Player of the Year

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
DUBAI

Smriti Mandhana was on Monday adjudged the Women's Cricketer of the Year as well as the Women's ODI Player of the Year by the ICC.

Left-handed opener Smriti won the Rachael Heyhoe Flint Award for the Women's Cricketer of the Year for scoring 669 runs in 12 ODIs, along with 622 runs in 25 T20Is in 2018. Her ODI runs came at 66.90 while her strike-rate for T20Is was 130.67. Smriti played a crucial role in India's semifinal appearance at the Women's World T20 in the West Indies, where she scored 178 runs in five matches at a strike-rate of 125.35.

Smriti became only the se-



Smriti Mandhana. ■ FILE PHOTO

cond India woman player to win an ICC award after fast bowler Jhulan Goswami, who was named the ICC Player of the Year in 2007.

Smriti said: "When you get acknowledged for your per-

formances through these awards, it motivates you to work harder and do well for your team. The century I scored in South Africa (at Kimberley) was quite satisfying. A lot of people used to say I do not score that much in India, so I had a point to prove to myself," she added.

Australia's Alyssa Healy, who scored 225 runs in six matches at the Women's World T20, has been named the ICC Women's T20I Player of the Year.

England's 19-year-old left-arm spinner Sophie Ecclestone has been voted the Emerging Player of the Year after grabbing 18 wickets in nine ODIs and 17 in 14 T20Is during the calendar year.

England's 19-year-old left-arm spinner Sophie Ecclestone has been voted the Emerging Player of the Year after grabbing 18 wickets in nine ODIs and 17 in 14 T20Is during the calendar year.

Kohli, who dropped three points despite an 82 in the third Test in Melbourne, still enjoys a 34-point lead over Kane Williamson.

Cheteshwar Pujara has maintained the fourth position after a first-innings century in Melbourne, while

wicketkeeper Rishabh Pant has gained 10 slots to reach a career-best 38th position.

Rabada, who split the top ranking with England's seasoned fast bowler James Anderson during the year, is just six points ahead of his adversary.

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## TV PICKS

**Ranji Trophy:** Star Sports 2 (SD & HD), 9.30 a.m.**Tata Open Maharashtra:** SS Select 2 (SD & HD), 3 p.m.**Premier League:** SS Select 1 (SD & HD), 6.30 p.m., 8.30 p.m., 11.30 p.m.**PBL:** Star Sports 1 (SD & HD), 6.30 p.m.

## IN BRIEF



## Yoshna wins Scottish junior open

EDINBURGH

Yoshna Singh ended the year on a high winning the under-17 title in the prestigious Scottish Junior Open squash here late on Sunday. Seeded 5/8, Yoshna defeated Sze Yu Lee of Australia 11-6, 8-11, 11-4, 13-11 in an engrossing final. Yoshna had earlier beaten the top seed Lucie Stefanon of USA in the quarterfinals and Scottish girl Lucy Murchie in the semifinals.

## Kalaivani starts well

## SPORTS BUREAU

BALLARI

Tamil Nadu's S. Kalaivani subdued Archana Thapa 4-1 verdict in the opening round of the 48kg category, as the JSW 3rd Elite women's National boxing championships began at the Inspire Institute of Sport (IIS) near here on Monday. There were as many as six RSC victories on the day, including one for Delhi's Pratibha against Karnataka's Divyani Shukla.

With the top boxers receiving a bye to the second round, the second day of the championships is expected to produce more drama.

**The results (Round 1): 48kg:**

Khushboo Tokas (Del) bt Satbir Limboor (Sik) 4-1, Jyoti Gorli (AP) bt Anjali Sharma (MP) 3-2, S. Kalaivani (TN) bt Archana Thapa (Utk) 4-1, Anchu Sabu (Ker) bt Rinku Moni Phukon (Asm) 5-0, Tanushree Bengle (Mah) bt Kritika Bagh (Cht) 5-0, Swasti Arya (Raj) w/o Sudesh (Nag), Pallavi bt Sivaranjani Karthikeyan (Pud) RSC, Rajni Singh (UP) bt Manica Pandey (WB) RSC.

**51kg:** Likitha Battini (AP) bt Deepa Kumari (MP) 4-1, Mansi Sharma (UP) bt Ramisha Lyngdoh (Meg) 5-0, Poonam (Raj) bt Shruti Sharma (Cht) RSC, K. Nivedita (TN) bt Kajal Kumari (Bih) 5-0.

Rajwant Kaur (Pun) w/o H. Chanchar (Nag), Diyav Bache (Mah) bt Anju Rajbhar (Goa) 5-0, Gourree Panda (Odi) bt Ayesha Walgude (Gu) RSC, Gargi (Chd) bt Athulya Das (Ker) RSC, Neelam Kumari (Jha) bt Kashmira Khatun (Ben) 4-1, Pratibha (Del) bt Divyani Shukla (Kar) RSC.

## Khejroliya, Bhati keep Bengal in check

The pacers scalp three wickets apiece as Delhi takes a narrow lead

Y.B. SARANGI

KOLKATA

The cutting edge in the Delhi pace department, despite the absence of Navdeep Saini, came to the fore when the tourists restricted Bengal to 220 and secured a crucial first innings lead on the second day of the Ranji Trophy Group B match at the Eden Gardens on Monday.

Kulwant Khejroliya and Subodh Bhati collected three wickets apiece as Bengal fell 20 runs short of Delhi's total. Delhi, at 41 for two in its second essay, enjoyed a 61-run lead at stumps.

Khejroliya showed his skill and guile to provide an early breakthrough. A beauty of a delivery, deviating and bouncing off the surface, took Abhishek Raman's outside edge to wicketkeeper Anuj Rawat.

## Good stand

Abhimanyu Easwaran (40 off 62, 5x4) and Sudip Chatterjee (56 off 102, 9x4) produced 63 runs for the second wicket to lay a solid platform.

Abhimanyu played some well-timed boundaries, predominantly on the onside, before being caught behind off left-arm spinner Shivank Vashisth.

Sudip batted with determination after a lucky escape on one. The on-field umpires referred the catch in the slips off Khejroliya to the third umpire, who hit the red button by mistake before rectifying it.

Sudip played the ball late, getting majority of his fours behind the stumps and off



Making an impact: Kulwant Khejroliya prised out three Bengal batsmen to help Delhi take a narrow lead over the host on Monday. ■ FILE PHOTO

his legs. He tried to form another partnership with Manoj Tiwary but the latter blundered in shouldering arms to an incoming delivery from southpaw Khejroliya, who used the angle well while bowling round the wicket.

Bengal lost five wickets for 79 runs in the post-lunch session.

Khejroliya dismissed Anustup Majumder cheaply and Bhati bowled a teasing line to make batsmen commit errors. The lanky bow-

ler's decisive spell fetched him three wickets for 11 runs off five overs.

Sudip, dropped by Akash Sudan of his own bowling on 47, became Bhati's first wicket shortly after scoring his first half-century of the season.

The left-hander edged it to Rawat, who went on to complete six dismissals.

Writtick Chatterjee and Aamir Gani also fell to Bhati as Delhi stopped Bengal despite Pradipta Pramanik's quick-fire 37, containing two

fours and as many sixes off Khejroliya.

## The scores:

**Delhi – 1st innings:** 240.**Bengal – 1st innings:** Abhishek Raman c Rawat b Khejroliya 11, Abhimanyu Easwaran c Rawat b Vashisth 40, Sudip Chatterjee c Rawat b Bhati 56, Manoj Tiwary b Khejroliya 15, Anustup Majumder b Khejroliya 4, Writtick Chatterjee c Rawat b Bhati 17, Agniv Pan c Sidhu b Shivam 14, Aamir Gani c Rawat b Bhati 6, Pradipta Pramanik (not out) 37, Ashoke Dinda c Rawat b Vashisth 4, Mukesh Kumar run out 2; Extras (b-10, lb-4); Total (in

58.4 overs): 220.

Fall of wickets:

1-18, 2-81, 3-

112, 4-131, 5-147, 6-162, 7-168,

8-186, 9-198.

**Delhi bowling:** Khejroliya 19-2,

87-3, Bhati 14-2-28-3, Sudan

12-3-40-20, Vashisth 74-1-24-2,

Shivam Sharma 6-1-27-1.

**Delhi – 2nd innings:** Kunal Chandela (batting) 15, Hiten Dalal (lbw b Dinda 11, Anuj Rawat c Tiwary b Dinda 10, Nitish Rana (batting) 5; Total (for two wkts. in 19 overs): 41.

Fall of wickets:

1-19, 2-31.

**Bengal bowling:** Dinda 8-2,

22-2, Mukesh Kumar run out 2;

Extras (b-10, lb-4); Total (in

RANJI TROPHY SCORES, DAY 2

Elite

Group A

for 83).

Group C

**At Bengaluru:** Karnataka 418 in 131.4 overs (D. Nischal 107, K.V. Siddharth 105, Manish Pandey 40, R. Vinay Kumar 90 n.o., Pankaj Rao seven for 82) vs Chhattisgarh 121 for three in 38 overs (Amandeep Khare 43 batting, Harpreet Singh Bhatia 53 batting).

**At Pune:** Maharashtra 230 vs Gujarat 414 for three in 95.1 overs (Kathan Patel 107, Chintan Gaj 53, Priyank Panchal 141, Manpreet Juneja 81 batting).

**At Delhi:** Baroda 313 in 94 overs (Krunal Pandya 160, Mitesh Patel 61 n.o., Amit Mishra five for 76) & 14 for two in 11 overs vs Railways 200 in 68.3 overs (Arindam Ghosh 46, Mahesh Rawat 50, Krunal Pandya four for 40).

**At Nagpur:** Vidarbha 511 in 129.4 overs (Atharva Taide 95, Wasim Jaffer 178, Ganesh Satish 90, Mohit Kale 68, Dhrumil Matkar four for 141) vs Mumbai 169 for six in 50 overs (Jay Bista 64, Shubham Ranjane 52, Akshay Wakhare four for 55).

Group B

**At Vizianagar:** Hyderabad 271 in 90.3 overs (Tammara 205, Yamini Agarwal 44, Akshath Reddy 57, Himalay Agarwal 59, K.V. Sasikanth five for 64) vs Andhra 207 for three in 76 overs (C.R. Ganeswaran 65, Ricky Bhui 49 batting).

**At Kolkata:** Delhi 240 & 41 for two in 19 overs vs Bengal 220 in 58.4 overs (Abhimanyu Easwaran 40, Sudip Chatterjee 56).

**At Indore:** Madhya Pradesh 265 in 98.3 overs (Rajat Patidar 47, Naman Ojha 41, Shubham Sharma 54 n.o., Pankaj Jaiswal four for 56) & 47 for two in 18 overs vs Himachal Pradesh 127 in 55.3 overs (Kumar Kartikeya six for 28).

**At Mohali:** Kerala 121 & 127 for three in 42 overs (Mohammed Azharudddeen 76 batting) vs Punjab 217 in 75.2 overs (Jiwan Singh 69, Mandeep Singh 89, Sandeep Warrier five

overs (Md Nazim 134).  
**At Ranchi:** Tripura 253 for nine in 89.4 overs (Udayan Bose 44, Rajib Saha 48 n.o., Rahul Shukla four for 38) vs Jharkhand 307 for four in 83 overs (Kumar Deobrat 136 batting, Md Nazim 134).  
**At Jorhat:** Bihar 440 for nine decl. in 102 overs (M.D. Rahmatullah 99, Ashutosh Aman 111, Vivek 102, H.M. Ratte five for 122) vs Mizoram 77 in 35.5 overs (Akhil Rajput 49, Samar Quadri six for 19) & 81 for five in 38 overs.

**At Dimapur:** Arunachal Pradesh 132 & 98 for seven in 43 overs (Abrar Kazi four for 12) vs Nagaland 377 for nine decl. in 77.1 overs (Paras Sehrawat 112, Sedezhali Rupero 65, Rongsen Jonathan 131, Abrar Kazi 50 n.o., Deendyal four for 84).  
**At Anantapur:** Manipur 132 & 118 in 31.5 overs (Yashpal Singh 52, Pankaj Singh four for 20) lost to Puducherry 238 in 78.2 overs (S. Karthik 55, T. Saju 42, Fabid Ahmed 41, Th. Kishan four for 65) & 13 for no loss in 1.1 overs. Points: Puducherry 7 (32), Manipur 0 (18).

**At Bhubaneswar:** Sikkim 219 vs Meghalaya 555 for three in 117 overs (R.R. Biswa 175, Punit Bisht 301 batting).

Plate

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Myneni named in Davis Cup team

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Saketh Myneni has been named in the Davis Cup team along with Prajneesh Gunnswaran and Ramkumar Ramanathan, apart from the Asian Games doubles gold medallists Rohan Bopanna and Divij Sharan, for the World Group qualification tie against Italy to be staged on grass in Kolkata on February 1 and 2.

The All India Tennis Association (AITA) has announced Saketh Myneni, Rohan Bopanna, Divij Sharan, and Ankita Raina, as the reserve, apart from Sumit Nagal, Arjun Kadhe and Siddharth Vishwakarma to train with the team in a preparatory camp from Jan. 22 to 30.

Equally, there was no scope for a surprise in the Fed Cup team which will be spearheaded by Ankita Raina and Karman Kaur Thandi. The girls will have a three-day camp here from Jan. 27, prior to the departure for Kazakhstan.

**The teams:** **Davis Cup:** Prajneesh Gunnswaran, Ramkumar Ramanathan, Saketh Myneni, Rohan Bopanna, Divij Sharan; **Reserve:** Sasi Kumar Mukund; **Captain:** Mahesh Bhupathi; **Coach:** Veeramachaneni Arjun.

**Fed Cup:** Ankita Raina, Karman Kaur Thandi, Pranjal Yadlapalli, Rutuja Bhosale; **Captain:** Vishaal Upadhyay; **Coach:** Ankita Bhambri.

Saketh Myneni. ■ R. RAGU

nia Group-1 competition to be staged at Astana, Kazakhstan, from Feb. 4.

Vishaal Upadhyay has been named captain of the Fed Cup team and Ankita Bhambri has been kept as the coach.

The girls will have a three-day camp here from Jan. 27, prior to the departure for Kazakhstan.

Speaking to *The Hindu*, Mukund said, "There were lots of ups and downs this year but I am humbled and it is a dream come true to be part of the Davis Cup."

2018 – a breakout year for Mukund

S. DIPAK RAGAV

CHENNAI

Sasi Kumar Mukund could not have asked for a better start to the new year after he was handed his maiden Davis Cup World Group qualification call-up on Monday as a reserve for the tie against Italy next month.

Speaking to *The Hindu*, Mukund said, "There were lots of ups and downs this year but I am humbled and it is a dream come true to be part of the Davis Cup."

On Monday, Mukund will play his maiden Davis Cup tie against Italy. The 21-year-old had one of his best years on the tour in 2018 moving from 426 to finish the year at 295 on the ATP rankings.

Mukund, who featured regularly on the Futures tour, made a conscious decision to go a step higher and play the Challengers more regularly.

At the start of the year, the youngster from Chennai made the quarterfinals in two Challenger events that gave him the confidence to scale new heights.

However, with the new rules kicking in, the field was getting stronger with more players fighting for crucial ATP points, which also meant some tough losses in qualifying rounds. At one point in the year, he lost in 12 out of 13 events in qualifying.

"It was a tough period when you don't qualify and I will be lying if I say I didn't think of going down a step back to Futures. But thankfully, towards the end of the year, I got some good results," he said.

Mukund trains in Vienna, Austria, with a small

## IN BRIEF



## Guardiola warns Manchester City

Pep Guardiola has warned his Manchester City side a failure to beat Liverpool at the Etihad Stadium on Thursday will effectively mean its title challenge is "over". "We knew it, that with the position of Liverpool, if we drop points then it is over, it (the title race) is finished. It would be almost impossible. Of course, they are going to drop points but not too many," said Guardiola. AFP

## Naman Nehra and Ekta Joshi triumph

**NEW DELHI** Naman Nehra scored a thrilling 21-18, 18-21, 23-21 victory over Pranav Dua in the under-17 boys final of the YoGems NCR Open badminton championships at the Thyagaraj Indoor Stadium. Ekta Joshi won the girls under-17 title, beating Sana Verma 21-18, 21-14.

**The results (finals):**

**Boys, u-17:** Naman Nehra bt Pranav Dua 21-18, 18-21, 23-21; **U-15:** Aditya Yadav bt Abhijay Sharma 21-19, 21-12; **U-13:** Ryan Ranjan bt Bhavya Chhabra 21-11, 17-21, 21-13; **U-11:** Aksh Singh bt Tarlochan Singh 21-13, 21-11. **Girls, u-17:** Ekta Joshi bt Sana Verma 21-18, 21-14; **U-15:** Khushboo Sahoo w/o Sana Verma; **U-13:** Apoorva Chaudhary bt Sanvie Anand 21-18, 21-11; **U-11:** Anushka Golash bt Drishti Waldia 21-18, 21-16.

## Solskjaer's advice to Pogba

**MANCHESTER** Ole Gunnar Solskjaer encouraged Paul Pogba to cut showboating from his game to recreate the "efficient" display that saw the Frenchman score twice for the second straight game in a 4-1 thrashing of Bournemouth at Old Trafford. "That is a top, top performance for a midfield player because it's all-round: work rate, dangerous in the box, no showboating. It's touch, pass, move. It's an efficient game and Paul knows he's at his best when it's an efficient game," said Solskjaer. AFP

## Federer excited about playing against Serena

Face-off set to happen in the mixed doubles of the Hopman Cup on Tuesday

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
PERTH

The Hopman Cup might have saved its best for last as excitement builds for the most anticipated tennis match involving a man and woman since the 'Battle of the Sexes' in the 1970s.

Roger Federer and Serena Williams, two of the greatest players in history, will face off across the net for the first time on Tuesday when the United States goes up against defending champion Switzerland in the mixed doubles of the unique two-player, mixed teams event.

## Early sell-out

Tuesday's group tie is an early sell-out on the back of the prospect of seeing two of the all-time greats, with 43 Grand Slam singles titles between them, on the same court.

"It is very exciting for both of us and I hope a lot of tennis fans tune in and watch it," said Federer after opening his Hopman Cup campaign with an easy singles win on Sunday.

"I admire everything she's done on and off the court, we are both fierce competitors and we always want to win," added the 20-time

Grand Slam champion of the once-in-a-lifetime match.

"It is going to be one time, probably never again."

"She is one of the biggest champions in our sport ever, men and women combined, so it is great to be playing against her."

## Past experiences

Federer said he had plenty of experience playing against women, going back to his days as a teenage tour hopeful in Switzerland.

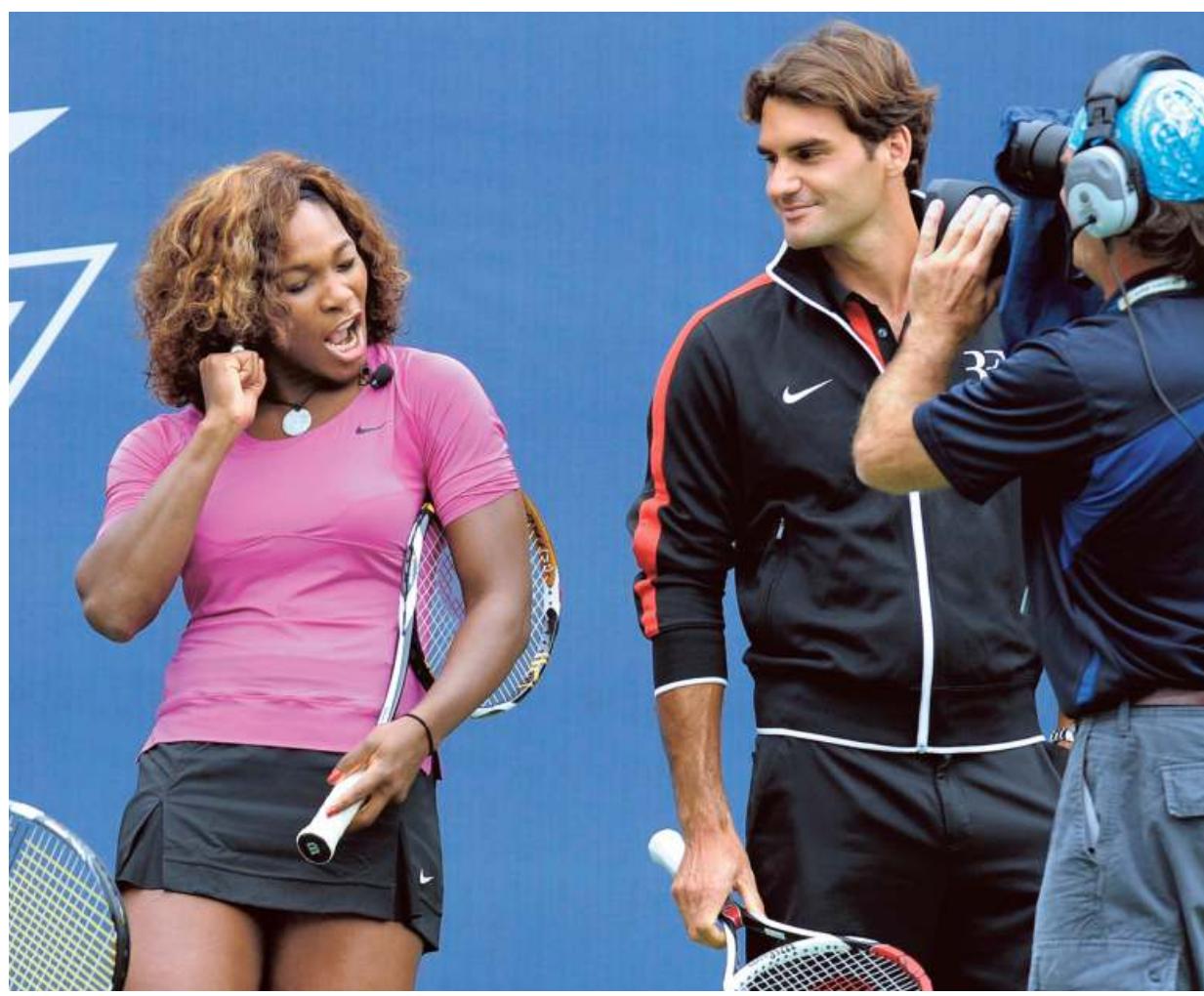
Despite their long concurrent careers and having attended a few Wimbledon champion dinners together, Federer said the pair barely knew each other.

"I don't know her that well," he said.

"In the corridors and cafés, walking by each other, sometimes in the past she has asked me how are the kiddies and how is everyone doing, but if I said I know her it would be a bit of an exaggeration."

Williams has said in a television interview that she was looking forward to getting a picture with Federer for her Instagram page.

"It is the age of social media," said Federer, with a grin.



**Ready to rock:** The closest Serena Williams, left, and Roger Federer have been together on court was perhaps for the Arthur Ashe Kids Day program at the 2009 U.S. Open. ■ REUTERS

## Apurvi, Anjum likely to keep their spots

Elavenil, who has been in top form, lies in the second position



Apurvi Chandela. ■ FILE PHOTO

## SHOOTING WC

KAMESH SRINIVASAN  
NEW DELHI

Olympic quota winners Apurvi Chandela and Anjum Moudgil are set to retain their place in the National squad in women's air rifle for the World Cup to be staged at the Dr. Karni Singh Range, Tughlakabad, in February.

While Apurvi has been consistent and topped the chart after the addition of merit points for her Olympic quota and the world rank, Anjum has managed a third spot behind Elavenil Valarivan who has been in brilliant form.

The team for the World Cup is likely to be selected in the second week of January.

## Provisional rankings

A group of quality shooters, including the Commonwealth Games silver medalist Mehuli Ghosh, Meghana Sajjanar, Shreyas Agrawal, Shriyanka Sadangi, Aayushi Gupta, Olympian Ayonika Paul, World University champion Viita Bharadwaj, and former Asian champion Pooja Ghatkar follow the top three in the provisional rankings.

Anjum, of course, tops her main event – 50-metre rifle 3-position – in which she holds a world record 1180 in



Anjum Moudgil. ■ FILE PHOTO

The young Manu Bhaker, the Commonwealth Games and Youth Olympics gold medallist, is likely to retain her place in both the air pistol and sports pistol events, as the No. 1 and No. 2 respectively.

Heena Sidhu climbed to the second spot after her world record score of 587 in air pistol in the recent trials.

Anuradha of Navy looks set to pip established names like Shri Nivetha, Shweta Singh, Yashaswini Singh Deswal and Annu Raj Singh in the race for a berth.

In sports pistol, Asian Games gold medallist Rahi Sarnobat tops the provisional list.

Chinki Yadav is placed third behind Manu but ahead of Annu Raj Singh, Heena Sidhu, Shreya Gawande, and Pushpanjali Rana.

## Deepak, Ravi at the top

In men's air rifle, the established shooters – Deepak Kumar and Ravi Kumar – remain at the top, and are followed by Divyansh Singh Panwar who was in roaring form during the recent trials in the men's, junior and youth events.

In the rifle 3-position event, Olympians Chain Singh and Sanjeev Rajput occupy the top, followed by Parul Kumar who looks set to overtake the World Cup gold

Kohli, Bumrah in CA's team

IANS  
MELBOURNE

Virat Kohli and Jasprit Bumrah have been included in Cricket Australia's Test Team of the Year.

**The team:** Kane Williamson (Capt.), Virat Kohli, Kusal Mendis, Tom Latham, A.B. de Villiers, Jos Buttler (wk), Jason Holder, Kagiso Rabada, Nathan Lyon, Mohammed Abbas & Jasprit Bumrah.

## Shotgun selection trials

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The second and third shotgun selection trials will be held in Jaipur from January 28 to February 8.

The skeet competition will be held till Feb. 2 followed by the trap competition for men and women. The entry fee is ₹9,900 per event. The NRAI has announced no ammunition would be available at the venue.

The selection of the shooters, after the trials, will be made for the first three World Cups to be held in Acapulco, Mexico in March, Al Ain, UAE in April and Changwon, Korea in May.

medallist Akhil Sheoran, struggling with below-par qualification scores.

In rapid fire pistol, Anish Bhanwala, Arpit Goel and Aradar Singh occupy the top three positions, ahead of Olympian Gurpreet Singh, Bhavesh Shekhawat and Olympic silver medallist Vijay Kumar.

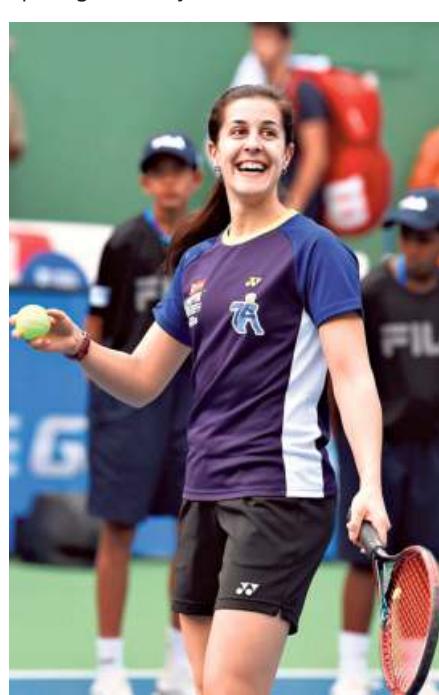
The averages were still being worked out for men's air pistol, in which Asian Games gold medallist, World Junior champion and Youth Olympics champion Saurabh Chaudhary is the overwhelming favourite to retain his top spot.

It will be interesting to see who joins him in the squad.

## TATA OPEN IN PICTURES



**Let the tourney begin:** Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis and Vijay Amritraj at the opening ceremony at the Balewadi Tennis Stadium in Pune on Monday. ■ PHOTO: R. RAGU



**Glamour quotient:** Actress Taapsee Pannu has a shot at tennis. ■ R. RAGU

Badminton star Carolina Marin. ■ R. RAGU

## Fewer cases of violations in 2018

NADA involved in dope control at all major events

A. VINOD  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

This should be some good news for the whole of the Indian sport spectrum as the National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA) has reported that there have been fewer doping violations in 2018 compared to the preceding two years.

A note circulated by NADA chief Navin Agarwal, highlighting the work conducted by the agency during the calendar year, says more than 4,000 tests were carried out during the year as compared to 3,363 in 2016 and 3,594 in 2017.

And, of these, the incidence of doping has reduced to 70 violations during 2018 as against 77 in 2016 and 73 in 2017.

## Innovative measures

This reduction, the NADA claimed was on account of innovative measures like Athlete Biological Passport Programme, Independent Observer Programme, Speak Up Mechanism and the all-India toll free helpline which were introduced this year.

Also, improvement in the quality of dope control by way of successful implementation of the 44 corrective measures suggested by the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA).

Another important measure adopted by the agency this year was the higher number of anti-doping cum awareness programmes which were proactively conducted to include school

and youth level athletes. NADA conducted 84 such programmes (52 in 2016 and 64 in 2018).

NADA was involved through the year in dope control at all major events like the inaugural Khelo India Games, Commonwealth Games and the Asian Games.

As many as 498 international-level Indians were tested by NADA prior to the Asian Games (including 54 tested abroad), marking the largest ever testing programme carried out by the agency before any international event.

And, of these, the incidence of doping has reduced to 70 violations during 2018 as against 77 in 2016 and 73 in 2017.

## Improved status

While the reduction of doping violations has improved India's position globally with regard to dope control, the year as it progressed did bring about the shocking revelation that international weightlifters Sanjita Chanu and Poonam Dalal and quartermiler Nirmala Sheoran had flunked tests conducted by WADA, which reiterates the fact that the country is yet to overcome the menace completely.

Pogba shone again for Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's Manchester United by scoring twice in a 4-1 victory over Bournemouth on Sunday.

## Bengal women emerge One-Day champion

Scores a 11-run win over Andhra in the summit clash



**One-day queens:** The triumphant Bengal squad. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS

SPORTS BUREAU  
BENGALURU

Bengal edged Andhra by 11 runs in the final to win the senior women's One-Day League at the Just Cricket grounds here on Monday.

Chasing 199 for victory, Andhra, riding on captain N. Anusha's half-century, ap-

peared on course at 129 for two. But her run-out triggered a collapse, Andhra losing eight for 58 in 13 overs.

All-rounder Deepi Sharma played a key role (34 and three for 33) for Bengal, as did medium-pacer Shubh Lakshmi. Veteran Jhulan Goswami, leading Bengal,

was not among the wickets, but made a useful 21.

**The scores:** Final: Bengal 198 for seven in 50 overs (Deepi Sharma 34, Paramita Roy 32, Prativa 26, Mandira Mahapatra 39 n.o., Jhansi Lakshmi three for 40) bt Andhra 187 in 49.1 overs (N. Anusha 61, Pushpa Latha 28, E. Padmaja 38, Deepi Sharma three for 33).

## Pogba continues to impress

## PREMIER LEAGUE

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
MANCHESTER

Paul Pogba shone again for Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's Manchester United by scoring twice in a 4-1 victory over Bournemouth on Sunday.

Pogba had scored just one goal from open play in the Premier League this season under Jose Mourinho, but

continues to flourish since the Portuguese's departure with his second double in four days.

The Frenchman's opener on five minutes owed much to the brilliant skill of Marcus Rashford who dribbled beyond two Bournemouth defenders before crossing for Pogba to tap into an empty net.

Pogba then powered home a header from Ander

Herrera's inviting cross before Rashford's outside of the boot finish put United 3-0 up. Nathan Ake reduced Bournemouth's deficit, but Pogba turned provider for substitute Romelu Lukaku to make it 4-1 and only the post denied Pogba a first ever hat-trick.

**The results:** Premier League: Manchester United 4 (Pogba 5, 33, Rashford 45, Lukaku 72) bt Bournemouth 1 (Ake 45+2, CMYK 1)

## IN BRIEF



## Eurozone to cease printing €500 notes

PARIS The eurozone is moving to stop printing €500 banknotes, the violet-coloured bills that authorities fear are favoured by criminals. "As of 27 January 2019, 17 of the 19 national central banks in the Euro area will no longer issue €500 banknotes," the European Central Bank said. **AFP**



## Lion kills worker at U.S. wildlife park

WASHINGTON A lion attacked and killed 22-year-old Alexandra Black, who had just started working at the Conservators Centre in North Carolina in the U.S. "During a routine enclosure cleaning, one of the lions somehow left a locked space and entered the space the humans were in and quickly killed one person," a statement said. **AFP**



## 3,000 kg of gumbo ladled out for charity

SHREVEPORT A chef in the U.S. cooked a little over 3,000 kg of gumbo, a kind of soup, as part of a charitable initiative that also set a Guinness record last week. The soup filled about 11,000 bowls, sold at \$5 each to raise money to house families of patients in military and veterans administration medical centres. **AP**

# Foreigners can now fly directly to Andamans

As tourist flow increases, Port Blair airport is named authorised immigration check post for India

## PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI

Foreign tourists can now directly fly to the Andaman and Nicobar Islands as the government has designated Port Blair airport as an authorised immigration check post for entry into and exit point from India.

The decision to open up the Andaman and Nicobar Islands directly for foreign tourists came after it was found to be the most sought-after tourist destination in the country receiving an av-

erage four lakh tourists, including several thousand foreigners, annually.

"...the Central government hereby designates Port Blair airport of Union territory of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands as an authorised immigration check post for entry into/exit from India with valid travel documents for all classes of passengers," a Home Ministry notification said.

The Superintendent of Police (CID) of the Island has been designated as the "civil



**Sun and sand:** The natural beauty of the Andaman and Nicobar islands is a big tourist draw. **FILE PHOTO**

authority" for the immigration check post at Port Blair airport with effect from Monday.

According to data availa-

bility with the Home Ministry, more than 16 lakh tourists visited the Andaman and Nicobar Islands between 2015 and October this year to en-

joy the natural beauty, beaches, flora and fauna and historically-significant landmarks in around 38 inhabited islands out of the 572 islets.

The archipelago has received 4,02,393 tourists, including 11,818 foreigners, till October 2018, while it received 4,87,229 tourists, including 15,310 foreigners, in 2017.

In 2016, as many as 4,00,019 tourists, including 15,467 foreigners, had visited the Andamans.

# Happy Two Thousand And Dineteen!



dacunha/AB/634

# Spaceship zooms towards distant mysterious world

Ultima Thule lies in a dark and frigid region of space, known as the Kuiper Belt

## AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

TAMPA

A NASA spaceship is zooming toward the farthest, and quite possibly the oldest, cosmic body ever photographed by humankind, a tiny, distant world called Ultima Thule 6.4 billion kilometres away.

The mysterious object is in a dark and frigid region of space known as the Kuiper Belt.

## Celebratory music

A guitar anthem recorded by legendary Queen guitarist Brian May – who also holds an advanced degree in astrophysics – will accompany a video simulation of the flyby on the NASA website.

Real-time video of the actual flyby is impossible, since it takes more six hours for a signal sent from Earth to reach the spaceship, named New Horizons, and another six hours for the response to arrive.



**Close call:** An artist's conception of the New Horizons spacecraft encountering Ultima Thule. **NASA/AFP**

But if all goes well, the first images should be in hand by the end of New Year's Day.

And judging by a tweet from Alan Stern, the lead scientist on the New Horizons mission, the excite-

ment among team members is palpable. "IT'S HAPPENING! Flyby is upon us! @NewHorizons2015 is healthy and on course! The farthest exploration of worlds in history!" he wrote on Saturday.

Scientists are not sure

what Ultima Thule (pronounced TOO-lee) looks like – whether it is round or oblong or even if it is a single object or a cluster.

It was discovered in 2014 with the help of the Hubble Space Telescope, and is believed to be 20-30 km in size.

## Detailed images

Scientists decided to study it with New Horizons after the spaceship, which launched in 2006, completed its main mission of flying by Pluto in 2015, returning the most detailed images ever taken of the dwarf planet.

"At closest approach we are going to try to image Ultima at three times the resolution we had for Pluto," said Mr. Stern.

"If we can accomplish that it will be spectacular."

Seven instruments on board will record high-resolution images and gather data about its size and composition.

But even before he had fully recovered, Mr. Pina was

# Visually challenged ex-boxer transforms a neighbourhood

Jorge Pina helps troubled children stay on the right path

## AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

LISBON

In some ways, says Portuguese ex-boxer Jorge Pina, the loss of most of his sight was the making of him. "I didn't lose my sight, I just see things differently," he says.

Forced to abandon his world title dreams, Mr. Pina devotes his time to helping troubled youth from rough neighbourhoods stay on the right path by channelling their energy into sport.

"Before, I was a selfish and troubled person from a difficult neighbourhood," he says. "But now I want to help young people, win the combat of life."

His sight problem developed in training in 2004 and eventually put an end to his boxing career. An operation two years later failed to fix his detached retina and he was left with only 10% vision.

But even before he had fully recovered, Mr. Pina was



**Packing a punch:** Jorge Pina teaching boxing to children living in a rough neighbourhood in Lisbon. **AFP**

asking his doctor whether he could run.

"When I lost my sight I needed something positive, despite my limitations," he said. "I chose what I was best at: running and sharing," he said.

The running has already taken him to three Paralympics and he is also aiming to be at Tokyo in 2020.

The sharing saw him set up shop in Bensaudé, one of

Lisbon's more deprived neighbourhoods, where he operates his own sport association for local children.

Wherever he goes, the children attach themselves to him, whether they are taking his hand to guide him or just giving him a hug.

"Jorge taught me discipline and how to channel my energy," says one regular, 13-year-old Xavier Pereira.

# Climate change takes toll on oysters in France

## AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

CANCALE

Gulping down oysters has long been a favourite New Year's Eve ritual for the French, but as winters get warmer and summers get drier many growers worry there will soon be fewer of the prized molluscs to go around.

Without summer rains that wash crucial minerals into the oyster beds, there's no plankton that serve as food for the oysters.

Oyster farmer Mathieu Le Moal and others along France's Emerald Coast say the long drought in France took a heavy toll, leading to smaller harvests.

Ms. Buthaina, her uncle Ali and his family were "kidnapped" by the coalition and taken to government-held Aden, before travelling onwards to Riyadh. Saudi media said she was brought to the Saudi capital at the request of the internationally recognised Yemeni government.

Although the Saudi government has never commented officially on Ms. Buthaina's case, pictures of her apparently boarding a private jet from Riyadh to Sana'a were published by the *Al Riyad* newspaper on December 19.

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