



## UPSC MOCK INTERVIEWS

EXCELLENCE IN THE INTERVIEW

Venue: Siddharth Jaypee Hotel, Near Rajendra Place Metro Station, Delhi.



Mock Interview Dates Available

12<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> February 2019 | 3<sup>rd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> March 2019 | 16<sup>th</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup> March 2019

Panel : Shri. Avinash Dharmadhikari Sir and other distinguished SERVING AND RETIRED CIVIL SERVICE OFFICERS.

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## NEARBY

Realtor Rahul Gaur arrested for cheating

NEW DELHI  
 Rahul Gaur, son of Gaursons' chairman B.L. Gaur, and his wife Vaneeet alias Neetu were arrested on Saturday for their alleged involvement in several criminal cases.

CITY ▶ PAGE 3

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## Rajapaksa underlines need to sustain Delhi-Colombo ties

Bilateral relations should not fall victim to changes in govt., says former President

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

BENGALURU

Sri Lanka's Leader of the Opposition and former President Mahinda Rajapaksa made an impassioned plea for Colombo and Delhi to ensure that their relations did not fall victim to a change in government in either capital.

Addressing the third edition of *The Hindu's Huddle* conclave here, Mr. Rajapaksa made repeated references to the efficacy of the "troika" mechanism of senior officials used by the two countries during his presidency. Admitting that the bilateral journey of the two countries had not always been



For better relations: Mahinda Rajapaksa and N. Ram at The Huddle 2019 in Bengaluru on Saturday. ■ K. MURALI KUMAR

smooth, he pointed to the 1980s and 2014 as the most troubled of times between India and Sri Lanka.

"We must evolve a me-

chanism to ensure that misunderstandings don't take place," Mr. Rajapaksa said in his inaugural lecture at the two-day thought conclave.

Mr. Rajapaksa, whose government presided over the demise of the LTTE and its once all-powerful leader Velupillai Prabhakaran, said Sri Lanka and India must ensure that their territories were not used by groups inimical to the interests of either country.

Calling for strong people-to-people relations, he said the civil services of the two countries – not just the Foreign Ministries – must have institutional mechanisms to foster better bilateral ties.

TAMILS FIRST TO OPPOSE IPKF, SAYS RAJAPAKSA ▶ PAGE 13  
THE EMPTY MIDDLE GROUND ▶ PAGE 12

## Twitter officials absent at House panel meeting

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The inability of top Twitter officials to appear before the Parliamentary Committee on Information Technology on Monday met with strong disapproval from the

committee's chairman, Anurag Thakur.

"The Parliamentary Committee on Information Technology takes very serious note of this. We will take appropriate action on 11th February," Mr. Thakur, who is

a BJP MP, tweeted on Sunday.

When contacted, a Twitter spokesperson said, "We have indicated that we are willing to participate in such a broad hearing process... Given the short notice of the

hearing, we informed the committee that it would not be possible for senior officials from Twitter to travel from the United States to appear on Monday."

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 10

India rebuts China on Modi's visit to Arunachal

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

India on Saturday strongly reiterated its claims on Arunachal Pradesh, after China objected to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the frontier State.

The Ministry of External Affairs said the Chinese side was aware of India's sensibilities. "The State of Arunachal Pradesh is an integral and inalienable part of India. Indian leaders visit Arunachal Pradesh from time to time, just as they visit other parts of India," the MEA said.

China objected to Mr. Modi's visit, saying it "firmly" opposed the trip.

A spokesperson of the Chinese Foreign Ministry said China does not recognise the State. "China urges the Indian side to... respect China's interests and concerns, cherish the momentum of improving relations between the two countries, and refrain from any actions that intensify disputes and complicate the border issue," the Foreign Ministry in Beijing said in a statement.

PM BACKS BILL ▶ PAGE 10

## As new cases rise, leprosy in spotlight

Govt. views detection as a sign of better disease management

## Infection trail

States that recorded maximum leprosy cases in three years

Year	2016	2017	2018*
Uttar Pradesh	14,282	13,456	12,583
Bihar	9,142	13,031	14,338
Maharashtra	10,103	9,887	9,836
West Bengal	7,211	8,578	9,175
Chhattisgarh	6,738	7,266	6,499
Odisha	6,044	5,383	6,325
Jharkhand	2,533	3,414	3,979

\*Cases on record as on March 2018 Source: National Leprosy Eradication Programme

## BINDU SHAJAN PERAPPADAN

NEW DELHI

The rise in the number of recorded leprosy cases from 86,147 (in 2013-14) to 90,709 (2017-18), reported a decade and a half after India was declared leprosy-free in 2005, has turned the spotlight on the hotspots for the disease.

Today, though, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal and Maharashtra remain the 'hotspots' from which maximum prevalence was detected last year. High population density, poor sanitation and inadequate access to nutrition are among the reasons for the number remaining high.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 10

## + Trinamool legislator shot dead in Nadia

Party suspects BJP role in attack

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

KOLKATA

A Trinamool Congress MLA was shot dead late on Saturday evening in West Bengal's Nadia district.

Krishnaganj MLA Satyajit Biswas was killed in full public view at a Saraswati Puja event in Majhdia. He was descending from the stage when he was shot by some unidentified assailants.

The MLA was rushed to a local hospital but was declared dead. A number of senior TMC leaders, including newly inducted Minister Ratna Ghosh, were present at the event.

The murder has sent shock waves in the political circles of the State. TMC Nadia district president Gauri



Satyajit Biswas ▶

Shankar Dutta claimed BJP leader Mukul Roy was behind the attack.

State BJP president Dilip Ghosh said the party had nothing to do with the murder and alleged factional feud in TMC to be the reason behind the attack. He

pointed out that another TMC MLA, Biswanath Das from Joynagar, had a narrow escape in a recent attack.

city and tourist attraction of Uttar Pradesh, which gives regular income to government".

On Friday, the apex court had said: "We are of the tentative view that Mayawati has to deposit the public money spent on her statues and party symbol to the State exchequer."

The remarks were made by the court while hearing a petition filed in 2009 by an advocate alleging that hundreds of crores of rupees were used from the State budget for 2008-09 and 2009-10, when Ms. Mayawati was the Chief Minister, for installing her statues and BSP symbols at different places.

(With PTI inputs)

## Mayawati: do not distort oral observations of SC

'Memorials providing income to govt'

## OMAR RASHID

LUCKNOW

A day after the Supreme Court said that BSP chief Mayawati might have to pay back the public money she spent on erecting statues and memorials in Uttar Pradesh, the senior leader on Saturday urged the media not to "distort" the oral observations of the court.

"Sure to get justice in this matter also. Media and BJP leaders please stop kite flying," she said.

In a short statement issued here, Ms. Mayawati said marvellous memorials and parks built to honour "ignored sants, gurus and great men born in deprived and oppressed Dalit and OBCs are a new grand iden-

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## Delhi CEO to counter 'misinformation' campaign

Takes note of 'voter deletion calls' allegedly being made by AAP, mulls legal action

## DAMINI NATH

NEW DELHI

With Delhiites receiving calls over the past month claiming to be from the Aam Aadmi Party, telling them that their names have been struck off the electoral rolls, the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer has decided to counter the "misleading calls" with its own awareness campaign.

In a statement on Saturday, the CEO office said: "It has been brought to the notice of Chief Electoral Officer, Delhi, that large number of calls have been received from unknown persons/entities/sources by many citizens of Delhi telling them that their names have already been deleted in the electoral roll and the caller(s) will get the same restored in the electoral roll."

The statement further cautioned Delhiites to "be aware of such misleading calls" and to check whether



Arvind Kejriwal said enquiries by his government had found some of the deletions to be wrong.

their names are on the rolls through the helpline 1950, the website www.nvsp.in or by visiting a voter centre. Though the statement did not name AAP, it added that "separate legal action" was being taken. Sources in the CEO office confirmed that the calls referred to in the statement were the ones claiming to be from AAP.

A senior official in the CEO office said apart from advertisements in print and on radio, the election auth-

orities would consider reaching out to voters through social media and SMS as well.

For the past few months, AAP has been alleging mass voter deletion ahead of the Lok Sabha elections, a claim denied by the Election Commission of India and the CEO. While the party has claimed that anywhere between 24 lakh and 30 lakh names have been deleted since the 2015 Delhi Assembly elections, the electoral roll published by the CEO on January 18 shows an increase of 9,88,925 voters since the 2014 Lok Sabha elections.

"Will the EC step up and initiate an inquiry against officers who are committing this crime in collusion with the BJP? While the EC may have permitted the BJP to kill democracy in Telangana, but in Delhi we have AAP and we will not permit the BJP to snatch people's democratic right to vote," he said.

SEE ALSO ▶ PAGE 2

## IN BRIEF

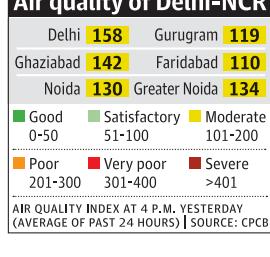


## AAP govt. to celebrate four years in power

NEW DELHI With it completing four years in power on February 14, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government said on Saturday that it would hold a celebration on February 12. Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia said in a tweet, "To celebrate 4 years of Delhi Government, join us for a grand celebration with Vishal Dadtani Live! Feb 12, Tuesday 5 PM All are welcome See you there! [sic]." STAFF REPORTER

## Govt. reviews steps to curb Yamuna pollution

NEW DELHI The plan to curb pollution in the Yamuna was reviewed during a meeting convened by Delhi Chief Secretary Vijay Dev with members of the Monitoring Committee for Yamuna set up by the National Green Tribunal, a Delhi government statement said on Saturday. At the meeting, attended by officers of government departments concerned and municipal corporations, the Chief Secretary directed the Delhi Jal Board to make sure its sewage treatment plants are meeting standards and that there is no leakage from the sewerage system. STAFF REPORTER



## Two held with foreign currencies at IGI airport

NEW DELHI A 67-year-old woman and a man were arrested at the Delhi airport for possessing foreign currencies worth over ₹92 lakh allegedly in an illegal manner, officials said on Saturday. The two were bound for Dubai. PTI

## Festive fervour



Workers load idols of goddess Saraswati on the eve of Basant Panchami festival in the Capital on Saturday. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

## Road traffic injuries are a growing health issue'

Minister releases handbook on prevention of accidents and awareness of first aid

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare Ashwini Kumar Choubey released communication material comprising first aid module for community and handbook on prevention of accidents and awareness of first aid earlier this week on the occasion of '30th Road Safety Week'.

"Road traffic injuries are a growing public health issue, affecting vulnerable groups of road users, including the poor. Road traffic injuries place a huge strain on healthcare services in terms of financial resources, bed occupancy and demand of health services," he said.

The Minister stressed the need for giving medical trauma care to the injured during the first hour of the accident.

## Will do everything to nail AAP's lies on voter deletion, says BJP

Seeks legal opinion; Kejriwal and Vijender Gupta engage in Twitter war

JATIN ANAND  
NEW DELHI

Terming it "large-scale fraud", the BJP is seeking legal opinion, and hopes for the initiation of penal action against the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) in relation to phone calls allegedly being made by its members regarding the deletion of votes from electoral rolls.

Union Minister Vijay Goel, who took the matter to the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) on Friday, said the BJP would "do everything possible to nail the AAP's lies" regarding phone calls in which citizens are being told that their name has been deleted from their respective voter list "at the behest of the BJP" but Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal "got it restored".

## 'Right decision'

"There have been multiple complaints which have been made against the AAP regarding the issue and I am in the process of seeking legal opinion on which particular sections of the Indian Penal Code [IPC] can be invoked regarding such false calls

**Do not lie** Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal. The 24 lakh votes have been deleted in last 10 years due to death, duplication, self-deletion through Form 7. Thirty lakh votes have been added during this period. It's a normal process [sic]

VIJENDER GUPTA  
Leader of the Opposition in Delhi Assembly

which everyone in Delhi is evidently getting," Mr. Goel told *The Hindu*.

"The EC has rightly decided to inform the public about the propaganda being used by the AAP against the BJP; even though we have been given to understand that the EC intends to begin an information campaign, in the form of full page ads, to inform the public about such bogus calls, we will do all we can to ensure that the guilty are punished as per the law," Mr. Goel added.

Meanwhile, Mr. Kejriwal and Leader of the Opposition in the Delhi Assembly Vijender Gupta confronted each other over the issue on Twitter. Mr. Gupta charged Mr. Kejriwal with "lying" about 24 lakh votes being deleted in Delhi over the last four years.

**Do not lie** Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal. The 24 lakh votes have been deleted in last 10 years due to death, duplication, self-deletion through Form 7. Thirty lakh votes have been added during this period. It's a normal process," Mr. Gupta tweeted in Hindi.

Mr. Kejriwal retorted, "Your Election Commission has given us list of 24 lakh votes deleted in four years. The dirty game of BJP has

**Your Election Commission has given us list of 24 lakh votes deleted in four years. The dirty game of BJP has been exposed early that why you are so flustered. Will EC resign if I give you the list of those whose names have been deleted fraudulently [sic]**

ARVIND KEJRIWAL  
Delhi Chief Minister

been exposed early that why you are so flustered. Will EC resign if I give you the list of those whose names have been deleted fraudulently [sic]."

In a statement, Delhi BJP chief Manoj Tiwari termed the Election Commission's action a "slap" on the face of the "falsehood of Chief Minister Kejriwal".

The Election Commission has informed all the parties, including Arvind Kejriwal's party, that by January 18, 2019, a total number of 9,88,925 votes have increased but Arvind Kejriwal is not ready to accept it," Mr. Tiwari said in a statement.

## Cabinet to take up proposal over ration dealers soon'

Hike in margin money was demand of fair price shop owners: Minister Hussain

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

The margin money paid to ration dealers would be increased to ₹200 per quintal from ₹70 per quintal, the proposal for which would be placed before the Cabinet at the earliest, Delhi Food and Civil Supplies Minister Imran Hussain said on Saturday.

Mr. Hussain's announcement came after a meeting with the office-bearers of the Delhi Sarkari Ration Dealers Sangh, a statement said. He

said the long-pending demand of the fair price shop owners for an increase in margin money was "under active consideration of the government".

He said the government had earlier decided to hike the margin money from ₹70 per quintal to ₹200 per quintal for foodgrains while starting the electronic point of sale (e-POS) system. "However, due to severe deficiencies noticed in the e-POS-based distribution of foodgrains,

the government was forced to suspend the operation of e-POS devices. Considering the difficulties faced by FPS dealers in running their FPSs viably, the Delhi government has decided to consider the demands of ration dealers for increasing margin money in offline mode also," the statement said. As per the National Food Security Act, 2013, the Delhi government distributes 3.75 lakh quintal of food articles to 72.78 lakh beneficiaries every month.

GOVERNMENT STATEMENT

**Considering the difficulties faced by FPS dealers in running their FPSs viably, the Delhi government has decided to consider the demands of ration dealers for increasing margin money in offline mode also**

With the FOB now open, commuters can easily interchange trains between the Airport Express Line and the South Campus station on the Pink Line, the spokesperson said. "It will be a crucial connecting link between the passengers of both the lines as many commuters travelling to and fro from Terminal 3 will be able to take the FOB and interchange trains," said DMRC spokesperson Anju Dayal.

## 22 travelators installed

For the convenience of commuters, a "record 22 travelators" have been installed, the DMRC said.

"The FOB is also equipped with all the safety and security features like CCTV cameras, lighting and PA systems. The CCTV cameras installed at strategic locations shall be monitored round the clock to ensure the security of passengers. There will also be space for display panel and benches have also been pro-

## 'CM playing victim card to hide failures'

BJP leader attacks Kejriwal while referring to Narela incident

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

A day after he was allegedly attacked in Narela, Leader of the Opposition in the Delhi Legislative Assembly Vijender Gupta criticised Chief Minister for "playing the victim card to hide his incompetence and failures".

**He has been indulging in such behaviour to garner cheap publicity to fan his political relevance, which seems to be declining with each passing day**

which seems to be declining with each passing day," Mr. Gupta said.

Mr. Gupta further attacked the Chief Minister for "attacking institutions" instead of "answering the people" and engaging in the "politics of confrontation" which had been "exposed" in front of the people on numerous occasions.

**'His politics is exposed'**  
"The EC has been under fire from the AAP supremo. In the latest case he has tweeted flinging unwarranted allegations at the constitutional body. His politics of confrontation has been exposed in front of the people on numerous occasions," he added.

## Modi to inaugurate National War Memorial on February 25

Constructed to honour martyrs post-Independence

DINAKAR PERI  
NEW DELHI

The National War Memorial (NWM) which pays homage to soldiers who laid down their lives for the country post-Independence is all set to be inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on February 25. Interestingly,

to that ceremony, the Prime Minister would be addressing a meeting of ex-service men at the National Stadium in the Capital. "In view of this, you are requested to disseminate the information through respective Zila Sainik Board's to all the ex-servicemen and all the ex-servicemen association," it reads.

## Guard of honour

Once inaugurated, the NWM will be used for guard of honour for all national events and India Gate which houses the AJJ will be used for regimental events and visiting dignitaries.

"During the dedication to the nation ceremony the Prime Minister will inaugurate a new Amar Jawan Jyoti [AJJ] at the NWM," a defence officer said.

During the ceremony, a full-fledged guard of honour will be held at the NWM, the officer stated and added, "As the bugle is being sounded, there will be a ceremonial guard of honour at India Gate with lesser strength."

The NWM is being constructed at the 'C' Hexagon

**Inauguration delayed**  
The inauguration of the NWM was earlier scheduled for January 25 but was postponed by the government citing pending work. Some officials said it was also to avoid any protocol issues and any unnecessary controversy arising out of it during the Republic Day celebrations.

The Union Cabinet accorded approval for the NWM, a long-term demand, on October 7, 2015, with a tentative timeframe of five years for completion of the project.

## Crucial connect makes travel to T3 seamless

Foot overbridge connecting South Campus and Daula Kuan metro stations opens

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

A foot overbridge connecting the Durgabai Deshmukh South Campus station to the Airport Express Line's Daula Kuan station was thrown open to public on Saturday, said Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) spokesperson.

With the FOB now open, commuters can easily interchange trains between the Airport Express Line and the South Campus station on the Pink Line, the spokesperson said. "It will be a crucial connecting link between the passengers of both the lines as many commuters travelling to and fro from Terminal 3 will be able to take the FOB and interchange trains," said DMRC spokesperson Anju Dayal.



Commuters use the newly inaugurated foot overbridge in the Capital on Saturday. ■ R.V. MOORTHY



## Road traffic injuries are a growing health issue'

Minister releases handbook on prevention of accidents and awareness of first aid

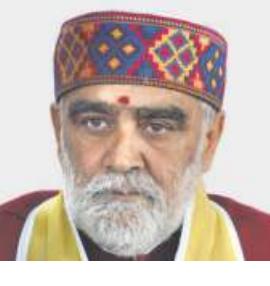
STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare Ashwini Kumar Choubey released communication material comprising first aid module for community and handbook on prevention of accidents and awareness of first aid earlier this week on the occasion of '30th Road Safety Week'.

"Road traffic injuries are a growing public health issue, affecting vulnerable groups of road users, including the poor. Road traffic injuries place a huge strain on healthcare services in terms of financial resources, bed occupancy and demand of health services," he said.

The Minister stressed the need for giving medical trauma care to the injured during the first hour of the accident.

**Care of injuries after a crash is of utmost importance, as a delay of minutes in delivering care can lead to a life-and-death situation**



ing 1,47,913 lives in the country. This would translate, on an average, into 53 accidents and 16 deaths every hour, Mr. Choubey said.

He said that 116 government hospitals were identified out of these, 100 trauma-care facilities are fully functional as reported by the States.

The Minister noted that more than 500 pre-hospital trauma technicians have been trained in the three Central government hospitals (RML Hospital, Safdarjung Hospital and Lady Hardinge Medical College) of Delhi. A release issued by the Health Ministry said that in addition, advanced trauma life support and basic life support trainings are being imparted for doctors and nurses under the programme.

Under the programme, trauma-care facilities are being strengthened in the existing government hospitals, near the State and National Highways.

During 2017, the total number of road accidents were reported to be 4,64,910 causing injuries to 4,70,975 persons and claim-

ing pre-hospital, hospital and rehabilitative services for injury victims.

## Trauma-care facilities

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## Minor boy on way to school hit by van, dies

Manhunt on for absconding driver

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

An 11-year-old boy was killed after he was hit by a speeding school van in west Delhi's Janakpuri on Friday morning, the police said on Saturday.

The police have registered a case on charges of rash driving and causing death by negligence and are looking for the absconding accused.

They said that the victim, identified as Saroj Kumar, was a resident of Uttam Nagar and hailed from Bihar. He was on his way to school with his two younger sisters when the incident happened.

A senior police officer said that around 7.30 a.m., Saroj's mother, a worker, dropped the children near the school and went to work. "He was crossing the road and had held his sister's hand when a speeding van hit him from behind. Locals said that he fell 50

meters away on the road," the officer said.

When the sisters called for help, security guards deployed at the school across the road came and rushed Saroj to Mata Chanan Devi Hospital where he succumbed to injuries he sustained.

"We were told that the driver of the van had stopped for a few seconds before fleeing. The van's registration number was noted by a person who has shared it with the police. A passer-by called the police," said Gagan, the victim's father.

Gagan said he had brought his wife and children to Delhi from Bihar about a year ago to provide the children better education. "I was working here alone but my wife suggested that we should come to Delhi so that the children can be admitted in good schools. Saroj was a very bright student," he said.

Sources said that a case on

## Realtor Rahul Gaur arrested for cheating, was at large for 3 years

Police say the accused was declared a proclaimed offender by the court

HEMAMI BHANDARI  
NEW DELHI

Rahul Gaur, son of Gaursons' chairman B.L. Gaur, and his wife Navneet alias Neetu were arrested on Saturday for their alleged involvement in several criminal cases, the police said.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (New Delhi) Madhur Verma confirmed the arrest.

A senior officer privy to the case said that Mr. Gaur had been absconding for the last three years and was declared a proclaimed offender by the court.

"He was a proclaimed offender [PO] of Barakhamba Road police station and FIRs under Section 174 [non-attendance in obedience to an order from public servant] of the Indian Penal Code were registered against him. He was PO in about 10-12 cases," the officer said.

Sources said that a case on



Rahul Gaur (left) and his wife Navneet alias Neetu were arrested on Saturday. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

found.

In the recent case, the complainant told the police that the husband-wife sold him shares of their company Brys Hotels Private Limited in 2014, stating that they can transfer the shares to the third party, but the complainant later found out that they had given a written undertaking to the bank, from which they had taken a loan and that the company's shares will not be sold during the currency of the loan.

Rahul Gaur, chairman and managing director of Brys group, was also arrested by the Odisha police with the help of the Noida police in November 2015, hours after he had locked himself inside a Noida house. The accused had allegedly sold a disputed land for ₹18 crore in Bhubaneswar to a Delhi-based worker for which he was arrested.

## Minor raped by school's sweeper in Shahdara

Accused arrested, case registered

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

A 10-year-old girl, a student of a government school, was allegedly raped by the school's sweeper on Tuesday in Shahdara, the police said on Saturday. The accused has been arrested, they said.

A senior police officer privy to the case said that the minor was leaving school in the afternoon of Tuesday, when she was allegedly lured by the 38-year-old sweeper into a room.

"The victim said that the accused made her sit and then pushed her towards a wall and raped her," the officer said.

**Victim 'threatened'**  
After committing the crime, the accused allegedly also threatened the girl, asking her not to tell anyone about the incident. The victim then returned home.

Subsequently, the minor informed her relatives, with

A case under relevant sections of POCSO Act and Section 506 [criminal intimidation] of the IPC has been registered

POLICE OFFICER

whom she stays, about the incident. The relatives approached the police on Saturday and also submitted a written complaint.

The police also said that the victim's parents live in Bihar.

"A case under relevant sections of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act and Section 506 [criminal intimidation] of the Indian Penal Code has been registered and the accused has been arrested," the officer said, adding that the accused is a contractual worker, who started working at the school about four months ago.

### OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE

#### BIRTHDAY REMEMBRANCE



**GURMEET SINGH**  
(Feb 10, 1960 - Sep 13, 2012)  
With an Ache in our heart,  
we whisper low,

#### HAPPY BIRTHDAY

to you,  
**We miss you so.**  
Charanjeet Kaur (Wife),  
Sarpreet Kaur (Daughter),  
Amandeep Singh (Son)  
& Family"

#### DEATH ANNIVERSARIES

#### 50<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY



**S.R.I.P.S. RAMACHANDRAN**  
ADVOCATE, CHITTOOR, (AP)  
15-08-1910 - 10-02-1969  
Fondly remembered by  
PRSEETHARAMAN & FAMILY

#### 1<sup>st</sup> ANNIVERSARY



**Tmt. Sarojini Subrahmanyam**  
B.A. B.Ed.  
W/o. Late Thiru T.P. Subrahmanyam,  
Former Joint Secretary,  
Government of India

Former Teacher, DTEA School,  
Lodhi Estate, New Delhi.  
Ex-Municipal Councillor,  
Tenkasi, Tamil Nadu.

FONDLY REMEMBERED BY

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# Man arrested for wife's murder

Accused suspected victim was friends with other men; body was found on Jan. 21

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

A 40-year-old man has been arrested for allegedly killing his wife over suspicion of being friends with other men in south-east Delhi's Lajpat Nagar, the police said on Saturday. The woman's decomposed body was found on January 21, they said.

Additional Deputy Commissioner of Police (South-East) Ghanshyam Bansal said that the accused has been identified as Sanjay Kumar Singh alias Sanju, a rickshaw puller, who allegedly killed his wife Geeta Devi.

Singh was Geeta's second husband, he said.

The police said that on January 21, a passer-by made a PCR call regarding a body. When police reached the



Deceased Geeta Devi

spot, they found a woman's decomposed body. The body remained unidentified for days after which it was cremated on January 30.

#### Missing report

However, on February 2, a 15-year-old boy approached

the police and reported his mother missing since January 13.

The boy was shown the woman's photo and told about the clothes she was wearing, after which he identified her as his mother.

"The boy also said that he used to reside with his mother and stepfather [Sanjay] at Garhi village and that the couple often used to fight. He said that his stepfather was also missing since January 13," Mr. Bansal further said.

During investigation, the police said, it was revealed that Geeta was last seen with Sanjay.

All his suspected hideouts were raided but he could not be found anywhere. On Friday, the police said they re-

ceived a tip-off that Sanjay had come to pick up his own son. He was arrested from Garhi when he came to pick up the boy (from his marriage with Geeta), the police said.

During interrogation, the accused told police that he had met Geeta in 2008 when she was living separately from her husband and with her son. The two fell in love, got married and Geeta gave birth to another boy. "He suspected her of being friends with other men, to which he objected and often picked up fights with Geeta. On January 13, the day of the incident, he took Geeta to a secluded place on the pretext of resolving the issues between them and strangled her," Mr. Bansal said.

# Man killed for threatening witness in attempt-to-murder case

Victim allegedly asked minor to turn hostile; three held

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

Three persons, including a minor, have been held for allegedly killing a 20-year-old man in south Delhi's Ambedkar Nagar on Friday allegedly because the victim asked the minor to turn hostile in an attempt to murder case.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (South) Vijay Kumar said that the accused have been identified as Sunny Nepali alias Lallu, his juvenile brother, and their accomplice Saurabh Singh and the victim as Sunil alias Sheru.

Sunil was involved in a firing incident at Karkardooma court in which a head constable was killed. "The victim was a minor at the time and was recently released

from an observation home in north Delhi," Mr. Kumar said.

The police said they received a call around 11.45 p.m. regarding a body lying in Dakshinpuri.

The deceased was later identified as Sunil. His brother Raj Kumar told the police that Sunil had a scuffle with Sunny and his brother a few days ago and was also seen with the accused around 5 p.m. on Friday.

The police said that raids were conducted and Sunny and his brother was nabbed with the help of local intelligence.

During interrogation, he said that his minor brother was an witness in an attempt-to-murder case re-

gistered last year at Ambedkar Nagar police station against one Himanshu Paharia, an acquaintance of Sunil.

"The accused said that Sunil was threatening the minor to turn hostile.

On the day of the incident, the brothers and their accomplice Saurabh took the victim to a deserted place and clobbered him with a stone and stabbed him to death," Mr. Kumar said.

The police said that raids were conducted and Sunny and his brother was nabbed with the help of local intelligence.

During interrogation, he said that his minor brother was an witness in an attempt-to-murder case re-

Uncle killed days after boy's murder

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

A 23-year-old man was shot dead in outer Delhi's Bawana on Saturday morning, the police said. A case has been registered and a probe has begun.

A senior officer said that the victim has been identified as Karan Dabas, a resident of Sultanpur Dabas. His nephew Mohit Dabas was shot dead only a week ago.

The police said that Karan was in his fields, getting some work done by the farmers, when he was shot at least five times by a few men, who had come in an SUV. They fled after the incident. The farmers informed Karan's family. He was rushed to a hospital where he was declared brought dead.

# Scrapyard



Heaps of abandoned vehicles near Seelampur metro station in New Delhi on Saturday. ■ R.V. MOORTHY

# IES officer found dead at residence in Munirka

Batchmates say he was upset for not being able to clear competitive exams

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

A 25-year-old Indian Engineering Services (IES) officer was found dead at his rented accommodation in Munirka on Friday night, the police said on Saturday. The police suspect that he died by suicide.

No note left behind by the deceased has been found, they said.

A senior police officer said that the deceased IES officer

hailed from Madhya Pradesh's Rewa. "The police control room received a call regarding the incident around 10:45 p.m.... During investigation, it was revealed that he had moved to Delhi about two months ago and lived with three of his batchmates. It was his first posting here," the officer said.

On Friday evening, two of the batchmates had gone to a mall, while the third was away in his village. When the

two batchmates returned around 9 p.m., they found the door locked. They called the deceased who did not answer. "They arranged a ladder from their neighbours and climbed up from the rear side of the house. When they finally went inside, they found him hanging," the officer said. The two then rushed him to a hospital where he was declared dead, police said.

When questioned, the batchmates told the police that their friend was upset for not being able to clear competitive examinations.

The officer further said that the family of the deceased has been informed about his death. Inquest proceedings have been initiated, he said.

*Suicide prevention helpline: Sanjivini, Society for Mental Health, Telephone: 011-4076 9002, Monday-Saturday, 10 a.m.-7.30 p.m.*

# 'CM deprives millions from Centre's schemes'

Kejriwal neglected 360 villages causing resentment among residents, says Goel

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

Union Minister and former Delhi BJP president Vijay Goel on Saturday addressed a public meeting against the Arvind Kejriwal-led Delhi government in north-west Delhi's Barwala.

Accusing him of not allowing the Centre-sponsored Ayushman Bharat scheme to be implemented in Delhi, Mr. Goel said, the Chief Minister had deprived "millions of people" residing in the rural belt from getting the benefit of free medical treatment up to ₹5 lakh.

"The benefits of the schemes are not available because farmers of the villages of Delhi are not being given the status of farmers. The Kejriwal government has totally neglected 360 villages of Delhi that has caused a lot of resentment against him in those residing in the villages," Mr. Goel claimed in a statement.

"The residents of Barwala told me that the condition of the roads is deplorable and the water available was not potable... They were angry with Mr. Kejriwal for creating hindrances in starting the Phase-IV metro of Rithala-Bawna-Narela line too," he



Union Minister Vijay Goel and MP Udit Raj address a public meeting in Barwala in New Delhi on Saturday. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

claimed.

Member of Parliament Udit Raj, who was also part of the program, said that when the Delhi government's Land and Building Department acquired land belonging to villagers, the villagers were promised similar plots; however, thousands of villagers had still not received the promised plots and the Delhi government was "sitting idle on these files".

Similarly, there is an urgent need to delete Section

81 as even if a small room is built on any farmland, the same gets vested in Gaon Sabha land. There is also a need to amend Section 33, due to which any farmer having less than 8 acres of agricultural land is not able to sell the same and is stopped from dividing it amongst his children as well," Mr. Raj said.

Mr. Goel further argued that the law and order situation in the area had deteriorated and the problems of alcohol and drug abuse had

# Minor killed after fight over accused's girlfriend

Three minors apprehended

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

A 14-year-old boy was stabbed to death on Friday allegedly by three minors following a fight over the prime accused's girlfriend, the police said on Saturday. The incident was reported from central Delhi's Anand Parbat, they said.

A senior officer privy to the case said that the victim has been identified as Kudrat Tulla, resident of Gayatri Colony, who used to do a part-time job. The three accused have been apprehended and sent to observation home, the police also said.

The police said that the victim was sitting around a bonfire with two of his friends, identified as Amir Khan and Dinesh, around 7 p.m. on Friday, when the three accused arrived and started abusing him. "The three then took him to the next street on the pretext of having a word with him. Two of them held him, while the prime accused stabbed him. As the victim cried for help, his friends rushed to the spot. Meanwhile, the accused fled," the officer said.

The friends then informed Kudrat's family members, who rushed him to a hospital where he was declared brought dead.

The police said that the victim was friends with the prime accused's girlfriend, which did not go down well with her boyfriend. The accused allegedly had threatened the victim and asked him to stay away from her.

On Saturday, the police said that the victim was friends with the prime accused's girlfriend, which did not go down well with her boyfriend. The accused allegedly had threatened the victim and asked him to stay away from her.

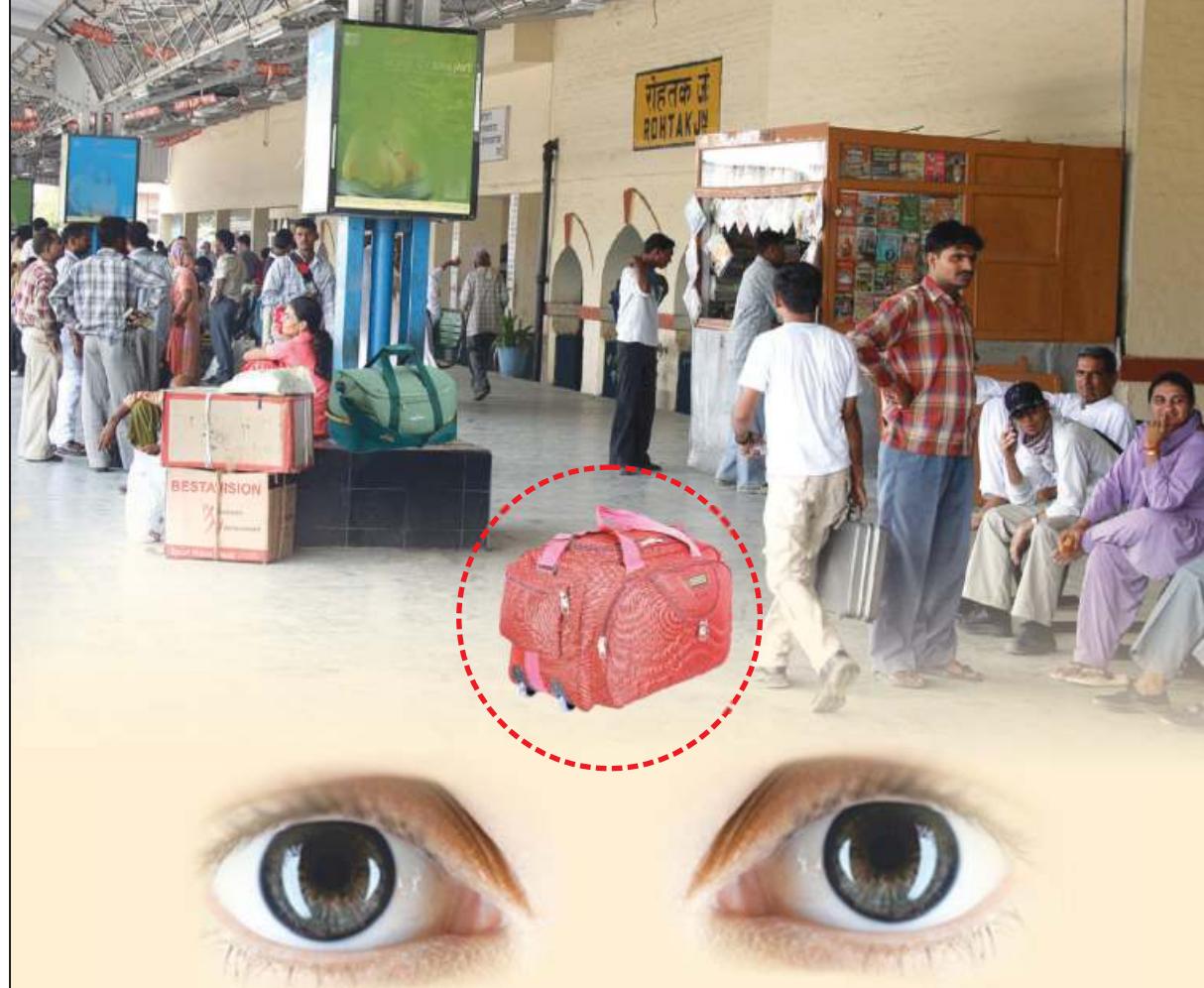
In order to ensure a fair probe, a magisterial enquiry has been initiated into the matter, DCP (Outer) Seju Kudrat, they also said.

The deceased food vendor, identified as Virender, lived with his family in

Mangolpuri.

Around 12.30 p.m. on Friday, Virender, along with his family members approached the Rajpark police station to get issues between his son and his girlfriend resolved. The families of both the parties had come to the police station, a senior police officer said. On Saturday, Virender's wife alleged that he had been thrashed by police officers inside the police station that led to his death. However, the police said that the victim died at his residence on Friday night.

The exact cause of death will be ascertained after his post-mortem and the Magistrate will decide on the further course of action based on the report, the police said.



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NAIR, KARTHIKAI 38/175, MCA Widower & Kids, Palakkad Settled Chennai, Looking Educated Unmarried or Widow (without kids). Pls Avoid Brokers. Ct : 9447205860/ 9965238896.

BRIDE WANTED

Looking for Fair Hindu Malayali Girl with PG qualifying with father business background for My son (MBA London) D.O.B:26/10/1995 doing Logistic Business and father 30yrs in Business. 98400 64490

TAMIL

CHRISTIAN NADAR 28/170 BE, MBA ICICI Bank Dy Manager Chennai seek Educated Employee.Bdye.9444505555

Malaysian, 37, Meo, Engineer (Div) Aus- PR \$7000 looking Doctor/ Engineer. Slim & Fair below 32. Christian's wife, 30+, Divorcee/ Widow with or without issues, as a soulmate and life companion. ph: 9159698271, Mail: tvk2018@gmail.com

SC/AD25/166 BE,ASWINI/RAGUKETHU WORK Canara Bank Seeks working preferably Bank/LIC. ct:9994195565

FOR DOCTOR MD Upper middle class holder Seeker Doc/Engr/Profesr bride Language&CasteNoBar. 9444157888

AD RC CHRISTIAN BE, Chennai/36/ 170 Job Engineer, Denmark Ship, 2 Lakhs/pm.seek graduate bride.

WANTED BRIDE : Iyer Kaushika Vadama Aiyilam Divorcee 41 yrs B.E. MNC Chennai Seeks Iyer/yen-ger Girl Ct: 98413 53749

ENGLISH

HINDU KARUNEEGAR, 47 yrs, b.com, Accountant, pvt, 1st marriage, groom appearance 30 yrs, well suited bride wanted from any FC or Backward community. PH. 8610707186, 9487043635.

KANNADA

VOKKALIGA GOWDER (KANNADA) GROOM, B.E.(Mech) M.S.(London) Business Family 32 Years from Chennai seeks bride. Contact: 9841737747

MALAYALAM

LATINATHOLIC NADAR 1990/167 MBA (Phd) CA/B, Govt Bank Manager Polyglot seeks Fair, Tall, Well Settled Reputed Family Bride. Contact: 944400044 / 8668013121

NAIR, KARTHIKAI 38/175, MCA Widower & Kids, Palakkad Settled Chennai, Looking Educated Unmarried or Widow (without kids). Pls Avoid Brokers. Ct : 9447205860/ 9965238896.

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LATINATHOLIC NADAR 1990/167 MBA (Phd) CA/B, Govt Bank Manager Polyglot seeks Fair, Tall, Well Settled Reputed Family Bride. Contact: 944400044 / 8668013121

TAMIL MUSLIM Boy - Religious Fair Slim 28 years 170 cms B.E., M.Sc.(Engg) abroad educated looking for a suitable girl from Chennai with educated background. Please whatapp biodata to 99401 68365

CSI OTHERS 29yrs B.E PL MINC Ch seeks fair, anyDiv Profnl Girl 044-882951574

SHRI TELUGU CHETTIAR 35/181 cms B.Tech, MBA Manager Tamil/Chennai. Seeking Vegetarian Telugu/Tamil Chennai Girl. Ct 944559768, 044-42859690

ALLIANCE INVITED for Our Son Entertainment and Media Professional 31/173cm,Hindi Residing at Chennai seeks suitable Bride. Contact: 9176448706

HINDU TAMILNAICKER/UNMARRIED GROOM/TATHIRUVATHIRAI/MUTHUM/BE/34/ 18.8'L'LORE SWEM/30+LPA seeks suitable Bride upto 33yrs/100cm. Plz send biodata to 91978852703/ shiva6191@gmail.com

PILLAI (CASTENOBAR) 35,173 cms, Fair, Software Professional, Masters, NRI Working in Malaysia, Shudha Jathagam (Thanus), Uthiradam, Looking for a like-minded and well educated bride willing to settle in abroad. Contact: 9842666764/+919789916306 (Whats app) Email: Satish\_h@yahoo.com

HINDU TELUGU CHETTIAR 35/181 cms B.Tech, MBA Manager Tamil/Chennai. Seeking Vegetarian Telugu/Tamil Chennai Girl. Ct 944559768, 044-42859690

CHRISTIAN BACHELOR Male, 41yrs, MNC Mgr, Bangalore, No language/ country preference, 9886326877

HINDU NADAR 31/165 Anusham B Tech SWE 3 L pm. Seeks Educated Bride from the decent Family. Ct: 9944570952

CHETTIYAR 30 divorcee Central Govt, Trichy 45000 pm seeks suitable decent female. Ct: 9944570952

ADIDRAVIDAR 27/180 BE, M.Tech Job in Railway, Bangalore, 50000 pm seeks suitable decent female. Ct: 9944570952

YER VADAMAL HARITHA Rishabh, 26/180 BE, M.Tech, MBA, 50000 pm, seeks suitable decent female. Ct: 9944570952

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HINDU NADAR 31/165 Anusham B Tech SWE 3

# BSP breaks electoral ties with INLD

To join hands with Loktantra Suraksha Party for the upcoming Lok Sabha and Assembly polls

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
CHANDIGARH

The Bahujan Samaj Party on Saturday announced that it was breaking its almost ten-month-old electoral alliance with the Indian National Lok Dal and will contest the upcoming Lok Sabha and Assembly polls, due this year, with the Loktantra Suraksha Party in Haryana.

BSP Haryana in-charge Meghraj said that following the orders of BSP national president Mayawati, the party has decided to end the alliance.

#### Rebel BJP MP

"The BSP today ends its alliance with the INLD and has decided to tie-up with the Loktantra Suraksha Party,"



Loktantra Suraksha Party leader Raj Kumar Saini (left) and BSP Haryana in-charge Meghraj at a press conference in Chandigarh on Saturday. ■ AKHILESH KUMAR

Mr. Meghraj told journalists here.

The LSP is the political outfit floated by rebel BJP MP Raj Kumar Saini. The

candidate fielded by him in the Jind bypoll had put up a better performance than INLD's Umed Singh Redhu.

Mr. Meghraj added that

the BSP and the LSP will jointly contest the upcoming Lok Sabha and Assembly polls in Haryana.

#### Seat sharing

"While the BSP will contest eight seats, the LSP would fight two parliamentary seats. As far as the Assembly elections are concerned, the BSP will contest 35 seats and the LSP will fight 55 seats," he said.

The INLD and the BSP had announced an electoral alliance in April last year for the Lok Sabha and Assembly polls. The alliance was under strain after the INLD was defeated in the recently held Jind bypoll.

Mr. Meghraj added that the decision to snap ties was

taken after considering the demand of the people of Haryana.

"Our leader gave them a chance for staying united. When we entered into an alliance, the INLD was one party. But after the Chautala family split, we got a chance to judge them in the Jind bypoll," he said.

The BSP leader said the objective of ousting the BJP was unachievable with an alliance with the INLD.

Meanwhile, INLD leader Abhay Singh Chautala said: "The INLD always respected BSP leaders and workers. Now, why the BSP has decided to end ties with the INLD, its for their (BSP) leaders to answer."

(With PTI inputs)

## Man with alleged JMB links held

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
KOLKATA

The Special Task Force of the Kolkata Police has arrested one person for his alleged links with the Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB), a Bangladesh-based JMB terror outfit, from the city, a senior officer said on Saturday.

Manirul Islam (42), a resident of Raghunathganj in Mursidabad district, was picked up from Sealdah station area on Friday night, he said adding that he has been an active JMB member since 2010.

The IPS officer said, "Islam used to visit Mokimnagar madrasa (in Mursidabad) frequently for recruitment purposes. His idea was to rope in persons for training."

#### Selfie time



Folk artistes posing in front of the Taj Mahal in Agra on Saturday. ■ PTI

## + Another student of residential school found pregnant

Pregnancy detected during a routine health check-up in Odisha's Mayurbhanj district: police

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
BARIPADA (ODISHA)

A minor tribal girl, studying in a State-run residential school in Odisha's Mayurbhanj district, has been found pregnant, the police said on Saturday.

The pregnancy of the Class IX student was detected during a routine health check-up on Friday, Uda

Sub-Divisional Police Officer S.R. Mohapatra said.

A complaint was lodged by the school headmaster the same day. A case had been registered and probe into the matter is on, he said.

The tribal girl has been admitted to a hospital in Baripada, where tests confirmed her pregnancy, the police said.

In her statement to police, the minor girl named a youth as accused, the SDPO said.

The youth, who hails from a nearby village, is missing and efforts are on to locate him, Mr. Mohapatra said.

The incident comes to light days after a Class VI student of a government residential school in the district was found to be six month

pregnant.

A teenage boy of the school was apprehended and sent to a juvenile home on Friday after the girl accused him of raping her.

#### Several incidents

Incidents of sexual abuse of minor girls in government residential schools have been reported from different

districts of the State in the recent past.

Three minor girls, including two inmates of State-run residential schools, were found pregnant in Dhenkanal, Kalahandi and Jajpur districts last month. A 14-year-old student of a residential government school had delivered a baby in Kandhamal district last month.

## Odisha BJP releases charter of promises

Assures shelter for homeless, records of rights for landless, jobs for youth

STAFF REPORTER  
BHUBANESWAR

The Odisha unit of the BJP released a charter of promises on Saturday, assuring shelter for homeless, records of rights for landless and employment for youth.

The charter called 'Pratisruti Patra' is like a printed declaration where people seeking home, land or jobs can fill up their personal details and submit the document at the party office. The forms are also being collected by the BJP workers and acknowledgement receipts are being issued to the applicants.

The BJP while releasing the 'Pratisruti Patra' here announced that it would fulfil the promises upon being voted to power.

"The Naveen Patnaik go-



Dharmendra Pradhan ■ FILE PHOTO

#### Gas Minister.

"About 25.57 lakh houses were allotted to poor during the United Progressive Alliance regime [at the Centre]. Each dwelling unit measured 20 sq metre and financial assistance to the tune of ₹75,000 was being given. After the Narendra Modi government came to power, the number of dwelling units went up to 1.4 crore while the assistance was doubled," said Mr. Pradhan.

He said that the NDA government has promised that nobody would be left without roof, power, and LPG gas connection by 2022.

"Mr. Patnaik enjoyed power thoroughly during 19 years of his rule, while Mr. Modi spent 55 months in service of the people," said Mr. Pradhan.

vernment during its 19 years of rule failed miserably. According to official statistics, 27.48 lakh families do not have roof over their head while 25 lakh landless people are yet to have records of rights in their name," alleged Dharmendra Pradhan, Union Petroleum and Natural

Pradhan. "In its 2014 manifesto, the BJD had promised housing for all, but everybody knows how many families have got roofs over their heads," he said.

#### Cong. declaration

This exercise of releasing a written charter of demands had been adopted by the State Congress too, which had issued guarantee cards to its supporters when party president Rahul Gandhi had visited Rourkela on February 6. The party had promised minimum basic income for poor and crop loan waiver. It had also assured financial assistance for higher education and marriage of girl child, water supplies in every household and steps to prevent violence against women.

complained to the Superintendent about some undertrial prisoners talking on mobile phone, the police said.

**Probe ordered**  
Faizabad District Magistrate Anil Kumar Pathak said that a magisterial enquiry has been ordered into the incident.

The rioters also broke CCTV cameras installed in jail as chaos reigned. Addi-

tional forces were called in, which used drone cameras to take stock of the situation, they said.

After more than six hours, the security forces were able to free the eight badly injured hostages who were shifted to Faizabad district hospital, they said.

According to sources, the jail has a capacity of 4,000 inmates but over 8,000 prisoners are lodged there.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
FAIZABAD (U.P.)

A clash between two groups of prisoners sparked a riot in Faizabad divisional jail where at least eight inmates were held hostage and assaulted during the stand-off that lasted six hours on Saturday, according to police sources.

The inmates threatened to blow up cooking gas cylinders which they took from

the jail kitchen and threw stones at the security personnel as reinforcements were rushed in to restore order.

**Probe ordered**  
Faizabad District Magistrate Anil Kumar Pathak said that a magisterial enquiry has been ordered into the incident.

The trouble started at 9 a.m. when a jail functionary

## Sukhbir promises free power to Haryana farmers

Urge Punjabis to unite to help SAD form the next govt.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
AMBALA (HARYANA)

Shiromani Akali Dal president Sukhbir Singh Badal on Saturday promised to provide free power to farmers in Haryana, on the pattern of Punjab, if his party is voted to power in the State Assembly elections later this year.

The BSP leader said the objective of ousting the BJP was unachievable with an alliance with the INLD.

Meanwhile, INLD leader Abhay Singh Chautala said: "The INLD always respected BSP leaders and workers. Now, why the BSP has decided to end ties with the INLD, its for their (BSP) leaders to answer."

Addressing a public rally here, the SAD chief urges Punjabis to unite to help the party form the next government in Haryana.



Sukhbir Singh Badal ■ FILE PHOTO

once we form the government in the State," he said.

#### Justice for riot victims

Describing the Congress as the biggest enemy of the Sikh community, Mr. Badal said the SAD had fought relentlessly to ensure justice for the 1984 anti-Sikh riot victims. "The SAD doggedly pursued the cases of the 1984 accused and it is because of our efforts that Jagtar Singh has been incarcerated for life," he said, while promising that other accused would also meet the same fate.

SAD Haryana in-charge Balwinder Singh Bhundur said the party would hold its next rally at Sirsa on February 17.

Speaking at the rally, senior SAD leader Manjinder Singh Sirsa said the party could emerge as a force in Haryana. He said Sikhs across the country and the world looked up to the SAD to resolve all problems being faced by the community.

## M.P. Congress MLA demands SIT in cow slaughter row

Demands Collector's transfer, says invoking NSA unjustified

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
BHOPAL/KHANDWA

A Congress MLA has written to Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Kamal Nath demanding setting up of a SIT and transfer of the Khandwa District Collector for invoking the National Security Act on three persons accused of cow slaughter.

Bhopal Central MLA Arif Masood, in his letter sent on Friday, termed the NSA move "one-sided", adding that the kin of the three accused had met him and had alleged that the Collector had not heard their side.

**Slaughter shameful'**  
He said cow slaughter was "shameful" but reiterated that the Collector's move to invoke the stringent NSA was unjustified.

He demanded constitution of a Special Investigation Team to probe the case and the Collector's transfer or was in order to have a "fair" probe.

Mr. Masood said on Saturday,

**The side of the accused should have been heard before invoking NSA**

ARIF MASOOD  
Bhopal Central MLA

day, "I have written to the Chief Minister and urged him to intervene in the matter. The action taken by the police and district officials was on the basis of information given by an informer. The side of the accused should have been heard before invoking NSA."

He claimed the minority community leaders from different parts of the country have also spoken to Congress chief Rahul Gandhi in this regard.

Earlier last week, the authorities had slapped NSA on three accused, identified as Shakeel, Nadeem and Azam, for allegedly killing a cow in Khandwa, and jailed.

Justifying the action, Khandwa Superintendent

of Police Siddharth Bahuguna had said Nadeem, alias Raju, was a habitual offender and had been held earlier in a cow slaughter case as well as other criminal cases.

**Communally sensitive**  
Khandwa is a communally sensitive area and such an incident might affect its peace and harmony and therefore, he had said, such a move was made against the three.

According to Moghat Police Station in-charge Mohan Singore, acting on a tip-off that a few persons were involved in cow slaughter, a team raided Kharkali village near here on February 1.

While the accused fled from the spot, a large knife and beef was seized from there, he said.

The three were arrested on February 2 and Khandwa Collector Vishesh Gadale later invoked NSA against them, Mr. Singore had informed.

## Eight injured in Faizabad jail violence

Assures shelter for homeless, records of rights for landless, jobs for youth

STAFF REPORTER  
BHUBANESWAR

The Odisha unit of the BJP released a charter of promises on Saturday, assuring shelter for homeless, records of rights for landless and employment for youth.

The charter called 'Pratisruti Patra' is like a printed declaration where people seeking home, land or jobs can fill up their personal details and submit the document at the party office. The forms are also being collected by the BJP workers and acknowledgement receipts are being issued to the applicants.

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Dharmendra Pradhan ■ FILE PHOTO

#### Gas Minister.

"About 25.57 lakh houses were allotted to poor during the United Progressive Alliance regime [at the Centre]. Each dwelling unit measured 20 sq metre and financial assistance to the tune of ₹75,000 was being given. After the Narendra Modi government came to power, the number of dwelling units went up to 1.4 crore while the assistance was doubled," said Mr. Pradhan.

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tion forces were called in, which used drone cameras to take stock of the situation, they said.

After more than six hours, the security forces were able to free the eight badly injured hostages who were shifted to Faizabad district hospital, they said.

According to sources, the jail has a capacity of 4,000 inmates but over 8,000 prisoners are lodged there.



## IN BRIEF



Two crore expected to take 'shahi snan' today

ALLAHABAD  
All roads led to Sangam city, where devotees have gathered for the third and the final shahi snan on Basant Panchami on Sunday. More than two crore people are expected to take a holy dip at the Kumbh Mela. The festival of Basant Panchami heralds the arrival of spring and is dedicated to goddess Saraswati. PTI

## Sri Lankan Navy arrests seven fishermen in T.N.

NAGAPATTINAM  
The Sri Lankan Navy on Saturday reportedly arrested seven fishermen of Akkaraipettai, a fishing hamlet on the outskirts of Nagapattinam, and confiscated a fibre reinforced boat for foraying into the Sri Lankan waters.

## 1 held after video of boys harassing a girl goes viral

JEHANABAD  
A video showing a group of boys harassing and beating a schoolgirl has gone viral on social media in Bihar's Jehanabad district, following which the police swung into action and arrested one of the perpetrators of the crime. Superintendent of Police Manish Kumar said that one person had been arrested in this connection on Saturday. PTI

## Stranded elephant calf reunited with herd in T.N.

COIMBATORE  
Tamil Nadu Forest Department personnel on Saturday helped a stranded elephant calf reunite with its herd, near Nellithurai in the Mettuppalayam range. The personnel found that the one-year-old calf could not cross an elephant-proof trench. However, the herd had managed to get across and was camping near the forest boundary. After two hours, the officials managed to take the calf across the trench.

## India set to overtake Pakistan in number of Haj pilgrims: Naqvi

50% of applicants this year are women: Minister

SUYASH KARANGUTKAR  
MUMBAI

Union Minister of Minority Affairs Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi on Saturday said that India is likely to overtake Pakistan in terms of the number of pilgrims sent for Haj pilgrimage this year.

Mr. Naqvi was in Mumbai on Saturday to inaugurate a two-day training camp of Khadim Ul Hajjaj that saw members from across the country gather at the Haj House near the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus.

"From our country, Muslims participate in Haj in huge numbers. There are two Islamic countries - Indonesia, from where around 2 lakh people participate and then there is Pakistan from where 1,84,000 people participate. As of today, India already has over 1.75,000 participants and we are aiming to supersede Pakistan this year," Mr. Naqvi said while addressing the Khadims.

According to Mr. Naqvi, of the total number of applications received by the Haj Committee of India, around 50% were from women. He also said that there was a gra-

## Pilgrims' progress

As people gear up for the annual pilgrimage to Mecca, Saudi Arabia, the holiest city for Muslims, a look at some facts

**1,75,025**

Muslims from India performed Haj in 2018. Of them, 48% were women

**1,75,000**

people have so far registered for Haj this year

**1,300**

women performed Haj without a 'mehram' (male companion) in 2018

**2,340**

women will perform Haj without 'mehram' in 2019

Pilgrims arriving at the State Haj House in Srinagar.  
■ FILE PHOTO: NISSAR AHMAD

**₹113 crore**  
amount pilgrims will save in 2019 due to the reduction in GST on Haj from 18% to 5%

Amount people from various cities will save this year on air fare (in ₹)

Srinagar	11,377
Ahmedabad	7,305
Aurangabad	9,373
Delhi	7,967
Gaya	11,027
Guwahati	13,049
Ranchi	11,946
Kolkata	9,787
Hyderabad	7,204

dual rise in the number of women willing to participate in the pilgrimage without a 'mehram' (male companion).

According to Mr. Naqvi, digitising the application process and reduction in the GST on Haj yielded significant results. "We made the process online this time. As a result, approximately 40% applications were received through the online medium.

The GST was reduced from 18% to 5% on Haj. We will also ensure a significant drop in the airfare on nine of the 21 embarkation points in the country," he said.

The Minister added that the number of women participating without male companions has also shot up. "Last year, we had around 1,300 women undertaking Haj without male compa-

nions. This year, that number has gone up to 2,340."

He said the government was tightening its leash on private tour operators who will now have to disclose every detail on a portal. "The PTOs will have to disclose details regarding those they are ferrying, rental costs and total expenditure. We have even blacklisted some tour operators," he said.

The Forest Department's strategy was to keep track of the elephant and gradually push it back into the forest, sources said.

## Wild elephant in no mood to return

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
COIMBATORE

Wild elephant Chinna Thambi, which returned to Tirupur district after crossing River Amaravathi a couple of days ago, stayed put near Sengazhanipudur and Kannadipudur villages, and is under the watch of the Forest Department and its 'kumkis' (trained elephants).

The elephant had ventured out of the Top Slip forest on January 31.

According to sources, on the ninth day of tracking Chinna Thambi, the Forest Department officials tried to chase it from the agriculture fields by bursting firecrackers, but it did not budge.

Later, they tried to chase it back into the forest by using the 'kumkis', Kaleem and Mariappan, but with little success. In the afternoon, Chinna Thambi moved back into the sugarcane fields. The elephant then continued moving between Sengazhanipudur and Kannadipudur, owing to the availability of food in farms. On hearing about the elephant, eager villagers rushed to the spot.

The Forest Department's strategy was to keep track of the elephant and gradually push it back into the forest, sources said.



Students wearing masks at a school in Ajmer. ■ PTI

ed a large number of fatalities due to the H1N1 infection," said an official from the ministry. Both the teams comprise a microbiologist, an epidemiologist and a clinician.

The Ministry had earlier deputed a public health team to Rajasthan.

The States have also been advised to involve district collectors in enhancing public awareness and outbreak response.

In a recently held high-power meeting with senior officials of the Ministry, Union Health Secretary Preeti Sudan reviewed the state of preparedness and action taken to deal with H1N1 influenza cases in the country.

(With PTI inputs)

## Congress keen on alliance with Kamal

STAFF REPORTER  
CHENNAI

ing Congress president Rahul Gandhi and general secretary Priyanka Gandhi in New Delhi on Saturday.

## Clean image

Mr. Alagiri said: "Secular parties are there in the DMK-Congress alliance. We feel that people like Kamal Haasan should be with us. He has been identifying himself as a secular person and with

a Leftist orientation. It is our wish that he should join us."

While Mr. Haasan has been strongly critical of the AIADMK, the actor-turned-politician has said that he would not have any truck with the DMK as well. He said that although he would like to win all seats in Tamil Nadu, he was concerned about keeping his hands clean. Mr. Haasan, who has

criticised the Dravidian parties for corruption when in power, is likely to go it alone in the Lok Sabha election.

Speaking to *The Hindu* recently in Coimbatore, Mr. Haasan said, "We have taken a plunge into politics to serve only good things to the people. Hence, we are careful not to indulge in a hasty handshake and get our hands stained".

## BJP to have pre-poll pact: Tamilisai

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
COIMBATORE

The Bharatiya Janata Party will not go it alone. It will contest the Lok Sabha election in Tamil Nadu in a formidable alliance with parties that are in no way connected with the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam or the Congress, BJP State president Tamilisai Soundarajan said here on Sunday.

She was talking to mediapersons at the Coimbatore airport on her way to Tirupur to oversee the arrangements for the function in which the Prime Minister Narendra Modi will participate on Sunday.

She said that during his visits, Mr. Modi was either laying the foundation stone or inaugurating a project, resulting in people eagerly

looking forward to his visits, she said.

The BJP began its electioneering in Tamil Nadu six months ago. The morale of the rank and file of the BJP was high, she said.

Referring to MNM leader Kamal Haasan, Ms. Soundarajan said Mr. Haasan was neither competent nor qualified to evaluate or assess the BJP government's work.

## Stalin terms cash dole announced in Central Budget as 'bribe for votes'

DMK leader says Modi's promise of doubling income remains just a promise

STAFF REPORTER  
SALEM

DMK president M.K. Stalin said that the ₹6,000 a year cash dole announced by the Centre to farmers in the interim Budget amounted to indirectly bribing the voters ahead of the Lok Sabha election.

Speaking at a conference organised by Adi Tamilar Peravai at Magudanchavadi in the district, he said those in power were not thinking of the downtrodden, but thinking of the welfare of the corporates. He said that during the election campaign in 2014, Prime Minister Narendra Modi promised to double the income of farmers after coming to power. "But

be fulfilled. "The cash dole to be given in instalments is bribing the electors," he said.

Mr. Stalin said that 10% reservation for the economically weaker sections among the forward castes would help only the upper castes and not the poor.

Taking a dig at Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami, who said he went to prison seven times, Mr. Stalin wanted the Chief Minister to list the reasons why he went to prison.

E.R. Eswaran, Kongunadu Makkal Desiya Katchi president; Adhiyamaan, Adi Tamilar Katchi president, and A. Raja, former Union Minister, were present.

and added that the protest by farmers in New Delhi was a shame for all citizens. Since the elections were two months away, Mr. Modi planned to visit the State frequently and added that their dream of winning would not

the Central government keeps on saying this every year," he said.

**'Shame for citizens'**  
The DMK president said that farmers' income had only dropped in all these years

be filled.

Mr. Stalin flanked by R. Adhiyamaan of Adi Tamilar Katchi and E.R. Eswaran of Kongunadu Makkal Desiya Katchi. ■ E. LAKSHMI NARAYANAN

Future allies? DMK president M.K. Stalin flanked by R. Adhiyamaan of Adi Tamilar Katchi and E.R. Eswaran of Kongunadu Makkal Desiya Katchi. ■ E. LAKSHMI NARAYANAN

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## FROM PAGE ONE

## As new cases rise, leprosy in spotlight

The Centre says a more aggressive detection campaign is being carried out, explaining the numbers.

The Leprosy Case Detection Campaign has shown that 34,730 cases were detected in 2016, 32,147 in 2017, and 16,097 in 2018. "We welcome the rise. It means we are catching these cases and putting the patients on treatment. But what the department is looking at is the new cases detected, the existing cases with leprosy-related handicap, and new cases in children. They are our actual ground check. The three parameters have shown a downward trend," said Anil Kumar, Deputy Director-General (Leprosy), Union Health Ministry.

Moreover, he clarified, "The figures don't tell us the actual story," adding that that India's leprosy management programme is running in a very aggressive sweep mode, after the "relaxed period" of 2005.

The number of cases reported fell after 2005-06, when India was declared leprosy-free – the prevalence rate at the time was 0.84%.

"It was only at the end of 2011 that we realised leprosy is very much around – when people started reporting in with leprosy-related disabilities – and we refreshed our strategy to find and treat new cases," Dr. Kumar said.

Disease management efforts now include going down to the village level in what is called the "active seeking mode" for cases, where health workers go from house to house and physically examine people for a leprosy patch. "We

were earlier missing many cases because people weren't reporting due to fear, social stigma and lack of awareness," said Dr. Kumar.

Leprosy is a chronic disease caused by a bacillus, *Mycobacterium leprae*, which multiplies slowly. The incubation period of the disease, on average, is five years. In some cases, symptoms may occur within one year but can also take as long as 20 years to occur.

"This is exactly the trouble with the elimination of leprosy. The long incubation period, and the social stigma attached to it, makes it a tough disease to eliminate," said Dr. Kumar.

Leprosy mainly affects the skin, the peripheral nerves, mucosa of the upper respiratory tract, and also the eyes. The disease is transmitted via droplets, from the nose and mouth, during close and frequent contacts with untreated cases. Untreated leprosy can cause progressive and permanent damage to the skin, nerves, limbs and eyes. It is curable with multi-drug therapy (MDT).

There has been a change in the percentage of new child cases from 9.49% in 2013-14 to 8.15% in 2017-18, with the level having remained almost stagnant at 8.94% in 2015-16 and 8.69% in 2016-17. "Our special emphasis is on children, for whom we have brought in active detection intervention, with primary health workers educating them from the school-level onward. We are working at developing a positive attitude towards detection and treatment," said Dr. Kumar.

**Cong. 'will not interfere' in Madhya Pradesh**

Backs Kamal Nath on imposing NSA

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Congress on Saturday said it would not "unwarrantedly interfere" in the functioning of the Madhya Pradesh government on the issue of the imposition of the National Security Act (NSA) against persons accused of cow slaughter and cattle smuggling.

The party described Chief Minister Kamal Nath as a "seasoned administrator." It said law and order is the domain of the Chief Minister and the police.

The Congress's position on the issue comes just a day after former Union Minister P. Chidambaram called the use of the NSA in this case "a mistake, and wrong."

"Kamal Nathji has categorically said the law will take its own course. Nobody innocent will be persecuted or punished in any manner, and nobody guilty will be spared," said the Congress' communication chief Randeep Surjewala.

He added, "He [Kamal Nathji] is experienced and

ment

is

fully

committed

to

protecting

the

rights

and

interests

of

Assam," he said.

"They're not infiltrators"

Mr. Modi said there is a need to differentiate between the people who infiltrate India "with the intention of capturing our resources" and those who are forced to

come

due

to

atrocities

faced

in

their

respective

countries.

"Citizenship Amendment Bill is not just linked to the northeast. There are many people in different parts of the country who have faith in India and who love Mother India. They have come here to save their lives," he said.

come due to atrocities faced in their respective countries.

"Citizenship Amendment Bill is not just linked to the northeast. There are many

people in different parts of the country who have faith in India and who love Mother India. They have come here to save their lives," he said.

The Prime Minister insisted it was India's obligation to protect the minorities who fled their countries because of religious persecution and let the entire country absorb them.

"But some are spreading rumours," he said, in obvious reference to the propaganda that 2 crore Bengali Hindus would migrate to As-

sam if the Bill was passed.

While the local authorities had sanitised the rally venue to keep protesters at bay, various organisations burnt the Prime Minister's effigy and demonstrated with black flags. Some youth also stripped outside the Assam Secretariat in protest.

**Poll stop:** Narendra Modi inspecting an indigenous loom at Raj Bhavan in Itanagar on Saturday. Arunachal Pradesh Governor B.D. Mishra and Chief Minister Pema Khandu are also seen. ■ PTI



## Twitter officials absent at House panel meeting

The committee had asked Twitter and IT Ministry officials to present their views on "safeguarding citizens' right on social/online new media platforms." The committee was supposed to meet on February 7. However, the meeting was postponed to February 11.

"We have suggested that we work with the Lok Sabha Secretariat to find mutually agreeable dates for this meeting so that a senior Twitter official can attend," the spokesperson said in an emailed response, adding that Twitter suggested that its representatives from

India answer questions on Monday. "We await feedback from the government on both of these matters," the spokesperson said.

BJP spokesperson and New Delhi MP Meenakshi Lekhi warned of "repercussions," if Twitter is disrespecting the established institution of Parliament."

The Twitter spokesperson added: "We want to reiterate that we have deep respect for India's parliamentary process and we are also committed to serving the people who use Twitter in the Indian market."

He added, "He [Kamal Nathji] is experienced and

seasoned enough to see if any officer of the police has made any overreach...We will not unwarrantedly interfere in the functioning of the State Government in any manner."

His comments are at variance with what Mr. Chidambaram had said on Friday with regard to imposing the NSA.

"The use of the NSA in Madhya Pradesh was wrong. If a mistake has been committed, the mistake has been pointed to the government by the leadership," Mr. Chidambaram had said at the formal launch of his new book, *Undaunted: Save the Idea of India*.

State leaders were told to identify major issues in their respective States and suggest them to the Manifesto Com-

mittee that is scheduled to complete its work by February 28 and hand over the document to the Congress Working Committee.

The Congress chief, along with K.C. Venugopal, general secretary in charge of organisation, reviewed the progress of tasks assigned to PCCs including strengthening booth level workers, distribution of responsibility, use of the Shakti internal app and the presence of the party on social media platforms.

The Congress is keen to finalise its list of candidates by February end-March first week. Odisha Congress chief Niranjan Patnaik is learnt to have told Mr. Gandhi that the PCCs should be given greater freedom in deciding candidates.

"Rahulji said he won't interfere from Delhi but State units should recommend candidates only after taking proper feedback," Mr. Patnaik said, adding that the system of screening candidates now includes State leaders.

On the issue of alliances too, the party is keen to tie up at the State level alliances as soon as possible. In several States like Bihar, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, Congress has former allies like the RJD, NCP, JD(S) and DMK, the parties are yet to work out seat sharing arrangements.

Jharkhand with 14 Lok Sabha seats is the only State where the party has worked out a seat sharing deal. While the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) is on board, one of the allies, Babul Mandri's Jharkhand Vikas Morcha has expressed its reservation about the allotment of the Lok Sabha seats.

## Flights to Srinagar resumed

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI

The Ministry of Civil Aviation said on Saturday that airlines are now operating additional flights to Srinagar to ease rush of passengers stranded due to a halt in flight operations earlier this week owing to heavy snowfall.

"After the closure of Srinagar airport earlier this week due to snow, airlines are now running extra flights to take passengers to their destinations. The weather is now clear & these extra flights should help all reach their destinations soon," the Ministry tweeted.

Mr. Deb told newspe-

sons that he was not privy to what transpired in the questioning room as he and two other West Bengal police officers – Kolkata Additional Commissioner of Police Jawed Sami and Deputy Commissioner (Special Task Force) Murlidhar Sharma – who accompanied Mr. Kumar to Shillong, were made to wait in a separate room.

**Not an accused: lawyer**  
The trio kept moving in and out of the CBI office situated on a narrow lane, heavily guarded by State police commandos.

"He (Mr. Kumar) is not

being interrogated as he is not an accused (in the Saradha case) but a witness. He is here to share information. He has cooperated earlier, and he is cooperating now after the Supreme Court order," Mr. Deb said after the questioning ended.

The interrogation is being headed by a 10-member team of CBI officials who came from Delhi, Lucknow and Bhopal. A couple of CBI officers, including the investigating officer of the case, came from Kolkata.

A CBI officer, declining to be quoted, said Mr. Kumar would be questioned again on Sunday along with Kunal Ghosh, a journalist-turned-politician and Trinamool Congress MP in the Rajya Sabha.

## CBI grills Rajeev Kumar for 8 hours in Shillong

Questioning may continue today

RAHUL KARMAKAR

SHILLONG



Rajeev Kumar

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## Rafale deal a non-issue for the voter, says Goyal

'People will repose their faith in Modi in Lok Sabha election'

SHARAD VYAS

MUMBAI



**C** The allegations are only keeping the Opposition busy and away from real issues of public interest

impact the Bharatiya Janata Party's chances in the elections. "This is and will be a non-issue for the voters," he said.

According to a recent report in *The Hindu*, at height of the negotiations over the controversial €7.87-billion Rafale deal between India and France, the Defence Ministry had raised strong objections to "parallel negotiations" conducted by the Prime Minister's Office with the French side.

The Opposition has since

Force and Defence Ministry to benefit his "cronies" in the Rafale deal.

### Talks on with Sena

Mr. Goyal, who was speaking on the sidelines of the party programme to launch the Bharat Ke Mann Ki Baat initiative in Maharashtra, said the consultations with the Shiv Sena for an alliance in the State were going on and could come to a conclusion soon.

Alluding to the demands for simultaneous elections, the Minister said it cannot be selectively applied to Maharashtra and Mr. Modi would only look to move in that direction if there was a national consensus on it.

Objecting to West Bengal Chief Minister and Trinamool Congress supremo Mamata Banerjee's alleged efforts to disturb BJP's poll preparations in the State, Mr. Goyal said the anarchy created by the Trinamool leaders was condemnable. They blocked preparations for even the Prime Minister's rallies while not making arrangements for lakhs of voters who wanted to come and hear him talk, Mr. Goyal claimed.

## Push for generous rehab scheme for Naga cadres

Parliamentary panel wants early talks

VIJAYA SINGH

NEW DELHI

A Parliamentary panel has recommended the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) prepare a detailed and generous rehabilitation-cum-settlement scheme for the cadres of National Socialist Council of Nagaland (Isak Muivah), the group that signed a Naga Framework Agreement with the Centre in 2015.

The panel also wondered at the delay in concluding the Naga peace talks "when all other stakeholders other than the Government appear to be eager to conclude it." Any further delay may harm the progress achieved in the last few years, it said.

The panel headed by Congress leader P. Chidambaram submitted the 219th report to the department related Standing Committee on Home Affairs in the Rajya Sabha on February 7.

### 'Stay prepared'

"NSCN (IM), being the largest group in the entire region, would have thousands of cadres who must be adequately settled to make the agreement successful and to prevent the emergence of any splinter groups.... the government should, never-

## Jaitley returns from U.S. after treatment

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI

Union Minister Arun Jaitley on Saturday returned from the United States, where he underwent medical treatment.

"Delighted to be back home," Mr. Jaitley tweeted.

Mr. Jaitley, who was the Finance Minister before a medical procedure led to the charge being temporarily taken away from him, missed presenting the final Budget before the general election. In his absence, the charge was given to Railways Minister Piyush Goyal.

In a tweet, Mr. Goyal said: "Delighted to welcome back respected Shri @arunjaitley ji. Very grateful to him for his support, guidance and leadership."

### Active on social media

Mr. Jaitley has been active on social media, tweeting and writing Facebook posts and had also met reporters through a video call from New York and fielded questions on the subject.

February end-March first week. Odisha Congress chief Niranjan Patnaik is learnt to have told Mr. Gandhi that the PCCs should be given greater freedom in deciding candidates.

"Rahulji said he won't interfere from Delhi but State units should recommend candidates only after taking proper feedback," Mr. Patnaik said, adding that the system of screening candidates now includes State leaders.

On the issue of alliances too, the party is keen to tie up at the State level alliances as soon as possible. In several States like Bihar, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, Congress has former allies like the RJD, NCP, JD(S) and DMK, the parties are yet to work out seat sharing arrangements.

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## IN BRIEF



## Minister slams Cong. for opposing triple talaq bill

MOTIHARI (BIHAR)

Union Law Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad on Saturday slammed the Congress for opposing the legislation against triple talaq, saying the party was supporting a social practice that has been banned in more than 20 Islamic countries. Addressing a farmers' congregation in East Champaran district, Mr. Prasad alleged that under the leadership of Rahul Gandhi the Congress was continuing with the politics of minority appeasement. PTI

## Rahul to address rally in Gujarat on Feb. 14

AHMEDABAD

Congress chief Rahul Gandhi will address a rally in Dharmpur in Gujarat's Valsad district on February 14, its State unit chief Amit Chavda said on Saturday. He said a meeting of the Congress Working Committee, to be attended by top leaders, including Sonia Gandhi, Manmohan Singh and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, is also scheduled in the State. PTI

## CBI probe likely into U.P. MBBS admission scam

NEW DELHI

The government has decided to refer the Uttar Pradesh Combined Medical Test - 2015 MBBS admission scam to the CBI for investigation. Amit Biswas, Under Secretary in the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, in a letter on February 8 to petitioner Surender Singh Hooda, said "the matter has been referred to the CBI for further investigation." Mr. Hooda, an investigative journalist, had filed the petition seeking a CBI probe into the alleged corruption in the exam. IANS

## India slams Pak. PM for remark on minorities

NEW DELHI

India on Saturday said Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan's recent remarks on the treatment of minorities in India were an "egregious insult" to all Indians. Mr. Khan was quoted by the Pakistani media as saying that his government would not allow minorities to be treated like "second class citizens" as is done in India. Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) spokesperson Ravesh Kumar said the remarks were an "egregious insult to all citizens of India". PTI

## 15 lakh BJP workers to be 'backbone' of poll drive

Cadres are well trained, says Rao

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

The BJP will field over 15 lakh trained workers – 15 times more than it had in 2014 – to drive its Lok Sabha election campaign, a party leader said on Saturday.

BJP general secretary P. Muralidhar Rao, who is in charge of the party's training department, said the trained manpower will give the party an edge over its rivals in the general elections as no other political party could claim such an "asset".

"In all the elections since 2015, this trained workforce has contributed in a big way in swinging the poll outcome in the BJP's favour. We are sure that in the 2019 general election too, this massive training programme will have a huge impact in ensuring voter turnout and support for the party," he told reporters.

About 1 lakh trained workers had been fielded by the party for electioneering in the 2014 Lok Sabha polls, he said.

**Massive support** Mr. Rao claimed that this massive organisational backup had helped the party its rivals far behind in several State Assembly elections and also managed to put up a "decent show" when the party did not fare well in some States.

P. MURALIDHAR RAO

BJP general secretary

## From the wings



## Alpha males and women power

Journalist Shekhar Gupta, in the session on "The Age of extremes", pointed out that an authoritarian version of the right was on the rise in the U.S., Turkey, Brazil, Hungary, the Philippines, Israel and others. "These countries are ruled by the alpha male," he commented on a point about politics catering to only their bases. Suhasini Haidar, the moderator of the session and Diplomatic Editor of *The Hindu*, quipped: "Maybe that's why we should have more women in power."



## Not just cricket

"It is important for everybody to play sport. But by sport I don't mean cricket [laughs]. Sport teaches the importance of winning and losing. It is a great equaliser. It is like a TV reality show, no retakes, all pure raw emotions. It taught me to treat all as equals. We don't see people with their colour, caste, religion and country," tennis ace Sania Mirza said. "When I grew up I had to look at heroes outside ... like Steffi Graf. The only other women athlete I knew then.... I wanted to be like P.T. Usha... But now, when a young girl picks up a sport, she can say 'I want to be like Sania, Sindhu, Mary Kom, Sakshi Malik, Dipa Karmakar.'"

## Tweets

Good to be in Bangalore with @PresRajapaksa. Looking forward to spending the next few days among some of the best minds in the region, at the idea conclave @thehuddle organized by @the\_hindu.

@RAJAPAKSANAMAL

Stimulating conversations at the 3rd edition of The Hindu's #thehuddle2019. line up of speakers. Mahinda Rajapaksa, Leader of opposition, Sri Lanka sharing thoughts on India - Sri Lanka relations.

@MAHESHJAYARAM11

Am proud to be an avid reader for the last 40 years. It refines everyone's thought to take an unbiased stand

@SRINIVASHTIRUV2

Who is a Bengalurian? Those born in the city post it being named Bengaluru

@HABNIZ

Great discussions @\_thehuddle. Thank you editor, @muk22, for organizing a fascinating conference. All of us, including my colleagues, Consul Generals from #USA #Australia, #Canada & #unitedkingdom learned much more about #IncredibleIndia

@DANAKURSH

@BVRMohanReddy Thank you for a highly enriching session today at @\_thehuddle today Sir. Your vision and thought process is very inspiring. Thank you.

@NELLUTLASIRI

Good that Vinita Bali talks about HDI being a better barometer of development in a panel for economic reforms. @\_thehuddle

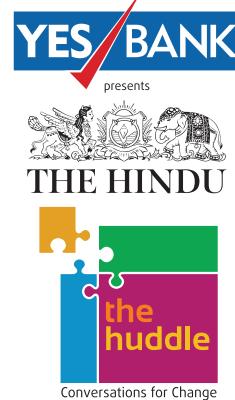
@VASUDEVAN\_K

Totally bowled over by Sania Mirza's stage presence, comic timing, and quick wit during her interview with @veenavengopal at @\_thehuddle. Instead of eventually casting someone like Alia Bhatt, she should play herself in the recently announced biopic on her life.

@UDUPENDRA

Pleasure to meet and interact with @ShekharGupta whose opinions I enjoy listening to even when I don't agree with them#TheHuddle2019

@ANUPPANDEY



## Conversations for Change

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## The empty middle ground

Only the rule of law helps survive the age of extremes marked by polarisation, trolling and name-calling

## MINI KAPOOR

Polarisation today takes forms vastly different from what it did earlier. In a session titled "The age of extremes: no space for the middle ground", panellists discussed whether it is not only that no consensus appears possible in the public sphere to craft a centre that holds – but also that the kind of discourse that is playing out in the age of social media is so thick with name-calling that people take fright from nuancing their argument.

Arif Mohammed Khan, former Union Minister in the Rajiv Gandhi and V.P. Singh governments, made a case for proportion instead of dismissing the situation today as irretrievable. He urged everyone to go back to history to consider the terrible violence that was visited upon different parts of the world. The media, he suggested, must resist from projecting every adverse development as if it is the first time such a thing has happened. "The essential thing," he argued, "is the rule of law. There is not a single problem that cannot be solved if we adhere to the application of the law and equality before the law."

## Losing the argument

Shekhar Gupta, founder and editor-in-chief of *ThePrint*, cautioned that the fear of being caught in the crossfire between two extremes could inhibit nuance and fact-based argumen-



Need for dialogue: Arif Mohammed Khan and Ashwani Kumar, political leaders, and Shekhar Gupta, journalist, in conversation with Suhasini Haidar, Diplomatic Editor, *The Hindu*. ■ K. MURALI KUMAR

tation. Quoting journalist-writer Fareed Zakaria, he said it's now seen that if you are arguing in nuances, you have already lost the argument.

"Today," he said, "if you are not in the trenches and want to check facts, you get caught in the crossfire." He recommended that those keen to safeguard the

If you are not in the trenches and want to check facts, you get caught in the crossfire

SHEKHAR GUPTA  
Journalist

middle ground and fact-based debate must develop a thick skin: "It's a question of not

choosing to enter any bunker." But he added that we should not mistake neutrality for the middle ground.

Ashwini Kumar, lawyer, Congress politician and a Minister in the Manmohan Singh government, however, contended that today public discourse has been severely "debased".

Saying that "moderation will always be the middle ground", he pointed out that "it is the job of the leader to give direction". Polarisation, he suggested, is not sustainable: "Nature shuns extremes."

The discussion was moderated by Suhasini Haidar, Diplomatic Editor at *The Hindu*.

## Thought conclave



(clockwise from left) Mahinda Rajapaksa inaugurating The Huddle in Bengaluru. N. Ram, Chairperson, The Hindu Group; N. Ravi, Publisher of *The Hindu*; Mukund Padmanabhan, Editor, *The Hindu*; and R. Ravichander, group president and regional director, Yes Bank; are seen; the audience at the conclave; and historian Ramachandra Guha asking a question. ■ G.P. SAMPATH KUMAR

Does the nation want to know?  
Does the nation know?

Anuvab Pal lights up proceedings, finding comedy in diversity

I performed in Kashmir last week. Everyone there is so good looking. No wonder they want to separate

him immensely. ("When Lord Wellesley came to south India and yelled, 'surrender', everyone applauded. At last, someone who speaks English! And while we are in the region, here's another one, "Vasco da Gama went to Kerala, got an Ayurvedic massage and never left.") One last: "I performed in Kashmir last week. Everyone there is so good looking. No wonder they want to separate."

Mr. Pal also held up a mirror to the state of journalism in India, especially in the form it plays out at prime time on television screens, where shouting anchors and tired talking heads play out a charade of a debate night after night, with not much real accom-

plishment other than constantly stirring the communal pot. He traced part of this, comically, to the origin of the construct of the term 'Lutyens media', which is often deployed to indicate a cabal of journalists and politicians who hobnob and trade favours in central Delhi, and the obsession with the actual residents of Lutyens Delhi in claiming London as their own and sounding 'properly' English.

The central point of Mr. Pal's comedy is an honest look at ourselves, a diverse people now struggling with the issue of national identity, and baffled at how we got here in the first place. Class and linguistic constructs used to be structured. Now, who knows what's going on?

"Does the Nation Want to Know?" the show asks. In its inability to answer that lies the real question. Does the Nation Know?



Honest laugh A stand-up act by Anuvab Pal, comedian and writer. ■ K. MURALI KUMAR

## The comeback kid

Sania says there is much tennis left in her

## N. SUDARSHAN

Sania Mirza's has always been a tightrope walk, be it in her playing style or outside the four corners of a tennis court. There is seldom a safety net.

In conversation with Veena Venugopal, Associate Editor, *The Hindu* and Editor, *Briefcase*, she was at her free-flowing best. Quite aptly, the 32-year-old had the line of the session too.

"You were the original victim of being trolled and now with social media the rest of us [journalists] are at the receiving end," she was told. "How does it feel," came the pat answer, accompanied by a smile.

## Early recognition

Things, though, weren't as easy when she started. "When I won junior Wimbledon, I heard things like the 'overnight star,' she recollects. "That is something a lot of athletes are told when they first come into recognition."

"I started tennis when I was six. Wimbledon came when I was 16. It was 10 years of struggle, but something nobody sees. People used to make fun of me saying, 'What, are you going to become Martina Hingis?' and it is ironic that I achieved so much with Martina Hingis," recalled Sania.

The doubles partnership with the Swiss ace, which carried the duo to the top of world rankings, was the most satisfying achievement of her career, Sania said.

"Everybody wants to be the best they can be. If you are privileged enough to be the best in the world, then you are really, really special. It just felt like it was so complete. There was a movie reel playing in my head at that moment, my whole life until then in fast forward."

## No emptiness

The achievement led to no feeling of emptiness in her. "I wanted to win more. We sports people are very greedy. The moment we lose that, we should stop. I got to No. 1, I wanted to stay at No. 1. When I won one [Grand] Slam, I wanted to win another...



Serving an ace: Sania Mirza speaks on tennis, motherhood and life lessons.

■ K. MURALI KUMAR

When I won one [Grand] Slam, I wanted to win another... that's the way you reset the goals

er. So that's the way you reset the goals."

It is this drive which is making her contemplate a comeback by the end of the year following the birth of her son. "I would die... it would kill me if I didn't not try. How can I not? Tennis is my life. It has given me everything and I feel it is still not over," she said.

## Tamils first to oppose IPKF, says Rajapaksa

Sinhala, Muslims joined in  
SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
BENGALURU

Former Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapaksa on Saturday said it was the Tamil community in the island nation that had first opposed the Indian Peace-Keeping Force (IPKF) when the latter was invited in 1987 to end the ethnic conflict. Later, the majority Sinhala and Muslim community also opposed the presence of Indian troops on the island, Mr. Rajapaksa said.

The Sri Lanka Leader of the Opposition was responding to questions after his inaugural address at the third edition of *The Hindu's Huddle* in Bengaluru on Saturday.

"After they [the IPKF] left, the [Tamil] issue was internationalised. It should have been settled between us," the senior Sri Lankan leader said.

Asked by the Chairman of The Hindu Group N. Ram about the current concerns of the Tamil community relating to devolution of powers, Mr. Rajapaksa responded, "People can be satisfied, not the politicians." Responding to another question from Mr. Ram, who presided over the session, Mr. Rajapaksa said unfortunately he could not contest the forthcoming presidential election in Sri Lanka, but was looking for a "good candidate" to do so.

## From the wings



**ISI Generals as 'attractive women'**  
Shekhar Gupta, founder and editor-in-chief of *The Print*, said that in the age of social media, most of the Indian influencers were followed by ISI Generals, posing as "attractive women". "Go to my profile, the first comment on every post I make is by this woman," he said.



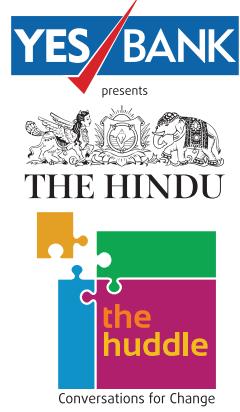
**'Pseudo' and 'psycho historian'**  
On the panel that discussed the complexities of former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, there was a historian, a journalist who covered her and a "pseudo historian". Congress leader Jairam Ramesh, who has written two books about the former Prime Minister, called himself a "pseudo-historian" while trying to ascertain the reasons behind Indira Gandhi lifting the Emergency. Later in the discussion, he said if he were a "psycho-historian", questions about her relationship with her son could be understood better.



**As city paces ahead, writing suffers**  
In the chaotic maze of Bengaluru, most people navigate using landmarks. But for a city that is changing at a rapid pace, directions are difficult. "Take a left turn where there was a Banyan tree," said writer Zac O'Yeah, speaking at *The Huddle*. On the session on "Who is a Bengalurian," "When I started writing my first novel *Mr. Majestic*, there was a cinema called Majestic and by the time I finished the novel, it was pulled down. This city changes at a faster pace than one can write. This forces the writer to assume a past tense writing of the present, very peculiar to Bengaluru," he said.



**Honking for an 'identity'**  
Writer Jayant Kaikini came up with a new theory on why drivers of ride hailing aggregators such as Uber and Ola honk incessantly on Bengaluru's streets, speaking at the session on "Who is a Bengalurian." He called it a "desperate cry" to seek space in an overcrowded city. "There is an anxiety for identity in the city and that's a genuine concern," he said.



# A buoyant economy must lift all boats

Some of the best minds in business discuss how to mould Reforms 2.0, moving beyond just economic statistics

### THOMAS K. THOMAS

Policy-makers and industry should now focus more on the execution of plans and addressing structural issues than merely announcing incentives and sops to encourage economic growth in India. While the first wave of economic reforms led to GDP growth, the real challenge now is to make the growth more broad-based to cover sectors such as agriculture, education, and healthcare.

This was the sum and substance of the panel discussion on "Reforms: time for Version 2.0," moderated by Raghuvaran Srinivasan, Editor, *BusinessLine*.

"When 50% of the world's stunted children live in India and if indeed there is 15% or 16% reported unemployment then these are not good statistics. In economic terms, yes we've got a pretty decent rate of growth of 7.5% over the past decade or so, but relying merely on GDP growth may not be enough as it just measures one sliver of a nation's development," Vinita Bali, former managing director of Britannia Industries Ltd, said.

### Minimal government

Keshav Murugesu, group chief executive officer, WNS Global Services, said the dependence on government incentives and



**Charting a new path:** B.V.R. Mohan Reddy (left), founder and executive chairman, Cyient, Vinita Bali, former MD of Britannia Industries, and Keshav Murugesu (right), group chief executive officer, WNS Global Services; with Raghuvaran Srinivasan, Editor, *BusinessLine*. ■ K. MURALI KUMAR

policies should be minimal. "We didn't wait for sops and reforms. We created a business out of what no one wanted to do. Today, there are 17,000 companies, 1.3 million employees directly involved, \$37 billion of revenue," Mr. Murugesu said, talking about the growth in the business process outsourcing sector.

B.V.R. Mohan Reddy, founder

**We are spending too much time solving the problems of the rich**

VINITA BALI  
Former MD, Britannia

and executive chairman, Cyient, said incentives alone were not going to help industries grow. "We need infrastructure and ta-

lent. There's a disaster waiting to happen in the education space.

There are 16.87 lakh seats available across engineering institutes in the country of which only 51% were taken by students and the employability is not more than 31-32%. That's a big disappointment," Mr. Reddy said. "There has to be some intervention here, starting with improving

the faculty."

Mr. Srinivasan said while the basic philosophy behind the first wave of reforms was to ensure the share of manufacturing in GDP grew substantially, which in turn created more jobs, the real problem was being faced by the agricultural sector in terms of remunerative pricing for farmers.

Agreeing with this observation, Ms. Bali said, "We are spending too much time solving the problems of the rich. The software industry, which we are all proud of employs 3-4 million people, but there are 35 million weavers who have no voice."

### Job creation

Commenting on the policies to encourage the start-up ecosystem, Mr. Murugesu said to focus on start-ups was good as it indicated the shift in thought from looking for a job to creating jobs.

Ms. Bali said the focus should shift from start-up to scale up to fundamentally change the ecosystem.

"We need to build capabilities that deliver on a plan. Otherwise, we have money chasing start-ups and not scale-ups due to which capital productivity is low. We also have to start thinking in terms of return on labour just as much as we think about return on capital."



**Demystifying Indira:** Author Srinath Raghavan, Congress leader Jairam Ramesh and journalist Shekhar Gupta in conversation with Mini Kapoor, Ideas Editor, *The Hindu*. ■ K. MURALI KUMAR

## Dynast or democrat? Unpacking the 'mixed legacy' of Indira Gandhi

The biggest mystery was why she called the polls in 1977

**Strong leaders post magnificent achievements if they are surrounded by people who can speak truth to power**

JAIRAM RAMESH  
Congress leader

Gandhi, "without which we would have had Indian troops in Afghanistan today, such was our dependence on food aid and imports", Mr. Ramesh said she placed ecology at the centre of her governance imperatives, which was important.

Mr. Gupta said Mrs. Gandhi's contribution to handling internal security, citing her actions in Nagaland, sending the Air Force to Mizoram and handling of the Suba movement in Punjab were often overlooked.

Mr. Guha said the most positive contribution of Mrs. Gandhi was in her respect for science and scholarship, while the most negative aspect was to validate and promote dynasty politics.

"If tomorrow the head of the science programme in India dies in a crash, will Rahul Gandhi be able to call up another man to take his place, like Indira Gandhi did by calling up Satish Dhawan? No," he said.

Mr. Ram intervened to say that it was not really necessary to reduce the contributions of a strong leader to one facet.

The last word was given to Mr. Ramesh, who said, "Strong leaders post magnificent achievements if they are surrounded by people who can speak truth to power. When she [Mrs. Gandhi] had those people around her, she did great things, and when you don't have such people you take Tughlaq decisions like demonetisation," he said, adding that Mrs. Gandhi's contradictions were evident in that she knew scientist Satish Dhawan and also R.K. Dhawan (her late aide).

**Three theories and one more**  
Mr. Raghavan discussed three theories with regard to the polls of 1977.

"One, that the Intelligence Bureau had told Mrs. Gandhi that she would win by a landslide; two, that she knew she wouldn't win but that calling the polls was better sooner rather than later; and lastly, that she saw herself as a radical democrat especially after managing to attract the depressed sections in an unprecedented manner into supporting the Congress," he said.

Mr. Ramesh had an interesting theory of his own, saying it was

As Ms. Kapoor rounded off the discussion asking each panellist what they thought was the enduring legacy or facet of Indira Gandhi, her questions attracted the intervention of Mr. Guha and Mr. Ram.

While Mr. Raghavan said the Green Revolution was the most important contribution of Mrs.

## Silicon binaries: language, culture and identity

How Bengaluru accepts change and migrants

### K.C. DEEPIKA

How much change is good for a city? Should people who migrate assimilate themselves into the culture of the new place? These were among the questions that the panellists tried to solve about the puzzle that is Bengaluru.

The session on "Who is a Bengalurian? Identities in a changing, cosmopolitan city" saw different perspectives being put forth: from a growing feeling of neglect of the Kannada language to whether knowing Kannada was the same as being a Bengalurian.

Vanamala Viswanatha, academic and translator, who moderated the session, started off the discussion with how Bengaluru had historically been "multi" because of its location, which makes it different from Dharwad or Mysuru, which are "recognisably" Kannada in their orientation and identity. The PSUs heralded the "multi" culture to Bengaluru, which has grown more "intense" recently, she said.

Delving into the reasons for this, novelist and playwright Vivek Shanbhag said the "linguistic tolerance" of Bengalureans and Kannadigas is something people can "immediately experience", given the influences other languages have in different regions of Karnataka: Marathi in north Karnataka, Tulu and Konkani in coastal Karnataka and Telugu and Tamil in south Karnataka. However, what is unique is that many – even legendary names in Kannada literature such as Da. Ra. Bendre and Masti Venkatesh Iyengar – did not have Kannada as their "mother's tongue" but belonged to the Kannada culture. This was what was lacking now.

Referring to the "IT revolution" that propelled Bengaluru into becoming the "silicon city", Mr. Shanbhag said, "When these people moved in, there was so much change in such a short time. There was no time or support given to these people to connect themselves with Kannada. There are so many IT companies here. Companies have a responsibility to make sure their employees are comfortable, and know the language of the street. As far as I know, there is no such training being given. Emotional health is as important as infrastructure."

Talking about "change," poet and writer

Jayant Kaikini, who recently won the DSC prize for South Asian Literature for the translated *No Presents Please-Mumbai Stories*, drew comparisons between Mumbai and Bengaluru.

"Change has to be there, but at what cost? The people who come here from outside, they are working here. It is all about evolving as an individual and what the city enables and empowers you. The Mumbai and Marathi ethos and ambience too had to go through this, but it ultimately evolved into a collective, larger mindset. I hope it happens in Bengaluru too," he said.

He also spoke about the other form of migration – of people from within Karnataka moving to Bengaluru. "There is an image that disturbs me: a tractor in the city. It was designed to be in an agricultural field. But it has come to Bengaluru to take the

**The language issue is important. But how much do we love Bengaluru? The city is getting to be like an ailing mother**

ZAC O'YEAH  
Author

construction debris to give rise to skyscrapers. On the trailer is an entire family from north Karnataka, who have come here to build this city," he said.

Author Zac O'Yeah, who has made Bengaluru home for the past 27 years, said of all the cities in the world he has visited, Bengaluru is the only one where "a shopkeeper will be able to converse in Kannada, Hindi, English, Malayalam, Tamil and Telugu". But he raised a question: is being a Bengalurean the same as speaking Kannada? "The language issue is important. But how much do we love Bengaluru? The city is getting to be like an ailing mother," he said.

Madhu Nataraj, dancer and choreographer underlined a fact that the panellists were pointing to: that Bengalureans were resilient to all the change that was happening around them. Speaking from an artist's perspective, she said, "Bengaluru has always allowed people to be creative. The audiences are open-minded and welcoming."



**Going local:** Zac O'Yeah, author; Madhu Nataraj, dancer; Vivek Shanbhag, novelist; and Jayant Kaikini, writer; in conversation with Vanamala Viswanatha, academic, at the session on Bengaluru. ■ K. MURALI KUMAR

## WHO

## Rajeev Kumar, officer in Centre- State crossfire

A 1989 batch IPS officer, Kolkata Police Commissioner Rajeev Kumar hogged the limeight along with West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee for the better part of this week. After a CBI team arrived to search Mr. Kumar's south Kolkata residence, Ms. Banerjee launched a sit-in, 13 years after she launched a fast during the Singur crisis. In 2006, it was against the Left, in 2019 it was directed against the right, the BJP. But this time the Supreme Court walked the middle path, halting Mr. Kumar's imminent arrest, calming Ms. Banerjee and her counterparts in Delhi.

## Why is he the target?

Launching the dharna in the city centre, Ms. Banerjee said it was "her duty to protect her officers." But the Opposition trained guns on Mr. Kumar, with the BJP alleging that he had not furnished two crucial items – a red diary and a pen drive – seized during raids on the Saradha Group's office. The office, at Midland Park in Salt Lake, falls under the juris-

diction of the Bidhannagar Commissionate, and Mr. Kumar was its first Commissioner. Ms. Banerjee blocked the CBI-Kumar interaction to "protect herself," said Union Minister Prakash Javadekar. The allegation was refuted by the main accused in the Saradha scam case, the group's chief Sudipta Sen, who has been in prison since 2013. The CBI, in a 17-page affidavit filed in the Supreme Court, alleged that Mr. Kumar "destroyed, destructed and tampered with the material primary evidence in form of CDRs [call data records] while handing over the same to the CBI on 28.6.2018."

## Is he close to the CM?

When Ms. Banerjee stormed to power in 2011, she kept her distance from Mr. Kumar, who was known to be close to Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee, the outgoing Chief Minister. But Ms. Banerjee soon changed her opinion on Mr. Bhattacharjee's "blue eyed" officer. Last Sun-

day, as she began her protest, she described Mr. Kumar as among the "best in the world." He studied engineering at the University of Roorkee, now an IIT, preceding the decade when India opened itself to foreign investments in

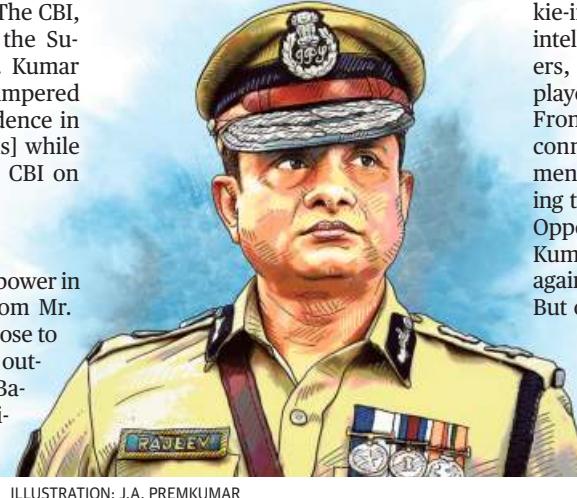


ILLUSTRATION: J.A. PREMKUMAR

the early 1990s. Western Uttar Pradesh's Kumars, with many teachers in their family, shifted to Chandausi, where Mr. Kumar's father joined a local college as a professor of social science. On completion of college, Mr. Kumar appeared for the civil services examination and cleared it. Mr. Kumar's Roorkee-induced specialisation in technical intelligence, a rare feat among IPS officers, helped him grow in the ranks. He played a major role during the Left Front government in nabbing leaders connected to various people's movements, like Chhatradhar Mahato. During that time, Ms. Banerjee, then in the Opposition, repeatedly alleged that Mr. Kumar was engaged in surveillance against the Left's political opponents. But once in power, Ms. Banerjee considered Mr. Kumar an asset. A fitness enthusiast like the Chief Minister, Mr. Kumar was reinstated in the Special Task Force with the responsibility of technical intelligence. At the time when

## What lies in store?

The CBI began questioning Mr. Kumar in Shillong on Saturday. Depending on the nature and volume of evidence, the CBI may seek to vacate the stay on his arrest, issue a warrant and take him into custody. The key question, however, is how Ms. Banerjee responds to the challenge. Will she succumb to pressure or be more combative? We will have to wait and watch.

SUVOJIT BAGCHI

## WHAT

## The lowdown on Mallya's extradition



**WHAT IS IT?** Earlier this week, Britain's Home Secretary Sajid Javid signed the order for Vijay Mallya's extradition to India to face charges of fraud and money laundering, following the judgment handed down by Westminster Magistrates Court Chief Magistrate Emma Arbuthnot in December. She concluded there was a *prima facie* case against Mr. Mallya, rejected the argument that the case was politically motivated, and labelled him a "glamorous, flashy, famous, bejewelled, bodyguard, ostensibly billionaire playboy." India wants to bring criminal action against Mr. Mallya, whose business interests have ranged from aviation to liquor, for defaulting on over \$1.4 billion in loans Kingfisher took out from Indian banks. Authorities argue misrepresentations were made to acquire those loans, while Mr. Mallya had no intention of repaying them and sought to squirrel away funds and use them in ways that were not permitted by the terms of the loans. However, the ample opportunities for appeal available to Mr. Mallya – who has indicated his intention to pursue them – means the entire process could take another two years, estimates Pavani Reddy, managing partner at Zaiwalla & Co. in London.

**WILL HE BE ALLOWED TO APPEAL?** The signing of the order means the appeal process can now be kick-started.

Mr. Mallya has two weeks from the signing of the order to seek permission to appeal to the High Court, at which stage that application will be considered by the judge on paper over a 21-day to 3-month period, explains Ms. Reddy. If he manages to get permission to appeal, the appeal process should begin within 76 days, though with options for seeking extensions available to both sides, the appeal could take 6-8 months to begin with. If – following the paper consideration – the judge denies permission to appeal, Mr. Mallya can push for an oral hearing, which could add a further three months to the process. If at this stage, permission is still refused that would end his appeal options.

**HOW LONG WILL THE PROCESS TAKE?** He can seek permission to appeal to the Supreme Court – at first instance from the High Court, and if unsuccessful he can seek permission from the Supreme

Court itself. If successful at this stage, he would have 28 days to file an appeal, with the ensuing appeal taking over 6-9 months more, estimates Ms. Reddy. He could apply as a last resort to the European Court of Human Rights, though such appeals are only granted in very rare cases, she notes. In 2014, only 4 of 833 applications for appeal were granted. The 2003 Extradition Act says he must be extradited within 28 days of the court of appeal's decision (or when appeal proceedings are discontinued). If the deadline (including any extension) is passed without the extradition happening, he could apply to be discharged from extradition, unless the Home Office could provide a good reason for any delay.

**WHAT CAN INDIA DO?** While the applications for permission to appeal can't be speeded up, an expedited appeals process can be requested if leave is granted, which would

involve pushing for an early date in the court's diary.

Grounds, of course, vary significantly, and include suggestions that the person is being pursued for political motivations because of race or religion and so on.

Others include the passage of time, and rules against double jeopardy. While it is not common for extradition appeals to succeed, last year India successfully appealed a Westminster Magistrate Court's ruling that discharged the alleged bookie Sanjeev Chawla, who India had been seeking to extradite over the 2002 cricket match fixing scandal.

As per the guarantees offered to the Chief Magistrate, if Mr. Mallya is extradited, he will be held in Barrack 12 of the Arthur Road Jail in Mumbai – with certain assurances of space, daylight and medical facilities – both ahead of any trial and after any conviction.

VIDYA RAM

that more evidence is needed to determine the extent of this fault and how active it is.

## What next?

■ Palghar falls in Zone 3 of the seismic zoning map developed by the Bureau of Indian Standards. This means that buildings here must be able to withstand earthquakes of intensity 5.5-6.5 on the Medvedev-Sponheuer-Karnik (MSK) scale. Intensity is a qualitative measure of how people experience earthquakes, rather than the energy released, which is measured by the magnitude scale, said Deepankar Choudhury, a civil engineer at IIT-Bombay. In earthquakes measuring 5.5-6.5 on the MSK scale, people are frightened and run outdoors, and heavy furniture can move. Buildings that follow the BIS codes are likely to survive swarms and even larger quakes. So, it is crucial for the code to be implemented stringently.

PRIYANKA PULLA



However, swarms are common in peninsular India and mostly harmless because of their low magnitude. In fact, a city called Jawhar in Palghar district has experienced swarms several times earlier, Dr. Gahalaut said. Another vulnerable region is Amaravati in Maharashtra, which saw swarm activity last August. Subsequently, the NCS set up seismometers in the region. They found that most earthquakes there were very shallow: they originated from within a few kilometres below the surface. Further, the tremors stopped soon after the monsoon. The researchers concluded that the swarms were related to the monsoon, and were attributable to a phenomenon called "hydro-seismicity."

Whether the Palghar quakes are a swarm, however, will only be clear after they stop. Researchers will then categorise them based on the distribution of the magnitude. Even if the magnitude distribution so far suggests a swarm, said Dr. Gahalaut, this will change if a big earthquake follows. If and when that

happens, the temblors so far will be called foreshocks. Because there is no way to predict whether such a large quake will follow, Palghar residents must be careful.

## Why is this happening?

■ In "hydro-seismicity," which is hy-



## WHY

## are quakes happening at Palghar?

**What happened?**

■ Since November, Maharashtra's Palghar district has experienced dozens of small earthquakes. As on February 6, a seismometer located around 70 km from Palghar and operated by Gujarat's Institute of Seismological Research (ISR), recorded 74 quakes, with 26 measuring between 1 and 1.9 on the moment magnitude scale (Mw), 39 measuring 2 and 2.9, and nine measuring over 3, according to ISR director Sumer Chopra. This pattern of several small earthquakes occurring in a brief time-window is called an earthquake swarm. "It is like a swarm of people. There is no leader, and all of them are similar [in magnitude]. So, there is nothing like a foreshock or mainshock," says Vineet Kumar Gahalaut, director of Delhi's National Centre for Seismology (NCS).

## Why is it a worry?

■ The epicentres of the current swarms haven't seen such activity in the past. Why it is occurring now is a mystery.

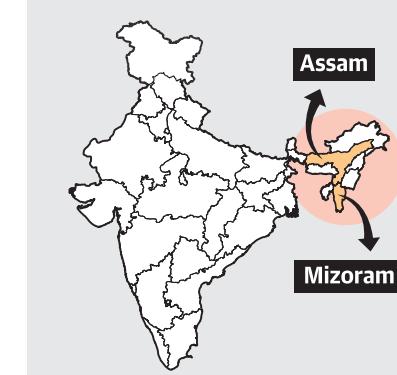
## WHEN

## 3 February 2019

**Off track:** Seven people died and several others were injured on February 3 after 11 coaches of the Delhi-bound Seemanchal Express derailed in Vaishali district of Bihar. Survivors recalled hearing a deafening bang and being flung off berths. Initially, officials suspected that the accident happened due to a "rail fracture" or a fault on the tracks. However, the reason has not yet been confirmed and a probe has been launched. On February 1, in the interim Budget for 2019-2020, the government announced a massive allocation for the Railways' capital expenditure, at ₹1.58 lakh crore. Presenting the Budget, Finance Minister Piyush Goyal, who also holds the Railways portfolio, said the Railways had "experienced the safest year in its history" in 2018. He said the launch of the first indigenously developed and manufactured semi high-speed Vande Bharat Express (Train 18) will give passengers a world class experience in speed, service and safety. Picture shows rescue workers looking for survivors. ■ REUTERS

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## Has the demand gone down?

According to Zoliana Chhakchhuak, Aizawl-based head of a regional tour operators' association, viability is often cited by airliners, despite a passenger occupancy rate of 60-70% in most flights, and more people in the region flying than ever before.

While some of the smaller airports have flights connecting Kolkata and Delhi, the withdrawal of service to and from Guwahati – the hub of communication – is expected to affect tourism, a sector that has capitalised on peace in the region. Airliners and the Airports Authority of India (AAI) agree that the passenger volume has doubled in the last five-six years from Guwahati and other popular airports in the region. But improved road and rail connectivity, they said, have become a bane for smaller airports.

For instance, a two-hour drive brings a passenger from Shillong and an overnight train trip brings one from Dimapur to Guwahati.

## Where is connectivity headed?

The Ministry of Civil Aviation announced the opening of 92 air routes in the region in the second round of UDAN in November 2017. Bidders snapped up six airports – Rupsi, Jorhat, Lilabari and Tezpur in Assam, and Tezu and Pasighat in Arunachal Pradesh – and 12 routes, of which only two are operational. In May 2018, Air India started a flight between Guwahati and Pasighat in Arunachal Pradesh with VIPs, including Chief Minister Pema Khandu, on board. The militarily strategic airport, which allows Sukhoi 30 to land and take off, has had very few civilian flights. AAI officials say UDAN, in its current form, is difficult for smaller airliners to sustain. Aviation experts say the scheme has not been able to add wings because it is aimed more at reaping political benefits than increasing connectivity. Furthermore, it does not have enough incentives for airlines to ignore the issue of viability.

RAHUL KARMAKAR

## WHERE

## In Northeast, air links shrinking

The day Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation for the first civilian airport in Arunachal Pradesh, Jet Airways operated its last flight on the Guwahati-Aizawl route. By withdrawing from Mizoram, the private airline joined an expanding list of flight operators that have suspended operations from new and existing routes in the geographically challenged northeastern region. This has undermined New Delhi's ambitious flagship regional connectivity scheme UDAN, an acronym for the Hindi phrase *Ude Desh ka Aam Naagrik* meaning 'let the common man fly.'

**Why was the flight terminated?**

Mizoram's Lengpui Airport, 32 km from the capital Aizawl, took a little more than two years to be completed in February 1998. It soon became the busiest airport in the region after the ones in Assam's Guwahati, Manipur's Imphal and Tripura's Agartala. But the airlines began withdrawing operations for reasons such as safety, maintenance and

viability. If an accident made Northeast Shuttles stop its Cessna flights in 2011, losses made Kingfisher Red withdraw a year later. Air India ended its Guwahati-Aizawl flights as did Spicejet in less than a year after its inaugural flight in October 2016. Jet Airways, once the only private airline flying to and from northeastern India, withdrew from Aizawl on February 10. The airline attributed it to non-viability of the route because of fuel price rise, a depreciating rupee and a difficult pricing environment.

## Is only Mizoram affected?

No. Jet Airways withdrew from Imphal and Assam's Silchar and Jorhat, along with Aizawl. Much before the first round of UDAN was launched in April 2017, private airlines had withdrawn from Nagaland's Dimapur.

The Hyderabad-based Air Deccan, which won exclusive rights in the UDAN bidding to connect Meghalaya capital Shillong to Aizawl, Agartala, Silchar, Dimapur and Imphal, operated only 10

# A compass for navigating contemporary art

Among the gimmicky installations and concept artworks at the India Art Fair, some pictures take you towards your north pole



## PASSING BITE

**RUCHIR JOSHI**  
is a writer, filmmaker and columnist

Every year, Delhi's art season throws up all sorts of odd things. Nowadays there are art events in the NCR all across the year but the so-called season is in the cooler months, from mid-October to mid-March. However, a bit like the magnetic North Pole that's currently playing catch-me-if-you-can, the exact epicentre of the season can be hard to pinpoint. An early winter show can define a particular season, or a big retrospective of a big-name artist at a museum might yank the point into March, but one steady fulcrum is the India Art Fair (IAF) that usually takes place in end January/early February, with all the shows and events that are clustered around that sales jamboree.

For this year's IAF, the Arterati landed in force from out of town, while their local allies came out of the city's for-

tress-palaces. You could see them at various locations: looking snifty in Khan Market, long-ball air-kissing in the lounge of the Taj Mansingh, piling out of SUVs and stumbling about trying to find the cleverly disguised entrance to the Kiran Nadar Museum of Art, and so on. You can easily identify these bipeds by the bright orange sunglasses (even at night) and the generally outlandishly expensive and unsuitable designer pelt in which they are covered. At the Fair itself, you see a few of them in the exclusive VIP lounge, not too many foreigners, and not too many proper Arterati, but a lot of the Indian nouveauaruchs who are clearly discovering new and unique ways of spending their ill-gotten crores. As soon as your group approaches the lounge (your own card having been acquired by dint of a friend being a part of the official proceedings), the young women at the desk put you through the questionnaire: 'What car do you drive, sir? Umm, usually Uber, sometimes three-wheeler.' 'Oh. And which model of our brand would you be looking to purchase, ma'am?' 'None, at least not in this life. No, wait, maybe I can afford one at Hamley's toy shop, I'll go look.' 'Okay ma'am, okay sir, thank



you, can I take that card? It's one-time use only. Thank you, this way please.'

### Through the grids

Entering the lounge you feel as though you've stumbled into some ill-conceived art installation. At the centre of the space is the fattest, most obscene staukampfwagen the sponsoring brand produces. Inside it is the suited salesman trying to show off all the bells and whistles to two gangsta-consumed chaps from Chandigarh. Around the

'car' mill the potential buyers and waiters with international cuisine canapes that tend towards the vegetarian. You look at the SUV and you can just see it, as still as it is now, embedded in the slow-moving car park that is the Mehrauli-Gurgaon Road at 6 p.m. on a Wednesday in April – you can just see this shiny thing in that oceanic traffic-jam, preening like some godman, with dirty Ubers and spluttering autos surrounding it like worshipful bhakts.

After this vision, even the worst art

on display outside should like a relief. But as you wander through the grids A, B and C and then the projects section of the expo, you do feel as though you are examining cross-sections of the internal organs of a large, dismembered creature called Indianartnow, with all its anxieties and stress having caused various kinds of 'art' to come into being like ulcers and cysts, leading to multiple organ failure in the beast. However, as you move from stall to gallery stall, you also come across a few gems hiding in all the posey, moribund dross – a small oil by Raza here, a lovely early canvas by Madhavi Parekh there or a series of photos by Simryn Gill.

### Some rewards in the maze

Away from the Art Fair crowds, the big KNMA retrospective of Arpita Singh's work spanning half a century is quietly rewarding. For a while you can be lost in the maze of rooms hung with good, old-fashioned water-colours and oils, the form of the two dimensional 'flat work' centuries-old, but the images painted upon them like fresh maps and scans of the last few decades. As you slowly make your way through the rooms you can see the explorations becoming

deeper, some lines becoming more playful, other things – a figure, a colour combination or the use of stencils – beginning to work rhythmically, coming up again and again like the samm of a raga.

At Vadehra Art Gallery you come across a practitioner from an earlier era – the great Benode Behari Mukherjee. Again, just the flat work hung on the wall: a picture painted or drawn on paper, a surrounding mount, a frame and that's it. And yet, the dance of the brush, or the staccato stippling of pen and ink creates whole worlds, opens up wells of deep emotion. A series of landscapes, a suite of watercolours depicting the same flowers, figures against a mountainside brought alive by the most parsimonious deployment of brushstrokes. Nobody sensible can argue that only this drawing-painting of Benodebabu's and Arpita's is genuine art and that all the instillery and conceptual churning of the contemporary art world should be dismissed as gimmicks. But when searching for something that hits you, that moves you and makes you think, it's good to think of these pictures as being somewhere near your genuine north pole.

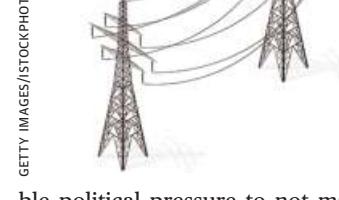
# Bill shock for power producers

India's power woes have shifted from generation to distribution



## ON THE OTHER HAND

**RAGHAVAN SRINIVASAN**  
is Editor, The Hindu BusinessLine



What happens if you don't pay your electricity bill? The power company cuts you off (unless you happen to be a politician, slumlord or goon), right? Now what happens if you happen to be the power company, and haven't been paying your bills to your supplier – the power generating company?

Ideally, the same rules should apply. After all, what is sauce for the goose must be sauce for the gander. Only, the same rules don't apply. All kinds of reasons are trotted out: power distribution companies (discoms) are essential utilities, electricity is a basic requirement, the discoms are all (or, almost all) owned by the government so the money isn't going anywhere, and so on and so forth.

### The power problem

Usually, the generators tend to cave in and simply let the dues mount till they reach a point where they can't pay their suppliers or their employees and then the cycle of threat and bargaining starts. Last week's stand-off between India's largest power producer, NTPC, and the discoms of Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Karnataka is a classic example.

Stuck with unpaid dues of over ₹5,838 crore, of which more than ₹4,100 crore were due for more than two months, NTPC threatened to "regulate" supply – effectively, reduce by over 3,400 MW the quantum of power it supplies to these three discoms – from midnight of February 5. Within a day, threat was kept in abeyance, with the three discoms promising to pay "as soon as possible", although no clear date was given. Needless to say, with all three States ruled by non-BJP parties or coalitions, there was considera-

31, 2019, while gradually increasing tariffs to cover the rest. With just a little more than a month left for that deadline, the loss figure is still over 20% – which means a fifth of the power produced doesn't earn a paisa – while tariff hikes and axing of subsidies hasn't happened.

India's power problem, long thought to lie on the generation side, has shifted to the distribution side. We are now comfortable on the generation side. But with State governments stubbornly refusing to change, using discoms as handy vehicles to push all kinds of populist agendas without actually having to spend their budget monies on it, the discoms have virtually reached the point of no return.

### A workable solution

The Centre has taken several shots at solving this. Initially, privatisation was thought of as the panacea, but the experience with privatised discoms has been only marginally better (Mumbaikars are up in arms over sharp bill increases after Gautam Adani bought out Anil Ambani's distribution utility there). Then the Modi government came up with UDAY. But clearly, UDAY too has just kicked the can down the road, since discoms haven't cleaned up their act.

In 2018, a high-level committee headed by the Cabinet Secretary suggested that public financial institutions like the Power Finance Corporation discount discom receivables and pay power producers. However, these institutions were wary of default by discoms and wanted the government to create a three-way arrangement with the Reserve Bank of India, such that flows to State government treasuries would be diverted to pay the institutions in case of default. This proved unworkable.

Now, yet another committee has been formed, which is of the view that discoms should go into a prepaid mode with power producers. This too looks unlikely. What also looks unlikely is a workable solution – unless the political class stops playing politics with power.

be political pressure to not make it seem like a BJP vendetta.

That may have solved the political problem, but it doesn't solve the power producer's problem. As of November 2018, the latest month for which data are available, the money owed by discoms to power producers was over ₹41,000 crore. That number will climb closer to the ₹55,000 crore mark, if you add the dues which are still within the 60-day credit offered by generators. Pending payments are growing at 29% per year.

This is clearly unsustainable. If power producers don't get paid, their only option is to go belly up or shut shop, since power distribution is, for all practical purposes, a monopoly. If you have only one customer and that customer isn't paying you, there's little you can do. This is one of the reasons why over 30,000 MW of capacity is currently under the "stressed asset" category and looking for resolution. With or without resolution, lenders are already facing a monumental haircut. If one adds productive, operational assets to this – because the buyer is not paying up – then we are looking at a systemic collapse.

Currently, the accumulated losses of discoms are in excess of ₹17,000 crore. But this is after two years of the government's Ujwal DISCOM Assurance Yojana (UDAY), instituted after the cumulative losses of discoms crossed ₹51,000 crore in 2015-16. Under the scheme, State governments took over the liability for half the accumulated losses, allowing the discoms to start with a near fresh slate. In return, discoms were expected to cut losses resulting from theft, non-metering and leakages to 15% of the total by March

# Whispers of the city

Around the world with a bagful of books



## WORD COUNTS

**MINI KAPOOR**  
is Ideas Editor, The Hindu

Ruskin Bond never tires of describing Landour, a little settlement high in the hills above Mussoorie in Uttarakhand's Garhwal where he's made his home for many decades; and his readers never fail to find something new in his descriptions as they fill in more details of the place in their imaginations. He does this by way of new stories, memoir and essays, through introductions to his books, and most curiously through the manner in which he constantly reassembles his writings in successive anthologies.

To read and love Bond is to look forward to finding a short story or narrative you've read before nestled among a different set of writings. I can read 'Time Stops at Shamli' or 'Voting at Barlowganj', to take just two of the pieces collected in his latest collection, *Landour Bazaar*, endlessly – but I never fail to experience a thrill of discovery when I find them in a new volume, with different Bond neighbours, as it were, in the table of contents. Serendipitously, the text feels just that tiny bit different each time, simply by being in new surroundings. In fact, it's long been a dream project to find all the anthologies of Bond's writings and map how different stories show up in different collections amidst old and new writing. The labour of tracking down each and every volume apart, I suspect the task is not doable for another reason – as happens spooky in his stories, the chase for his collected collections may bring the archivist to one trap door after another that take her to books no one else even knew existed.

Perhaps, Bond may also spice up the mapping project by updating some



essays. In the introduction to *Landour Bazaar*, for example, he describes how "the Garhwal Himalaya and the people who live on these mountain slopes in the mist-filled valleys have long since learned humility, patience, and a quiet resignation", with a familiar rhythm to their cheer-filled days but very tough lives – but he notes, with a tone of regret, the changes that have come to the legendary bazaar in the twenty or so years since he wrote the title essay. Yet, even as Mussoorie and Landour change, for countless readers who may make their way around these hill stations, what they see will be some unique combination of the actual landscape and the picture Bond has painted over time not just in his non-fiction, but especially in his fiction.

### Transforming memory

No Ruskin Bond story is there in *Literary Landscapes: Charting the Worlds of Classic Literature*, a vividly illustrated volume edited by John Sutherland. He summarises it as "a collection of the world's most memorable fictionalised geographies". Sometimes the fictional touches don't just change our perception of a place, they actually alter the map. Patrick Modiano, who won the Nobel Prize for literature in 2014, had situated his 1997 novel *The Search Warrant* (*Dora Bruder* in the French original), set against the Holocaust and the German occupation of France during World War II, in the non-touristy quarters of Paris's 18th ar-

ondissement. It came full circle in 2015, when, as Catherine Taylor updates us, "the City of Paris named a promenade in the 18th arrondissement after Dora Bruder, the missing Jewish girl of Modiano's novel."

And as the Windrush issue comes back centre stage in Britain, it is instructive to map the London of characters in Trinidadian writer Samuel Selvon's 1956 novel, *The Lonely Londoners*. Kate McNaughton shows how the opening line of Selvon's classic uses not just imagery but also nuances of diction to contrast the London everyone is presumed to be familiar with the diverse 'Londons' various immigrants, specifically of the Windrush wave, occupy: "One grim winter evening, when it had a kind of unreality about London, with a fog sleeping restlessly over the city and the lights showing in the blur as it is not London at all but some strange place on another planet, Moses Aloetta hop on a number 46 bus at the corner of Chepstow Road and Westbourne Grove to go to Waterloo to meet a fellar who was coming from Trinidad on the boat-train." Selvon and Barbadian George Lamming (*In the Castle of My Skin*, 1953) found the key for generations of West Indian, and other, writers to come, that to depict a place, language was key.

Cairenes, on their part, caution first-time visitors to their city to read Naguib Mahfouz before they set foot in the Egyptian capital or they'll never know it. Andrew Taylor recommends *Midaq Alley* (1947) to get a measure of the city's profile: "Mahfouz makes the alley much more than a setting for his characters. From the first page it is presented as a character in its own right, depicted through not just its physical appearance but the textures of its crumbling walls, the smells of spices and folk cures, the deep colors of a city sunset, and the intimate evening whispers as the daytime noises die down."

That's one of the reasons we keep going back to great works – to catch snippets of, among other things, "intimate evening whispers".

# The vanishing of a writer

As the sins of the creator are foisted upon their work, writers craft a public persona superior to their own artistic creations



## SERENDIPITIES

**KEERTHIK SASIDHARAN**  
is a writer and lives in New York City

consequential. Yet, it rankled within.

### A rogue's gallery?

For much of my adult reading life I have found myself admiring a book, only to later discover that in his personal lives the author was a moral skunk. There is, of course, a long history of this dichotomy – the yawning gap between luminous words and the wordsmith. Seneca was an obsequious slime ball in Nero's court who wrote stirring essays about honour and courage. The great Shakespeare, some evidence points, may have been in support of the Inclosure Acts which threw out tenant-farmers from British feudal estates. The greatness of T.S. Eliot is scarred by his anti-Semitism. Ezra Pound and Curzio Malaparte became fellow travellers of Mussolini's fascism. Closer to our times, V.S. Naipaul declared that he became "a great prostitute man" as his wife lay dying. Lawrence Durrell's daughter topped off the description of her father as an "aggressive and demonic drunkard" with insinuations of incest. Gabriel Garcia Marquez, who spoke about human freedoms, enjoyed the friendship of a



del Castro, who ran an authoritarian gulag state. Pablo Neruda, ever ready to make art out of the artlessness, confessed to raping his Sri Lankan manual scavenger, all the while admiring the "brimming cup of her breasts" during the attack. Despite knowing all this, it has never stopped me from reading, enjoying, and profiting from their works.

In our times, however, unlike any generation before, we are gifted with a

den variety misogynist and so on. An outcome of this is an increasingly schizoid response about what is to be done: Should we suffer through mediocrities because they favour our political dispensation. Or, should those who transgress our norms about gender or religion or nationhood be accommodated despite our distaste on account of their abilities to unsettle and yet instruct. These are the questions that increasingly dominate not just our aesthetics but even our consumption patterns.

The logic of consumption in an age where artists and writers transform themselves into products also forces them to conform, to behave and speak in a certain manner, to ascribe to forms of progressive claims lest the consumer, and therefore the publisher, deem them unmarketable. The upside of this relentless pressure of the markets is evident – more voices now add to the collective noise. But the downside is that these voices are largely similar because they emerge out of the same production chain – born from similar creative writing programmes subject to similar editorial tastes and ultimately package

their own authorial self as a conscientious, sensitive liberal, secular and so on. Both the writer and his work become receptacles for low-cost virtue signalling.

### Not for everyone

In today's environs, authors like Norman Mailer, prodigious in his talent but also one who stabbed his wife in a drunken fit, or Nirad Chaudhuri, who wrote euphoric prose that sought to please only Edward Gibbon and more expressively aimed to stir Indians out of their self-satisfied stupor – would be hard-pressed to find a place. This is not because we are more egalitarian today but because art and the artist have fused into a single marketable product. Anticipating this comingling, some like the great Thomas Pynchon or the pseudonymous 'Elena Ferrante' have simply chosen to vanish from the public eye. They are content to let only their words speak. The rest knowing very well that the sins of the creator will be foisted upon their creation muddle on, working to craft a public persona superior to their own artistic creations.

## CAPSULE

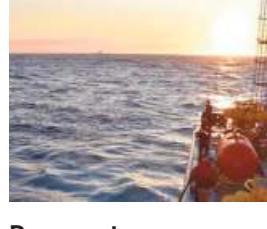


## Salt in the stars

Astronomers have detected chemical fingerprints of common salt (sodium chloride) in an unusual place - around a star. Orion Source I is a young star behind the Orion Nebula, and the paper published in *Astronomy Journal* suggests that the salt may be formed from colliding dust grains in the surrounding disk. Search for more metallic molecules in this region have been started.



**MRI to save the heart**  
By studying the MRI results of about 9,000 patients, researchers from Duke University Medical Center, U.S. have pointed out that cardiac magnetic resonance can be an alternative to stress echocardiograms, currently used to study the severity of heart diseases. The study noted that there is a strong association with abnormal CMR scan and mortality.



**Deep sea treasures**  
Hydrothermarchaeota, or microbes living in extreme environments may hold clues to the evolution of early life. These microbes use carbon monoxide and sulfate as sources of energy - chemosynthesis. Published in *The ISME Journal*, the study used genomic approaches to unravel the secrets of its survival. It may help predict about extraterrestrial life.

## + +

# IIT Madras identifies unique pathways of eye cancer

13 drug targets for treating retinoblastoma have been identified

## R. PRASAD

Based on computational modelling, researchers at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Madras have identified the biochemical pathways that eye cancer (retinoblastoma) preferentially chooses for growth and survival. The pathways chosen are very different from the ones that normal, healthy cells choose.

Retinoblastoma is a childhood tumour, affecting single or both the eyes. Retinoblastoma-related mortality rate is high in Asian and African countries due to its late stage presentation. The current treatment methods – chemotherapy and enucleation – are associated with severe disabilities. Therefore, a systems level understanding of the disease is necessary for suggesting alternative treatment and novel diagnostics.

As a first step, the researchers used tumour samples taken from seven retinoblastoma patients and three normal retina samples. Unlike cell lines, actual patient samples were used and so even fewer samples would suffice for the modelling. The RNA sequence was extracted from the tumour and normal samples as a first step to derive the model.

## Biochemical pathway

RNA translates into proteins (enzymes) and the enzymes catalyse the reactions which form part of different pathways. These components are exploited to generate respective data types – RNA sequence data, proteomics data and metabolomics data – each of which can be integrated to derive the model.

For this study, the RNA sequence data and physiologically/biochemical information



**The difference:** Unlike in normal cells, amino acids are a major source of energy for tumour tissue, says Swagatika Sahoo (second from left). ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

were used to derive patient- and healthy cell-specific models. The subsequent models were then used to analyse the biochemical pathways.

"This way we were able to differentiate the biochemical pathways that cancer cells preferentially choose for their survival," says Dr. Swagatika Sahoo, an INSPIRE faculty at the Department of Chemical Engineering, IIT Madras who co-led the team. The results of the study were published in the journal *FEBS Letters*.

For instance, unlike healthy cells which use carbohydrate for energy and survival, the tumour tissue preferentially uses four amino acids instead.

"Amino acids are a major source of energy for the tumour tissue, while carbohydrate and fatty acids are used to a lesser extent for energy," says Dr. Sahoo.

By relying on amino acids

for energy, the tumour tissue preserves the fatty acid for other important functions such as signalling and membrane structure.

While amino acids are used at a higher rate, cholesterol synthesis is under-utilised by the retinoblastoma tissue. "The reason why the tumour under-utilises cholesterol synthesis is to preserve the redox potential of the cells, thereby mask the diseased condition. Any change in the redox potential is seen as abnormal and can alert the stress pathways," says Dr. Sahoo.

## Different subtypes

Unlike normal cells, the tumour tissue specifically synthesised only long and very long chain fatty acids, which play a major role in signalling.

The researchers were also able to know the different subtypes of retinoblastoma based on RNA sequence data

extracted from the patients. "The disease subtypes arise because the tumour tissue chooses to synthesise specific fatty acids – long or very long chain fatty acids – for its survival," Dr. Sahoo says. "The disease subtypes are well known and our model was able to correctly and fully capture this information."

The researchers compared the metabolism of diseased and health tissue and zeroed in on proteins critical for cancer cells but not the normal cells.

"Based on modelling, we identified 13 drug targets that can be used for treating eye cancer. Eight of the 13 targets are already known and drugs that have already been approved for other cancer types are specific to the eight targets. The remaining five are novel drug targets," says Dr. Karthik Ramam from the Department of Biotechnology at IIT Madras and a co-author of the paper.

# Unique composition of Indian gut microbiome revealed

## ASWATHI PACHA

By studying the faecal samples of over 100 healthy people from Madhya Pradesh and Kerala, researchers from the Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER) Bhopal have decoded the Indian gut microbiome and have created a gene catalogue. Constructed using multiple omics approaches such as genomics and proteomics, the catalogue contains details on the different genes coded by the gut bacteria and the functions carried out by the bacteria.

## Comparative analysis

This study also compared the gut microbiome of Indians with people in China, the U.S. and Denmark. The Indian gut microbiome showed higher levels of *Prevotella* bacteria compared to the other populations. "The presence of these species in high abundance in Indian gut microbiome correlates with the food habits and the diet of the Indian population, which is very different from the other western populations," says Prof. Vineet K. Sharma from the Department of Biological Sciences at the Institute in an email to

*The Hindu*. He is the corresponding author of a paper recently published in *GigaScience*.

Faecal samples from 53 people from Madhya Pradesh and 57 from Kerala were used to construct the microbial gene catalogue. The catalogue contains 1,551,581 genes and 943,395 genes out of them were identified as unique to the Indian population. "So about 9% (almost one million) microbial genes were found unique to our population, and were not identified in the integrated microbial gene catalogue constructed from other populations across the globe," adds Prof. Sharma.

The study also highlighted the differences in microbiome composition between the two states. Samples from Kerala had a higher abundance of short-chain fatty acid producing bacteria such as *Faecalibacterium* and *Roseburia*, in addition to *Prevotella*.

According to Mr. Dhakan, a drug made and tested in the U.S. may not work for the Indian population. So understanding the gut microbiome will help customise drugs and also develop new strategies for tackling the metabolic diseases by correcting the imbalance in the gut microbiome.

This group consists most-

ly of people eating a plant-based diet and also showed an enrichment of branched-chain amino acid and lipopolysaccharide biosynthesis pathways.

## Faecal metabolites

Using large-scale metabolomics, the study also identified the different faecal metabolites (end products after microbial metabolism) of the Indian samples and mapped their association with the gut microbial species.

"If we have a data of the faecal metabolites, we can compare how it changes during some metabolic disorders and this can serve as simple signatures," says Mr. Darshan Dhakan, PhD scholar at the institute and the first author of the paper.

"The results of this study will also help develop pre and probiotics according to our needs."

This may be due to the fact that they consumed an omnivorous diet containing rice, fish and meat. *Prevotella*, the key species in Indian gut was comparatively higher in the Madhya Pradesh population.

This group consists most-

# IGIB: TB bacteria use a new way to subvert host defence

The abundance of 86 proteins were altered

## R. PRASAD

It is well known that TB bacteria can actively manipulate the degradative pathway of macrophages (cells responsible for detecting, engulfing and destroying pathogens) such that instead of getting destroyed, the TB bacteria can actually multiply inside the macrophages. Now, researchers at the Institute of Genomics and Integrative Biology (CSIR-IGIB), Delhi have for the first time found that TB bacteria actively manipulate an organelle other than those involved in the degradative pathways. They found that protein composition of lipid droplets is actively manipulated by TB bacteria.

## New mechanism

Lipid droplets are storehouses of lipids inside the host cells but can be decorated with specific proteins. Previous studies have shown how the composition of proteins in lipid droplets gets altered during different physiological conditions.

From there, *Ethmostigmus* dispersed to the southern Western Ghats. *Ethmostigmus* centipedes also reached the northern Ghats from the south-central Ghats too, and later dispersed back to the central Ghats again from there.

The formation of wet forests in these areas during this time could have aided this dispersal (for all existing peninsular Indian *Ethmostigmus* centipedes now dwell only in wet forests), write the authors in the paper.

+ +

**Identified:** Two pathways have links with lipid metabolism, say Sheetal Gandotra (right) and Dilip Menon.

pete with the host cell for nutrients stored inside the cells. So the team led Dr. Sheetal Gandotra from IGIB set to study how the lipid droplet organelle gets actively modified by live TB bacteria leading to changes in the protein composition.

The results were published in the journal *ACS Infectious Diseases*.

The lipid droplets in macrophages infected with live TB bacteria altered the composition of 86 proteins. While there was increased abundance of 57 proteins, the abundance reduced in the case of 29 other proteins.

## Predict pathways

"All that we know now is that there is a change in the abundance of certain proteins. But at this point we don't know the causal rela-

tionship between the changes in abundance and lipid metabolism," says Dr. Gandotra.

By knowing which proteins' abundance are altered, it is possible to predict which pathways are being affected. "The lipid metabolism can impact different pathways through changes in the recruitment of proteins that are involved in these pathways or these proteins can have an impact on lipid metabolism directly," says Dilip Menon from IGIB and first author of the paper.

Based on the increased abundance of certain proteins, the team has found that protein synthesis pathway and vesicular trafficking pathway have an unprecedented link with lipid metabolism in the context of infection.

# Moving continents created new centipede species

Ethmostigmus centipedes dispersed across peninsular India to form new species

## AATHIRA PERINCHERY

Fossils and advanced genetic methods to study relationships between species now tell an intriguing story about a group of tropical centipedes. Continental drift (the moving apart of continents) almost 100 million years ago created many species of *Ethmostigmus* centipedes in the world's tropics. In the Indian peninsula, these centipedes first originated in the southern and central Western Ghats, and then spread across the ranges here, finds a study published in *BMC Evolutionary Biology*.

## Diversity of species

India is home to six, fairly large *Ethmostigmus* centipedes: four dwell in the Western Ghats, one in the Eastern Ghats and one in



**Unique:** The *Ethmostigmus* in peninsular India are very unique. ■ UMESH PAVUKANDY

north-east India. Africa, south-east Asia and Australia are also home to other species of *Ethmostigmus* centipedes. What explains its distribution across continents and the diversity of species in peninsular India?

To find out, scientists Jahnavi Joshi and Gregory Edge-

species emerged – of nine species (across peninsular India, Africa, Australia and southeast Asia). They used three fossil centipedes to calibrate the DNA tree, which gave them the approximate times that the species originated in the past.

## Common ancestor

The results suggest that a single ancestor gave rise to all *Ethmostigmus* centipedes in the ancient supercontinent of Gondwana (continents including Australia, Africa and peninsular India comprised this single landmass then). The subsequent breakup of Gondwana and the drifting away of different landmasses shaped the early evolutionary history of *Ethmostigmus*. And the *Ethmostigmus* in peninsular India are very unique, says co-author Joshi.

From there, *Ethmostigmus* dispersed to the southern Western Ghats. *Ethmostigmus* centipedes also reached the northern Ghats from the south-central Ghats too, and later dispersed back to the central Ghats again from there.

The formation of wet forests in these areas during this time could have aided this dispersal (for all existing peninsular Indian *Ethmostigmus* centipedes now dwell only in wet forests), write the authors in the paper.

## Mendeleyev

Mendeleyev put emphasis on chemical properties. As a result, in a few cases systematically increasing atomic weights did not match well with chemical properties. He hesitatingly placed tellurium before iodine with a question mark, although tellurium is heavier than iodine. Today we know that his placing was indeed justified.

Periodicity in properties made systematisation of information. Modern periodic law states that, "the properties of the elements are periodic functions of their atomic numbers." This restatement is due to Moseley who worked on the topic in 1913. Here, we must note that Mendeleev related the properties to atomic weights at a time when atomic numbers, or number of protons in the atomic nucleus was unknown. They

were found to be part of nuclei in 1917 and the nucleus itself was discovered in 1911, both by Rutherford. In 1869, atomic weights were considered as the single most important property of elements.

Mendeleyev had a compelling reason to discover the periodic table. He was deeply concerned about the prevailing systematization of chemical knowledge and decided to write textbooks (*Principles of Chemistry*, Vol. I & II). He could cover only eight elements in his first volume of the book, which was finished in January 1869 and wanted to condense information in the form of a table for the second volume. It is said that the first version of the Table appeared in his dream.

Intense passion of the man to study science should motivate anyone. He was the youngest of 17 siblings who lost his father at the age of 13 and was the destruction of his mother's factory by fire. She took him across Russia, walking all the way from Siberia to Moscow, a distance of 3,500 km. Having denied

a place in Moscow, they next went to St. Petersburg where Mendeleev joined the pedagogic course. After graduation and a few years of work, he returned to St. Petersburg for his Masters degree.

The current periodic table decorating the walls of class rooms, printed on tea-cups, T-shirts and memorabilia is far removed from the original version of Mendeleev. Yet, the core principle that 'properties of elements are periodic functions of its atoms' remain. This would indeed be one of the most fundamental insights into the puzzles of nature for eternity. For that reason, element 101 is aptly named as Mendeleevium (Md). Although narrowly missed the Nobel Prize of 1906, he became one of the 15 scientists to be remembered with an element, a more illustrious recognition considering that 181 have won a Nobel Prize in chemistry so far.

(T. Pradeep is an Institute Professor at IIT Madras. Email: pradeep@iitm.ac.in)

## T. PRADEEP

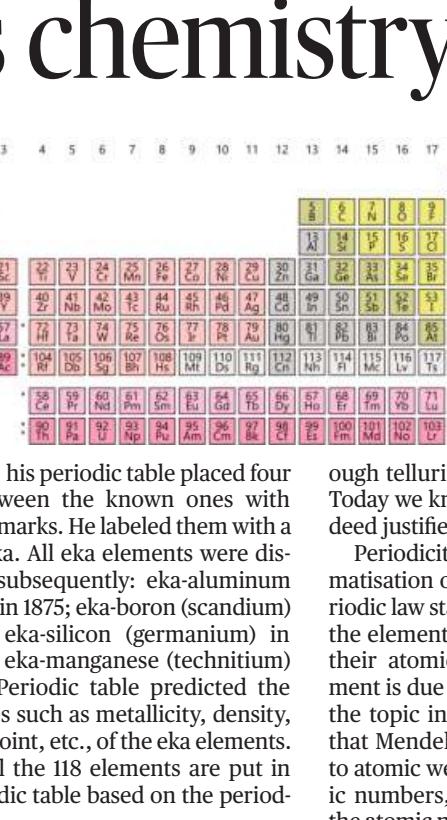
The majestic table of elements that hangs on the walls of chemistry classrooms across the world has turned 150 years old in 2019.

The 'Periodic Table of Elements', or simply, 'The Table' for many, was written by Dmitri Ivanovich Mendeleev on 17th February 1869. Looking back, the Table opens a window to the world of inanimate matter. Mendeleev's profound impact on chemistry is comparable to those of his contemporaries, Gregor Mendel and Charles Darwin in genetics and evolution, respectively. Therefore, the United Nations General Assembly and UNESCO have decided to celebrate 2019 as the 'International Year of the Periodic Table of Chemical Elements (IYPT2019)'.

Mendeleev was not the first one to create a table of elements. Earliest such efforts was due to the father of modern chemistry, Antoine Lavoisier in 1789 who classified them in terms of

their properties. John Newlands introduced the concept of octaves in chemistry, wherein properties repeat for every eighth element. There were other attempts too. However, the proposal of Mendeleev was unique. On February 17, 1869 he sent out a single page note to the Russian Chemical Society outlining his findings and it was published in the first volume of the society's journal. In the same year, its German abstract with a table and eight comments was published in *Zeitschrift für Chemie*, taking it to larger Europe.

Mendeleev's finding was that "The elements, if arranged according to their atomic weights, exhibit an evident step-wise variation of properties". In his Faraday Lecture, delivered in 1889 the statement of the periodic law appeared in the more familiar form: "The elements, if arranged according to their atomic weights, exhibit an evident periodicity of properties". While putting together all the 63 elements known at



## HEALTHLINE RITESH KUMAR



"Drivers who use hands-free electronic devices, as opposed to handheld ones, are less likely to get into a crash." — Virginia Tech, U.S.

## AROUND THE WORLD



## Fat aggravates prostate cancer

A scientific team in Australia, Canada, the U.S. and the U.K. has linked aspects of fat metabolism to the aggressiveness of prostate cancer cells, reports a new study. The research suggests that targeting the uptake of fatty acids and the formation of new fat stores (lipogenesis) could slow the progression of prostate cancer, although further studies are needed. Prostate cancer is one of the most common cancers, representing 15% of all cancer diagnoses in men and 8% of all cancer cases. Although most prostate cancers are slow-growing, some men have high-risk cases that can progress to aggressive disease. The new study finds that the molecule CD36 transported fatty acids to prostate cancer cells, which promoted their growth and proliferation. Mice lacking CD36 in the prostate displayed less aggressive prostate cancer cells and a slower progression of the disease. The findings appear in *Science Translational Medicine*.

## Depression drug useful for sepsis

Researchers in the U.S. have repurposed an antidepressant drug to combat sepsis in mice. Their findings lay the groundwork for addressing a major unmet need in clinical care — the lack of a treatment which is able to target the systemic inflammation that makes sepsis so dangerous. Sepsis occurs when bacterial infections spiral out of control and cause an inflammatory cascade to propagate through the body. The resulting inflammation then damages blood vessels and deprives organs of oxygen and nutrients, leading to organ failure and death. For this study, the scientists zeroed in on the endoplasmic reticulum (ER), a subcomponent of cells that is increasingly linked to inflammatory signalling and observed that a protein in the ER named sigma-1 receptor (S1R) acted as a brake on the production of inflammatory molecules. The findings appear in *Science Translational Medicine*.



## Blood protein can warn of Alzheimer's

When tested in individuals with cognitive impairment whose amyloid-beta status was previously determined, a team of researchers from Australia, the U.K. and Sweden report that several individual plasma proteins in the blood can predict amyloid beta in the preclinical stage of Alzheimer's disease, or AD. This work is a step towards creating an easier way to identify individuals at high risk of AD, for early intervention. Experts have been working to find a blood-based measure that can accurately reveal AD pathology. The researchers built a protein classifier model to build a predictive model. The amyloid-positive individuals were identified with 90% accuracy in the mixed diagnosis cohort. Relative increases in certain amyloid beta precursor protein fragments were important in predicting plaque burden at the earliest stages. The findings appear in *Science Advances*.

## Drug addiction and gender differences

Women's hormonal cycles may not only make them more prone to drug addiction but also more affected by triggers that lead to relapse. The research by a team in the U.S. is significant since there are virtually no addiction studies in women that account for these cycles. The researchers say that women represent a particularly vulnerable population, with higher addiction rates following exposure to drugs, but studies have primarily focussed on the mechanisms underlying these effects in men. The study found that when fertility-related hormone levels are high, females learn faster, make stronger associations to cues in their environment and are more prone to seek rewards. Women becoming addicted to drugs may be a fundamentally different process than men, the scientists contend. The next step would be to figure out the specifics of how hormonal shifts affect women's brains and, ultimately, develop medications that could help override those. Researchers historically have avoided using female animals in medical studies specifically so they don't have to account for influences from hormonal cycles. As a result, medication development has often focussed on correcting dysfunctions in men, which may explain why women often don't respond to available medications/treatments in the same way as men do. The findings are in *Neuropsychopharmacology*.

## Getting one's just desserts

If you're going to choose dessert first, then the high-calorie option might lead to your eating a healthier meal, unless you have a lot on your mind, according to new research published by the American Psychological Association. In the study, researchers placed either a healthy or less healthy dessert (fresh fruit vs. lemon cheesecake) at the beginning or end of a university cafeteria line. When diners picked the cheesecake first, they then chose a lower-calorie main or side dishes and ultimately consumed fewer calories than diners who chose the fresh fruit first. Those effects weren't found when either dessert was placed at the end of the food line. Three additional online experiments that mimicked a food delivery website had similar findings, except when participants were distracted because they had a lot on their mind.

## DEMYSTIFYING SCIENCE

## What is Bedin 1?

It is a modestly sized, elongated galaxy that measures only around 3,000 light-years at its greatest extent — a fraction of the size of the Milky Way. Not only is it tiny but it is also incredibly faint. These properties have led astronomers to classify it as a 'dwarf spheroidal galaxy'. Dwarf spheroidal galaxies are defined by their small size, low-luminosity, lack of dust and old stellar populations. Bedin 1 was discovered by the Hubble Space Telescope when it was looking for white dwarf stars. — Science Daily

## Fake news could be injurious to health

Medical leaders and associations must take the lead in issuing effective and clear messages countering fake information

ANOOP MISRA, AMBRISH MITHAL & VISWANATHAN MOHAN

**A**long with the Hippocratic oath, the MBBS curriculum has a mantra: 'bar God, all must provide data. A good physician treats patients based on scientific principles derived from solid evidence. The physician's personal experience may embellish or temper these principles, but should not be 'contrary' to them.'

In India, the mantra of scientific data and evidence is often not the basis of beliefs. The attraction of alternative, unscientific treatment methods has been irresistible. Aided by social media, 'cure-mongers', 'quacks' and 'diet gurus' issue medical diktats. Some are confused, and others believe them.

One hoax relates to chronic diseases such as diabetes. The lure of a complete cure is greater than boring, often predictable medical advice. In addition, the effort needed to sustain lifestyle changes often pushes people to 'miracle remedies' that free them from lifelong restrictions.

## 'Claims' on social media

Social media is flooded with claims that diabetes can be reversed or cured in hours or days. Through experiments we now know that remission is possible only in a small number of those with Type 2 diabetes, most of whom are obese and freshly detected; and that such remission will take months. And



most diabetics cannot achieve remission. But the pull of a message offering cure is magnetic. People ignore advice from qualified doctors and flock to authors of these falsehoods.

One video tells us that if we consume 'fruit juice' diets or mangoes, we could control, even cure diabetes. This amounts to a con. Fruit juices are high on fructose or fruit sugar, which raises blood sugar levels. One patient with diabetes and kidney disease following such a diet without the doctor's knowledge was brought in with not only high blood sugar but also high potassium levels. People with diabetes can take fruits in limited amounts, not more than two servings containing 15 gm of carbohydrates each.

Most of such messages are against national and international guidelines, and play to the gallery. These ('eating saturated fat, for example, ghee, butter, in any amount will do no harm'; 'there is no such thing as bad cholesterol'), are lapped up by the public because these give them freedom to eat what has been restricted by doctors. If one attempts any scientific criticism of the 'experts', one gets hounded in the social media. Other diet fads and harmful substances (blood group diet, gluten-free diet as panacea, *bhasma* (holy ash) and alternative medicines by gurus to cure asthma, tuberculosis and HIV) abound. All these result in selling food items or medication to unsuspecting patients, which brings lucrative gains to the perpetrator.

One galling news item from November 2016 states that insulin use in India is a scam, insinuating that doctors are unnecessarily prescribing insulin. Years ago, the landmark United Kingdom Prospective Diabetes Study showed that with the passage of time it is difficult to control diabetes with oral drugs alone, and insulin administration becomes unavoidable to halt serious organ damage. Delay in initiating insulin treatment ('clinical inertia' which can increase complications) is dangerous. Interestingly, less than five million people (6.7% of the diabetic population) currently use insulin in India, which is far less than that in the U.S. and the U.K., where the figures are 30-50%.

Another item says diagnostic criteria for diabetes (by blood sugar cut-offs) have been repeatedly lowered, and these are influenced by the pharma industry for profits, implying that more drugs will be used if more patients are diagnosed. This is a lie. The fasting glucose criteria for diabetes was arbitrarily set at 140 mg/dl about three decades ago. In 1997, after extensive review by experts (and not pharmaceutical companies) the fasting plasma glucose criteria for diagnosis of diabetes was revised downwards (from 140 mg/dl) to 126 mg/dl in a rigorously scientific manner. These criteria are based on the tendency of a large number of people with diabetes to develop complications (eye damage) after a particular threshold of blood sugar (in this case 126 mg/dl), based on a review of a large body of scientific data.

**C**onflicting data

Not in all cases are perceptions and opinions of the public at fault. Sometimes confusing messages come from the scientific community. Maintaining glycosylated haemoglobin (HbA1c), used for monitoring blood sugar control and for diagnosis value of less or equal 7% (meaning good blood sugar control) would decrease chances of complications. This cut-off point of HbA1c was based on data from large trials in the U.K. and the U.S., conducted over a decade. Recently, the American College of Physicians (ACP) said that maintaining HbA1c up to 8% (equivalent to average blood sugar value of 180 mg/dl) is fine. This statement has been vehemently and universally denounced, including by key Indian researchers (includes the authors). The distorted message now adds that blood sugar levels of 200-250 mg/dl are normal and only a value above 250 mg/dl is diagnostic of

The lure of a complete cure is greater than boring, often predictable medical advice

diabetes. Interestingly, the statement about increased limit of HbA1c by ACP was limited to control of diabetes, and not its diagnosis.

The medical fraternity should partly take the blame for not countering frauds and fake news. Most physicians/scientists are media-shy. Many of them can write good scientific papers, but not something that appeals to the masses. Their messages on audio-visual media are considered 'boring'. Effective communication to the masses is never taught in medical schools. On the other hand, quacks, frauds and fake godmen (and even some retired, disgruntled physicians) deliver incorrect/false statements effectively. One retired physician even has the audacity to tell people that the best thing to do if one has a heart attack is to stay at home and do nothing; if one goes to a hospital, one would surely die!

People listen. People applaud. People discuss and forward such messages. It is therefore essential that more medical leaders and medical associations, issue effective and clear messages countering such fake news.

A. Misra (Delhi), A. Mital (Delhi) and V. Mohan (Chennai) are experts in diabetes and related diseases

## Mapping bugs on the ISS



**To adapt than harm:** New research shows that microbes stranded in the International Space Station (ISS) have different genes from the equivalent bacteria on Earth. While there have been many concerns about these microbes forming a new generation of 'superbugs', it now appears that the differences are making the bacteria more able to withstand the harsh conditions of space, rather than increasing pathogenicity. Numerous bacterial species can be found in the ISS, from the clothing of the astronauts or in the cargo. Thousands of these, and other, microbes have been cultured from samples taken from the ISS, the genomic data of which is stored in a National Center for Biotechnology Information public database, in the U.S. With increasing talk of enabling travellers to visit space, there is growing interest in understanding how microbes behave in enclosed environments including the harsh conditions on the ISS that encompass high levels of radiation, microgravity, and lack of ventilation. In their research, Dr. Erica Hartmann and her team at the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, Northwestern University, U.S., compared the genomes of *Staphylococcus aureus* and *Bacillus cereus* cultures isolated from the ISS with those on Earth. The analysis showed that the bacteria isolated from the ISS did contain different genes from their terrestrial counterparts. Interestingly though it was shown that these genetic differences would not increase the pathogenicity of the bacteria or make them more detrimental to human health. It was reported that the changes merely reflect the bacterial responses to living in a stressful environment. However, infected individuals can still spread illness on space stations and space shuttles. — News Medical

## Can you get too much exercise?

A study based in the U.S. looks at what the heart tells us

GRETCHEN REYNOLDS



**M**any middle-aged marathon runners and other endurance athletes are familiar with concerns from their loved ones — and occasionally their physicians — that they might be exercising too much and straining or harming their hearts.

For all of them, a large-scale study published recently in *JAMA Cardiology* should be mollifying. It finds that middle-aged men who work out often and vigorously do tend to develop worrisome plaques in their cardiac arteries. But those men also are less likely than more sedentary people to die prematurely from a heart attack or other cause.

The findings raise the interesting possibility, in other words, that strenuous exercise may protect the heart against the very problems to which it also contributes.

No one doubts, of course, that our hearts benefit from exercise. Study after study shows that people who meet the standard exercise guidelines, which call for about 30 minutes a day of moderate exercise, have a reduced risk of deve-

loping heart disease.

There have been some hints, however, that people can exercise too much, especially if the exercise is intense. In past studies, researchers scanning the hearts of long-time endurance athletes, such as marathon runners, have found scarring in those athletes' heart muscles and also hefty deposits of coronary plaques, which can break free and block arteries, causing a heart attack. But most of those earlier studies were small and provided a single snapshot of the athletes' hearts; they did not follow people for years to see whether their heavy exercise and any subsequent build-up of plaques was linked to heightened risks for heart attacks and shorter lives.

So, for the new study, scientists at the Cooper Institute in Dallas and other institutions decided to

devote into just that issue.

They also happened to have a useful trove of data readily at hand, in the health records of tens of thousands of people who had undergone exams at the affiliated Cooper Clinic. Many of these exams included scans of people's hearts, along with detailed questionnaires about their exercise habits.

## The data

The researchers focused on the records of 21,758 men, most of them in their 50s. (They did not include women but plan to in a follow-up study.) They categorized the men into groups, based on how much they exercised. Those in the sweating-the-most group worked out vigorously for at least five hours a week and often more. The researchers used a mathematical measure (known as metabolic equivalent of task) to characterize the men's workouts. But in practical terms, these extreme exercisers were doing the equivalent of running about six miles a day.

A second group completed somewhat less exercise, and a third group finished less than half as much exer-

cise each week as the most avid exercisers.

The researchers also looked at the scans of each man's heart. The degree of plaque accumulation can generally be assessed using a coronary artery calcium score. Someone with a score higher than 100 is considered to have worrisome plaque build-up.

Comparing the groups, the researchers determined that the men in the highest-exercise group were prone to developing plaques. They were, in fact, about 11% more likely to have a calcium score higher than 100, compared to men who moved less. Some of the extreme exercisers had scores above 800.

Finally, the researchers checked death records for a decade or so after each man's latest exam, to see if any had died.

In essence, these results suggest that large amounts of exercise can up someone's risk of developing plaques, while also lessening the likelihood that he will die from a heart attack precipitated by those plaques, says Dr. Laura DeFina, the chief science officer for the Cooper Institute, who led the study. NY TIMES

## Winning the war on worms



ASHUTOSH MISHRA

Last year, the World Health Organisation said approximately 1.5 billion people globally were at risk of contracting soil-transmitted helminths (STH) infections — or roundworms. That is, 270 million pre-school children and 600 million children of school-age live in areas where these parasites are intensively transmitted. India accounts for a quarter of the world's STH-infected children; 64% of them are younger than 14 years.

Because of the pronounced impact on child growth and development, the 54th World Health Assembly, in 2011, committed itself to reducing the prevalence and the intensity of soil-transmitted helminth infections in all countries by 50%.

Recognising this challenge, India's Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, in 2015, launched the National Deworming Programme under the National Health Mission, one of the largest fixed-day, mass drug administration public health programmes in the world, to reach out to over 230 million children by 2020. Primarily a school and Anganwadi-based initiative, this involves teachers and frontline health workers administering deworming tablets (Albendazole). This initiative has garnered many accolades globally, especially from public health advocates of neglected tropical diseases.

Open defecation, contaminated soil and water, uncooked food, and not following basic hygiene are the main reasons for transmission (worm larvae and eggs). If undiagnosed, worms persist in the body and lay thousands of eggs every day. Worms cause a decline in iron, protein and vitamin A levels, leading to anaemia, a lower appetite, malnutrition, and diarrhoea.

Though there have been impressive gains as far as the national deworming programme is concerned, there are some ways in which it can be improved. First, teachers and frontline workers are overburdened and under-incentivised to participate in the programme. Thus, the engagement of community volunteers, youth and the village health and sanitation committees needs to be planned. Second, there needs to be a special focus on out-of-school children and adolescents through intensified outreach and also using peer-group and youth-group networks to administer the drug. Third, private schools need to raise awareness among parents and increase participation. Finally, the State departments (of health, women and child development, and education) must coordinate better and improve drug procurement and the timely delivery of drugs. The reach of mass drug administration is commendable, but what India needs to do on a war footing is to focus on preventive chemotherapy, improved sanitation facilities, enable access to clean/safe drinking water, and enable hygiene awareness. Since eradication of STH infections is difficult, given its faecal-oral and penetration-via-skin transmission patterns, the chances of re-infection are very high in population living in endemic areas. This is particularly a concern in regions with tropical climate with high humidity and warm temperatures such as Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Assam, and West Bengal and in cities that have seen unplanned urbanisation.

In February 2018, India reached out to more than 266 million children through the National Deworming Day programme. State governments are also leveraging this programme to tackle health challenges such as anaemia and malnutrition by complementing it with other health programmes, for example, the Government of India's Vitamin A as well as the Iron and Folic Acid Programme. The Swachh Bharat Mission has to a large extent addressed the issue of open defecation in many States, but we need to ensure that this rigour is maintained. Issues of clean drinking water, safe faecal sludge management, and safe waste disposal and recycling need to be prioritised. Alternatively, the problem of STH infections should also be considered as a part of India's urbanisation and city-planning mandates.

Dr. Ashutosh Mishra is with RTI International, India

# A cauldron of discontent

With universities constantly under the scanner, two books on what ails our campuses and why students are so angry

PRAHUB GUPTA

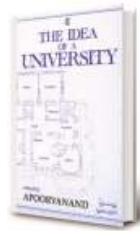
A modern university can flourish only under a modernising government within a society that supports modernisation. In contrast, what the British Raj did, and what most of our own governments continued to do, was to try to build modern universities within an overwhelmingly traditionalist society.

The effort was countercultural: till recently, our universities have been state-sanctioned and state-supported engines to modernise Indian society. The year 2014 marks the revenge of that part of traditional Indian society which is infuriated by modernity and wants to aggressively perhaps reverse whatever national modernisation has taken place.

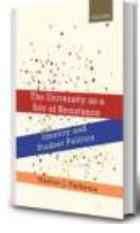
For that purpose, anti-modernisers employ marauding bands of hired goons for physical attacks, and use nods, winks and none-too-veiled threats to try to intimidate the average person.

Then, apparatchiks are appointed to top positions – whether as culture secretaries, heads of institutions like the Film and Television Institute of India and Indian Council for Cultural Relations, and Vice-Chancellors of our universities. The rot has now spread so far as to affect not only the appointment of faculty but even the selection of students.

The attacks of anti-modernisers range from the reduction of budgets for higher education, to the criminalisation of debate and creativity, and the increasing bureaucratisation of higher education. Book bans, curbs on seminars, and the imposition of intervening



**The Idea of a University**  
Edited by Apoorvanand  
Context, Westland  
₹699



**The University as a Site of Resistance**  
Gaurav Pathania  
Oxford University Press  
₹895

structures of surveillance through which everyday academic work must be produced, continuously bleed the energy of our universities.

#### Propaganda centres

Will the attacks of the modernisers succeed? Perhaps so, fear the 18 outstanding authors whose essays are included in *The Idea of a University*, edited by Apoorvanand.

But these authors are also cautiously hopeful that the whole of Indian society, having had at least some of the real benefits of modernisation, will not want to decline into the merely imaginary benefits of a past dreamed up by those pro-



**Moving lines:** Students and police clash on the premises of Osmania University, Hyderabad, during the Telangana statehood movement. ■ NAGARA GOPAL

pagating Hindutva. Our public universities are in the process of being converted into party propaganda centres – as in Iran and North Korea. The assaults have not been confined to universities, but have been directed against all modernising institutions, ranging from the media to the judiciary.

However, assaults on other institutions are much less damaging to the country – because it is universities that curate and communicate the best of the past, as well as develop in young minds the abilities which create a nation's future. This involves not merely giving young people the skills required

by national and global capital but, much more importantly, the nurturing of values, discernment, nuance, creativity, citizenship, a sense of perspective, and a love for lifelong learning.

Students not only put their skills and abilities at the service of companies and governments, they also launched important national initiatives.

In the 1960s, students dropped out of St. Stephen's College (Delhi) and Presidency College (Calcutta) to join the extra-parliamentary struggles to support the landless labourers. In Tamil Nadu and Gujarat, students created massive anti-Hindi and anti-pride rise agita-

tions that challenged policies and toppled governments.

In the 1980s, students led or collaborated with regional movements in Assam and Punjab. Students provided cadres for the Jayaprakash Narayan-led movement in 1974-75 for decentralisation, honest government, and a more just society.

However, it is also true that Indian student politics has often been partisan and factional.

In the 1980s, Sanjay Gandhi's mobilisation of educated and ambitious but frustrated youth into the Youth Congress produced student groups more interested in rising to power through unprincipled means than agitating for a better and more just society.

All that was a generation or more ago. So when Gaurav Pathania encountered the intense movement for Telangana's statehood, he felt impelled to research it, resulting in *The University as a Site of Resistance*, the very first detailed account of the Telangana Student Movement in English.

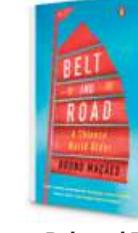
#### The Telangana stir

The outcome of a year of fieldwork in Hyderabad by an outsider (a north Indian), it is an examination of the contribution of an institution (Osmania University) to the movement. The book explores the everyday life of activists on campus: how did activists deal with the issues and problems of the Telangana movement? Why are cultural identities the basis of Indian politics? How did the demand for Telangana statehood succeed?

The book argues that the Telangana movement is a new cultural or social movement, not merely a political one. Social movements require material and cultural resources to be able to raise consciousness and to represent it. What student activists gained from joining an institution of higher education was access to cultural capital, and specifically to cultural resources unique to their own identity.

By looking at the struggle for Telangana in the light of university activism not only in the whole of India but also around the world, Pathania's book provides a perceptive, thorough and thought-provoking analysis that effectively complements Apoorvanand's bouquet of essays.

## BOOKSHELF



**Belt and Road**  
Bruno Macaes  
Penguin Random House  
₹599

What does the biggest geopolitical project of our time tell us about China's ambitions? What will the Belt and Road initiative which covers almost 70 countries mean for the region? As America becomes isolationist, will Beijing be the new centre of globalisation? Macaes outlines China's strategy and why it symbolises a new phase in its endeavour to be a superpower.



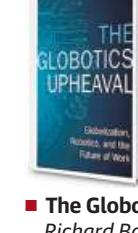
**Power and Diplomacy: India's Foreign Policies during the Cold War**  
Zoravar Daulet Singh  
OUP  
₹845

The notion that a monolithic idea of 'nonalignment' shaped India's foreign policy is a popular view. Singh challenges this by unveiling another layer of India's strategic culture. In a detailed narrative, the author presents worldviews that underlay geopolitics during the Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi years.



**At Nature's Edge: The Global Present and Long-Term History**  
Edited by Gunnar Cederlöf,  
Mahesh Rangarajan  
OUP  
₹1,195

Ecologies as diverse as the Himalayas and the Indian Ocean coast, the Negev desert and the former military bases of Vietnam all have in common a long-time human presence and the many ways people have modified nature. With research covering countries from Asia, Africa, and Australia, the writers ask how and why human impacts on nature have grown in scale.



**The Globotics Upheaval**  
Richard Baldwin  
Hachette India  
₹699

Autonomy, artificial intelligence and robotics are changing our lives quickly, but does digital disruption go much further than we realise?

Baldwin argues that the inhuman speed of this transformation will overwhelm us. When technology enables people from around the world to be a virtual presence in any given office, he says Globotics will upset lives of millions of skilled workers.



**Three Classic Films by Gulzar**  
Saba M. Bashir & others  
HarperCollins  
₹299X3

This set provides insights into the making of Gulzar's *Aandhi*, *Angoor* and *Ijaazat*. While for *Aandhi*, Saba M. Bashir does a close textual analysis, for *Angoor*, Sathy Saran traces the evolution of a comic tale, an adaptation of Shakespeare's *Comedy of Errors*. In the third, Mira Hashmi highlights the characters of *Ijaazat* and R.D. Burman's poignant score.

# Grid shortfall

To what extent is politics entwined with our power policy?  
Case studies from 15 States highlight the problems facing the sector

RAMESH MATHAM

Exactly a decade-and-a-half has passed since the 'landmark' legislation meant to transform the power sector was brought in. The grand objective of the well-intentioned Electricity Act, 2003 was the creation of a free market for power in which energy companies have the freedom to generate power from anywhere in the country and sell to any consumer at prices determined by the market, and the consumers have the option to choose their supplier. Fifteen years down the line, such a free market remains a pipe dream.

#### Hurdles of the mission

Why so? The answer, in one word, is: politics. Political imperatives make radical reforms practically impossible. Political masters have tried to shape reform measures in a manner that would avoid a negative fallout for them.

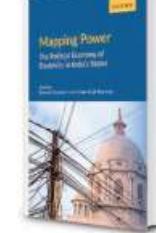
Wrong approach, says the book, *Mapping Power: The Political Economy of Electricity in India's States*, an anthology of case studies in the power sector in 15 States, edited by Navroz K. Dubash, professor at the Centre for Policy Research, New Delhi, Sunila S. Kale, faculty member at the Henry M. Jackson School of International Studies, University of Washington, Seattle, and Ranjit Bharvkirikar, Principal at the NGO, Regulatory Assistance Project. The articles, one on each State, provide a peek into the political history of the power sector with a view to finding out how, and to what extent, is politics entwined with power policy. The authors of the articles have prepared their work researching archived material as well as interviews with experts. The intent of the book is made clear in the first few pages. The authors note that a common thread running through past reform measures is the 'impulse to bypass or insulate' the sector from politics. "This impulse, we argue, is misplaced."

**The subsidy factor**  
The fundamental point of the book is this. The power sector (though to different degrees in different States) is beset with problems such as corruption, need to provide subsidised power to the under-privileged, theft of power and poor health of the State-owned power supply companies (discoms). All these issues are deeply political. If you bury your head in sand and bring in reforms – such as UDAY – the outcomes at best will be positive only temporarily. Instead, look for solutions that will give politicians political pay-offs.

Beyond stressing that 'mapping power' – which means, "the need to understand the power sector's role in both shaping and being shaped by



**Status quo:** 'Aam Aadmi Party's arm-wrestle with Lieutenant Governor of Delhi Naeem Jung (left) led to a consequent paralysis in the electricity distribution sector.' ■ KAMAL NARANG



**Mapping Power: The Political Economy of Electricity in India's States**  
Edited by Navroz K. Dubash & Others  
Oxford University Press  
₹1,195

electoral politics, the extent to which efforts at reform work with or against existing political currents" – the book does not offer any specific prescriptions as to what reforms the governments should undertake in order to obtain positive political pay-offs. "The intent," the authors say, "is not to provide a mechanistic toolkit, but rather a framework for dialogue and understanding of how to map power, which is the first step to productively reforming electricity politics."

The 15 articles serve as a one-stop shop for information about the power sector's tryst with politics and are quite interesting. For instance, under 'Delhi', (written by Megha Kaladharan, a lawyer) there is a fairly detailed discussion on Aam Aadmi Party's arm-wrestle with Lieutenant Governor Naeem Jung, the LG holding the appointment of the State's electricity regulator, Krishna Saini, invalid; the consequent paralysis in the electricity distribution sector, all leading to tariffs remaining static and worsening of the discoms' financial health.

Writing on Gujarat, Siddharth Sareen, a post-doctoral fellow at the University of Bergen, Norway, shows how State-specific the problems are. "Our call is for State-by-State solutions." While there are commonalities across States, "For us to provide a silver bullet single-point solution for all States would have fallen into the same trap we warned against."

sector whose performance has been consistently outstanding at a national level." However, this is not to say that all is hunky-dory. The sector may have reached a 'stable but a suboptimal equilibrium'. The negatives include banking on short-term trading at the power exchange as a protectionist measure that favours discoms at the expense of industrial consumers, caps on solar, and failure to promote sufficient public engagement.

#### The case of Tamil Nadu

Another interesting case study is that of Tamil Nadu, by Hema Ramakrishnan, faculty member at the Madras School of Economics. She traces the evolution of populism and corruption. In 1988, the AIADMK government discontinued metering of agriculture under the pretext that while recording incurred a lot of expenses, it did not earn any revenues from agricultural users. With no metering, farmers started exploiting groundwater indiscriminately, using multiple pumps and choosing water-intensive crops. Traditional crop rotation methods were replaced by cultivating paddy for all three seasons. "Supply of free power for agricultural and low income consumers provided a convenient cover for the State to hide theft and inefficiencies," says Ramakrishnan. This, in turn, helped financial and political rent-seeking by the party in power.

In as much as it zooms in into the relationship between politics and the power sector in 15 (big) states, the book is timely and useful, because the Electricity Act is going nowhere. However, it's disappointing that there is no clear-cut recommendation on what policy makers should do.

About asked this, Navroz Dubash told *The Hindu* that the book shows how State-specific the problems are. "Our call is for State-by-State solutions." While there are commonalities across States, "For us to provide a silver bullet single-point solution for all States would have fallen into the same trap we warned against."

He describes himself as a 'modest wanderer in search of music and personal relationships,' and this gem of a book gives us a slice of history now mostly lost.

■ SUDIPTA DATTA

# Voice of the Valley

Re-reading a slain journalist's Kashmir stories

FASIL YASEEN

Shujaat Bukhari, editor of English daily *Rising Kashmir*, was killed on June 14 last year just outside his office in Srinagar. Before launching the newspaper, he had been the Srinagar correspondent for *Frontline* and had worked for *The Hindu* for 15 years between 1997 and 2012. Now his reports have been compiled into a book, *The Dirty War in Kashmir*, with the foreword written by the editor of *Frontline*, R. Vijaya Sankar, in which he talks about his association with Bukhari and his courage in reporting from a conflict zone.

In the introduction, 'Shujaat Bukhari: A man of peace', the Associate Editor of *Frontline*, R.K. Radhakrishnan, recalls how Bukhari would make officers of the Army uncomfortable with his probing questions.

He writes that Bukhari wanted people in India to understand the Kashmir issue in a holistic manner – he wanted the Kashmir story to be told by a Kashmiri and not by some-



**The Dirty War in Kashmir: Frontline Reports**  
Shujaat Bukhari  
LeftWord Books  
₹150

one giving it an Indian or a Pakistani twist.

The rest of the book is divided into 10 chapters dealing with reports on wide-ranging subjects over a period of time.

He wrote for instance on the simmering anger among the Kashmiri youth towards New Delhi; election boycotts; how the killing spree of civilians was pushing the youth toward militancy; and how total alienation and the social media ban was resulting in student protests.

In all his reports, Bukhari stressed on the need for dialogue to end the 'dirty war in Kashmir'. He was vocal about

the attack on Hindu pilgrims by extremist groups and made it clear that Kashmiris disproved of such attacks.

A votary of fearless but objective journalism, Bukhari stood for the resolution of the Kashmir issue and remained involved in the Track II dialogue process with Pakistan. His reports are relevant as they provide pointers to the way ahead in Kashmir. For example, he elucidates the special status of Jammu & Kashmir needs to be protected and how tampering with Article 370 and Article 35-A will further deteriorate the situation in the State. He rues the non-seriousness on the part of the Bharatiya Janata Party-led government in New Delhi to resolve the Kashmir issue.

While he is critical of New Delhi, Bukhari does not spare the separatists either for their lack of acumen to engage in a dialogue process. The book achieves its goal of telling the stories of Kashmir and making readers across India understand why New Delhi should not deal with Kashmir with an iron fist.

# Songs from the road

Reviving an old remarkable musical journey across West Asia



**Paris to Calcutta: Men and Music on the Desert Road**  
Deben Bhattacharya  
Sublime Frequencies  
₹3,430

lives and concerns' of many tribes including the very private Bedouin.

In her introduction, Bhattacharya's wife, Jharna Bose, explains why the book has been long in the making. She talks about his escape from a 'humdrum life in Varanasi' to the U.K., and how he 'soon immersed himself in music that was to become his source of livelihood.' Of this journey across West Asia, many of the recordings were released earlier, but this is the first time

the music and the personal narrative of the journey, thanks to a manuscript he had

written soon after his return, have been put together in a volume.

Bhattacharya died in 2001 but had told his wife and children many stories of the desert, bereft of flowers, 'but there was the perfume of melody all around.' In Turkey, he records a man playing a cumbus (a stringed-guitar like instrument), singing love songs from central Anatolia. Bhattacharya keeps his eyes and ears open, hearing strains of the zurna (a rather crude form of the shehnai) somewhere or the dhaval (resembling the dhol of Bengal) elsewhere.

The story of Bhattacharya's meeting with the Bedouins and their chief Sheikh Lawrence Shaalan – yes he was named after the brave Englishman T.E. Lawrence of Arabia – and hearing their traditional songs of the desert and camels is delightful.

He describes himself as a 'modest wanderer in search of music and personal relationships,' and this gem of a book gives us a slice of history now mostly lost.

# Men in Blue looking for the icing on the cake

Another first will cap a fantastic sojourn down under; New Zealand needs to tighten up in the middle overs



**Keeping the flag flying:** Team India has given the nation enough to celebrate on this overseas tour and would like to sign off in style. ■ HAGEN HOPKINS/GETTY IMAGES

## INDIA IN NZ

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
HAMILTON

In a season of many firsts for Team India, Rohit Sharma's men will be aiming to become the first to win a Twenty20 International series in New Zealand when the two sides clash in the final match here on Sunday.

### Memorable phase

The past three months have made for a memorable phase for the team, which won a first Test and bilateral ODI se-

ries in Australia followed by the biggest one-day series win in New Zealand.

A first T20 series victory in New Zealand will be the icing on the cake for the 'Men in Blue'.

Krunal Pandya has once again punched above his weight with some gritty performances in both games.

### Time to weigh in

For New Zealand, a better batting effort in the middle overs is what is required.

Skipper Kane Williamson has endured a quiet limited-over series by his standards

some quality swing bowling by Trent Boult.

In case the team management gives change a thought, it could be Kuldeep Yadav coming in place of Yuzvendra Chahal.

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## Golden summer

India's twin tour of Australia and New Zealand has been a grand success with India sealing all the series so far except the T20I leg in Australia which was drawn 1-1. If India manages to win the final T20I match against New Zealand on Sunday and clinches the series, the visitors' cup of joy will be complete. A look at the results so far:

### Tour of Australia

#### T20Is

Brisbane	<b>Australia won</b> by four runs (DLS method)
Melbourne	No result
Sydney	<b>India won</b> by six wickets
<b>Series drawn 1-1</b>	

#### Tests

Adelaide	<b>India won</b> by 31 runs
Perth	<b>Australia won</b> by 146 runs
Melbourne	<b>India won</b> by 137 runs
Sydney	Drawn
<b>India won the series 2-1</b>	

#### ODIs

Sydney	<b>Australia won</b> by 34 runs
Adelaide	<b>India won</b> by six wickets
Melbourne	<b>India won</b> by seven wickets
<b>India won the series 2-1</b>	

#### Series level 1-1



The Indian team celebrates the Test series win in Australia.

## Tour of New Zealand

#### ODIs

Napier	<b>India won</b> by eight wickets
Mount Maunganui	<b>India won</b> by 90 runs
Mount Maunganui	<b>India won</b> by seven wickets
Hamilton	<b>New Zealand won</b> by eight wickets
<b>India won the series 4-1</b>	

#### T20Is

Wellington	<b>New Zealand won</b> by 80 runs
Auckland	<b>India won</b> by seven wickets
Hamilton	?
<b>Series level 1-1</b>	

and senior batsman Ross Taylor has also blown hot and cold during the last three weeks.

Among the bowlers, Tim Southee was impressive in the first game and pretty ordinary in the second.

**The teams (from):**

**India:** Rohit Sharma (Capt.), Shikhar Dhawan, Rishabh Pant, Dinesh Karthik, Kedar Jadhav, M.S. Dhoni, Krunal Pandya, Kuldeep Yadav, Yuzvendra Chahal, Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Siddarth Kaul, Khaleel Ahmed, Shubman Gill, Vijay Shankar, Hardik Pandya and Mohammad Siraj.

**New Zealand:** Kane Williamson (Capt.), Doug Bracewell, Colin de Grandhomme, Lockie Ferguson, Scott Kuggeleijn, Colin Munro, Daryl Mitchell, Mitchell Santner, Tim Seifert, Ish Sodhi, Tim Southee, Ross Taylor, Blair Tickner and James Neesham.

Match starts at 12:30 p.m.

# Little by little Test cricket will lose, says Muttiah Muralitharan

The batsmen do not have the defensive skills now, according to the legendary off-spinner

S. DINAKAR  
CHENNAI

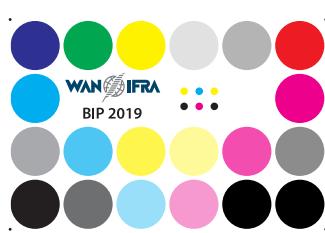
His Test numbers are staggering – 133 matches, 800 wickets at 22.72, 67 five-wicket hauls and 22 10-wicket

match hauls.

Nobody has more wickets in Tests, none threatens to come close. His eyes, so full of joy and hope – he grew up during a difficult period in Sri Lankan history but never stopped smiling – are a window to his resilience and compassion.

Greatness sits lightly on Muttiah Muralitharan. His humility is striking, his feet are grounded. This Sri Lankan Tamil is not the kind to look down condescendingly at bowlers with less success at the highest level.

Murali's upbringing does not permit him that. As he said during his visit to *The Hindu* office here on Saturday, "I am lucky to be picked at the right time, and play international cricket for nearly 20 cricketers. Some very talented cricketers might not have got that opportunity."



**C** Virender Sehwag attacked you, tried not to allow you to settle. I feared him and he feared me

you to settle. I feared him and he feared me."

### Lesson from Sehwag

Muralitharan, now 46, dwelled on the fluctuations of fortunes in international cricket and the need for a strong mind.

"I learn a lot from Sehwag. He used to say, 'There is always the next ball awaiting you.'

"Every day is a different day, either it is your day, or isn't. But you don't allow it to work on your mind," said Muralitharan.

Commenting on India coach Ravi Shastri's remark that left-arm wrist spinner Kuldeep Yadav will be the Test side's No. 1 spinner in away campaigns, Muralitharan said, "He is an attacking bowler, is different and will always get you wickets. Left-



**Different breed:** Muttiah Muralitharan is of the view that left-arm chinaman bowlers need to be backed on their off days. ■ M. VEDHAN

arm chinaman bowlers are rare and they spin the ball both ways but you will have to back the wrist spinners on off days."

The Sri Lankan legend said Bumrah being different from the rest was his greatest

asset. "He reminds me of Lasith Malinga. The batsmen follow Bumrah's arm as it comes from wide and expect an incoming delivery. When the ball straightens, he is almost unplayable."

The Indian captain Virat

Kohli, he said, was now at his peak. "Between 29 and 34, you are at the height of your powers. Then your body, gradually, does not listen to you."

Muralitharan stressed fitness and said, "Angelo Math-

## Time for a new 'bash'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI

to cricket aficionados above the age of 15, will be conducted in July/August this year and the registration of players has already begun.

Muralitharan said, "In all, we will have 16 teams, including Chennai, drawn from 26 centres. The registration fee will be ₹500." Chris Gayle, Zaheer Khan and Praveen Kumar are the other mentors. The matches will be telecast live.

For details, give a missed call to 9871063063 or log on to www.feritcricketbash.com

international arena to the falling standards school cricket, the island nation's major catchment area.

During his time at *The Hindu*, Muralitharan spread warmth and goodwill. He has his heart at the right place.

# Panchal and Bharat tame the Lions attack

P.K. AJITH KUMAR  
KRISHNAGIRI (WAYANAD)

A lot can change in three weeks, and Priyank Panchal is proof.

He had come here mid-January with the reputation of being Gujarat's run-machine. But in the Ranji Trophy quarterfinal against Kerala, he came across a seaming track and a deadly pace attack. He made eight and three.

On his return to the Wayanad Cricket Stadium, he made up for that in style. He scored a splendid 206 (313b, 26x4, 3x6) to show his class on the third day of the first 'Test' against England Lions. He wasn't the only home batsman to make merry against a clueless English attack on a lifeless wicket, though. Wicketkeeper K.S. Bharat slammed a cracking 142 off just 139 balls (11x4, 8x6).

Their fifth-wicket stand of 196 helped the host declare at 540 for six – a lead of 200. Lions were 20 for no loss at stumps.

Anju Bobby George belongs to a generation in which aspiring athletes struggled for funding and infrastructure.

The Olympian, one of the jury members for the Sportstar Aces Awards, is therefore happy to notice a change in the scenario now.

Young athletes are encouraged by a more helpful set of circumstances, contributing to a larger pool of sporting talent in India.

"It is a good thing for the country. Not just cricket, more and more youngsters are coming up in various disciplines. Be it athletics or table tennis, there is so much talent and this is a very good trend," Anju said.

"Now we have a lot of support from the government and the corporate organisations, so that helps the athletes in preparing better. All the



**Piling it up:** Priyank Panchal and K.S. Bharat were simply unstoppable on the third day of the first 'Test'. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

too, accelerated; the two produced a scintillating exhibition of strokeplay. The Gujarat opener had got to his hundred with a quick single to mid-on off medium-pacer Steven Mullane. But his next hundred was completed with a six over long on, off the hapless Briggs.

It was as if he was drawing inspiration from his irrepressible partner. In the previous over, Bharat had reached his hundred upper-cutting Chappell above point.

As for Panchal, who completed 1,000 First Class runs for the season, he mixed defence and offence most judiciously.

**The scores:** England Lions – 1st Innings: 340.

**England Lions – 2nd Innings:** K.L. Rahul c sub b Briggs 142, Jalaj Saxena (not out) 28, Shardul Thakur 25-61-0, Chappell 12, Extras (b-12, lb-4) 16; Total (for six wkts. decl. in 134.5 overs): 540.

**Fall of wickets:** 1-48, 2-222, 3-223, 4-262, 5-458, 6-524.

**England Lions bowling:** Porter 23-4-83-1, Gregory 26-7-86-0, Mullaney 25-5-61-0, Chappell 24-2-105-3, Briggs 30.5-2-144-2, Jacks 6-0-45-0.

**England Lions – 2nd Innings:** Max Holden (batting) 9, Ben Duckett (batting) 9, Extras (b-1, nb-1) 2; Total (for no wkt. in five

# Real bests Atletico in Madrid derby

Rampant Reds reclaim the lead; Martial's gem and influential Pogba's double strike lift United

## Euro Leagues

### AGENCIES

LONDON

Thibaut Courtois overcame the jeers and Gareth Bale delivered a timely reminder of his talents as Real Madrid beat Atletico Madrid 3-1 in a fiery city derby on Saturday.

Real's fifth league win in a row means it sits second for the first time since September, above Atletico, and just five points behind Barcelona.

Bale had been left out of the starting line-up for the second time in four days, after he was also a substitute against Barca in the Copa del Rey on Wednesday.

The Welshman's goal, his 100th for Real Madrid, will not have been lost on coach Santiago Solari and ended Atletico's hopes of a comeback after Sergio Ramos' penalty put Real in front at half-time, with Antoine Griezmann earlier cancelling out Casemiro's acrobatic opener.

### Cruising home

In the Premier League, Liverpool reclaimed the lead with a convincing 3-0 win over Bournemouth as Jürgen Klopp's team showed no sign of jitters in the tightening title race.

With Manchester City having gone top on goal difference on Wednesday after erasing a seven-point gap since January, Liverpool responded with a confident and rampant display at Anfield to



**There it goes!** Casemiro, left, of Real Madrid beats Atletico Madrid custodian Jan Oblak. ■ AFP

provisionally go three points clear again.

Goals from Sadio Mane and Georginio Wijnaldum essentially decided the game after just 34 minutes, and Mohamed Salah added the third in the 48th.

### United fourth

Earlier, Manchester United swept into fourth place as Anthony Martial's sublime strike inspired its 3-0 win ov-

er Fulham.

It has won 10 of 11 matches in all competitions since Solskjaer replaced Mourinho as interim boss.

**The result:** EPL: Fulham 0 lost to Manchester United 3 (Pogba 14, 65-pen, Martial 23); Crystal Palace 1 (Zaha 76) drew with West Ham 1 (Noble 27-pen); Huddersfield 1 (Kolasinac 90+3-pen) lost to Arsenal 2 (Iwobi 16, Lacazette 44); Liverpool 3 (Mane 24, Wijnaldum 34, Salah 48) bt Bournemouth 0;

(Stephens 90+1) lost to Cardiff 2 (Bamba 69, Zohore 90+3); Watford 1 (Gray 67) bt Everton 0.

**La Liga:** Getafe 3 (Mata 39-pen, 81, Jorge Molina 62) bt Celta Vigo 1 (Araujo 2); Real Valladolid drew with Villarreal; Atletico Madrid 1 (Griegzman 25) lost to Real Madrid 3 (Casemiro 16, Ramos 42-pen, Bale 74).

**Serie A:** Chievo 0 lost to Roma 3 (El Shaarawy 9, Dzeko 18, Kolarov 51).

**Bundesliga:** Mainz 1 (Quaison 5) lost to Bayer Leverkusen 5 (Wendell 5, Havertz 19, Brandt 30, 64, Bellarabi 43); Borussia Dortmund 3 (Sancho 32, Goetze 43, Guerreiro 66) drew with Hoffenheim 3 (Befodil 75, 87, Kaderabek 83).

Hannover 2 (Mueller 45+, 77) bt Nuremberg 0; Leipzig 0 drew with Frankfurt 0; Freiburg 3 (Grifo 37, Petersen 70, Waldschmidt 87) drew with Wolfsburg 3 (Roussillon 11, Weghorst 63-pen, Steffen 74); Moenchengladbach 0 lost to Hertha Berlin 3 (Kalou 30, Duda 56, Selke 76).

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It has won 10 of 11 matches in all competitions since Solskjaer replaced Mourinho as interim boss.

**The result:** EPL: Fulham 0 lost to Manchester United 3 (Pogba 14, 65-pen, Martial 23); Crystal Palace 1 (Zaha 76) drew with West Ham 1 (Noble 27-pen); Huddersfield 1 (Kolasinac 90+3-pen) lost to Arsenal 2 (Iwobi 16, Lacazette 44); Liverpool 3 (Mane 24, Wijnaldum 34, Salah 48) bt Bournemouth 0;

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**La Liga:** Getafe 3 (Mata 39-pen, 81, Jorge Molina 62) bt Celta Vigo 1 (Araujo 2); Real Valladolid drew with Villarreal; Atletico Madrid 1 (Griegzman 25) lost to Real Madrid 3 (Casemiro 16, Ramos 42-pen, Bale 74).

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## TV PICKS

**New Zealand vs India:** 3rd T20I, Star Sports 1 (SD & HD), 8.30 a.m. & 12.30 p.m.; SS Select 1 (SD & HD), 12.30 p.m.

**West Indies vs England:** 3rd Test, Sony ESPN (SD & HD), 7.30 p.m.

**ISL:** Star Sports 1 & 3 (SD & HD), 7.15 p.m.

**Premier League:** SS Select 1 (SD & HD), 6.45 p.m. & 9.20 p.m.

**Bundesliga:** SS Select 2 (SD & HD), 7.45 p.m. & 10.15 p.m.

**La Liga:** Sony Ten 1 (SD & HD), 11 p.m.

**Serie A:** Sony Ten 2 (SD & HD), 5 p.m., 7.20 p.m. & 10.30 p.m.

**NBA:** Sony Ten 1 & 3 (SD & HD), 7 a.m.

**Pro Volleyball:** Sony Ten 3 & Six (SD & HD), 6.45 p.m.

## IN BRIEF



Davis wins over Pelicans fans

LOS ANGELES

Anthony Davis scored 32 points to turn fans to cheers on Friday, leading New Orleans Pelicans to a 122-117 NBA victory over Minnesota Timberwolves in his first game since asking to be traded. Davis scored 10 quick points and finished the first half with 24. AFP

Churchill battles back to hold Bagan

VASCO DA GAMA  
Churchill Brothers rallied from a goal down to hold Mohun Bagan in their I-League match here on Saturday. After Aser Dipanda put the visitors ahead in the 39th minute, Anthony Wolfe got the equaliser off a penalty in the 78th minute. The home side remained third in the table with 30 points from 17 games while the Kolkata giant was sixth with 23 points in 16 matches.

# Chikkarangappa is champion

Aman Raj and Dharma share runner-up spot

## GOLCONDA MASTERS

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD

Bengaluru's S. Chikkarangappa came up with a brilliant performance in the final round scoring six-under 65 to outclass the rest of the field and emerge winner by two shots at 20-under 264 in the Golconda Masters golf championship at the Hyderabad Golf Club on Saturday.

Patna's Aman Raj produced the last day's best round of seven-under 64 to finish joint runner-up at 18-under 266 along with Bengaluru's M. Dharma (69).

Chikkarangappa (65, 64, 70, 65), lying tied second, two off the lead going into the final round, began the day with birdies on the first two holes even as overnight leader Dharma dropped a bogey on the second.

There was no looking back for 25-year-old Chikkarangappa, with birdies on the eighth and ninth and 11th and 12th, where the two-time Asian Development Tour winner knocked in his longest putts of the day from nine feet and 15 feet.

The win meant five world-ranking points. He also leads the PGTI Order of Merit with earnings of ₹6,46,600 from the season-opener.



Good going: S. Chikkarangappa finished on top with a fine run on the final day.

■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

"I had an outstanding week with as many as 28 birdies."

"I attribute my performance to my much-improved ball-striking. My tee shots and approach shots were terrific today."

"I really wanted to finish well at the HGC as my previous best here had been

10th in the inaugural edition," Chikkarangappa said.

Aman Raj gained six spots from his overnight tied eighth after an error-free fourth round of 64.

M. Dharma, the third round leader by two shots, dropped to tied second on day four after a 69 that featured four birdies and two

bogeys.

Chandigarh's Karandeep Kochhar (69) took fourth place at 16-under 268 while the trio consisting of last year's champion Udayan Mane of Ahmedabad, Gurugram-based rookie Priyanshu Singh and Delhi's Honey Baisoya shared fifth place at 15-under 269.

## Punjab to meet RSPB

## PRESS TRUST OF INDIA GWALIOR

Defending champion Punjab defeated Punjab and Sind Bank (PSB) 2-0 to set up a clash with Railway Sports Promotion Board (RSPB) in the final of the ninth senior men's National hockey championship (Division A).

Akashdeep Singh (eighth minute) and Dharamvir Singh (39th) scored for Punjab. RSPB got past Petroleum Sports Promotion Board (PSPB) 5-4 in a shoot-out after the teams were locked 2-2 at regulation time.

Varun Kumar (eighth) and Mandeep Singh (23rd) gave PSPB a 2-0 lead before RSPB made a late surge and scored through Yuvraj Walimiki (45th) and Dilpreet Singh (50th) to take the contest to a tie-breaker.

## Jeevan-Purav pair loses in semifinals

## SPORTS BUREAU SOFIA

Jeevan Nedunchezhiyan and Purav Raja were beaten 5-7, 6-4, 10-6 by Nikola Mektic (Cro) & Jurgen Melzer (Aut) bt Jeevan Nedunchezhiyan & Purav Raja 5-7, 6-4, [10-6].

\$15,000 ITF WOMEN, SHARM EL SHEIKH DOUBLES (quarter-finals): Mariana Drazic (Cro) &

Malene Helsga (Nor) w/o Anna Morgina (Rus) & Zeel Desai.

points.

**The results:** €596, 140 ATP,

**Sofia: Doubles (semifinals):**

Nikola Mektic (Cro) & Jurgen Melzer (Aut) bt Jeevan Nedunchezhiyan & Purav Raja

5-7, 6-4, [10-6].

\$15,000 ITF WOMEN, SHARM

EL SHEIKH DOUBLES (quarter-

finals): Mariana Drazic (Cro) &

Malene Helsga (Nor) w/o Anna

Morgina (Rus) & Zeel Desai.

## Usha pins hopes on Neeraj and Hima

Says she doesn't understand the importance given to coach Galina

K. KEERTHIVASAN  
CHENNAI

It may have been 20 years since she announced her retirement from active athletics, but former sprint queen P.T. Usha has retained her popularity and the respect – through her work at Usha School Athletics in Kozhikode – she receives wherever she goes is one thing which has to be seen to be believed.

In the City for the Little Millennium's Kids Marathon on Saturday, the 54-year-old spoke about Indian athletes' chances in the Tokyo Olympics while questioning the undue importance given to the relay teams by the Athletics Federation of India (AFI).

While Usha hoped Neeraj Chopra (javelin) and Hima Das (400m) would do well in Tokyo, she maintained that it would be difficult as other countries too would be training as hard as these two.

**Jisna being ignored?**

The former athlete lamented that just because Jisna Mathew is training under her, she is being ignored.

"Her [Jisna] only fault is she is not training with Galina. [But] performance must speak," she said.

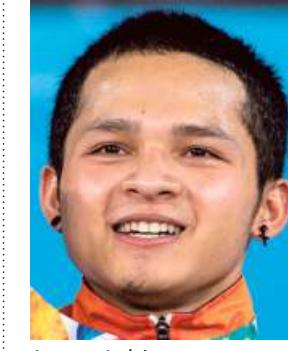
**Season yet to start**

"The season has not yet started. If you see the per-



Tough road ahead: P.T. Usha feels it would be a huge challenge for Indian athletes at Tokyo. ■ B. VELANKANNI RAJ

Jeremy takes weightlifting silver



Jeremy Lalrinnunga.  
■ FILE PHOTO

**SPORTS BUREAU**  
CHIANG MAI (THAILAND)  
Youth Olympic Games gold medallist Jeremy Lalrinnunga aggregated 288kg to take the silver medal in the men's 67kg category in the EGAT's Cup international weightlifting championships, an Olympic qualifying event, here on Friday.

Jeremy lifted 131kg in snatch and 157kg in clean and jerk behind gold medal winner Deni (303kg, 132kg, 171kg). Ruben Katoatau (125kg, 160kg, 285kg) of Kiribati won the bronze.

## Perry makes merry

**NEW DELHI:** Matthe Philip Perry scored eight goals in powering Rajnigandha Achievers to a 13 goals to 2 1/2 victory over Cavalry-Army Service Corps (ASC) in the semifinals of the Cavalry Gold Cup 10-goal polo tournament on Saturday.

In the final, Ranjigandha Achievers will play Garcha Group-Aravali Polo.

**The results (semifinals):**

Garcha Group-Aravali Polo 6 (Manuel Llorente 3, Angad Kalaan 2, Satinder Garcha) bt APRC-Navy 3 1/2 (Deepak Udar 2, Akhil Sirohi, handicap 1/2).

Rajnigandha Achievers 13 (Matthew Philip Perry 8, Gaurav Sahgal 3, Salim Azmi, Hurr Ali) bt Cavalry-ASC 2 1/2 (Naveen Singh 2, handicap 1/2).

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# Marquez has it in him: Doohan

The Honda bike has been primarily built for him, says the Australian great

S. DIPAK RAGAV

CHENNAI

Whenever the history of motorsports or the greatest athletes in the sport is discussed, the name of Mick Doohan would easily be one that will be mentioned without much protest.

The 53-year-old epitomised the famed Australian toughness, winning five consecutive titles (1994-98) in the 500cc motorcycling championship, the precursor to today's MotoGP. This, after he had a serious crash in 1992 where he injured his right leg seriously and at one point faced amputation.

The incident in 1992 happened during practice for the Dutch TT race when Doohan was leading the championship by 65 points with five wins and two second-place finishes and was forced to miss three rounds, losing the title by four points. The injury meant he could also not use his right ankle for braking and instead used a left-thumb operated rear brake.

On coming back from that injury Doohan said, "It was about physically getting myself back. By the end of the 1993 season, I still had issues with my right leg but the desire to win the championship kept me going. I knew if I could get myself physically



**Star power:** Mick Doohan, who won five consecutive 500cc motorcycling championships, seen with Arun Mammen, vice-chairman and Managing Director, MRF. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

fit I could be competitive."

Doohan is in the city with his son Jack, who has preferred four-wheelers and taking part in the MRF Challenge 2000 this weekend.

#### New season

The most exciting aspect of the new season of MotoGP is that the reigning five-time champion Marc Marquez will be joined by three-time champion Jorge Lorenzo at Honda, and the Australian feels that the mental strength of the riders will be the crucial factor.

"The Honda bike is primarily built for Marquez be-

cause he is the lead rider. The bike development has been heading in his direction. Lorenzo should adapt to the machine fairly well but it will come down to who's mentally the strongest.

"If Marc likes something and Lorenzo doesn't, it's going to start messing with your head. They both are coming off injuries. I am excited to see how it unfolds. Marc is a bit crazy and I don't think it will bother him. Lorenzo is calm and calculat-ed," said Doohan.

Doohan also feels Marquez could well become an

all-time great of the sport. "He is young enough, just going to turn 26. Rossi's gonna be 40 and he is still there. It's just about how many years to hang around to surpass that number (eight premier class titles held by Giacomo Agostini). Marquez has certainly got the desire and as long as he doesn't burn out, he has plenty of time left in him."

The motorcycling legend said India can have success at the world level with a strong national series, pointing to the examples of Japan and Malaysia which produce top riders.

# Chadwick lights up the day

Takes over at the top with her fourth victory

## MRF CHALLENGE

SPORTS BUREAU

CHENNAI

Jamie Chadwick, one of only two woman drivers on the grid, scored a fine win to move into the lead, just one point ahead of Max Defourmy, in the third and final round of the MRF Challenge at the MMRT here on Saturday. With three more races to be run on Sunday, UK's Chadwick, who has won four races in 12 starts, has 218 points to the Belgian's 217.

Chadwick, 20, starting Race 2 second on the reverse grid, had a brilliant start as she moved past pole-sitter Dylan Young of Australia and over the 20 laps built up a



**Special, really special!** Jamie Chadwick, centre, who finished ahead of Dylan Young, left, and Andreas Estner. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

sizeable lead for a deserving win. Young finished second, almost a second behind Chadwick, while German

Andreas Estner took the third spot.

#### Pasma pulls away

Earlier, in Race 1, Pasma, starting from pole, had a great start and surviving a strong challenge in the first lap, gradually pulled away to complete a comfortable win, his second in the championship.

#### The results:

#### MRF Challenge (F2000): Race 1 (20 laps):

1. Patrick Pasma (Finland) (30:42.140); 2. Michelangelo Amendola (Belgium) (30:47.192); 3. Jack Doo-han (Australia) (30:53.293).

#### Race 2 (20 laps):

1. Jamie Chadwick (UK) (30:51.643); 2. Dylan Young (Australia) (30:52.669); 3. Andreas Estner (Germany) (30:53.260).

#### MRF MMSC FMSCI INRC - For-

mula LGB 1300 (Race 1, Eight laps): 1. Tijil Rao (Momentum Motor Sports) (20:04.219); 2. Ashwin Datta (Momentum Motor Sports) (20:05.309); 3. K Suriya Varathan (M Sport) (20:06.090).

**Race 2 (10 laps):** 1. Ashwin Datta (Momentum Motor Sports) (19:50.799); 2. Karthik Krishna (Hasten Performance) (19:51.142); 3. K Suriya Varathan (M Sport) (19:51.332).

**Saloon Cars (Super Stock - Race 1, 10 laps):** 1. Rithvik Thomas (Race Concepts) (20:33.163); 2. Joel Joseph (Race Concepts) (20:39.841); 3. Prateek Benya (Race Concepts) (20:59.922).

**MRF F1600 (Race 1, 10 laps):** 1. Nayan Chatterjee (Mumbai) (16:47.925); 2. Sohil Shah (Bengaluru) (16:57.206); 3. Arya Singh (Kolkata) (16:57.199).

# Thumbs up for MRF

SPORTS REPORTER

CHENNAI

The ongoing MRF Challenge has come in for praise from Mick Doohan.

"I was in Dubai a few years ago and a number of the Australians I knew were driving in MRF Challenge. We had heard a lot of good things about it (MRF Challenge)."

"It was pretty easy for us to get here, and get

# India slips against Korea

Kazakhstan wins the competition

## FED CUP

SPORTS BUREAU

ASTANA (KAZAKHSTAN)

Ankita Raina played strong but India slipped to a 1-2 defeat to Korea in the match for the third place in the Fed Cup Asia Oceania group-1 women's tennis tournament here on Saturday.

After the Indians took the first set 6-4, Reid and Saville were 5-3 up in the second. Mager and Pellegrino broke back to make it 5-5. In the tie-breaker, Reid and Saville saved a match point at 5-6 but couldn't save another, at 7-8, as Reid netted his return.

#### The results: Singles: Semifinals:

#### Singles: Semifinals:

#### Doubles: Final:

#### Doubles: Final:

#### Reid & Luke Saville 6-4, 7-6(7)

####