



Bollywood director Hirani accused of sexual assault, denies charge

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Let people of Kerala take a decision on Sabarimala, says Rahul

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India must engage with the Taliban, says former Afghan President Karzai

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Australian Open, the year's first Grand Slam, gets under way today

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NEARBY



Two militants killed in J&K's Kulgam

Srinagar
Zeenat-ul-Islam, a top "commander" of the Al-Badr terror group, and another terrorist were killed in an encounter with security forces in Kulgum district of Jammu and Kashmir, the police said on Sunday. "The militants killed in the Katpora encounter have been identified as Zeenat-ul-Islam and Shakeel Dar. Both were involved in several terror crimes," a police official said.

NEWS ▶ PAGE 10

HC upholds law to retire 'compromised' RAW men

New Delhi
The Delhi High Court has upheld the constitutional validity of a provision in law that gives power to the Centre to voluntary retire Research and Analysis Wing officers whose identity is exposed or compromised.

DELHI METRO ▶ PAGE 1

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Congress to contest all 80 seats in U.P., but doors open for allies

Fight for Parliament is between us and BJP, says Ghulam Nabi Azad

OMAR RASHID
LUCKNOW

The Congress on Sunday announced that it was prepared to contest all 80 seats in Uttar Pradesh in the upcoming Lok Sabha elections. The decision comes a day after the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) and the Samajwadi Party (SP) announced an alliance carving up the seats between them.

However, Congress general secretary in-charge of U.P. Ghulam Nabi Azad said the party was willing to "accommodate other secular parties or individuals" if they were willing to join as part of an alliance, and would "embrace" other regional parties.

Addressing a press conference here after a meeting with State leaders, Mr. Azad said the party was open to take the support of other parties in its fight against the BJP.

National player
Stressing the position of the Congress as a key national player, he said, "The whole world knows that the fight for Parliament is one between the Congress and the BJP," and the contest between the two was not "personal" but a "fight of principles" and to keep India



Clear aim: Congress leaders Ghulam Nabi Azad and Raj Babbar speaking in Lucknow on Sunday. ■ RAJEEV BHATT

united. "Under the leadership of Rahul Gandhi, we will fight with full force based on the ideology of the Congress... We will fight strongly and defeat the BJP. We respect all those parties who will help us in this fight," said Mr. Azad.

He expressed confidence that the party would double its tally of 2009 when fighting alone it had secured over 20 seats in U.P.

The Congress was snubbed on Saturday as BSP chief Mayawati and SP president Akhilesh Yadav announced they would be contesting 38 seats each. The BSP chief went on to dismiss the party as being "similar"

to the BJP in its politics and thinking.

Responding to questions on the SP-BSP alliance, Mr. Azad said the Congress didn't break the alliance and though it wanted to walk with other parties to defeat the BJP, it "cannot force anyone [to join hands]."

Since the SP-BSP had "closed the chapter," the Congress would now continue the fight against the BJP, said Mr. Azad.

The Congress leader stressed that it was wrong to say that party leaders and workers were dismayed by the SP-BSP rejection. If any party can challenge the BJP at the national level, it is the

BJP will wipe out SP, BSP: Yogi

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
LUCKNOW

U.P. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Sunday said the alliance between the Samajwadi Party and Bahujan Samaj Party will have no impact on the State, and that the BJP will "effectively wipe them out". The tie-up denoted "caste mentality" and "anarchic elements", he said here.

Congress, he said.

"This is not a State fight. This is fight for Parliament, for Delhi," he emphasised.

As part of its campaign, the Congress has also reportedly planned 13 public meetings for Mr. Gandhi across the State in February.

Meanwhile, a day after his joint press conference with Ms. Mayawati, SP chief Akhilesh Yadav said that after the announcement of the alliance, not only the BJP and its entire organisation, but even the party cadre had lost courage.

"Demoralised and frustrated BJP leaders and workers are desperate to join the SP-BSP, he tweeted.

Justice Sikri turns down Centre's offer

Was offered Commonwealth panel post

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL
NEW DELHI

Justice A.K. Sikri, the Supreme Court judge whose vote in the Prime Minister-led high-power committee became decisive for the removal of Alok Verma as CBI Director, on Sunday turned down an offer from the government to nominate him to the London-based Commonwealth Secretariat Arbitral Tribunal (CSAT).

The government had made an "oral" offer to Justice Sikri in the first week of December last year to nominate him as president/member of the CSAT.

The judge, scheduled to



Court judgment, which had found his "overnight" divestment from office by the Central Vigilance Commission and the government wrong.

The removal of Mr. Verma led to a storm of public criticism. Following this, on Sunday, media reports appeared about Justice Sikri's nomination to the CSAT.

"The offer was made by the government orally in the first week of December 2018. Nothing more was heard about it. The judge [Justice Sikri] was given to

In a majority decision, despite objections raised by Opposition Leader Mallikarjun Kharge, the committee voted against Mr. Verma continuing as the CBI Director.

The decision came merely a day after Mr. Verma returned as CBI Director on the basis of a Supreme

Congress demands ouster of CVC

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Congress on Sunday demanded the immediate ouster of Central Vigilance Commissioner K.V. Chowdary, accusing him of working as a "vigilant slave" of the government to help hide facts concerning the contentious Rafale fighter jet deal.

Addressing a press conference at the AICC headquarters, Congress spokesperson Abhishek Manu Singhvi said the "CVC (Central Vigilance Commissioner) should be sacked or should tender his resignation". The "CVC must go," he said.

"The CVC has been acting like an ambassador, messenger of the government, and lobbying for Asthana (CBI Special Director Rakesh Asthana). The CVC has forgotten that he is supposed to do vigilance for public good, and not be a 'vigilant' puppet in the hands of political masters," he added.

Mr. Singhvi cited news reports on Mr. Chowdary's visit to sacked CBI director Alok Verma on October 6–17 days before he was removed unceremoniously by a midnight order of the government – on behalf of then CBI Special Director Rakesh Asthana.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 10

+ Floating kites



Lohri impact: A volunteer removing kites from the holy tank at the Golden Temple in Amritsar. Flying of kites is an important part of the Lohri festival, which was celebrated across north India on Sunday. ■ PTI

Tamil Nadu's biryani binge keeps cash registers ringing

Recording revenues of ₹5,500 crore per year, there's more space at the table, say established players

SANGEETHA KANDAVEL
CHENNAI

The growing appetite in Tamil Nadu for biryani has kept cash registers jingling across the State, with a fourfold increase in the number of restaurants serving the rice and meat (or vegetables) favourite.

According to analysts who track the industry, the organised biryani business in the State is pegged at ₹1,500 crore per year while the unorganised segment records a healthy ₹4,000 crore per year.

Currently, there are over 300 brands including well-known names – Anjappar, Buhari, Junior Kuppanna, Aasife Biryani, Dindigul Thalappakatti and Behroo – that comprise the organised segment. Players

in the organised space do an average business of ₹25 lakh per month which translates into ₹3 crore per annum per outlet. The cost of a serving of biryani at these restaurants ranges from a modest ₹180 for the vegetarian variant to ₹600 or more for the fully loaded non-vegetarian delicacy.

For every pocket

In the unorganised sector, costs range from as low as ₹50 to ₹120 per serving. Those operating in this category typically churn out around 10-15 kilos of biryani per day. (A kilo of biryani would serve 8-10 persons on an average). Restaurants in this space



ILLUSTRATION: DEEPAK HARICHANDAN
One mutton biryani please
Tiffin centre

Dilip Kumar, director-Marketing, Aasife Biryani Pvt Ltd, said, "This is one food item which makes you feel complete – it fills your stomach. It's cost effective too. You end up paying ₹170 for a vegetarian meal, if you add another ₹20 you can have a vegetarian biryani."

A market analyst said while the biryani sector has immense potential, the fact that the major players are family-run businesses is a major hurdle to expansion. "Decision making is a key issue. But things are slowly changing with the next generation coming into business," he said. "Even if there is a slight variation in taste, you will end up losing customers. It is also a highly labour-intensive business," he added.

PM uses Kartarpur to hit out at Congress

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Kartarpur Corridor is an effort to correct a wrong done in 1947, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Sunday, attacking the Congress regime for its inability to bring Kartarpur Sahib under Indian jurisdiction during Partition.

At a function at his resi-

dence to release a commemorative coin as part of the 350th birth anniversary celebrations of the 10th Sikh guru, Guru Gobind Singh, he said, "A mistake took place in August 1947. It [the corridor] is an atonement of the mistake. An important place of our guru was only a few kilometres away. But it could not be made part of India during

Partition] ... the corridor is an effort to reduce the damage."

Mr. Modi said now devotees did not have to look at the shrine in Pakistan using binoculars and they could visit the place without visa using the corridor. Guru Nanak passed away in Kartarpur in 1539 and the site is one of the most revered for the Sikhs.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 10

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The curious case of Amjad's encounter

A youth in his 20s died in an 'encounter' with a U.P. police team in 2007. Almost 12 years on, his 65-year-old mother continues to wage a lone battle against 11 policemen involved in the incident. **Hemani Bhandari** visits **Muzaffarnagar** to find out why Akhtari refuses to give up her unending 'fight for justice'

Clad in a black burqa covering her from head to toe, 65-year-old Akhtari takes tired steps towards the lawyer's chamber in Muzaffarnagar court. She doesn't remember the number of times she has visited the premises. It's been nearly 12 years, she says, recalling her painful journey which began when she lost her 25-year-old son, Amjad, in February 2007. The struggle only got tougher when she lost her husband, Khalid Khan, in 2011, she adds.

Amjad was killed in a police encounter in Muzaffarnagar's Ratanpuri and the incident presents a grim reality of a "manufactured and fake encounter", says Akhtari's lawyer Qazi Naim.

Early years
Amjad was born and brought up in Roorkee's Manglaur town. He received his education at a madrasah he attended till his teenage. His father tried to get him into his line of work, masonry, but Amjad had different plans. "He was different from the rest of us. He was jovial and every neighbour's darling," Akhtari recalls.

Around the age of 20 in the early 2000s, he moved to Saharanpur to live with his maternal uncle and aunt and became a truck driver to earn a living, which, his mother says, was "the worst decision of his life".

Over a year after he moved to his uncle's place, says Akhtari, during one of his visits back home, he told her that his "aunt was in a relationship with a policeman, constable Mir Hasan, who used to come home often and it did not look nice".

He allegedly told this to his uncle too, but the man "didn't take any action". The policeman, the family claimed, was posted in Saharanpur at that time.

Amjad allegedly told Ha-

san not to visit his uncle's home and end his relationship with his aunt. "I told him not to interfere in their family matter and not make a police officer his enemy but he did not listen," she says.

Criminal cases

Soon after that a series of criminal charges were levelled against Amjad without any evidence, adds Akhtari.

In March 2005, a person identified as Zuber was shot dead in Saharanpur's Mandi area and Amjad was named among the accused by the police on charges of murder and rioting. According to the police, Zuber was murdered by a gang of land grabbers for whom he was becoming a problem.

In April 2005, the police registered another FIR against Amjad on charges of attempt to murder. The complaint said that sub-inspector Pravin Kumar and a few other officers had received a tip-off that "Amjad, who was wanted in the Zuber murder case, was going towards Nawabganj". The police said they saw Amjad coming along with another man and asked him to stop. The duo allegedly fired at the police party after which Amjad managed to flee while the other man was held.

In May 2005, another FIR was registered against Amjad and two others wherein the police alleged that SI Kumar, constable Hasan and a few others were travelling in a police vehicle when they saw three persons coming on a motorcycle and asked them to stop "suspecting something amiss". The three allegedly fired at the police vehicle and were subsequently held. A case of attempt to murder and Arms Act was registered against the three, including Amjad.

In 2006, a city court acquitted Amjad in all three cases after finding the police



Fighting for justice: Akhtari holding the photograph of her son Amjad Khan, who was allegedly killed in a fake encounter 11 years ago, along with her family members at the Muzaffarnagar court in Uttar Pradesh. • R.V. MOORTHY

version unsubstantiated.'

A year later, in the early hours of February 3, 2007, Amjad was killed in an "encounter" with a police team including SI Kumar, constable Hasan, SI Iqbal Uzzama Khan and eight others, in Muzaffarnagar's Ratanpuri. Iqbal was then posted in the Anti-Extortion Cell, Kumar was Ratanpuri's Station Officer and Hasan was posted in the same police station.

The next day the headlines in the regional newspapers read "Uttaranchal ka shat Amjad mara gaya (Uttaranchal's notorious criminal Amjad shot dead)", says Akhtari, adding that he was tagged a criminal despite being acquitted in all the cases.

She recalls that Amjad had left his uncle and aunt's house and returned to Manglaur when cases started piling up against him.

The fateful night

On the night of February 1, Akhtari says, several policemen knocked on their door around 11 p.m. The family,

which was watching television after having dinner, was taken aback as were the neighbours who saw the policemen taking Amjad with them.

"They said they wanted to ask him some questions and would send him back the next day, but they killed him instead," the mother says.

On February 2, the family claims to have tried everything in its power to bring the son back. While the parents and other family members went to the Ratanpuri police station, some 90 km away from Manglaur, to look for the son, Amjad's uncle Muhammad Khan, the family claims, went to the District Magistrate's office and informed them that his nephew had been picked up by the police who may "try to implicate him in false cases or even kill him". The family was suggested to do so by a lawyer they had contacted at the time.

On February 3, around 7 a.m., Amjad's family was informed by the Manglaur pol-

ice that he had been killed in Ratanpuri in an encounter. The family rushed to Muzaffarnagar only to find his body with several bullet injuries.

The police registered an attempt to murder case leading to the encounter, similar to the narrative presented in May 2005. The police said that the team led by Kumar was patrolling when it received an information that three criminals were coming from Khatauli on a motorcycle.

The officers intercepted them at Rampur junction and asked them to stop but they fired at them. "In retaliation", police fired at them which led to the death of Amjad. The other two, the police said, managed to flee taking advantage of the dark night.

Endless wait

The family has been running from pillar to post since that day seeking justice for Amjad. A protest was organised on February 6, followed by endless court proceedings,

but the wait is still not over.

The family approached Muzaffarnagar court in November 2007 with their complaint alleging that Amjad was killed in a fake encounter. In March 2008, the court ordered that it will get the matter investigated.

Over the next few years, the court proceedings went on and witnesses were heard. Neighbours Zinda Hasan, Abdul Manan, Mohd. Wasi, Mohd. Rashid and Hussain Ahmed told the court that they saw the policemen taking Amjad from home.

Meanwhile, the police submitted their final report in the incident on May 30, 2007, stating that the two absconding persons could not be found and the investigation had been closed. The final report was signed by Inspector Ajay Chauhan, the second investigator in the case, who is now posted in Muzaffarnagar's Crime Branch.

When questioned about the case, he claims to have "faint memory" of the inci-

dent as he was posted out a few months later and could not keep track.

2018] has given me some hope," the mother says.

Lone battle

Akhtari has been fighting alone for the last eight years after her husband died of a heart attack. "The two of us always travelled together for all the proceedings in the case. He was more optimistic than me. He always used to say that we will get justice," she recalls.

Now Akhtari goes to the court with her other children or relatives. She has 10 children, including two daughters; all aged between 18 and 45. Most of her sons are working as masons and one of the two daughters is married.

"In the last 11 years, there has not been a single marriage in my family though five of my children are of marriageable age. We have spent ₹9-₹10 lakh on the case so far. I thought I will get my daughter married with the compensation money but they slapped another case on us," says Akhtari.

But she is relentless. "I want justice for my son... only then will I be at peace," she says. "So many times my children have told me stop but I won't."

Even as Akhtari waits for justice continues, one of the accused policemen, Kumar, passed away three years ago after a prolonged fight with cancer.

Today Akhtari's most favourite memory of Amjad is from January 26, 2007, a few days before he was killed. "He had organised Republic Day celebrations a nearby local school run by one of our neighbours. I remember he bought sweets for all the children and taught them a song 'Ye Hindustan hamara hai'."

She is looking forward to the Republic Day celebrations this year too, hoping for some positive news from the hearing a day before.

BJP picks Kataria as Leader of Opposition in Rajasthan

The senior legislator also selected as leader of the BJP legislature party



conduct the first meeting of the newly elected Assembly, is an eight-time MLA and was Home Minister in the former Vasundhara Raje government.

Mr. Kataria was first elected as MLA in 1977, then in 1980. He has won all Assembly elections since 1993, remaining a member of the House.

Governor Kalyan Singh will administer the oath of office on Monday.

Mr. Rathore has earlier served as the Parliamentary Affairs Minister in the State.

Union HRD Minister and party's poll in-charge in the State Prakash Javadekar, national spokesperson Sudhanshu Trivedi, party's State president Madan Lal

Saini were present at the meeting.

Mr. Kataria said he would fulfil the responsibility to best of his capacity and raise all public-related issues in the House.

"We will be a constructive opposition. We will oppose in the Assembly not for only the sake of opposing, but to keep the government alert," Mr. Rathore said.

The Assembly session is scheduled to begin on January 15.

BJP's national general secretary Arun Singh said the defeat in the recently held Assembly elections in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh was the party's collective responsibility and not that of one person.

posal for the post, the party's national general secretary Arun Singh told reporters after the meeting.

He said Mr. Rathore was chosen as the deputy leader by Mr. Kataria.

Mr. Kataria, who will also be the pro-tem Speaker to

conduct the first meeting of the newly elected Assembly, is an eight-time MLA and was Home Minister in the former Vasundhara Raje government.

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Wife demands CBI probe into ex-Mayor's murder

To observe a day-long fast at DM office

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

JAIPUR

Senior legislator Gulab Chand Kataria was on Sunday unanimously chosen as the Leader of the Opposition in the Rajasthan Assembly by the BJP legislature party during a meeting at the party office here.

The 74-year-old was also selected as leader of the BJP legislature party while seven-time MLA Rajendra Rathore was chosen as his deputy.

Former Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje proposed the name of Mr. Kataria as the leader of the BJP legislature party, which was seconded by the party's MLAs unanimously.

There was only one pro-

Ujjain civil surgeon removed over 'kiss' clip

Notice issued to the doctor: Collector

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

UJJAIN (M.P.)

Ujjain district hospital civil surgeon has landed in a soup after a video purportedly showing him getting intimate with a woman, believed to be a nurse, in an operation theatre went viral on social media.

The 49-year-old civil surgeon has been removed from his post for "behaviour unbecoming of an officer", District Collector Shashank Misra said on Sunday.

The undated clip purportedly shows the civil surgeon kissing a woman in an operation theatre.

"I have removed him from the post of civil surgeon of the district hospital," the Dis-

trict Collector said, adding that he has also issued a notice seeking the senior doctor's explanation.

The civil surgeon has been replaced by Dr P.N. Verma, he said.

When asked about the next course of action, the Collector said he was awaiting the reply of the CS who has been on leave since the last two days.

When contacted, District Chief Medical and Health Officer (DCMHO) Mohan Malviya said the Divisional Commissioner is expected to order an inquiry into the incident. Dr Malviya refused comment when asked if the clip was shot in the operation theatre.

Admissions will be made based on the merit position of the student's BITSAT 2019 score.

2 killed, 34 injured in bus-truck collision

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

SITAMARHI/MUZAFFARPUR

Two persons were killed and 34 injured after a tourist bus carrying them collided head-on with a truck in Muzaffarpur district on Saturday, the police said.

The incident happened on Sitamarhi-Muzaffarpur road (NH-77) near Bhanapatti village under the jurisdiction of Runnisaidpur police station when the bus was travelling from Uttarakhand to Gaya via Muzaffarpur, the police said.

The passengers had offered prayers at Janki temple in Sitamarhi, the Deputy Superintendent of Police Kumar Veer Dhrendra said. All the passengers had come from Uttarakhand, the DSP said.

All the 34 injured were taken to Sri Krishna Medical College and Hospital (SKMCH) in Muzaffarpur, Muzaffarpur District Magistrate Mohammad Sohail said.

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4 WEST

THE HINDU
MONDAY, JANUARY 14, 2019

Person to pin Shiv Sena down not yet born: Uddhav

Responds to Amit Shah saying BJP will thrash former allies if no pre-poll tie-up formed

ALOK DESHPANDE

MUMBAI

Days after Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) president Amit Shah said that his party will thrash its former allies if a pre-poll alliance is not formed ahead of the Lok Sabha elections, Shiv Sena chief Uddhav Thackeray on Sunday said that one who could trouble his party was yet to be born.

Addressing the conference of Sthanika Lokadikar Samiti Mahasangh, a Sena-affiliated body, at Worli, Mr. Thackeray said, "People boast a lot these days without doing any work and nobody is bothered about the country."

Referring to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's speech at BJP national convention at New Delhi where he claimed

PM like Ghajini's Aamir, forgets promises'

ALOK DESHPANDE

MUMBAI

Leader of Opposition in the State Council and Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) leader Dhananjay Munde on Sunday compared Prime Minister Narendra Modi with a character played by actor

Aamir Khan in the film *Ghajini*, who loses his memory.

Mr. Munde, addressing a party rally as part of its Parivar Yatra, in Palghar said that Mr. Modi too has forgotten the promises he made in 2014 campaign.

that the Opposition wants a *majboor sarkar* (helpless government) and the country a *majboot sarkar*, (powerful government), Mr. Thackeray said he wouldn't mind if the government is *majboor* but

prefers a *majboot* country.

"Once you lose the confidence of people, you are bound to lose any battle. When people lose their confidence in you (BJP), they will pull you down from

power," he said.

On the recent 10% quota Bill, Mr. Thackeray demanded that the 'no income tax' slab should also be raised to ₹8 lakh, from the ₹2.5 lakh at present.

Unlike the BJP, he said, his party has raised the Ram temple issue before the polls to "expose" those who use the issue as a poll plank.

"Tell us how the Congress is hindering construction. The Congress was shown its place in 2014. It could not even get Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha," he said.

He also asked the BJP how it could build the Ram temple when it has allies like Nitish Kumar of the JD (U) and Ram Vilas Paswan of the LJP opposing it.

His mortal remains were brought in a special plane from Jammu to the National War Memorial in Pune on Saturday evening, where senior military personnel paid tributes and laid ceremonial wreaths. Earlier on Sunday morning, an emotionally-charged crowd of mourners escorted the funeral cortège from Nair's residence in Khadakwasla to the Vaikuntha crematorium.

His last rites were per-

Family and friends bid tearful adieu to Major Nair

Was killed in IED explosion in Jammu and Kashmir

SHOUMOJIT BANERJEE

PUNE



Final farewell: A massive crowd gathers for the last rites of Major Shashidharan V. Nair, in Pune on Sunday. ■ MANDAR TANNU

Delegation from Goa meets Amit Shah for resuming mining in State

PRAKASH KAMAT

PANAJI

A delegation of Goa Mining People's Front (GMPF), a collective of mining ban-affected workers, truck and barge operators, on Sunday met BJP national president Amit Shah in New Delhi to press for resumption of mining in Goa.

The ban by the Supreme Court was announced in February last year.

In a statement issued here after the meeting, the Front said that Mr. Shah had said that a "solution to the impasse shall be brought about soon by the

Central Government".

South Goa MP Narendra Savoikar who was also present at the meeting, said that the delay in finding a resolution to the mining crisis, was because the Centre was considering all legal aspects.

"Our president has assured every body, particularly mining dependents, that the government has come to a conclusion and will come out with a mechanism soon too," Mr. Savoikar said.

The Front has been agitating for quite some time as a large number of people

have been badly affected.

Last week, members of the Front laid siege to the private residence of Goa BJP president Vinay Tendulkar and demanded that all three Goa BJP MPs resign if they cannot help resolve the mining crisis.

The GMPF, led by BJP's Putu Gaonkar, had expected that the NDA government at the Centre would come out with an ordinance or an amendment to the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act in the recently-concluded winter session of the Parliament so mining activities can be resumed in the State.

Ajit Sonba Nake (24), a worker from Ratnagiri-Kolhapur succumbed to injuries at the State-run Goa Medical College Hospital on Sunday. Two other workers of a total of nine, who were injured in a blast at the fac-

Cement factory blast: death due to negligence

One of 9 injured workers died

PRAKASH KAMAT

PANAJI

The Pernem police in north Goa on Sunday added Section 304(A) (causing death by negligence) to the case against owners of a cement factory and its management after the death of a critically injured worker on Sunday.

Ajit Sonba Nake (24), a worker from Ratnagiri-Kolhapur succumbed to injuries at the State-run Goa Medical College Hospital on Sunday. Two other workers of a total of nine, who were injured in a blast at the fac-

tory on Saturday in Tuem industrial estate in Pernem, are still in critical condition, the police said. They are under observation at the GMC hospital.

After a boiler blast in the cement factory on Saturday afternoon, the local police booked Rajendra Joshi and management of the factory shed on Saturday and charged them with Sections 337 (causing hurt by act endangering life or personal safety of others) and 338 (negligently endangering life).

Former Goa Ranji player collapses at local match, dies

PRAKASH KAMAT

PANAJI

A 46-year-old former Goa Ranji cricket player Rajesh Ghodke collapsed on a cricket ground in Margao in south Goa on Sunday while playing a local tournament and died soon after.

Ghodke had scored 30 runs and was at the non-striker's end when he collapsed, said Apoorv Bhembre, secretary of the Margao Cricket Club, the organisers of the tournament. He was rushed to the nearby ESIC Hospital and then to a private health facility in Margao, where he was de-



Rajesh Ghodke

clared dead.

Ghodke, who has represented the State in several one-day matches in the 1990s, had no history of medical issues, Mr. Bhembre said.

Farmers attack sugar factories

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

MUMBAI

Angry over delay in payments, farmers attacked offices of sugar factories in Satara, Sangli and Kolhapur and set some ablaze, the police said on Sunday.

Protesters torched the office of Krishna Sugar Factory at Karad in Satara on Friday, a police official said. Important documents, computers and furniture were destroyed. Offences were registered against unidentified persons by Karad rural police.

Another office in Sangli was set on fire on Saturday morning, an official at Islampur police station said. Computers and several documents were kept there.

Protesters also vandalised and tried to torch the office of Kranti Sugar Factory at Walwa on Saturday and later fled, the officials said. Offences were registered against unidentified persons under IPC sections for mischief and house-trespass, he said. No arrest was made so far.

In another incident, members of a local farmers' organisation gathered near the Gurudatt Sugar Factory's office at Shirol on Saturday afternoon, seeking fair and remunerative price for their produce, a police official said. They broke the office lock and vandalised furniture, computers and stationery.

The Shirol police registered offences against 65 people, of whom 15 were identified and booked under IPC sections for rioting, unlawful assembly, house-trespass and mischief. No arrest was made, the official said, but a probe was underway.

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IN BRIEF



Red sanders logs seized, T.N. youth arrested

CHITTOOR
The Chittoor police on Sunday seized red sanders logs and a car at a forest location near Nendragunta cross, 30 km from here, and arrested Praveen Kumar, a youth from Arakkonam in Tamil Nadu. The value of the logs is said to be about ₹1.5 crore in the international market.

90 kg sandalwood seized in Kerala

IDUKKI
Marayur forest officials seized 90 kg of sandalwood and arrested three persons on Sunday. The arrested were Kasaragod residents Ibrahim Mazood, 29, Bathil Ashik M., 28 and Muhammed Ali, 38. Marayur Range Officer Job M. Neryampambil said that the arrest was made around 2 a.m. following a tip-off.

Elephant attacks handler in Karnataka camp

MYSURU
A 11 year-old elephant at the Dubare camp in Kodagu district went berserk and injured its handler on Sunday. The victim, Naveen, 31, assisted the mahout.

Assistant Conservator of Forests Chinappa said Karthik attacked Naveen while returning from a waterhole. The immediate cause for the elephant's behaviour is not clear.

Girl mauled by stray dogs dies in Telangana

HYDERABAD
A three-year-old girl died and another baby girl was injured after stray dogs attacked them in Asifabad district of Telangana, the police said on Sunday. The incident took place on Friday. Both the girls were rushed to a private hospital at Kagaznagar where one of them succumbed to the injuries on Saturday, police said. PTI

Cong. sees plot against Karnataka govt.

Camping of BJP legislators in New Delhi sets tongues wagging; three Congress MLAs now in Mumbai



Conspiracy theory: Minister D.K. Shivakumar said in Bengaluru that there was a "serious conspiracy" to woo their MLAs.

STAFF REPORTER
BENGALURU
As Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) legislators are in New Delhi for a party meeting in preparation for the Lok Sabha elections, speculation is rife that the party is trying to woo MLAs from the ruling combine in order to topple the Karnataka government. The reported presence of a few disgruntled Congress MLAs, who were incommunicado to their party leaders, in the national capital on Sunday further fuelled the speculation.

Water Resources Minister D.K. Shivakumar told reporters in Bengaluru that there was a "serious conspiracy" to lure their MLAs and that party leaders were aware of what was being offered to MLAs to switch sides.

Govt. will be stable'
"The MLAs have also told us of the overtures being made to them. Attempts at horse-trading are real. The BJP leaders have said there will be a change after Sankranti. But the government will be stable," he said.

He added that three MLAs who had been to Delhi had returned and were now in Mumbai, indicating a numbers tussle was on between the ruling combine and the BJP. Asked about the identity of the MLAs, he said he would not disclose whether they were Congress MLAs or BJP MLAs.

However, sources close to BJP State president B.S. Yeddyurappa said nearly 20 MLAs were ready to resign and switch camps, and a crisis was likely to be precipitated in the coming week.

BJP sources also said that

this time – in a third attempt since May 2018 to form the government – the party's Central leadership was involved and would take the final call on the matter, keeping the upcoming Lok Sabha election in mind.

Meanwhile, an audio clip of Congress MLA Ganesh Hukkeri speaking to a journalist about defecting to the BJP led to further speculation that the government's fate was uncertain. However, several Ministers from the ruling combine, including

Will work to strengthen coalition, says Gowda

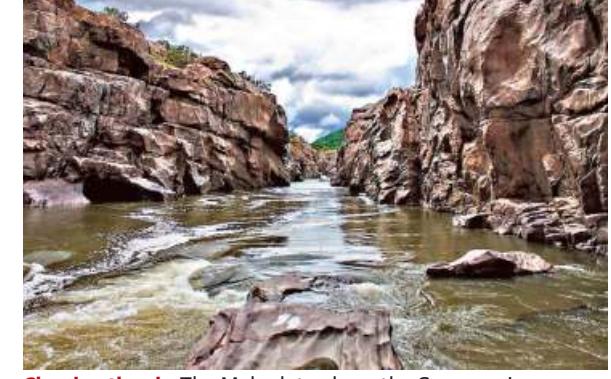
SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
HASSAN

Former Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda on Sunday said he would not let the coalition government collapse and would make all efforts to strengthen it.

He was speaking at a party workers' meeting organised in his constituency, Hassan, on Sunday. The Janata Dal (Secular) national

president said he had discussed with former Chief Minister and coalition coordination committee chairman Siddaramaiah the steps to be taken to strengthen the ties between the Congress and the JD(S).

He praised his son and Chief Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy for the loan waiver scheme which was no small challenge.



Clearing the air: The Mekedatu along the Cauvery river near Kanakapura of Ramanagaram district in Karnataka.

It is not a nod for Mekedatu: Centre

'Clearance only for project report'

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Centre has informed the Supreme Court that the conditional clearance given to Karnataka for preparing a detailed project report (DPR) on Mekedatu balancing reservoir-cum-drinking water project is subject to the amicable resolution of connected inter-State matters.

"The conditional clearance is only for preparing the detailed project report and it no way conveys clearance by the Central government or the Central Water Commission (CWC) for construction of the project," the Ministry of Water Resources said in an affidavit.

The Centre submitted that the conditional clearance for preparing the DPR was as per guidelines of submission, appraisal and acceptance of irrigation and multi-purpose project-2017. The technical parameters have not been finalised yet.

It said the nod of the Cauvery Water Management Authority would be a "prerequisite" for consideration of the DPR for techno-economic approval by the advisory committee of the ministry. The government said it was fully conscious of the

interests of farmers of the Cauvery delta and would not permit any activity detrimental to their livelihood.

Water for Tamil Nadu
It argued that even the conditional clearance was based on the premise that the reservoir would help Karnataka fulfill its obligation to release Cauvery water to Tamil Nadu.

Tamil Nadu had submitted that the Mekedatu project in its present form violated the decisions of the tribunal and apex court for equitable apportionment of Cauvery water.

"The proposed construction of any new dam by the State of Karnataka through its instrumentalities would alter the adjudication to the distribution of 10 daily/monthly releases to Tamil Nadu. This amounts to interference with the adjudication, which is in contempt of the Supreme Court judgment of February 16, 2018," the petition said.

Karnataka had, however, termed Tamil Nadu's grievances against the unilateral approval granted by the CWC to prepare the DPR for the project as "false, frivolous and vexatious."

Row as Pinarayi skips event on menstruation

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

KOCHI
A controversy erupted after Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on Sunday backed out of a programme organised here to "celebrate menstruation" in a bid to end the stigma associated with the biological process.

The two-day programme 'Aarp Aarthavam' (Hurray menses!) was organised by activist groups in response to protests over a Supreme

Court verdict permitting the entry of women of all ages into the Sabarimala temple.

The organisers had informed the media that Mr. Vijayan would participate in the programme.

Citing Mr. Vijayan's schedule prepared by his office, the sources said the Chief Minister had four back-to-back programmes in Kochi on Sunday, but the 'Aarp Aarthavam' event was not on the list.

All set for 'Makaravilakku' today

Ayyappa devotees converge on Sabarimala for annual festival

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
SABARIMALA

The sacred grove ('poonkavanom') of Ayyappa at Sabarimala is all set to celebrate the annual 'Makaravilakku' festival on Monday.

Devotees from different parts of the country have started camping at the 'Sanndhanam' and on the surrounding hillsides to worship the 'Makaravilakku deeparadhana' to be per-

formed at Ponnambalamedu on Monday.

The pilgrim turnout on Sunday was moderate compared to the huge crowd on the eve of the previous festival.

The procession carrying the 'Thiruvabharanam' (sacred jewellery of the deity) will reach the 'Sanndhanam' by 6.20 p.m. on Monday.

The deity will be decorat-

ed with it prior to the 'deeparadhana' to be performed between 6.30 p.m. and 6.40 p.m.

The celestial star 'Makara', known as 'Makarajyoti', will appear on the eastern horizon of the 'Sanndhanam' by this time.

The 'Makaravilakku deeparadhana' at Ponnambalamedu, a remote hill facing the temple, will be performed in the next few minutes.

Gritty sport



Rural spectacle: Buffaloes running through slush during the Kambala at Bangra Kulur in Mangalore on Sunday. Kambala is an annual event conducted in the Dakshina Kannada district of Karnataka during the Sankaranti festival. ■ H.S. MANJUNATH

Survey spots 3 new bird visitors

Number of birds to Upper Kuttanad in Kerala declines

STAFF REPORTER
ALAPPUZHA

A waterbird survey conducted in the Upper Kuttanad region has recorded 16,767 birds of 47 continental and local species. The survey, conducted as part of the annual Asian Waterbird Census, has spotted three new species – Greater flamingo, Grey-headed lapwing, and Blue-cheeked bee-eater.

However, compared to the previous years, the number of winged visitors to the region has declined drastically. In 2017, the survey recorded 28,198 birds whereas 41,576 were spotted last year. According to B. Sreekumar of the Kottayam Nature Society and Harikumar Maniar, the birder who led the survey, the August deluge and subsequent delay in preparing paddy fields for the Puncha crop season could



Greater flamingo seen at the Upper Kuttanad region.

be the reason behind the sharp fall.

15 places
This year, the survey was conducted in 15 places.

It was jointly organised by the Social Forestry wing of the Forest Department, Kottayam Nature Society, and Alappuzha Natural History Society. A total of 72 birders from across the State took part.

The Asian Waterbird Cen-

sus is part of the global International Waterbird Census carried out each January as a voluntary activity. The survey would help understand the changes to wetland systems, change in migratory pattern of birds, and impact of climate change. The information would be used to promote the designation and management of protected areas, Ramsar Sites, Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas, and so on.

Punters lure Vizag youth to cockfights

Police say they are circulating videos through messaging Apps

HARISH GILAI
VISAKHAPATNAM

As Sankranti festival kicks off on Monday, police have increased their vigil suspecting the increase in banned rooster fights and betting associated with it at several parts of the city. The blood-sport, which was confined to rural areas, for the last couple of years, is now spreading among youngsters in the city.

According to police sources, several punters have been luring youngsters to the banned sport. The punters have been recording videos of the roosters fight and sharing them in WhatsApp groups to lure the youth. Sources also said that the punters are also informing about the breed of roosters and their capacity to attack and other aspects to entice the youth. The videos of

rooster fights are being circulated through various messaging apps, inviting people to take part in the sport on the Sankranti day. It is learnt that many youth are being attracted towards the banned sport after watching those videos. Among the youth, there are B.Tech graduates, management stu-

dents, degree and other students.

"Taking part in rooster fight betting has become the latest fad. Moreover, such videos look very attractive to the youth. The idea is to lure them to the venue and then entice them to place bets," said a senior police officer from the city.

Assistant Commissioner of Police (City Task Force) I. Chittibabu said that the police are prepared to prevent cockfights and they have sent surveillance teams to monitor certain places where the event is held.

During the last Sankranti, several punters reportedly organised rooster fighting at Arilova, under the patronage of a lawmaker. The police could not do anything due to pressure from the higher-ups.

A senior police officer said that the sport was organised not only in Arilova, but also in other parts.

These areas have now come under scanner, with gangs trying to organise rooster fights. Though there may not be big amounts being placed for bets, organising such game was a crime, he said.

"We assumed it was for the State Highways, and plazas on the national highway need an official order from the National Highways Authority of India, which we do not have," officials said. Some drivers engaged in heated arguments with toll operators and the police, even as others either sounded their horns or waited for almost two hours.

Though the Telangana government on Saturday waived toll gate tax from January 13 to 16 for people going home for Sankranti, it failed at the implementation level. Till around Sunday noon, motorists had been taxed, with vehicles seen stranded for long stretches near toll plazas.

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Confusion over waiver of toll tax

STAFF REPORTER
NALGONDA

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IN BRIEF



Nitish offers prayers on 352nd Prakash Parv

PATNA
Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar on Sunday offered prayers at Takht Sri Harmandir Patna Sahib on the occasion of 352nd Prakash Parv – birth anniversary of 10th Sikh Guru, Guru Govind Singh. "We had organised 350th Prakash Parv of 10th Sikh Guru on a grand scale two years ago," he said. PTI

Two killed in road accident in Rajasthan

JAIPUR
Two persons were killed and seven injured when a car in which they were travelling rammed a stationary truck in Rajasthan's Nagaur on Sunday, the police said. The victims were on their way towards Pushkar when the accident happened. The injured are undergoing treatment at the district hospital, the police added. PTI

Man posing as cop to extort money arrested

MUZAFFARNAGAR
A man who allegedly extorted money from truckers by posing as a checking officer was arrested in Uttar Pradesh's Shamli district, the police said on Sunday. Shiv Kumar would stop truckers and demand money from them. He was nabbed from Kandhla town on January 12, said Circle Officer Rajesh Kumar Tiwari. PTI

Two drug smugglers held in Jammu and Kashmir

JAMMU
Two alleged narcotic smugglers were arrested in Jammu and Kashmir's Udhampur, the police said on Sunday. Sameer Ahmad from Doda and Mohammad Farooq of Reasi were arrested after the recovery of 205 kg of poppy straw during checking on January 12, they said. PTI

Surjewala's entry throws Jind by-election wide open

The Cong, BJP, JJP enter the fray with their most-popular faces; voting on January 28

ASHOK KUMAR
JIND

Though the campaign for the high-stakes Jind by-election in Haryana, necessitated due to the death of Indian National Lok Dal (INLD) MLA Hari Chand Middha in August last, gathered pace on Sunday with the candidates holding closed-door parleys to make strategies and going for door-to-door campaign, the contest seems to be wide open with caste equations going awry following the entry of Congress' communications in-charge and Kaithal MLA Randeep Singh Surjewala.

What was earlier tipped to be a direct fight between the Bharatiya Janata Party and the newly formed Janayak Janata Party (JJP), with the latter having a clear edge, and the Congress being at distant number four, could now be a photo finish with a close contest between the three parties.

Hoping to romp home with the overwhelming support of the Jats – the Jind Assembly constituency has around 1.7 lakh electorate with around 30% Jats, the JJP – formed after the split in INLD in December last – has certainly been harmed with the candidature of Mr. Surjewala, also a Jat.

Another Jat candidate INLD's Umed Redhu is also likely to cause a dent in the Jat vote further reducing the share of the Congress and the JJP.

Though trying to reach out to the urban non-Jat voters beyond its traditional Jat constituency by promising better infrastructure and development in the sleepy town, the JJP is unlikely to find speedy acceptance, especially with the organisa-



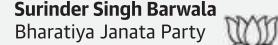
JJP leader Digvijay Singh Chautala, contesting as an independent candidate, during his campaign for the Jind by-election. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Looking back

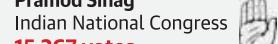
ASSEMBLY ELECTION RESULT FOR JIND, 2014

Hari Chand Middha
Indian National Lok Dal

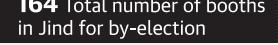
31,631 votes

Surinder Singh Barwala
Bharatiya Janata Party

29,374 votes

Pramod Sihag
Indian National Congress

15,267 votes



164 Total number of booths in Jind for by-election

SOURCE: CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICE WEBSITE, HARYANA GOVERNMENT

ASSEMBLY ELECTION RESULT FOR JIND, 2009

Hari Chand Middha
Indian National Lok Dal

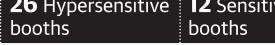
34,057 votes

Manga Ram Gupta
Indian National Congress

26,195 votes

Swami Raghvanand
Bharatiya Janata Party

507 votes



26 Hypersensitive booths

12 Sensitive booths

tional set-up still in its infancy.

BJP's masterstroke

Political analysts have questioned the choice of candidate by the ruling BJP, which has fielded Krishan Middha, a "Punjabi", contending that a "baniya" could have been a better bet appealing to both the communities alike.

Mr. Middha is the son of late MLA Hari Chand Middha.

The party's prospects are also marred by dissidents, not happy with the party of offering ticket to turncoat Mr. Middha, who quit INLD to

join the saffron party a few months ago, over old-time party workers. The "baniya" vote, around 7% of the total electorate, is now likely to drift towards the Congress, harming the interests of the party in a keenly-fought poll.

Though Mr. Surjewala, a prominent figure in Haryana politics, has the tallest political stature among the 30-odd candidates in the fray, with the withdrawal of nominations fixed for January 14, he might find it difficult to shrug off the tag of being a "non-serious" candidate since he already represents Kaithal in the Haryana As-

sembly. Besides, the party's traditional support base, Mr. Surjewala's campaign managers pin hopes on his own persona. Said to be a "reluctant" candidate, Mr. Surjewala, who seems to have played a big political gamble by agreeing to the contest the election, could be harmed by factionalism in the party.

More than the party, Mr. Surjewala has high stakes for himself with the result likely to impact his chief ministerial ambitions.

Claiming to have a "Modi" like wave in the State with the strongest support base at Jind, JJP, which was launched amid huge fanfare in the political capital of the State, will be hugely impacted by the result of the first electoral contest and for the ruling BJP, riding high on the recent clean sweep in Mayor elections in five Municipal Corporations, the win could

set the tempo for the upcoming Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabha elections.

Voting is scheduled to be held on January 28 and the results will be out on January 31.

Security beefed up in U.P. after veterinarian's murder

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUZAFFARNAGAR

Security has been tightened in Morna here following the murder of a doctor, the police said on Sunday. The 40-year-old veterinary doctor, Satish Kumar, was found murdered in Morna on January 12, they said.

Kumar who was missing since January 11 was killed over a monetary dispute, the police said, adding that the accused, Kamil, has been arrested.

Angry villagers blocked the Bhipa-Morna road demanding action against the killers.

Police personnel in large numbers have been deployed in the area to maintain law and order, they said.

Six killed in bus-truck collision

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
BANDA

At least six persons were killed and 40 injured on Sunday in a collision between a roadways bus and a truck in Fatehpur district, the police said.

The incident took place in Kalyanpur. The bus was carrying pilgrims from Kanpur to Allahabad, they said.

"The incident took place on Sunday morning on National Highway 2 when the roadways bus carrying the pilgrims collided with a truck after its tyre exploded," said Bindhi Circle Officer Abhishek Tiwari.

Five people died on the spot while another succumbed in a hospital, he added.

WEATHER WATCH

RAINFALL, TEMPERATURE & AIR QUALITY IN SELECT METROS YESTERDAY



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 18.30 HRS)

Forecast for Monday: No weather warning

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	... 28.6	9.6	
Ahmedabad	... 28.4	10.6	
Aizawl	... 27.6	10.6	
Allahabad	... 23.5	12.0	
Bengaluru	... 30.3	14.3	
Bhopal	... 24.8	11.0	
Bhubaneswar	... 29.2	12.4	
Chandigarh	... 20.6	9.2	
Chennai	... 29.0	8.9	
Coimbatore	... 29.9	18.4	
Dehradun	... 23.1	9.1	
Gangtok	... 15.1	5.1	
Goa	... 32.2	20.0	
Guwahati	... 26.0	8.9	
Hubbali	... 29.0	17.0	
Hyderabad	... 29.6	17.5	
Imphal	... 23.2	4.9	
Jaipur	... 22.8	10.0	
Kochi	... 31.4	23.4	
Kohima	... 16.4	5.0	
Kolkata	... 26.5	13.1	
Kozhikode	... 33.4	23.0	
Kumroo	... 32.5	18.6	
Lucknow	... 23.4	7.2	
Madurai	... 32.2	21.2	
Mangaluru	... 30.3	20.4	
Mumbai	... 29.4	15.5	
New Delhi	... 23.5	8.5	
Patna	... 24.6	7.6	
Port Blair	... 30.2	25.6	
Puducherry	... 29.6	19.0	
Pune	... 31.3	10.2	
Raipur	... 27.6	14.8	
Ranchi	... 25.2	9.5	
Shillong	... 17.2	5.9	
Shimla	... 9.4	0.2	
Srinagar	... 8.1	0.4	
Tiruvanamalai	... 33.3	21.2	
Tiruchi	... 30.7	19.8	
Vijayawada	... 29.1	19.8	
Visakhapatnam	... 28.0	19.5	

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

Yesterday

CITIES	SO ₂	NO _x	CO	PM _{2.5}	PM ₁₀	CODE
Ahmedabad	75	.96	.25	235	■■■■■
Bengaluru	5	.27	160	134
Chennai	25	.20	.70	141	■■■■■
Delhi	29	..	.88	461	427	■■■■■
Hyderabad	7	.44	.24	162	■■■■■
Kolkata	20	.74	.48	431	■■■■■
Lucknow	34	.67	.48	207	■■■■■
Mumbai	39	.50	.100	154	207	■■■■■
Pune	65	.12	.50	192	144	■■■■■
Visakhapatnam	19	.69	.31	254	180	■■■■■

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

SO₂: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

NO_x: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

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

PM_{2.5} & PM₁₀: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease



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IN BRIEF



IMD to give advance forecast on storms

NEW DELHI
Scientists at the India Meteorological Department are working to create models to forecast thunderstorms six to 12 hours in advance, officials said. Early warnings will give States more time to respond, they said. PTI

Murder accused found hanging in police lock-up

KATNI
A 24-year-old man facing murder charges was found hanging in the lock-up of a police station here in Madhya Pradesh. Police claimed it was a suicide case. PTI

NTCA lens on Rajasthan for missing tigers

NEW DELHI
The National Tiger Conservation Authority has sought a report from the Rajasthan government on a complaint by a wildlife activist, Ajay Dubey, regarding missing tigers from its Ranthambore reserve. PTI

Bus from Maharashtra goes up in flames in T.N.

DINDIGUL
At least 40 passengers and two crew members of a private tourist bus from Maharashtra had a providential escape when the bus in which they were travelling caught fire near Vedasandur. No one was injured in the incident.

Sri Lankan navy arrests 20 fishermen, 1 missing

RAMANATHAPURAM
The Sri Lankan navy arrested 20 fishermen – nine from Pudukkottai district and 11 from Rameswaram – along with their three trawlers on charges of trespassing and poaching in the island nation's waters.

Train hits killed 49 elephants in 3 years

Environment Ministry provides numbers on wild animals killed in road and train accidents

SHIV SAHAY SINGH
KOLKATA

In 2016, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) released 'Eco-friendly measures to mitigate impacts of linear infrastructure', an advisory document for mitigating human-animal conflicts. Despite this advisory, and many others issued by conservationists and organisations, deaths of wild animals in road and railway accidents have continued unabated.

The MoEFCC told the Rajya Sabha, in response to a question by MP T. Subbarami Reddy, that 49 elephants were killed in Railway accidents between 2016-18 (nine in 2015-16, 21 in 2016-17 and 19 in 2017-18). In the same 3-year period, three tigers were killed in road accidents while eight tigers were mowed down by trains.

Three lions died in a train

Fatal crossings

West Bengal and Assam, both put together have accounted for 37 out of the 49 deaths of elephants on train tracks across the country

ELEPHANT DEATHS IN TRAIN ACCIDENTS

9 2015-16 21 2016-17 19 2017-18

TIGER/LION DEATHS

Tiger Lion

Year	Road accidents	Train accidents	Tiger	Lion
2015-16	2	3	0	0
2016-17	1	2	1	0
2017-18	0	3	3	0



Danger zone: A wild elephant entering railway track near Walayar in Kerala. ■ K. MUSTAFAH

accident in the Amerli district of Gujarat in December 2018. Prior to this, 10 lions died in railway and road accidents between 2016-18.

Most deaths

West Bengal and Assam together accounted for 37 out of the 49 deaths of elephants on train tracks across the country. While the number

of elephant casualties on railway tracks in West Bengal has fallen from five in 2015-16 to three in 2016-17 to two in 2017-18, the number of elephants dying in railway accidents in Assam have increased in the same period – the State recorded three elephant deaths by accidents in 2015-16, ten in 2016-17 and 14 in 2017-18.

According to the Ministry, several notifications have been issued, including one on December 28, 2016, to Chief Wildlife Wardens, to implement precautionary measures for minimising elephant deaths caused by train accidents.

Jose Louise, a conservationist with the Wildlife Trust of India (WTI), which

has developed a mobile app for monitoring road kills, said that when the infrastructure was developed, "it was never thought it could lead to the death of so many wild animals."

Mr. Louise said data generated from the app can also provide answers on regulating traffic and cutting wildlife casualties in the future.

Rajkumar Hirani accused of sexual assault

Bollywood's famous director terms the allegations by *Sanju* team member as a 'false, malicious story'

DEBORAH CORNELIOUS
MUMBAI



Bollywood's biggest #MeToo scandal broke on Sunday afternoon with director Rajkumar Hirani being accused of sexual assault in a report in *HuffPost India*. The complainant is a woman who worked on *Sanju*, the Sanjay Dutt biopic, as a post-production crew member between March-September 2018.

The accusations came to light when the survivor recounted her abuse in an email, written in November,

Iy shocked when these allegations were brought to my notice about two months back. I had suggested immediately that it is essential to take this matter to any committee or any legal body. The complainant has chosen to go to the media instead. I want to very strongly state that this is a false, malicious and mischievous story being spread with the sole intention of destroying my reputation."

For over a month, the talk in Bollywood circles suggested that Mr. Hirani's alleged

misconduct would surface soon. Two days ago, it was reported that Mr. Hirani's name would be dropped from the posters of the upcoming *Ek Ladki Ko Dekha Toh Aisa Laga*. The poster of the Sonam Kapoor-starrer originally credited both Vidhu Chopra Films and Rajkumar Hirani.

The 56-year-old filmmaker

has delivered some of

Bollywood's biggest hits, including the two 'Munna Bhai'

films, 3 *Idiots*, and 2018's highest grossing *Sanju*,

which was a box office hit.

to *Sanju* co-producer Vidhu Vinod Chopra. Mr. Hirani has already employed the services of advocate Anand Desai to respond to the accusations.

In a public statement, Mr. Hirani said, "I was complete-

Milky way



All white: Snow-laden roads near the Jammu-Srinagar national highway at Patnitop, about 115 km from Jammu on Sunday. Hundreds of stranded vehicles were allowed to move towards Kashmir on Sunday, a day after snowfall disrupted traffic. ■ PTI

Minor delivers baby in tribal school hostel

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
BHUBANESWAR

A minor student of a State-run tribal residential school in Odisha's Kandhamal has given birth to a baby girl in her hostel.

Six employees of the hostel were 'disengaged', Kandhamal District Welfare Officer (DWO) Charulata Mallick said on Sunday.

The Seva Ashram High School at Daringbadi in Kandhamal district is run by the SC/ST development department of Odisha. The student and her new born were on Sunday admitted to the Phulbani sub-divisional hospital. Doctors said their condition was normal.

Staff shown the door
District Collector D. Brunda said two matrons, two cook-cum-attendants, a lady supervisor and an auxiliary nurse midwife of the institute were disengaged from service for dereliction of duty.

CMYK

Kolkata's iconic meat supplier shuts shop

Unusual problem hints at change in city's historically inclusive diversity

SUVODIT BAGCHI
KOLKATA



Agamani Dhar, the owner, with the last turkey sold.

Manager Joy Ghosh looks on. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

manager, also a family member, explained, "An unusual problem started over the last year. Hindu workers refused to touch the beef and Muslims the pork. This was never a problem over the last century."

The problem turned acute as Mr. Ghosh took ill

last October. "The old workers, who used to process the raw meat, were retiring, and the new workers refused to touch the meat," he said. Ms. Dhar admitted that she was "not adept" in handling the shop during the absence of her uncle, Mr. Ghosh.

That, however, offers little solace to Arup Chatterjee, a retired management consultant who was introduced to Kalman by his late father. An emotional Mr. Chatterjee, a connoisseur of cold cuts, said, "During Christmas and New Year there used to be a 100-metre-long queue outside the shop. [It is] foolhardy to shut a shop like that for some manageable management problem."

Kalman would supply to elite members-only clubs and celebrities in the city. They, too, are upset. Actor and film director Anjan Datta was quoted as saying:

"The variety of Kalman's meat also tells a story – a story of the city's inclusive

character [where] no one's really an untouchable."

NGO worker Sonam Basu and engineer N. C. Thomas were also "saddened" when they visited the shop on its last day.

So was Nikhilchandra Lodh, the shop's oldest worker, attached with Kalman since 1972. "It could have survived..." Mr. Lodh said, without elaborating.

Kalman, perhaps the smallest shop on Mirza Ghalib Street (the erstwhile Free School Street) off Park Street, was bought from Kalman Gohari's family by Ms. Dhar's father, Bishnupada Dhar, the shop's accountant, in 1969.

Realising that the 'magic wand' – the beef selling licence paper obtained by Gohari nearly a century back – was still with them, Ms. Dhar said that they are not "shutting completely."

She added, "We will get processed beef only on basis of orders on phone in small amounts."

TIKI RAJWI

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

India could have put an astronaut in space in 2015 had the original plan for the human spaceflight programme worked out, former ISRO chairman G. Madhavan Nair has said.

Mr. Madhavan Nair, who headed the space agency from 2003 to 2009, attributed the delay to political factors and the changed priorities of the subsequent ISRO management.

"But it's never too late. ISRO now has a strong chairman in K. Sivan. The human spaceflight mission will be a turning point in the Indian space programme," he told *The Hindu* on Friday, responding to ISRO's formal announcement that it plans to put three Indians in space in

December 2021.

According to Madhavan Nair, it was in 2005 that ISRO decided that it was time to think beyond the grand vision of Dr. Vikram Sarabhai.

"Dr. Sarabhai wanted India to achieve self-reliance in satellite building, launch vehicle

No concrete result even a month after Meghalaya tragedy

Water not yet fully drained: officials

RAHUL KARMAKAR
GUWAHATI

Even after a month since 15 miners got trapped in a flooded rat-hole coalmine at Ksan in Meghalaya's East Jaintia Hills district, no headway has been made in draining the water from the mine.

Rescue operations had commenced about 25 days ago to bring back the miners from the 380 ft deep mine

Status quo

"There has been no significant change or receding of (water) level in spite of several lakh of litres pumped out," the district's Deputy Commissioner Frederick M. Doph said.

On Saturday, an Indian Air Force AN-32 aircraft flew in two teams with 700 kg of underwater scanners and associated equipment to Guwahati airport from where they were driven to the site.

While a team from National Geophysical Research Institute (NGRI) was flown in from Hyderabad, another from Planets Technologies was brought from Chennai.

"The Indian Navy had been using a remotely operated vehicle (ROV) for underwater scanning meant for larger water bodies. The hunt for a smaller ROV for easier manoeuvring ended in the specialised Chennai firm," Aditya N. Prasad, who had filed a PIL in the Supreme Court for urgent steps to rescue the miners, told *The Hindu*. Mr. Prasad had helped mobilise the team as well as liaise with

NGT asks State govt. to check illegal mining

SHILLONG
A month after 15 miners were trapped in a coal mine, search operations for which is still underway, a three-member committee of the National Green Tribunal (NGT) has asked the Meghalaya Police to investigate into nearly 1,200 cases of illegal quarrying across the State. The green tribunal had imposed a blanket ban on coal mining and transportation in Meghalaya in 2014, citing unscientific methods and absence of safety measures.

the Roorkee-based National Institute of Hydrology for assisting in the rescue operations.

The Chennai firm's ROV is expected to follow the inputs provided by the NGRI radar and go underwater into the tunnels to scan for air pockets and life.

Officials in Meghalaya said the NGRI team with ground penetrating radar would try to map the Ksan mine and pinpoint the horizontal tunnels branching out from its base while Mr. Kumar, using a topographical map, would ascertain the flow and source of water.

Local residents said almost all the 60,000 mines in the area, interconnected by tunnels, were filled with water. "It is an ocean down there, not easy to drain out," Brian Kharpan Day, an environmentalist, said.

Nair rues delay in human spaceflight plan

Former ISRO chief attributes delay to political factors and changed priorities



G. Madhavan Nair headed ISRO from 2003 to 2009.

cle technology and, more importantly, ensure that the common man benefited from these technologies. We took a review in 2005. The question was, what next?" recalls Mr. Nair.

Natural choice

The human spaceflight programme was a natural choice as a target for the future, he said.

"Human access to space had become very important for various reasons. One, ISRO had improved in terms of launch vehicle technology.

Second, if we are to send humans to the Moon and Mars, we have to make a beginning," he said.

In 2008, ISRO prepared a project report and submitted it to Space Commission. The same year, a small team

was formed at the Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC) to study various aspects of spaceflight and the technologies that such a venture called for. It was headed by S. Unnikrishnan Nair, who was appointed project director, Human Spaceflight Programme (HSP). The team consisted of 10 to 12 people.

Green light

"In 2009, the Planning Commission gave the green light for the programme.

"In 2009, the plan was to have the mission in six years. So by 2015, we would have been flying in earth orbit. But unfortunately due to various political factors and probably, the attitude of the subsequent management in ISRO it was put in cold storage," he said.

पिंपरी-चिंचवड महानगरपालिका, पिंपरी-४९१ ०९८
मध्यवर्ती



Sharing, and not caring

The SP-BSP tie-up poses a challenge to the BJP, but does little for pre-poll opposition unity

Sometimes, it is impossible to make new friends without making new enemies. In reaching an early agreement on seat-sharing in Uttar Pradesh for this year's Lok Sabha election, the Samajwadi Party and the Bahujan Samaj Party have thrown a serious challenge to the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party in a State that could well determine which political formation forms the next Central government. In the process, however, they may have alienated the Congress, which, given its pan-Indian footprint, can be the only national-level force in an emerging anti-BJP coalition. The two biggest parties in U.P.'s opposition space have equally carved out 76 of the 80 seats between themselves, leaving four to the Congress and the Rashtriya Lok Dal, which has a support base in the western region of the State. Whether the seat sharing is final or just a bargaining tactic is difficult to say. But for now, the Congress has been pushed into a forlorn corner in India's most populous State. The party may have to strike out on its own in sheer desperation at being denied a reasonable number of seats. It is doubtful, or at least by no means certain, whether it will be content with contesting in only a few seats to prevent a split in the anti-BJP vote in the others. It will be difficult for a party in revival mode in other parts of the Hindi heartland to give up U.P. without putting up a serious fight. As for the SP and BSP, it will be odd for them to be locked in a fight with the Congress in the State, while pushing for a Congress-led alternative at the national level.

The Congress does enjoy additional support in a Lok Sabha election; it demonstrated this in 2009, winning a surprise 21 seats in U.P. However, the SP and the BSP have probably calculated they are in a good space following the BJP's poor showing in three Lok Sabha by-polls, one of them in Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's political backyard, Gorakhpur. They may well also be banking on the history of strategic voting in the State, which leaves little room for a third player. For all the talk of beating back the challenge of the BJP, regional parties know it is easier to do business with a weakened Congress than with a resurgent one. If the Congress is kept out of the alliance, then any alternative to the BJP will have to emerge from a post-poll coalition of disparate parties. This will hand a campaign point for Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who is already projecting the choice in 2019 as that between a strong government and a motley post-poll coalition united by no more than a shared aversion for the BJP. The strategy of the SP and the BSP and some other regional players to defeat the BJP without making the Congress win is high-risk, and tactically difficult to implement on the ground.

Change in Congo

A contentious election may lead to the country's first transfer of power via the ballot

After last month's general election, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DR Congo) is anxiously awaiting the first ever transfer of power via the ballot since gaining independence in 1960. President Joseph Kabila, who had already deferred the polls by two years, postponed them again by a week days before it was scheduled in December. He cited the Ebola outbreak in some provinces and the destruction of electronic voting machines in a fire in the capital Kinshasa as reasons for the latest delay. But Mr. Kabila's critics dismissed these excuses as coming from a President in denial of his impending defeat after 17 years in power. Their suspicions appeared to be justified, as prominent opposition leaders were barred from the contest by partisan courts and the election commission. Meanwhile, the UN has voiced concerns over the quality of voting machines and the deployment of the state machinery to obstruct opposition campaigns, adding to the sense of uncertainty. Soon after polling closed on December 30, rival camps began to pronounce victory for their own sides. When the election commission last week announced Felix Tshisekedi, leader of the Union for Democracy and Social Progress as the winner, it predictably created a controversy. Mr. Kabila's candidate, former Interior Minister Emmanuel Shadary, was expected to romp home. In the event, Mr. Shadary, who faces accusations of human rights abuses, was ranked third. The outcome triggered intense speculation that Mr. Kabila had cut a deal to back Mr. Tshisekedi, son of a deceased opposition leader. The candidate who came in second, Martin Fayulu, a political outsider, has challenged the results.

DR Congo's Catholic church, which runs an independent poll observation mission, has questioned the official result and has even threatened to legally challenge it. It is but natural that DR Congo's vibrant civil society groups should expect the judiciary to assert its independence, as did the court in Kenya following that country's disputed 2017 elections. There are real fears that without genuine attempts to uphold the rule of law, the central African nation could slip into protracted political uncertainty and social unrest. The U.S. has cautioned Mr. Kabila against attempting to doctor the popular mandate. But with an eye on the country's lucrative mineral wealth, which is needed to power electric cars and the robotics revolution, there are limits to the pressure Western nations will want to exert on Kinshasa in the months ahead. The role of Mr. Kabila, who is just 47 years old, in the coming days will be important to watch. He has emphasised that by stepping down, he is merely respecting the constitutional mandate. The intent behind that assertion will be tested in the ensuing months.

A way out of the morass

The U.S.'s plan to pull out of Afghanistan is an appropriate time to re-examine the idea of enabling its neutrality



C.R. GHAREKHANI &
HAMID ANSARI

In an article published in *The Hindu* (Editorial page, "Another approach to Afghanistan", December 24, 2003), we had suggested that the only way out of the morass in Afghanistan would be to re-place Afghanistan in its traditional mode of neutrality. For that, two things were essential. The Afghans themselves must declare unequivocally that they would follow strict neutrality in their relations with external powers, and the outside powers must commit themselves to respect Afghanistan's neutrality. In other words, external powers must subscribe to a multilateral declaration not to interfere in the internal affairs of Afghanistan together with an obligation on Afghanistan not to seek outside intervention in its internal situation.

We further put forward the idea that the agreement on the Neutrality of Laos, concluded in 1962, could provide a model for the neutralisation of Afghanistan. The present might be an appropriate time to revisit that proposal.

U.S. President Donald Trump has announced his decision to reduce American troop strength in Afghanistan, 14,000 at present, by half. Though Mr. Trump has not laid down a deadline for this reduction, it is safe to assume that he will make this happen well in time before the next U.S. presidential election in 2020.

This development has ener-

gised the principal stakeholders in Afghanistan to make calculated efforts to place themselves in as favourable a position as possible in an Afghanistan post-American withdrawal. India should also be thinking of what steps it should take to protect its interests in that situation.

Engage with the Taliban

One thing that should already have been done and must be done is to engage in dialogue with the Taliban. There is no doubt that the Taliban will be a major player in the politics of Afghanistan in the coming months and years. They already control more than 50% of the country and are getting stronger and bolder by the day. They are also engaged in direct talks with China, Russia, the Central Asian states and others. The Americans, represented by former diplomat Zalmay Khalilzad, have begun sustained dialogue with the Taliban. The Taliban have refused to talk to the Kabul government so far, but as and when the Americans pull out, as they are justified in doing for reasons of their own national interest, they might agree to engage with the Ashraf Ghani government. In any future scenario, the Taliban are guaranteed to play an important, perhaps even a decisive role in the governing structures of the country.

New Delhi has so far refrained from establishing formal contacts with the Taliban out of sensitivity for the Kabul government not wanting to talk directly to the Taliban as long as the Taliban refuse to acknowledge its legitimacy. However, India must look after its own interests. Will a Taliban-dominated government in Kabul necessarily pose a serious security threat to us? While we are in no



position to prevent such an eventuality, we would have alienated the Taliban by refusing to talk to them during the present phase. Even Iran, a Shia regime, has established official dialogue with the Taliban, a staunchly Sunni movement. It would not be difficult for our agencies to establish contacts that would facilitate initiating an official dialogue with Taliban; if needed, Iran could help in this even if it might displease the Americans. After all, the Americans have not always been sensitive to our concerns, in Afghanistan or elsewhere and Mr. Trump has publicly shown unawareness of our substantial development assistance to it.

A regional compact

The international community ought to, at the same time, think of how to establish a mechanism which might offer a reasonable opportunity to the Afghan people to live in peace, free from external interference. And perhaps the only way in which this could be done is to promote a regional compact among all the neighbouring countries as well as relevant external powers, and with the endorsement of the UN Security Council, to commit themselves not to interfere in Afghanistan's internal affairs.

fairs. The most important country in this regard is Pakistan. Pakistan is highly suspicious, perhaps without any basis, of India's role in Afghanistan. A multilateral pact, with India subscribing to it, ought to allay, to some extent at least, Pakistan's apprehensions. India will need to talk to China about cooperating in Afghanistan; Chinese President Xi Jinping and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi already agreed in Wuhan, in April 2018, on working on joint projects there.

Pakistan should have no objection to formally agreeing to Afghanistan's neutrality. There is the most relevant precedent of the Bilateral Agreement on the Principles of Mutual Relations, in particular on Non-interference and Non-intervention, signed in Geneva in 1988 between Pakistan and Afghanistan. In that agreement, the parties undertook, inter alia, to respect the right of the other side to determine its political, social and culture system without interference in any form; to refrain from overthrowing or changing the political system of the other side; to ensure that its territory was not used to violate the sovereignty, etc of the other side, to prevent within its territory the training, etc of mercenaries from whatever origin for the purpose of hostile activities against the other side.

As a document on non-interference, it could hardly be improved upon. Pakistan probably would agree to a document with Afghanistan in whose governance its protégé, the Taliban, will play an important role, which would broadly be similar to the one it had concluded with an Afghan regime which it did not approve of.

The Bonn Agreement of 2001,

which made Hamid Karzai the interim chief of Afghan government, contains a request to the United Nations and the international community to 'guarantee' non-interference in the internal affairs of Afghanistan, a request not acted upon so far.

Some concerns

A regional pact on non-interference and non-intervention ought to be welcomed by all the regional states. Russia has reason to worry about a lack of stability in Afghanistan because of its concerns regarding a spread of radicalism as well as the drug menace. China has even stronger concerns, given the situation in its western-most region. The U.S. might have apprehensions about China entrenching itself in strategically important Afghanistan, but there is little it can do about it; a regional agreement on non-interference might give the U.S. at least some comfort.

It is early days to conclude whether the situation in Afghanistan has entered its end game. In any case, it would be prudent to assume that the U.S. will definitely leave Afghanistan in the next two years, likely to be followed by other western countries. No other country will offer to put boots on the ground, nor should they; certainly not India. The only alternative is to think of some arrangement along the lines we have suggested. May be, there are other ideas; we would welcome them.

Chinmaya R. Gharekhani, a former Indian Ambassador to the United Nations, was also a Special Envoy for West Asia as a UN Under Secretary General. Hamid Ansari was the Vice-President of India (2007-17), a former Indian Ambassador to Afghanistan and a Permanent Representative to the UN

Basic income works and works well

India has the technological capacity, the financial resources, and the need for a simple, transparent basic income scheme



GUY STANDING

In 2010-2013, I was principal designer of three basic income pilots in West Delhi and Madhya Pradesh, in which over 6,000 men, women and children were provided with modest basic incomes, paid in cash, monthly, without conditions. The money was not much, coming to about a third of subsistence. But it was paid individually, with men and women receiving equal amounts and with children receiving half as much, paid to the mother or surrogate mother. The pilots involved the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) and financial assistance from UNICEF and the UNDP.

The outcomes exceeded expectations, partly because everybody in the community, and not just select people, received their own individual transfer. Nutrition improved, sanitation improved, health and health care improved, school attendance and performance improved, women's status and well-being improved, the position of the disabled and vulnerable groups improved by more than others. And the amount and quality of work improved.

Critics said it would be a waste of money, but they were proved

wrong. Above all, the basic incomes improved the community spirit and were emancipatory. Those who do not trust people wish to retain paternalistic policies despite decades of evidence that they are woefully inefficient, ineffective, inequitable and open to ridiculously extensive corruption. The tendency of elites to want to have common people grateful to their discretionary benevolence has blocked sensible economic reform.

As commentators know, in the 2017 Economic Report tabled by the government there is a chapter on how a basic income could be rolled out across India, and is affordable. Its main author, former Chief Economic Adviser Arvind Subramanian, and others such as Professor Pranab Bardhan have proposed ways of paying for it – primarily by rolling back existing wasteful, distortionary, and mostly regressive subsidies. This

should not be an issue to divide the left and right in politics, and it would be wonderful if the main political parties and personalities could come together on it. That is too much to hope. But in this wonderful country, now is a moment of transformative potential.

A ripe idea

The international debate on basic income has advanced considerably in the past five years. Experiments have been launched in countries of different levels of per capita income, which include Ca-



nada, Finland, Kenya, Namibia, the Netherlands, Spain and the U.S., with plans being drawn up in England, Scotland, South Korea and elsewhere. India could take the lead. It has the technological capacity, the financial resources and, above all, the need for a simple, transparent scheme to liberate the energies of the masses now mired in economic insecurity, deprivation and degradation.

However, as I wrote after the pilots in Madhya Pradesh were completed, planning the phased implementation of basic income will be a serious but manageable challenge. It will require goodwill, integrity, knowledge and humility about what will be inevitable mistakes. As we found, if properly planned, it is possible to introduce a comprehensive scheme even in rural or urban low-income communities, without too much cost.

But it is essential to obtain local cooperation and awareness at the outset, and the backing of key local institutions.

It is strongly recommended that if the government is to go ahead, it should phase in the scheme gradually,

rolling it out from low-income to

higher-income communities, after local officials have been trained and prepared.

It is also recommended that the authorities should not select particular types of individuals and give it only to them. It is tempting to say it should go only to women, low-income farmers, or vulnerable social groups. That would be wrong. It would involve expensive and corruptible procedures, and risk evoking resentment in those arbitrarily excluded, who would probably be equally in need, perhaps more so. The same applies to means-testing targeting. That would be a terrible mistake, for the many reasons reiterated in a recent book on basic income.

What administrators often do not appreciate enough is that money is fungible. If money is given only to women, men will demand a share; some women will give in, some will resist; it will be divisive. We found in the pilots that if men and women all have an equal individual amount, it promotes better and more equal gender relations.

Moreover, giving to all in the community fosters solidarity within households and the wider community, apart from enabling multiplier effects in the local economy.

Farm loan waivers

The contrast is bound to be made with the Congress's promise of farm loan waivers. No doubt this policy would lessen the burden on a hard-pressed social group, and lessen rural poverty, but it is a po-

pulist measure. It will be popular, but will not alter structures and is bad economics. Suppose the principle were generalised. If one type of loan could be declared non-repayable, why not others? Unless one can show that a debt is odious or illegal per se, it would be a dangerous precedent to declare that one type of debt and not others need not be repaid.

In the long term, financial institutions would be less likely to extend loans to small-scale farmers. Is that the aim? If the loans were made on fair rules, it would be better to enable the debtors to pay them back less onerously. That is why a basic income would be a more equitable and economically rational way of addressing what is undoubtedly an unfolding rural tragedy.

The beauty of moving towards a modest basic income would be that all groups would gain. That would not preclude special additional support for those with special needs, nor be any threat to a progressive welfare state in the longterm. It would merely be an anchor of a 21st century income distribution system. Will the politicians show the will to implement it? We need to see.

Guy Standing is Professorial Research Associate, SOAS University of London, and is co-founder and honorary co-president of BIEN, the Basic Income Earth Network. His most recent book is *Basic Income: And How We Can Make It Happen'*

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Letters emailed to letters@thehindu.co.in must carry the full postal address and the full name or the name with initials.

Opposition moves

Excluding the Congress from the Samajwadi Party-Bahujan Samaj Party combine's alliance in Uttar Pradesh has been the subject of lively media debate soon after the announcement by the respective party leaders, Akhilesh Yadav and Mayawati. The consensus in these debates has revolved around a landslide win awaiting the SP-BSP alliance. Media discourse, however, seems to have overlooked one important determinant of the poll outcome, namely, the Congress's role as a vote divider. Although the Congress hardly created a ripple in the State in the 2014 Lok Sabha as well the 2017 Assembly elections, 2019 is unlikely to turn out to be another dismal event for the party.

Elections in Madhya Pradesh, K.R. KRISHNA IYER, Palakkad, Kerala

Prashant, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh seem to have heralded the resurgence of the national party. The formation of an alliance-led government in Karnataka has boosted the morale of its cadres. Party president Rahul Gandhi has also been on a propaganda juggernaut. In U.P., the party is sure to have a respectable share of votes in most constituencies particularly those with pockets of minorities. The division of votes will definitely hurt the gathbandhan to the advantage of the BJP. K.R. KRISHNA IYER, Palakkad, Kerala

■ The Prime Minister's line at the BJP's national council meet criticising the alliance politics of the Opposition says much about the political realities. The newfound friendship between arch

rivals, the SP and the BSP, in Uttar Pradesh has left the Congress cold. The alliance in West Bengal is in the doldrums. An enthused TRS chief and Telangana Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhar Rao is leaving no stone unturned to form a federal front against both the BJP and the Congress. One does not know what the situation will be like in Kerala and in Andhra Pradesh. The big question many want to know is who will head the coalition of Opposition parties and what their agenda for the nation is other than defeating common enemy, Narendra Modi and his party, the BJP. Except DMK chief M.K. Stalin, all other non-Congress Opposition parties are tight-lipped about their prime ministerial candidate. The nation is bound to pay heavy price if there is an unstable and weak

government formed by parties lacking cohesion.

N. SADHASIVA REDDY, Bengaluru

Be transparent

In a democracy, people have a right to know what is happening in the country. The strange happenings at late Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Jayalalithaa's estate in the Nilgiris must be probed. Blacking out a media report and making the threat of legal action are odd reactions by the State government (Tamil Nadu, "Those behind Kodanad video will be exposed" and "Kodanad case: Oppn. demands probe, Edappadi's resignation", January 13). The way in which it is rushing to gag things leads to suspicion that there is more to the incidents than what meets the eye.

R.M. MANOHARAN, Chennai

Rat hole traps

It is obvious that there is a lack of major employment opportunities in the northeast States ("Ground Zero", "Meghalaya's rat hole traps", January 12). How else can one explain why young men are forced to look at the very risky option of extracting coal from rat hole mines? What the entire northeast region is blessed with in abundance is natural beauty. Perhaps ways should be explored to have sustainable and eco-friendly models so that tourism becomes a major revenue earner in the region.

RADHIKA KUMAR, Bengaluru

Fading Urdu?

Urdu has played a major role in the success story of many an Indian film. What is unfortunate now is how film producers are now biased against this otherwise

sweet language which enables succinct dialogues, a flow to parlance and apt proverbs to embellish a film script. A key factor responsible for the diminution of Urdu is official apathy. There needs to be a way to

Taking back control? Not really.

Less than 80 days before Britain is due to leave the EU, the future remains as uncertain as ever



VIDYA RAM



"Britain PM Theresa May is resting her hopes on persuading MPs across the political spectrum to have a last-minute change of heart to avoid exiting the EU without a deal." A public gathering, 'Think Anew, Act Anew: a Convention on Brexit and a People's Vote', in London on January 11. ■ AP

Last week, over a million people tuned in to watch *Brexit: The Uncivil War*, a long-awaited television drama on the successful Leave campaign in Britain. In the film, Benedict Cumberbatch stars as Dominic Cummings, the controversial political strategist who masterminded the successful strategy, including the micro-targeted political advertising campaign that has come under scrutiny in recent months. The drama, which attempts to capture the perspectives of both sides, has still unsurprisingly divided public opinion, with many believing it presents too sympathetic a picture of the other. This reflects the highly charged nature of the debate. On the show, even Mr. Cummings, giving evidence to an inquiry, displays his frustration with where things are headed. "It's gone crap," he declares, launching a rambling attack on "flawed people" and the need for a system reboot, which has failed to happen. It's unlikely that even the most ardent supporter of Brexit would disagree with that analysis – less than 80 days before Britain is due to leave the European Union, the future remains as uncertain as ever.

Two significant votes

On Tuesday, MPs are due to vote on Prime Minister Theresa May's controversial Brexit plan, and despite the decks being stacked clearly against her, Mr. May has plodded on, insisting her deal is the right one for Britain. The willingness of MPs from across the political spectrum to vote against her became abundantly clear over the past week, as they came together to defeat the government on two significant, if not game-changing, Brexit votes. First, MPs, including 20 from the Conservative Party, voted in favour of an amendment to the Finance Bill to limit the government's ability to levy taxes if Britain were to crash out without a deal. Second, the (Conservative) Speaker of the House, John Bercow, controversially allowed MPs to pass an amend-

ment that gives the government three days to come up with a Plan B in the event that Ms. May's proposal is shot down on Tuesday. The amendment caused outrage among Brexiteers and the right-wing tabloids. The Prime Minister said she was "surprised" that Mr. Bercow allowed MPs to vote on the amendment and called on him to explain himself to Parliament. The anger over this highlights the extent to which British politics has descended to the farcical: the amendment merely requires the government to swiftly offer an alternative if, as expected, there is a negative vote on the withdrawal deal. This is what a sensible government would have done in any case in order to avoid a cliff edge.

Garnering support

What has become increasingly clear is that a cliff edge is precisely what the government is counting on to garner support for its deal. With little sign from Europe of any substantial change in the deal, Ms. May is resting her hopes on persuading MPs across the political spectrum to have a last-minute change of heart to avoid exiting without a deal, which, observers agree, would severely damage the

economy and create short-term logistical chaos, including at Britain's main ports and road networks. Labour has accused the government, which delayed the vote from December after it became clear that it was set to lose, of running down the clock in an attempt to force the vote through by focussing on wavering MPs, dissatisfied with the Prime Minister's deal but more anxious of a no-deal exit. Other methods have been deployed to garner support too. *BuzzFeed*, the news website, reported that a government source warned that Conservative MPs who sided with Labour and opposition parties could have their whip withdrawn and be deselected as party candidates at the next election. The veteran Eurosceptic, John Redwood, received a knighthood in the New Year honours list, which led to suspicions that the honours route was being used by Ms. May to drum up support. There is now even talk that the Prime Minister has reached out with more workers' and environmental protections to trade unions, traditionally supporters and allies of Labour, to test whether these concessions will encourage them – and Labour politicians – to back the deal.

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SINGLE FILE

For whom the TikToks

Indian companies are unable to hold their own against the Chinese in the content-centric app market

G. SAMPATH

 Chinese apps are making huge inroads in the Indian market. According to the tech news portal FactorDaily, two of the top 10 mobile apps in India in December 2017 were Chinese-owned; this increased to five as of December 2018. And leading the charge is TikTok, an addictive viral video app owned by ByteDance, a \$75 billion cash-rich behemoth.

The app, which allows users to make short videos of up to 60 seconds, is a rage among teenagers not just in India but around the world. TikTok seems to have cracked the code of combining stickiness, sociality, and user-generated content better than any of the Silicon Valley giants. It is already being spoken of as something that could render YouTube irrelevant, thanks to the algorithmic superiority of its video-making/video-sharing interface. Some believe it could make Instagram obsolete, given its more aggressive indulgence of users' craving for selfie-powered mega-celebrity. In terms of the audio-visual genre, TikTok is unabashedly meme-driven. As for its USP, it has positioned itself as the first port of call for adolescent self-expression, knowing well that if this demographic cares for anything at all, it is fun-filled, creative self-expression meant to impress one's peer group, and the more problematic the manner of self-expression, the more likely they are to embrace it.

A user who downloads the app and opens it for the first time is instantly greeted by an endless avalanche of snazzy videos that, if you are not careful, can turn your brain to mush before you can say 'TikTok'. The videos, by and large, fall into three categories: comedic skits, lip-synch songs or dialogues, and teens dancing suggestively to popular music. Many videos feature just one person, and are evidently shot in the user's home, often the bedroom. The teen-heavy user base either doesn't understand privacy or doesn't care for it.

TikTok has drawn flak in many countries, including Australia, France, Hong Kong and the U.S., for its laxity in privacy protection and enforcement of minimum age norms. Parents have flagged the danger of paedophiles contacting minors on the platform. In India, PMK leader S. Ramadoss recently called for a ban on TikTok on the grounds that the app was causing "cultural degradation" by allowing youngsters to upload "suggestive sexual dance choreography".

There is little doubt that TikTok raises the burden of parental anxiety, especially at a time when their wards are least likely to be appreciative of parental supervision. But the app's mass popularity among India's youth is something that begs for serious analysis, not just among sociologists and cultural critics, but also the ubiquitous advocates of Digital India who must answer how, soon after the abject surrender in the smartphone sector, even in the content-centric app market, Indian companies are unable to hold their own against the Chinese onslaught.

The writer is Social Affairs Editor, The Hindu

CM YK

Still others within government circles have attempted to persuade their colleagues that not backing Ms. May's deal would thwart Brexit entirely and, as one person warned, even trigger a surge in the far right.

Preparations for a no-deal exit

The government is also making preparations to face the worst. It is attempting to strike a balance between demonstrating its preparedness for a no-deal exit, while making clear the many grievous repercussions of such an exit. For instance, the Health Secretary made a throwaway remark about becoming the world's biggest buyer of fridges as Britain stockpiles several weeks' supply of crucial medicines. There was also a recent test run of a contingency traffic plan to avoid congestions at the port of Dover, which went off well enough for the government to claim success but involved few enough vehicles for the test to be dismissed by the Road Haulage Association. *The Times* reported that thousands of civil servants are being asked to abandon their day jobs this week and prepare for a no deal.

The government can count on one thing, however: for all its struggles to garner support, there is no other position that can claim outright certainty either. While it appears that most MPs agree that they don't want to crash out without a deal, neither of the two leading political parties support the option of a second referendum. In a speech last week, Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn made it clear that his priority remains securing a fresh election, which, if his party won, would enable it to hold talks anew with Europe, in the hopes of a new deal. However, there is little hope of a new election (a two-thirds majority of Parliament would be required to hold an election before 2022 and neither the Conservatives nor their allies, the Democratic Unionist Party of Northern Ireland, would vote to jeopardise their already vulnerable political position). This of course increases the risk of Britain crashing out, with nothing else agreed on. The ignominious process is a long way from the message of "taking back control" that the real Mr. Cummings ingeniously, if deceptively, sold the country.

FROM THE READERS' EDITOR

Reflections from within

Two books provide insights into the changing media landscape



A.S. PANNEERSELVAN

Literature festivals are democratic sites to discuss ideas. They grapple with a whole gamut of issues and they use books, not violence or intimidation, as entry points to unpack complex realities and understand our societies better. Veteran journalist Arun Shourie declared at The Hindu Lit for Life: "There is a darkening cloud of intolerance. Persons have been killed, prosecuted and cases have been filed for what they have written or their views." For most participants, the sense that space for the media is shrinking was real. A young researcher asked, if the freedom of expression is under such severe attack, what are the responses from within the journalistic fraternity?

Understanding tectonic shifts

Two recent books look at contemporary media, its relationship with commerce and what it means for freedom and democracy. Written by journalists who carved a name for themselves in the media as fine reporters, these books provide insights into the reality today of a digitally disrupted media environment and a changing public culture. Pamela Philipose, Public Editor of *The Wire*, in her book *Media's Shifting Terrain: Five Years that Transformed the Way India Communicates*, tries to explain the changes using some crucial media-led, or rather media-fed, mobilisations. These include the 2011 India Against Corruption protests, the spontaneous demonstrations of public outrage over the gang rape of a young student in a bus in Delhi in December 2012, the arrival of the Aam Aadmi Party in 2013, and the 2014 general election that saw the Bharatiya Janata Party emerge with a massive and unprecedented majority. The focus of her study is to document "the deceptively discreet way in which mediatisation has brought about tectonic shifts in our lives."

She establishes how the very "fabric of human-to-human interaction is increasingly woven on the looms of communication technology". Most significantly, she captures the sequence of events that led to the activism of the "politics of anti-politics". Going through

the details of various scams that marked the two terms of the United Progressive Alliance – the Commonwealth Games, the coal block allocation, the 2G spectrum allocation, and the murky real estate deals concerning Adarsh Cooperative Housing Society – Ms. Philipose argues that none of these were directly broken by the mainstream media. They were "largely the outcome of leaked reports from the offices of the Comptroller and Auditor General or the Chief Vigilance Commissioner, and information gathered by activists through RTI applications".

Restoring trust

Sukumar Muralidharan, a journalist and an advocate of press freedom, has come up with a comprehensive study titled *Freedom, Civility, Commerce: Contemporary Media and the Public*. In the hardcover book that is just shy of 500 pages, Mr. Muralidharan covers a vast domain. He looks at the philosophical foundations of free speech, the theories of media functioning, and the practice of journalism from the early years of print media to television, the Internet, and social media. He situates journalism in a wider political context and looks at the manner in which nationalism, global politics and the rise of corporate power in the media are addressed. In the complex interlocking of the right to free speech, the media as an industry and its regulation as a public utility, he tries to understand the importance of the ethics of journalism and its future as a part of democratic discourse.

Mr. Muralidharan looks closely at the legal framework that made journalism different from other professions. He examines the contestation of the Working Journalists Act of 1955, which was significantly amended in 1973, by the newspaper industry in the Supreme Court as a dilution of the Press Commission doctrine that the newspaper is a "public utility". Asking for a reaffirmation of core values, Mr. Muralidharan reminds us that though there has never been a golden age of journalism, we should be aware of the difficult realities of today. He points out that information overload has not led to more democratic access to information. Instead, information overload points to a future of robotic forms of information aggregation and dissemination that could serve little else than corporates. He rightly places emphasis on the importance of restoring public trust in journalism.

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FROM The Hindu ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO JANUARY 14, 1969

Delhi student to be released in exchange for Pakistani

Trilok Chandra, 17-year-old Delhi student, who is in an internment camp in Pakistan after serving a two-year sentence, is to be released in the next few days, it was officially learnt here [New Delhi] to-day [January 13]. He will be exchanged for a Pakistani national, Gulzar Hussain Shah, who has just completed his term of imprisonment in India. The release of Trilok Chandra, who strayed into Pakistan on the Wagah border in January 1966, follows protracted efforts on the part of the Government to secure his return to India. The Governments of India and Pakistan have agreed to exchange these two persons at the Wagah border on a date yet to be decided. Trilok Chandra was sentenced for alleged spying. His term expired last year, but Pakistan refused to release him until India agreed to release a Pakistani of its choice sentenced to jail in India.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO JANUARY 13, 1919

Mr. S. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar. Arrival in Madras

Mr. S. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar, leaving Dhanushkodi last evening [Jan. 10], stayed at Rammad in the night as the guest of the Hon'ble the Rajah of Rammad and resumed his journey this morning by Boat Mail for Madras. He passed through Madura this afternoon when a very large number of prominent gentlemen of the town were present on the station platform to meet the distinguished editor, now returning from England. The train steamed in at 2.15 and as soon as it stopped, the crowd rushed to his carriage, cheered him and shouted Vandemataram. Mr. George Joseph and the Hon'ble Mr. K. Rama Iyengar exchanged greetings with Mr. Iyengar and extended to him a hearty welcome on behalf of those present. Mr. T.S. Sankaranarayana Aiyar garlanded him, after which he was taken in a motor car to the Victoria Edward Hall where a reception had been arranged by the citizens of this place in his honour.

CONCEPTUAL

Hayflick limit

BIOLOGY

Also known as the Hayflick phenomenon, this refers to the natural limit that exists on the number of times a normal human cell population divides before cell division stops. After each cell division, the telomeres at the ends of the cell decrease in length slightly. This process continues until the cell becomes so short that it cannot divide further. The phenomenon is named after American anatomist Leonard Hayflick who first proposed the idea after conducting a study of human fetal cells in 1961. It was earlier believed that cells can divide forever and are thus immortal. The Hayflick limit differs across various organisms with the human cell dividing about 50 to 70 times over its lifespan.

MORE ON THE WEB

Andy Murray from then to now: career highlights

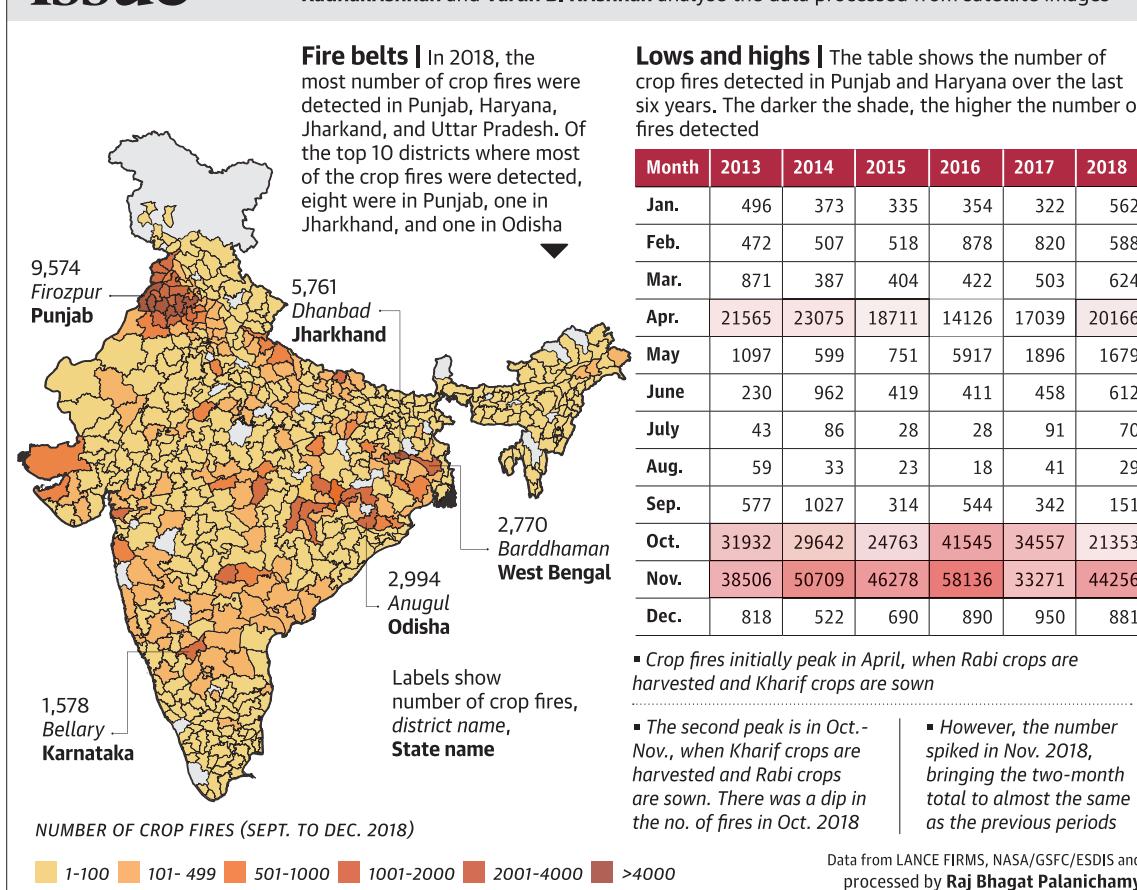
<http://bit.ly/MurrayCareer>



DATA POINT

A burning issue

Stubble burning is a pan-Indian problem but is most acute in Punjab and Haryana, which together account for 46% of the crop fires in the country. In 2018, stubble burning picked up in November after a six-year low in October in these two States. **Vignesh Radhakrishnan** and **Varun B. Krishnan** analyse the data processed from satellite images



FROM PAGE ONE

Congress demands ouster of CVC

"The purpose was to improve the appraisal report of Mr. Asthana," Mr. Singhvi claimed. Mr. Verma had called Mr. Asthana a man of "doubtful integrity" in the report.

Mr. Singhvi pointed out that news reports only point out facts and there has been no denial issued by any of the concerned parties to prove them otherwise.

"The sequence of events indicate that the CVC acted like a hatchet man of the government. He cancelled his trip to Denmark at the very

last minute and then issued the midnight orders to remove then CBI Director Alok Verma," Mr. Singhvi alleged.

Without naming Mr. Modi and BJP President Amit Shah, Mr. Singhvi said,

"None except the top two

people in this country, who rule this country dictatorially, can claim the power to treat and make the CVC act like a puppet and these master puppets can only be doing it to hide something.... Something like Ra-

feale."

Justice Sikri turns down Centre's offer

The source said the position did not involve any monthly remuneration nor was it in the nature of a regular assignment. It involved two or three sittings a year.

The statute of the CSAT, which was adopted first by Commonwealth governments in 1995, requires the eight-member CSAT to comprise Commonwealth nationals of "high moral character" who had held "high judicial office in a Commonwealth country" or jurists of recognised competence

with not less than 10 years' experience. Their tenure is four years with room for one additional term.

The tribunal determines applications regarding non-observance of contractual obligations involving staff members of the Commonwealth Secretariat or international/intergovernmental Commonwealth body/organisation, and the Commonwealth Secretariat or Commonwealth international/intergovernmental bodies.

Two heist suspects held in video release case

The charges against Mr. Samuel and others are of "promoting enmity between different groups" and "doing acts prejudicial to maintenance of harmony".

The police have also accused the journalist of "publishing and circulating a rumour with intent to cause, or which is likely to cause, fear or alarm to the public, or to any section of the public whereby any person may be induced to commit an offence against the State or against the public tranquillity."

Mr. Mathew in a Facebook post on Sunday said he stood by his report.

Soon after the arrest, Mr. Samuel in a video message circulated on WhatsApp claimed that the police came to Sector-9 in Dwaraka and forced Sayan and Manoj

into a private vehicle with a police sticker. "They were kidnapped," he claimed.

In the 16-minute video released in New Delhi, Sayan and Manoj had claimed that key conspirator Kanakaraj (since dead) had told them about his proximity to Mr. Palaniswami. However, the Chief Minister dismissed the allegations as baseless and said strong action would be taken against those behind the making of the video.

The two suspects who were arrested by the Nilgiris police for the break-in came out on bail subsequently.

Kanakaraj, who had served as a driver in Poos Garden and was the prime suspect in the heist, was killed in an accident at Salem. In the break-in in 2017, Om Bahadur, a security guard was hacked to death.

PM uses Kartarpur to hit out at Congress

Mr. Modi came down on the Congress for the 1984 riots that took place following the assassination of the then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. He said it was Guru Nanak or Guru Gobind Singh, they had taught us to be on the side of justice.

Following the path shown by them, the Central government was trying to get justice for the people who suffered during the 1984 anti-Sikh riots, Mr. Modi said.

Govt. re-promulgates triple talaq ordinance

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI

The government has re-promulgated the ordinance banning the practice of instant triple talaq ('talaq-e-biddat').

Under the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Ordinance, 2019, issued on Saturday, divorcing through instant triple talaq will be illegal, void and would attract a jail term of three years for the husband. A Bill to convert the earlier ordinance, issued in September, 2018, was cleared by the Lok Sabha in December and was pending in the Rajya Sabha. Since the Bill could not get the Parliamentary approval, the fresh

ordinance was issued. The Cabinet last week approved its re-issuance.

Seeking to allay fears that the proposed law could be misused, the government has included certain safeguards, such as adding a provision of bail for the accused before trial. These amendments were cleared by the Cabinet on August 29, 2018.

All India Congress Com-

Two terrorists killed in J&K

Top Al-Badr commander Zeenat-ul-Islam among the deceased

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

SRINAGAR

Zeenat-ul-Islam, a top "commander" of the Al-Badr terror group, and another terrorist were killed in an encounter with security forces in Kulgam district of Jammu and Kashmir, the police said on Sunday.

"The militants killed in the Katpora encounter have been identified as Zeenat-ul-Islam and Shakeel Dar. Both were involved in several terror crimes," a police official said.

Islam, a Category A++ militant, had switched over to the Al-Badr from the Hizbul Mujahideen last November following an agreement between the two outfits to strengthen the Al-Badr. He was active since 2015, the police official said.

The official said the security forces launched a cordon-and-search operation in the Katpora area of Yaripora in Kulgam district of south Kashmir on Saturday evening after receiving specific information about the presence of militants. As the forces were conducting the searches, the militants fired on them, he said.

By policy, the militants were given an opportunity to surrender, but they continued to fire, the official said. The forces retaliated, leading to an encounter in which the two militants were killed, he said.

Arms and ammunition were recovered from the site, the official said. No collateral damage had been reported.



Venting anger: Protesters clashing with security forces during the funeral procession of terrorist Zeenat-ul-Islam in Sogun village of Shopian district on Sunday. ■ NISSAR AHMAD

the two militants were killed, he said.

Arms and ammunition were recovered from the site, the official said. No collateral damage had been reported.

Clashes erupt

However, as the news spread, clashes erupted between groups of youth and security forces in Islam's village of Sogun in Shopian district as people held multiple funeral prayers for him. Around a dozen persons were injured allegedly in security forces' action on protesters, a police official said.

The clashes erupted soon

after the forces tried to chase away the people from assembling in the village, the official said.

The injured were taken to a nearby hospital, from where four of them were referred to the SMHS hospital here, the official said.

A woman also suffered injuries when she was allegedly hit by a vehicle of the security forces during the clashes, the official said, adding that she has been hospitalised.

Former Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti termed the security forces' action "unfortunate and disturbing".

The soldier was apparently hit by a Pakistani sniper in the Keri sector.

The Indian troops retaliated strongly, they said.

Soldier injured in Pak. firing

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

JAMMU

A soldier, manning a forward post, was injured on Sunday after Pakistani troops violated the ceasefire by resorting to unprovoked firing from across the Line of Control in Rajouri district of Jammu and Kashmir, officials said.

The soldier was apparently hit by a Pakistani sniper in the Keri sector.

The Indian troops retaliated strongly, they said.



I would not be able to give you an open-and-shut position on this

RAHUL GANDHI

Congress president

allowed to go anywhere they want," he said.

Mr. Gandhi told reporters in Dubai that he had realised that the issue was far more complicated and that he had left it to the people of Kerala to decide.

He conceded that his initial position was different on the subject. The Congress headquarters in the capital had welcomed the Supreme Court verdict, battling for upholding the age-old tradition barring entry of women in the men-strengthening age.

Mr. Gandhi refused to comment on a question whether the Left government was right to implement the verdict. "It is not my place to comment on the court verdict," he said.

Gujarat to implement 10% quota

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

AHMEDABAD

Gujarat Chief Minister Vijay Rupani announced on Sunday that the State would implement the 10% quota in government jobs and higher education for the economically backward sections in the general category from January 14.

'Who will benefit?'

Mr. Pawar expressed strong reservations as to who would ultimately benefit from the 10% quota.

"Perhaps a few educated youth in the urban pockets of Maharashtra would avail of the benefit, but the majority of the unreserved category youth in the rural hinterlands would fall behind in this case," the NCP chief said.

In a press release, the State government said the new quota would be implemented in admissions and jobs which were advertised before January 14 but for which the actual process for recruitment or admissions had not started before January 14.

RSS-BJP trying to end caste-based quota

10% reservation the first step: Mewani

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

KOLKATA

Dalit leader Jignesh Mewani said on Sunday that the Centre's move to provide 10% quota to the upper caste poor is a step towards realising the RSS-BJP's agenda to remove caste-based reservations".

President Ram Nath Kovind on Saturday gave his assent to the constitutional provision to provide 10% reservation in government jobs and education to economically backward section in the general category.

"I am apprehensive and so are the members of the Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribe and Other Backward Class that this is the first step towards putting an end to the reservation on the ground of socio-educational deprivation," Mr. Mewani said on the sidelines of a programme here.

The Independent MLA from Gujarat also said that



Jignesh Mewani

the quota system was introduced in the country to give representation to socially and educationally backward people, it wasn't meant to end poverty.

"We have absolutely no issues with the poor people from the other communities getting any benefit. But reservation is not meant to remove poverty," he said.

"It is meant to give representation to SC/ST/OBC people, who on account of the society's caste structure, have remained socially and educationally backward," Mr. Mewani said.

The NCP chief said the BJP government planned to extend the Budget session of

10% reservation violates the Constitution: Pawar

Says such 'gimmicks' by the Modi government won't work

SHOUMOJIT BANERJEE

PUNE

The Bill seeking to extend 10% reservation to the economically backward among the general category was "inimical" to constitutional structures, Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) chief Sharad Pawar said on Sunday.

Speaking in Kolhapur, Mr. Pawar said such "gimmicks" by the Narendra Modi government just before the Lok Sabha election would have little impact on the electorate.

"The Modi government is taking such decisions in great haste after it has sensed the disgruntlement among the people in its recent poll debacle in five States... But the public is smart enough to see through this eyewash," he said.

The NCP chief said the BJP government planned to extend the Budget session of



Sharad Pawar

Parliament to pass more "populist" Bills.

Claiming that the 10% quota for the weaker sections among the general category would not endure in court, Mr. Pawar said the Supreme Court had clearly stated in the past that the cap on reservation could not rise above the 50% limit. According to experts, amending Articles 15 and 16 to permit reservation above 50% is

harmful to the underlying principles of the Constitution. Moreover this move is not likely to endure in a court," said the NCP chief.

'Who will benefit?'

Mr. Pawar expressed strong reservations as to who would ultimately benefit from the 10% quota.

"Perhaps a few educated youth in the urban pockets of Maharashtra would avail of the benefit, but the majority of the unreserved category youth in the rural hinterlands would fall behind in this case," the NCP chief said.

On films like *The Accidental Prime Minister*, based on former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, and the biopic on the late Shiv Sena supremo Bal Thackeray, Mr. Pawar said such films would not make much of an impression on voters.

'Fear' over Rafale making PM 'corrupt', says Rahul

Cites offer to Justice Sikri

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI

The Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) here on Sunday reiterated its demand that the Centre enact a law for the construction of a Ram temple in Ayodhya, saying that matters of faith did not come under the purview of the courts.

VHP international president Vishnu Sadashiv Kokje also said a solution to the Ayodhya dispute through court procedures

was not in sight at the moment, given the prevailing scenario.

'Matters of faith'

"Matters related to religious faith do not come under the jurisdiction of courts which are run by laws.

That is why we want that the Central government should get a law enacted for the construction of a grand Ram temple soon," Mr. Kokje said.

"We have a hunch that in the coming days, the Ayodhya dispute will linger on in the Supreme Court as in the past," Mr. Kokje, a former judge of the High Courts of Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan University.

Moreover, Mr. Rathore's appointment balances the caste equation as he represents the Rajput community, while Mr. Agnihotri is a Brahmin.

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INTERVIEW | HAMID KARZAI

'Delhi must engage with Taliban, oppose U.S.-Pak. deal outside Kabul'

Wary of deals on Afghanistan between Washington and Islamabad, the former President urges India to seek an end to violence by speaking to all stakeholders

SUHASINI HAIDAR

More than four years after demitting office, former President Hamid Karzai remains a key figure in Afghan politics. During a recent visit to Delhi for official meetings, Mr. Karzai said India must reconsider its refusal to deal directly with the Taliban, given that the insurgent group was an important stakeholder in the future of Afghanistan.

You met External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj and briefly Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Do you feel India's position on Afghanistan has changed?

■ Our expectation is that India should always have its own policy towards Afghanistan, not as a part of anyone else's. The United States has suddenly begun to speak of peace and reconciliation efforts and the need to engage with the Taliban and re-engage with Pakistan.

We want an Afghanistan that is friendly with Pakistan, but one that is sovereign of Pakistan's influence. In other words, we would help the U.S. for peace in Afghanistan, but equally make it clear that we want no deals on Afghanistan between the U.S. and Pakistan

and we hope that India will make that clear as well. Help us gain peace, and be sovereign.

What do you mean by India's own course in Afghanistan? What role can it play within the parameters that it will not engage the Taliban directly, nor extend security assistance like troops, etc. beyond current levels?

■ India can play a role at different levels at the same time. We understand its position to engage with the government of the day in Kabul. But India is also a friend of the Afghan people, and the Taliban are part of the Afghan people. They are a part of the reality. My proposal to India is that they must engage with the Ta-

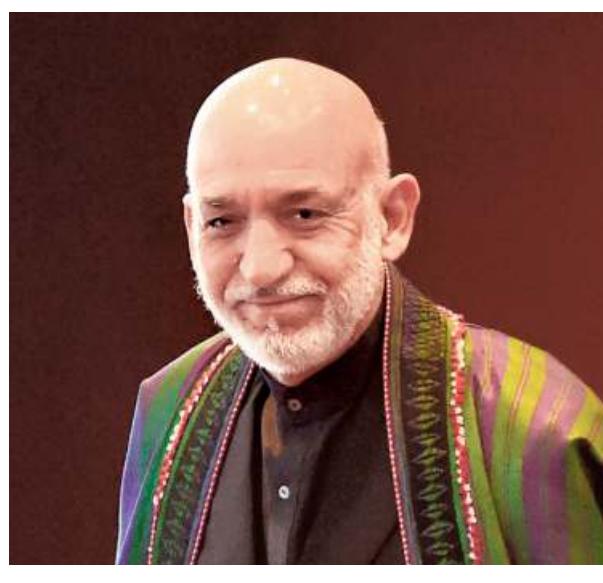
liban, as well as the government. Tomorrow, if through a peace deal, the Taliban becomes a part of the government, then India will have to deal with them.

When you ask India to talk to the Taliban, aren't you saying that an insurgent group should be equated with the state?

■ No, what I mean is that India should be seeking an end to violence in Afghanistan, and how can you do that without speaking to all the stakeholders? Unfortunately, the reality is that the government is not the only [stakeholder].

Unlike India, the United States has been fighting the Taliban, and waging war within Afghanistan because it says it is fighting the Taliban. But today the United States wants to talk to the Taliban.

India has never fought the Taliban; there has been no direct conflict with the Taliban. Therefore, what I am saying is that India should talk to the Taliban and you met him too. Do you believe that the U.S. has discarded its South



India should have done a long time ago.

Your visit [to Delhi] coincided with that of U.S. Special Envoy on Afghanistan Zalmay Khalilzad, who briefed the government on Washington's talks with the Taliban and you met him too. Do you believe that the U.S. has discarded its South

■ Of course, it has been discarded, and I am glad it has been discarded. That policy

announced in 2017 was one of escalating the conflict and making war in Afghanistan; and I stood up against it even then. I support their initiative for peace and the appointment of Ambassador Khalilzad, so long as the distinctions are clearly made between peace, and deals with a foreign country [Pakistan] on Afghanistan, which is not acceptable to our sovereignty.

You mean between the U.S. and Pakistan...The new government in Islamabad has reached out to the Afghan government – do you think it would be prepared to give up that influence?

■ Pakistan will not willingly give up the control or influence it has, but it is for the Afghan people not to allow a foreign country to influence us. We have been the victims of the deal concocted between the U.S. and Pakistan during the Soviet invasion, which led to the creation and sustenance of extremist

groups here. Pakistan's actions against Afghan traditions and values still continue, and they must be stopped from wielding that power over the people.

Do you think U.S. troops will be pulled out?

■ The U.S. remains intent on keeping bases in Afghanistan, but this is something that can only be granted to them through a legitimate forum. That forum is the Loya Jirga (Grand council of representatives), and it should be convinced that Americans want to stay on to keep peace in Afghanistan. We don't want the bases used for war-making. The American presence and bases should be a factor of stability and not for war, as we have seen.

What about the worry that the peace process would mean rolling back many of the freedoms Afghans have gained post-Taliban, especially for women?

■ We must never allow that.

My point is that the focus should be on the outcome of the peace talks and the gains from that rather than the tokenism of how many women are in the process. A strong presence will be judged by the outcome of the talks.

Do you think the presidential elections will be – held this year?

■ Right now, the circumstances are extremely difficult, judging by the confusion over the parliamentary elections. What we need is stability and return of the peace before the elections.

The process could mean there will be a Loya Jirga first, or an international conference like the one in Bonn in 2001 that decides the way forward with international and regional guarantees that no deal will be done between foreign powers on Afghanistan. And this could then be ratified by the Loya Jirga. It is necessary that we, the Afghan people, determine our future and regain the ownership of our country.

IN BRIEF



Rahul Gandhi calls on Sharjah ruler

SHARJAH

Congress president Rahul Gandhi on Sunday called on Sharjah ruler Sultan bin Muhammad Al-Qasimi and held a "cordial discussion" with him on a range of issues to strengthen the bilateral ties. "It was a pleasure to meet Sultan bin Muhammad Al-Qasimi, the ruler of the Emirate of Sharjah. We had a cordial discussion that covered a range of issues," the Congress president said in a tweet. PTI

Goel hosts event to felicitate Phoolka

NEW DELHI

Former AAP leader H.S. Phoolka was felicitated on Sunday for his legal battle for anti-Sikh riot victims at an event hosted by Union Minister Vijay Goel, who said the doors of the BJP were open for all "good" people. Phoolka accepted his "closeness" with several BJP leaders, but ruled out joining any political party. PTI

'SHe-box' receives 169 harassment complaints

NEW DELHI

A total of 169 complaints of sexual harassment at the workplace in private industries have been received since 2017 through 'SHe-box', an online system for filing complaints by women working in both government and private sectors, the Women and Child Development Ministry has said. A senior Ministry official said the highest number of complaints had been received from the State of Maharashtra (33), followed by Delhi (23). PTI

India for Afghan-led peace talks

Swaraj's statement goes against Army chief's suggestion for talks with Taliban

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

India supports the efforts of the government and the people of Afghanistan to build an inclusive nation, External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj said at a meeting with the Foreign Ministers of Central Asian countries and Afghanistan on Sunday.

"India supports the people and the Government of Afghanistan in their efforts to build a united, sovereign, democratic, peaceful, stable, prosperous and inclusive nation. India supports all efforts for peace and reconciliation in Afghanistan which are inclusive and Afghan-led, Afghan-owned and Afghan-controlled," Ms. Swa-

raj said at the India-Central Asia Dialogue at Samarkand, Uzbekistan.

Support for process
The statement indicated India's support for a peace process that will help end the war that has haunted the country for decades.

"The violence and terror imposed on Afghan people should end. It should strength-

then unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country," Ms. Swaraj said in her speech at the Samarkand hand event.

The ministerial statement indicates India's unchanged position regarding peace building in Afghanistan.

Last week, the Chief of the Army Staff, General Bipin Rawat, had urged India to begin talks with the Taliban

in Afghanistan, which did not receive support from the government with the External Affairs Ministry saying that India wanted the peace process in Afghanistan to be "Afghan-led, Afghan-owned, and Afghan-controlled".

Land link

A joint statement issued after the Samarkand meeting highlighted the opportunities that the collaborative platform would provide for the people of Afghanistan and asked for Kabul's participation.

The regional Ministers described Afghanistan as a "land link" in the region that will help in connectivity among the nations.

Taliban not for monopoly of power, says peace activist

Shafi says militant group wants to reach out to wider world

KALLOL BHATTACHERJEE
NEW DELHI

troops from Afghanistan.

Mr. Shafi's observation comes in the wake of a series of recent discussions regarding talks with the group that is waging a war against the government of President Ashraf Ghani in Kabul. Last week, Iranian Foreign Minister Javad Zarif suggested that the Taliban should be involved in talks. India, however, maintained a cautious stand saying it supports "Afghan-led, Afghan-owned and Afghan-controlled" talks. India's concern is Pakistan's role in supporting the Taliban.

means they want power sharing so, they have to talk and reach on a peace agreement with the Afghan government and other Afghan political groups," Mr. Shafi said, indicating that the process however depends on the withdrawal of foreign

At mini 2+2, India, U.S. review progress on pacts

The two sides also exchanged notes on developments in the Indo-Pacific and the region

DINAKAR PERI
NEW DELHI

India and the U.S. reviewed the progress on finalising two key agreements during the 2+2 intercession meeting last week, apart from taking stock of the overall defence cooperation. The agreements are the Industrial Security Annex (ISA) and the Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement for Geo-spatial Cooperation (BECA), a foundational agreement.

"This was to follow up on the 2+2 dialogue and to keep the official-level dialogue going. The two sides reviewed the decisions taken at 2+2 and also exchanged notes on developments in the Indo-Pacific and the region,

Taking ties forward

Industrial Security Annex (ISA)

As the Indian industry looks for greater role in defence manufacturing, the agreement allows sharing of classified information from the U.S. government and companies with the Indian private sector

Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement for Geo-spatial Cooperation (BECA)

The U.S. has already shared a draft of BECA, the last foundational agreement to be signed with India

broadly the countries of interest. Also, the bilateral defence cooperation was reviewed, especially the greater Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) and the first tri-service exercise which will take place later this year," an official source said.

The inaugural 2+2 dialogue was held last September and was chaired by the Defence and External Affairs Ministers and their U.S. counterparts. The third foundational agreement, Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement, was signed on the si-

defines. As the next step in furthering defence cooperation, negotiations are on to conclude the ISA and BECA.

The U.S. has already shared a draft of BECA, the last foundational agreement to be signed. "We have a working draft [BECA] which we are looking at. It came some time before the Defence Minister's visit to Washington," the official said.

Greater role

The ISA is particularly essential as the Indian industry looks for a greater role in defence manufacturing. It allows sharing of classified information from the U.S. government and American

companies with the Indian private sector, which is so far limited to the Indian government and the defence public sector undertakings. The ISA and BECA.

The U.S. has already shared a draft of BECA, the last foundational agreement to be signed. "We have a working draft [BECA] which we are looking at. It came some time before the Defence Minister's visit to Washington," the official said.

meeting was attended by Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Alice Wells and Assistant Secretary of Defence Randall Schriver from the U.S. and Joint Secretary of the External Affairs Ministry Gourangal Das and Joint Secretary of the Defence Ministry Shambhu Kumar from India.

The next 2+2 dialogue will take place this summer, by which time India will have a new government.

Pak should boost ties with India, neighbours'

Ex-Foreign Minister debunks U.S. ties



Hina Rabbani Khar

tant relations should be with its neighbours like Afghanistan, India, Iran and China instead of becoming a U.S. client state, former Pakistan Foreign Minister Hina Rabbani Khar has said.

Speaking on the U.S.-Pakistan relationship at the ThinkFest here on Saturday, Ms. Khar said Pakistan always imagined itself as a complete strategic partner, which was far-fetched, the Dawn reported on Sunday.

She said Pakistan cannot command respect in the comity of nations with a begging bowl in both hands.

"Pakistan's most impor-

India to grow crops for UAE, Saudi Arabia

Prabhu calls it farm-to-port project

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI

Union Commerce Minister Suresh Prabhu announced here on Sunday that the UAE and Saudi Arabia had decided to use India as a base to address their food security concerns.

Mr. Prabhu was speaking to presspersons after meeting delegates from the two countries, along with representatives from 44 others, at a summit of the Confederation of Indian Industry here.

The UAE and Saudi Arabia will use India as a base in addressing their social security concerns. For the first time, India's export policy identifies the potential of agriculture along with horticulture, dairy, plantation



Suresh Prabhu

and fisheries," Mr. Prabhu said. The farm-to-port project will be similar to a special economic zone but in the style of a corporatised farm, where crops would be grown keeping a specific UAE market in mind. The concept has been accepted by both governments.

Muted Bhogali Bihu fete in Assam

Many in the State are going on a fast in protest against Citizenship Bill

RAHUL KARMAKAR
GUWAHATI

A contentious Bill to legitimise the stay of non-Muslim migrants from India's neighbourhood has made many in Assam decide to break an age-old tradition – by fasting during an agrarian festival of feasting.

Large swathes of Assam have been witnessing protests since the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2016 was passed by the Lok Sabha on January 8.

The anger is believed to have diminished the intensity with which the mid-January Magh Bihu or Bhogali Bihu is celebrated.

Bhogali Bihu is to Assam what Pongal is to Tamil Nadu and Lohri to Punjab. "The Bill is a threat to the existence of the Assamese people. Festivities should not make us forget this. We shall be fasting on Uruka for 24 hours till the Meji is burnt the next morning," Akhil Gogoi, adviser of the Krishak Mukti Sangram Samiti, said on Sunday.

Traditionally conical, the Meji turned designer and thematic a few years ago, spurring contests for the best structures across Assam.

Gohain's plea

"Let the celebration be subdued this time as a mark of protest. We also urge people to burn copies of the anti-race Bill at the Meji," Hiren Gohain, president of the Forum Against Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, said in a statement. The police had last week filed a sedition case against Dr. Gohain, 80, and two others for allegedly stoking separatism while mobilising support against the Bill. The Gauhati High Court granted them bail a day later.



Subdued sales: People buy sweets at a Bhogali Mela in Guwahati on Sunday. ■ PTI

KMF Karnataka Cooperative Milk Producers' Federation Limited

KMF Complex, Dr. M.H. Marigowda Road, DRC Post, Bangalore - 29

Tel: 25536567/26096832, Fax: 080-25536105, Email: purchase@kmf.coop

IFT NO.: KMF/PUR/E-Procurement/Tender-206/2018-19 Date: 11.01.2019

SHORT TERM TENDER NOTIFICATION

The Karnataka Milk Federation, Bangalore invites tenders from eligible tenderers for supply of the goods listed below:

Sl. No.	Name of the Item	Qty	EMD (Rs)

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ELSEWHERE



Tsipras to call confidence

vote after resignations

ATHENS

Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras on Sunday said he would call a confidence vote in his government after his coalition ally quit, leaving him bereft of a parliamentary majority. Earlier, Defence Minister Panos Kammenos resigned in protest at a deal ending a long-running dispute with Macedonia over its name, saying he was taking his other six Ministers in Cabinet with him. **REUTERS**

Toll in China mine accident rises to 21

BEIJING

The toll in a coal mine roof collapse in northern China has risen to 21 after rescuers found two more miners dead on Sunday. A total of 87 people were working underground in the Shaanxi province mine at the time of the accident on Saturday, Xinhua reported. Rescuers had been searching for two remaining trapped miners but found them dead on Sunday morning, Xinhua said. **AFP**

May warns MPs against rejecting Brexit deal

Parliament is to vote on it on Tuesday

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

LONDON

British Prime Minister Theresa May on Sunday warned MPs ready to reject her European Union (EU) divorce deal next week that failing to deliver Brexit would be a "catastrophic and unforgivable breach of trust in our democracy".

"Doing so would be a catastrophic and unforgivable breach of trust in our democracy," Ms. May wrote in *The Sunday Express* newspaper. "So my message to Parliament this weekend is simple: it is time to forget the games and do what is right for our country."

The Opposition Labour Party has suggested that it will seek a no-confidence vote in the government if MPs throw out the plan. *The*

Trump rubbishes claim that he hid details of meet with Putin

A report said that there is no detailed record of his talks with the Russian President

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

WASHINGTON

U.S. President Donald Trump has rejected a *Washington Post* report that he has refused to share details of his conversations with Russian President Vladimir Putin with top U.S. government officials.

Mr. Trump, in a telephone interview late on Saturday with Fox News, dismissed as "ridiculous" the *Post* story that alleged that he went to great lengths to hide the content of his talks with Mr. Putin, even confiscating the notes of his interpreter and ordering that person to not discuss what was said. Mr. Trump said he had "a great conversation" with Mr. Putin in Helsinki in July 2018.

When asked why he has not released details of the nearly two-hour conversation, Mr. Trump said: "I would, I don't care." "I would, I don't care."

"I mean, I had a conversation like every President does. You sit with the Presi-



More allegations: President Donald Trump with Vice-President Mike Pence in Washington last week. ■ AP

dent of various countries... We were talking about Israel and securing Israel and lots of other things... I'm not keeping anything under wraps, I couldn't care less. I mean, it's so ridiculous."

He added: "Anybody could have listened to that meeting, that meeting is up for grabs."

According to the *Post*, there is no detailed record of Mr. Trump's personal talks with Mr. Putin at five locations over the past two

years. The newspaper quotes unnamed current and former government officials as sources for the story.

On probe by FBI

Mr. Trump also took aim at an earlier story in *The New York Times* stating that the FBI launched a previously undisclosed counterintelligence investigation to determine whether he posed a national security threat, at the same time that it opened a criminal probe into possible

obstruction of justice.

The FBI investigation was later folded into the broader probe by Special Counsel Robert Mueller into Russia's meddling in the 2016 election. Fox asked if he had ever worked for Russia. "I think it's the most insulting thing I've ever been asked," he said, without directly answering the question.

He slammed the *Times* story as "the most insulting article I've ever had written and if you read the article, you'd see that they found absolutely nothing."

No evidence has publicly emerged that Mr. Trump was secretly in contact with or took direction from Russian officials, *The Times* said.

The FBI had been suspicious of Mr. Trump's ties to Russia during the 2016 campaign, but it held off on opening a probe until the President sacked James Comey, who refused to roll back the Russia investigation, *The Times* said.



U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo in Doha on Sunday. ■ AFP

Riyadh must hold Khashoggi's killers accountable: Pompeo

U.S. Secretary also asks Gulf states to end dispute with Qatar

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

DOHA

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said on Sunday that he will ask Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman to ensure that the killers of journalist Jamal Khashoggi are held accountable for their crime.

Mr. Pompeo spoke ahead of a politically sensitive visit to Saudi Arabia, which has faced intense international scrutiny over Khashoggi's murder inside its Istanbul consulate. "We will continue to have a conversation with the Crown Prince and the Saudis about ensuring the accountability is full and complete with respect to the unacceptable murder of Jamal Khashoggi," Mr. Pompeo told reporters at a press conference in Qatar.

"So, we'll continue to talk about that and make sure we have all the facts so that they are held accountable, certainly by the Saudis but by the United States as well."

Mr. Pompeo was due to travel to Saudi Arabia later on Sunday as part of an eight-day trip to Amman, Cairo, Manama, Abu Dhabi, Doha, Riyadh, Muscat, and finally Kuwait City.



U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo in Doha on Sunday. ■ AFP

travel to Saudi Arabia later on Sunday as part of an eight-day trip to Amman, Cairo, Manama, Abu Dhabi, Doha, Riyadh, Muscat, and finally Kuwait City.

Talking to Qatar

He was speaking to journalists in Doha after meeting his Qatari counterpart, Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman al-Thani. Mr. Pompeo also called on Qatar and other Gulf countries to end the worst political rift in the re-

gion for years, which has seen Doha isolated by neighbouring countries for the past 19 months.

Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Bahrain and Egypt – all U.S. allies – cut ties with Qatar in June 2017, accusing it of supporting terrorist groups and seeking closer ties to Saudi arch-rival Iran. Qatar – also a U.S. ally – denies the allegations and accuses the countries of seeking regime change. "As for the GCC... we are all more powerful when we're working together when we have common challenges in the region and around the world," Mr. Pompeo said, referring to the six member nations of the Gulf Cooperation Council. He added that "President Trump and I both believe the ongoing dispute in the region has gone on too long".

The U.S. and Qatar held the second bilateral "strategic dialogue" on Sunday, and signed agreements on defence, education and culture.

White House sought options to strike Iran'

REUTERS

WASHINGTON

The White House's security team last fall asked the Pentagon to provide it with options for striking Iran after a group of militants aligned with Tehran fired mortars into an area in Baghdad that is home to the U.S. Embassy, *The Wall Street Journal* reported on Sunday.

The request by the National Security Council, headed by John Bolton, sparked deep concern among Pentagon and State Department officials, the newspaper reported, citing current and former U.S. officials. The Pentagon complied with the request, but it is not known whether the options for a strike were also provided to the White House or if President Donald Trump knew about it.

If the government loses a no-confidence motion, there will be a period of 14 days in which parties can seek to find an alternative working majority in Parliament. If they fail to do so, an election would be called.

The Observer newspaper reported on Sunday that its lawmakers have been told it could be tabled "within hours" of that on Tuesday, with the confidence vote to be held the following day.

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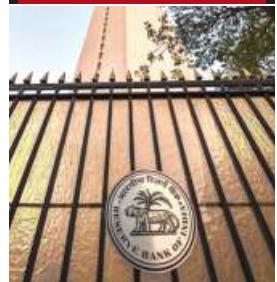
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IN BRIEF



RBI remains net seller of dollars in November

MUMBAI The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) remained a net seller of dollars in November 2018, as it sold \$644 million of the greenbacks on a net basis in the spot market, according to the latest data. As against this, in November 2017, the bank had purchased \$2,570 billion from the spot market and sold \$1,706 billion, while in the reporting month, the monetary authority bought \$3,127 billion from the spot market, and sold \$3,771 billion, according to data from the central bank. PTI

Insolvency plea against Parsvnath subsidiary

NEW DELHI The National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT), Delhi has approved insolvency proceedings against realty firm Parsvnath Developers' arm, which is developing a housing project in New Delhi. The NCLT admitted an insolvency petition filed by three homebuyers against Parsvnath Landmark Developers for inordinate delay in project development and non-refund of their payment. PTI

FICCI for cut in corporate tax rate in Budget

NEW DELHI FICCI has recommended the government cut corporate tax rate across the board to 25%, irrespective of turnover, in the forthcoming Budget to spur economic growth and increase overall tax collections. The chamber has also suggested revision in tax slabs for individual taxpayers with the top 30% rate to be applied for those with more than ₹20 lakh annual income. It also suggested a cut in the rate of minimum alternate tax. PTI

Panel pulls up govt. for diverting coal cess

Cess used to make up States' revenue loss post-GST; committee urges support for gas-based power

PIYUSH PANDEY
MUMBAI

The 42nd standing committee on energy in its report on stressed gas-based power plants tabled in Parliament earlier this month has pulled up the government for diverting coal cess to compensate States for revenue loss post-GST, and recommended financial support to the stressed gas-based power projects in the country from National Clean Energy Fund (NCEF).

The NCEF was created out of cess on coal at ₹400 per tonne to provide financial support to clean energy initiatives and an Inter Ministerial Group chaired by the Finance Secretary was constituted to approve the project/schemes eligible for financing under NCEF.

The coal cess collected



Green initiative: The NCEF was created out of cess on coal to provide financial support for clean energy. ■ RITU RAJ KONWAR

from 2010-11 to 2017-18 amounts to ₹86,440.21 crore, out of which only ₹29,645.29 crore has actually been transferred to the NCEF. The amount financed from NCEF for projects is only ₹15,911.49 crore, or only about 18% of the total amount collected as

coal cess. "The Committee feels that the fund should be used for its intended purpose i.e. to support clean energy initiatives and it should not be diverted to compensate GST losses.

"Diversion of this fund to unrelated activities reflects

poorly on our commitment towards cleaner environment and shows government's apathy towards clean energy projects. Since it is levied on coal as that is a polluting fuel, the amount collected should be used to promote cleaner fuel," said the committee in its report.

It recommended that financial support be extended to gas-based power projects from the NCEF. The Ministry of Power should pursue this matter with the Ministry of Finance, said the panel.

Stranded capacity

Out of India's total installed capacity of about 345 GW of power, gas-based capacity is about 25 GW or 7.2% of the total. However, its share in terms of generation is only 3.8% as 14,305.30 MW of gas-based capacity is stranded

due to non availability of domestic gas and unaffordability of imported gas. The consequence is that a large amount of assets in this sector have turned 'non-performing' or 'unproductive'.

Servicing of debt

A senior GMR Group official said, "We welcome the findings of the committee. Time has now come to understand the real benefits of gas-based projects which can be used as peak-based plants as also for ancillary services. As demand for energy is picking up due to government's efforts in electrifying all households, revival of gas-based plants will help provide clean energy."

The revival will also help all these plants service outstanding debt of ₹50,000 crore with banks, he added.



Gung ho: For the quarter ended December, the bank posted a 43% increase in net profit to ₹104 crore.

By FY22, J&K Bank eyes ₹2,000 cr. profit

Best is yet to come, says chairman

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI Jammu & Kashmir Bank has embarked on a transformation plan to scale up business and aims to grow its total business to ₹2.45 lakh crore by 2020 from ₹1.57 lakh crore now, the bank's chairman and chief executive officer Parvez Ahmed said.

Transformation is key'

"Post transformation, we are envisaging a total business of ₹2.45 lakh crore with a targeted profit of ₹2,000 crore, net interest margin ranging between 3.5-4%, return on assets of 1.3%, return on equity of 16% and credit cost below 1% at the end of FY 2022. So in terms of numbers, our best is yet to come," Mr. Ahmed said in a statement.

He added that while the provision coverage ratio remained static year-on-year and was still comparable with the best in the industry, it dipped on a sequential basis to 65.82% mainly on account of downgrade of the IL&FS account.

The gross and net NPA ratios remained unchanged at 9.94% and 4.69%. J&K Bank was a private sector lender. But in November last, while dissolving the State assembly, J&K governor Satyapal Malik turned the bank into a public sector undertaking, making it accountable to the legislature. The State holds 59.23% stake in the bank.

'Expect 2019 to be our best year by far'

With many users preferring upgrades, Samsung India to unveil new products

YUTHIKA BHARGAVA
NEW DELHI

Samsung India expects 2019 to be the best year so far for the company, driven by the launch of new products and services coupled with rising number of users upgrading to better devices.

The company, which is locked in an intense battle with brands like Xiaomi and Oppo, is also gearing up to launch a new online-only smartphone series – the M series – to cash in on the segment that contributes about 35% to the smartphone sales in the country.

"We are looking at a 2019 as evermore exciting than anything in the past. The market, the opportunity, the growth is all beckoning in 2019. I think, this year is going to be the best we have



Fully charged: The M series may help Samsung India double its online business, says Asim Warsi. ■ SOMASHEKAR G.R.N.

seen so far. If the market is a healthy double digit growth, for sure we will have very strong double digit growth," Asim Warsi, senior vice president, mobile business, Samsung India told *The Hindu*.

As per the company's filling with the RoC, it saw a

sales growth of 9% in its mobile business in India in FY 2018, to touch ₹37,349 crore.

Customised services

"We are geared up for 2019. You will see many more exciting tech, capabilities, app and services... customised services for Samsung device

users," Mr. Warsi said. He, however, did not elaborate.

On the launch of the new series, he said that the online retail is a growth segment and the new series has been built with Indian millennials in mind.

"Online is an important channel and we have been committed to it since its inception. We have launched multiple number of devices online... M series is a success in that path... What we will be seeing most likely is that this will help us more that double our online business next year over the previous year," he said.

To start with, the series would comprise three devices priced in the sub-₹10,000 and ₹10,000-₹20,000 segment in "the centre of where the Indian market is."

RBI warns of NPA spike in MUDRA loans

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has raised a red flag over spike in non-performing assets (NPAs) under the government's flagship scheme to support micro enterprises in the country – the Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana.

"Online is an important channel and we have been committed to it since its inception. We have launched multiple number of devices online... M series is a success in that path... What we will be seeing most likely is that this will help us more that double our online business next year over the previous year," he said.

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INTERVIEW | SAMPATH REDDY

'Investor must follow goal-based approach to asset allocation'

Rally in debt markets behind us, says Bajaj Allianz Life CIO

OOMEN A NINAN

Sampath Reddy, chief investment officer (CIO), Bajaj Allianz Life Insurance Company, believes that the company's investment philosophy has helped it in protecting downside risk, on a relative basis, and capture market upside reasonably well. Excerpts from an interview:

What is your outlook for markets in 2019?

■ Earnings growth has been recovering (albeit, slightly below expectations), but we expect it to accelerate from 2HFY19 onwards, and this should be the key driver for markets in 2019. Earnings growth over the past few years was primarily driven by domestic consumption sectors. But we expect that growth will be more broad-based in 2019, and also that the capex cycle (which has been a drag earlier) is now bottoming out, and will see a gradual recovery in FY20.

What are the sectors which, according to you, may do well this year?

■ We continue to like well-run private sector banks and NBFCs due to their good asset quality and healthy credit growth.

Pharma sector, which was struggling due to USFDA issues and weak pricing for generics, seems to have bottomed out. We are currently turning positive on capital goods, on expectations of a capex turnaround – as the industry capacity utilisation levels are inching towards optimal. We have also been liking

IT services sector for its attractive valuation.

What should be the ideal portfolio contribution for investors in such a challenging scenario?

■ Other than age of the investor, two other important parameters for deciding asset allocation for an investor would be 'investment horizon' and 'risk appetite.'

If the investor approaches maturity of the goal or gets older, preservation of the wealth created becomes more important – so he/she should reduce allocation to equity and increase allocation to debt.

What will be the outlook for debt funds for 2019?

■ With a sharp fall in bond yields over the past few months, we feel that large part of the rally in debt markets is behind us now. We expect bond yields to be range-bound, and data-dependant, so investors in debt funds can expect steady returns in 2019. We are presently positive on short to medium term part of the yield curve.

Why should an investor look at long-term investment such as ULIPs for wealth creation?

■ Firstly, with the introduction of new-age ULIPs, they have become a very competitive savings/investment vehicle, with an added advantage of life cover. Second, ULIPs being a long-term investment product (along with life cover), enjoy various tax advantages. This further helps increase the net return in the hands of the investor – as compared to other savings and investment vehicles. Third, ULIP is a good avenue for wealth creation over the long term, being a long term investment product.

As per a ratings agency, most of your funds have been rated as five star?

■ We focus on growth-at-a-reasonable-price investment philosophy. With ULIP being a long-term product, we also have a long-term orientation in our investment approach. "We are training people in augmented reality too," he said.

Govt. plans technology centres for MSMEs

M. SOUNDARIYA PREETHA
COIMBATORE

The Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) will develop 20 technology centres, along with extension centres across the country in another 3-5 years.

According to Sudhir Garg, Joint Secretary of the Union Ministry of MSME, these centres would come up at an investment of ₹200 crore each. There are plans to have about 100 extension centres, each at an investment of ₹20 crore. "We are identifying locations. These will come up in the next three to five years. The aim is to ensure that maximum [number of] units are benefited from the facilities," he said.

As many as 18 tool rooms are operational in the country and 15 more are in different stages of development or have started functioning. These tool rooms are specific to electronics, general engineering and high-end engineering sectors.

They have modern technology machinery and testing equipment and the services are offered to industries at a competitive price.

With the development of technologies such as virtual reality and augmented reality, the manufacturing units in the MSME sector need to have access to these.

The Ministry is creating trained manpower in virtual reality through the National Small Industries Corporation (NSIC). It has also developed training modules that use virtual reality and these will be launched across the country through the NSIC in a couple of months.

"We are training people in augmented reality too," he said.

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A forgettable festival season for auto sector

But falling fuel prices, year-end discounts helped spur sentiment in the last half of December

LALATENDU MISHRA

The automobile industry had a forgettable festival season and the lean trend extended into early December. But the last couple of weeks of December saw a rise in retail sales as buyers capitalised on year-end discounts from manufacturers.

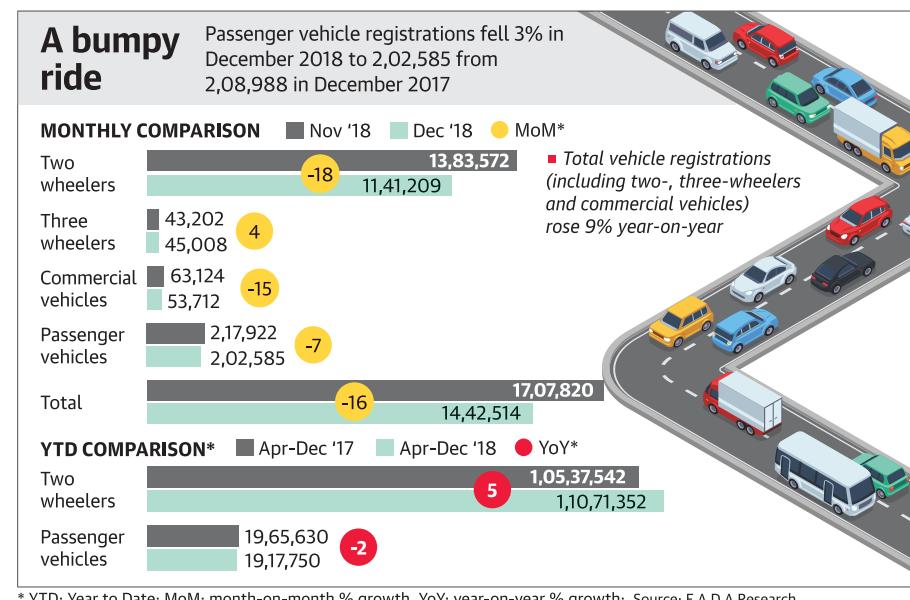
There may have also been a turnaround in sentiment with fuel prices reversing sharply and interest rates remaining steady. So, has the industry put the lean trot of the last few months behind it or is this just a fleeting rise due to temporary factors? Let's take passenger vehicle sales first.

Dec. registrations higher
The Federation of Automobile Dealers Associations (FADA), in its maiden report on vehicle registrations, speaks about positive consumer sentiment witnessed post the lacklustre festive season.

The last 15 days of December saw a surge in vehicle registrations indicating a demand upturn, FADA said.

Though the retail sales data for the 15 days is not available yet, as per the registration data collated by FADA, passenger vehicle registrations in December were down 7% compared with November while commercial vehicle registrations were down 15% in the same period. The extent of fall in registrations is lower than what would have been the case but for the [discounted] upturn witnessed in the last 15 days.

FADA president Ashish Harsharaj Kale said, "We are seeing initial signs of revival in the industry as compared to the recent festival season. Passenger vehicle sales [have] arrested further decline. Good retail momentum



* YTD: Year to Date; MoM: month-on-month % growth, YoY: year-on-year % growth; Source: FADA Research

tum in last 15 days [of December] indicates [that] sentiment [is] turning positive."

Mr. Kale said "customer interest is still healthy, indicating sales will come back in its previous growth trajectory sooner than later. The auto industry will once again clock real growth close to double digits by the end of this FY".

What is likely to contribute to rising sales is the reduction in fuel prices and likely liquidity generation in the system through policy intervention.

Hetal Gandhi, director, CRISIL Research, agrees that the rise in passenger vehicles sales in December is due to record high discounts offered by OEMs to clear the old inventory.

"Also, 2-4% price hikes announced in December by major OEMs effective from January 2019 led to pre-buying, this resulted in inventory days lowering to 30-35 by December end," Ms. Gandhi said.

As per CRISIL's interactions with dealers, retail sales were muted during first

10 days of January 2019 on account of inauspicious period which will continue till Makar Sankranti/Pongal i.e. Jaunary 14 and 15.

"To add to it, 2-4% hike in prices by major players from January 1 is expected to play spoilsport for retail demand. We expect Q4FY19 to show muted growth in mid-single digits on a year-on-year basis," Ms. Gandhi said.

T.T. Srinivasaraghavan, MD, Sundaram Finance Ltd., the oldest and one of the largest vehicle financiers in the country, points out that the slowdown in car sales had begun earlier in the financial year with the rise in fuel prices. "I think buyer fatigue and fewer new launches have also contributed to the slowdown in the passenger cars segment," he said, pointing out that sales is unlikely to improve dramatically in the current quarter.

Brighter outlook for CVs
On the commercial vehicles (CV) front, the outlook appears brighter, especially for the tipper segment which is expected to continue to do

better than haulage vehicles.

Historically, sales of commercial vehicles in Q4 is observed to be higher than the sales in the other remaining quarters. Transporters prefer to make purchases between January and March so that they can take credit for depreciation right away.

Putting the high growth rate in the early part of this fiscal in perspective, Mr. Srinivasaraghavan said: "It is important to bear in mind that the CV segment, in the first half of the year, had registered high growth coming off a low base in the comparable period (HIFY18) last year. The spike in growth that one saw in H1 this year has kind of cooled off in Q3."

In the last 15 months, a lot of the growth in the CV segment was driven more by the tipper segment than the haulage segment, driven by road building and increased investment in infrastructure development, he said.

The haulage segment, in his view, will continue to be sluggish. The revision in axle-load norms and the trucks becoming bigger in size have

also impacted sales of haulage vehicles. "Unless something dramatic happens in the overall economy, I do not see a pick-up in sales in the haulage space," he said.

Shriram Transport Finance Co. Ltd., another major vehicle financier, believes that CV sales will improve from this quarter. "There was increased sales in the last part of December and it was primarily on account of heavy discounts being offered by OEMs. But in the first week of this month, sales have slowed down. However, sales will improve post January 15 and will continue till March. We expect reasonable rise in sales till March," said Umesh Revankar, MD & CEO, Shriram Transport Finance Co. Ltd.

Mr. Revankar is confident that CV sales will be buoyant in the current quarter. "There will be buoyancy in this quarter as [EMI] collections have been good," he said.

CRISIL Research's Ms. Gandhi is also optimistic about the prospects in the current quarter. "We expect the impact of the liquidity crunch to soften going ahead in Q4, aiding sales. Thus,

MHCV sales in Q4 are expected to see an uptick on a sequential basis (as compared with Q3FY18). However, sales would remain largely flat year-on-year in the last quarter of the fiscal. We forecast goods-carrying MHCV sales to end at 16-18% in FY19 thanks to the great first half," she said.

Mr. Srinivasaraghavan agrees, "Traditionally, the CV segment has seen an up-trend in Q4 and we expect this to be the case this year as well. CV sales, especially tippers, are expected to maintain their growth momentum."

The business case for 5G

Tech can ease network congestion, a pain point for India

DINKAR AYILAVARAPU
HERBERT BLUM
VIKRAM CHANDRASHEKHAR



*GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

ecutives of the 19 largest mobile network operators (MNOs) worldwide conducted by Bain & Company shows that while they share a belief in the long-term potential of 5G, more than half see no immediate business potential.

We see three common fallacies: there is no compelling, near-term business case for 5G; implementing 5G will require enormous and unjustifiable capital investments; the main reason to invest in 5G is to reduce costs or, at least, improve unit economics, but not to increase revenues.

The business cases for 3G and 4G were centred on data speeds and hence, a superior customer experience. The near-term business case for 5G in India will be driven by congestion relief, which is a very real constraint for every operator today. Further, the capex required may not be as high as expected. 5G-capable devices can seamlessly connect to the existing 4G cells, thus precluding huge investments.

Operators that make full use of existing assets will develop multi-year roll-out plans that will evolve as 5G technology improves. And all this will be done with prudent capital investments. These operators will be able to create a virtuous cycle of 5G reinvestment; first, by building or upgrading to an all-digital 5G network, and then, by using the cash flow generated by those efficiencies to invest in high RoI cases.

(Dinkar Ayilavarapu and Herbert Blum are partners with Bain & Company and lead the telecom practice in India and the Americas, respectively. Vikram Chandrashekhar is a principal at Bain's New Delhi office.)

Paddy farmer 'seeds' a success story

Praseed Kumar reaps good profits by selling seeds of rare rice varieties

E.M. MANOJ
KALPETTA

At a time when many a farmer in Wayanad district is keeping his paddy field fallow owing to huge losses, T. Praseed Kumar from Sultan Bathery is scripting a different story – one of hard work, perseverance and fine imagination.

The 45-year-old farmer's journey to success began after he got a handful of paddy seeds from a friend in Gujarat.

'Krishna Kamod', the Basmati rice variety for which he got the seeds, is known for its taste, colour and aroma. Enticed by its violet chaff, he first cultivated it on just a cent of land.

Gradually, in a period of seven years, he expanded the cultivation to one hectare and last year, Mr. Kumar harvested about 2,500 kg of the rice.

And instead of selling the rice in the open market, he sold the seeds to farmers at ₹200 a kg.

He had spent ₹85,000 for the cultivation last year and got returns to the tune of ₹5 lakh.



Greener pastures: Praseed Kumar at his farm in Nambikolly of Wayanad district. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

GREEN SHOOTS

line, have offered to procure the remaining quantity of rice at ₹500 a kg," Mr. Kumar added.

Mr. Kumar acknowledged the timely assistance provided by T. Girija, project director, Agricultural Technology Management Agency, Wayanad, said.

He had also received an incentive of ₹20,000 from the Agriculture Department.

"As there is a huge demand for the seeds of rare rice varieties among the farming community in the country and pesticide-free rice from the elite class of so-

cietry, I am trying to tap the huge potential," Mr. Kumar said. The Black Jasmine variety has huge demand from supermarkets in the country as well as abroad, he said.

Mr. Kumar has also launched a website to market the seeds.

"This rice variety [Black Jasmine] seems quite suitable for the district, though its market is yet to be tapped properly in the State," Sebastian Joseph, Assistant Director, Agriculture Department, Wayanad, said.

However, many farmers had come forward to cultivate the crop as it fetched a better price in the market, he added.

Mr. Kumar's farm had been selected as a 'demonstration plot' last season to promote the rice variety.

The farmer has also dabbed in the cultivation of a spectra of rice varieties.

100 kg of seeds
He spent ₹25,000 on cultivating it on 50 cents of land and harvested 400 kg of the rice. "I have sold 100 kg of the rice seeds to farmers at ₹400 a kg and some traders, who have been selling premium varieties of rice on-

Waves of change

In 2009, there were close to 49 crore subscribers shared by 10 operators*

From 14 crore subscribers in 2011 to just 25,000 in 2018, Reliance Comm.'s (■) fall was the biggest in the business

RCOM

Airtel (■)

BSNL + MTNL

Idea (■)

Tata (■)

Aircel (■)

Telenor (■)

Etisalat (■)

Sistema (■)

MTS (■)

Videocon (■)

Loop (■)

Jio (■)

Alcatel (■)

Ericsson (■)

Qualcomm (■)

Other (■)

Others (

Seventh heaven beckons Federer, Djokovic

Question marks remain over World No. 2 Nadal's fitness



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MELBOURNE

Roger Federer and Novak Djokovic will be gunning for a record seventh Australian Open crown from Monday, but Andy Murray will make his last appearance in Melbourne as the era of the 'Big Four' draws to a close.

Top seed Djokovic and third seed Federer face a stern challenge from the likes of Alexander Zverev, seeded four, who is still looking for a first Major to cement his place as torch-bearer for the next generation.

Murray dropped a pre-Grand Slam bombshell, breaking down during a press conference as he revealed chronic hip pain means he will retire after Wimbledon – if he can carry on that long.

And, question marks remain over the fitness of World No. 2 Rafael Nadal, who pulled out of his Brisbane warm-up but arrived in Melbourne professing he was "fully fit" and promising to unleash a remodelled serve.

It all means the era of the 'Big Four' is almost over after a season in which Federer – who opens his title defence against Denis Istomin on Monday – rolled back the



Milestone park: Defending champion Caroline Wozniacki returns to the Rod Laver Arena where she won her maiden Grand Slam. ■ MICHAEL DODGE/GETTY IMAGES

years on Rod Laver Arena to lift an emotional 20th Grand Slam.

By contrast, Djokovic endured a miserable early Melbourne exit in 2018, followed by elbow surgery and a string of disappointing results that saw him drop outside the top 20. But, since winning a fourth Wimbledon in July, the Serb rose inexorably back to No. 1, losing only three further matches – one of which was to Zverev at the

ATP Finals. Djokovic won his third US Open in September to put him on 14 Grand Slams.

Second-ranked Nadal, 32, pulled out of Brisbane with a thigh strain although he returned for an exhibition in Sydney and insisted at the weekend his fitness woes were behind him.

Djokovic picked young guns Zverev of Germany, Borna Coric of Croatia, Karen Khachanov of Russia and Greece's Stefanos Tsitsipas as key threats to the top three.

Home fans will look to new Sydney champion and 27th seed Alex de Minaur, who faces Portugal's Pedro Sousa on Monday, and the temperamental Nick Kyrgios.

Serena keeps low profile

Meanwhile, Serena Williams has adopted a low profile ahead of the Australian Open, but rival players admit the American's shadow looms large in Melbourne as

she eyes a record-equalling 24th Grand Slam crown.

Williams won her 23rd title and seventh at Melbourne Park while eight weeks pregnant two years ago, and now attempts to match Margaret Court's mark of 24 singles Majors on the Australian's home soil.

Defending champion and third seed Caroline Wozniacki of Denmark preferred to concentrate on her own prospects, dismissing concerns health problems were affecting her game.

She achieved a career milestone last year to claim her maiden Grand Slam at Melbourne Park, but also revealed she was suffering the debilitating auto-immune condition rheumatoid arthritis.

Wozniacki's vanquished opponent in last year's final, Simona Halep, arrives in Australia with the Number 1 ranking and her confidence overflowing after winning

the French Open.

Second-ranked Angelique Kerber has already indicated her priority for 2019 will be the French Open, the only Slam to elude the 30-year-old German in her career.

Naomi Osaka is the leading contender among the younger generation, warming up for Melbourne by making the semifinals of the Brisbane International.

SHOWPIECE MATCHES

■ **Rod Laver Arena:** 30-Sharapova vs Dart; 2-Nadal vs Duckworth; 2-Kerber vs Hercog; 3-Wozniacki vs Van Uytvanck; 3-Federer vs Istomin.

■ **Margaret Court Arena:** 14-Goerges vs Collins; 5-Stephens vs Townsend; 6-Cilic vs Tomic.

■ **Melbourne Arena:** 5-Anderson vs Mannarino; 22-Bautista Agut vs Murray; 8-Kvitova v Rybarikova.

Roll of honour

Men's singles	Year	Women's singles
Novak Djokovic	2011	Kim Clijsters
Novak Djokovic	2012	Victoria Azarenka
Novak Djokovic	2013	Victoria Azarenka
Stan Wawrinka	2014	Li Na
Novak Djokovic	2015	Serena Williams
Novak Djokovic	2016	Angelique Kerber
Roger Federer	2017	Serena Williams
Roger Federer	2018	Caroline Wozniacki

Vijay Shankar, Gill called up

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

The BCCI's senior selection Committee have chosen Tamil Nadu all-rounder Vijay Shankar and Punjab batsman Shubman Gill as replacements for the suspended Hardik Pandya and K.L. Rahul.

Vijay Shankar will play in the ODI series in Australia, starting from the second match in Adelaide on January 15, while Gill will join Vijay Shankar for the five-match ODI and three-match T20I series in New Zealand.

Rayudu reported
Ambati Rayudu, meanwhile, has been reported for a suspect bowling action during the first ODI in Sydney, the ICC said on Sunday. Rayudu bowled two overs in the game on Saturday, conceding 13 runs.

However, Rayudu can still bowl if the need arises.

I always believed I had the skill-set'

Vijay Shankar looking forward to making contributions that help the side



Vijay Shankar. ■ FILE PHOTO

kar has sent down his seamers usefully. He operates around 130 kmph, keeps it in the right areas and does achieve some bounce with his height and high-arm action and seam movement.

Vijay Shankar is expected to reach Australia in time for the second ODI in Adelaide on Tuesday.

He said, "This is my first trip to Australia and I am excited. I missed an India-A tour of Australia some years ago because of an injury."

Familiar with conditions
Vijay Shankar said, "I am familiar with the conditions in New Zealand. On the A tour, we faced some very good fast bowlers in Doug Bracewell, Lockie Ferguson, James Neesham, and Hamish Bennett, all of them have played for New Zealand."

Vijay Shankar had performed capably in the First Class leg of the New Zealand-A tour too with innings

of 62 at Mount Maunganui and 71 Whangarei. And whenever given the ball, he bowled with control if not explosive speed.

The 27-year-old allrounder said, "I am fitter and mentally stronger now. I always believed I had the skill-set. I am looking forward to fitting into the Indian team and making contributions that help the side's cause."

In the shorter formats, Vijay Shankar has improved his ball-striking ability by practising against the robot-stick – a flexible rod that can hold and release [manually] the ball at great speeds – and employing range-hitting; a centre-wicket practice where distant parts of the boundary ropes are targeted and cleared.

Vijay Shankar is firmly focused but wants to "live the moment rather than being consumed by it" and seeks to "enjoy every bit of his cricket."

On the cusp of history, Indians out to exact revenge against Bahrain

A win or a draw will see Constantine's men progress to the knockout stage of the continental showpiece for the first time

ASIAN CUP

SHYAM VASUDEVAN
SHARJAH

January 14, 2011 saw India slump to a 5-2 loss against Bahrain and exit the AFC Asian Cup after failing to register a single win. Indian football has come a long way since and eight years to the day, the side has a chance to erase the painful memories and re-write history when the two sides face-off in their final group stage match here.

The Blue Tigers have three points to their name after a 4-1 pummelling of Thailand in the opening game, which was followed by a deflating 2-0 loss to the United Arab

Emirates. Bahrain, however, has had a mediocre campaign and has managed to amass only one point from two games, after a 1-1 draw with UAE and a 1-0 loss to Thailand.

Monday night's clash at the Sharjah Football Stadium will be one of the most important games of coach Stephen Constantine's career. A win, or even a draw, will see India progress to the knockout stage of the continental showpiece for the first time, making it the team's biggest achievement on the global scale.

India has had a fairly impressive run at the tournament thus far and has played a more enterprising brand of

football as compared to its opponents.

The team has looked sharp up front and has managed to create plenty of goal-scoring chances, though its finishing needs a little improving. The defence has looked susceptible to aerial deliveries but on the whole, it has been pretty tight at the back.

"Bahrain is a good team, they're very well organised and have some quality players. We expect a tough game. I'm sure they're going to try and attack us, but we're prepared for that," said Constantine on the eve of the game.

Bahrain will head into the match with the sole aim of

claiming all three points if it is to remain in the competition. Constantine acknowledges that this will ensure a thrilling contest.

"The more you have to fight for, the more you have to lose and the harder you have to try. When someone is backed into a corner, he has nothing to lose. They have to win, a draw will do nothing for them," he said.

India's top-scorer Sunil Chhetri is the only player in the current side who had played on 2011 and incidentally, Chhetri had bagged a goal in the 2011 game against Bahrain.

"We haven't achieved anything substantial yet.



What I want to achieve is to reach the top-10 in Asia and rub shoulders with the best. For that, we have to improve a lot. The first step starts with a result against Bahrain," he said.

Indian women set for New Zealand

Direct World Cup entry is primary target, says Mithali Raj

G. VISWANATH
MUMBAI

After going through an upheaval following India's exit from the Twenty20 World Cup in the West Indies and some rancour coming to the fore between India's seniormost player Mithali Raj on one side and Harmanpreet Kaur, Smriti Mandhana and former coach Ramesh Powar on the other, the Indian women's team is all set to embark on a tour of New Zealand for the first time in 12 years.

India captain Mithali Raj, who is set to complete 200 ODIs during the tour, touched upon the need to earn a direct entry into the 2020-21 World Cup and also summed up the recent events that vitiated the atmosphere in the dressing room, at a press conference here on Sunday.

Team profile
Asked whether the controversy had affected the profile of the team, she said: "It did not think of quitting, be-



On a mission: Mithali Raj and W.V. Raman will helm the Indian team's New Zealand visit after 12 years. ■ PRASHANT NAKWAL

(the unpleasant incidents) definitely did affect women's cricket in a not so good way. But we are getting an opportunity to perform and let people talk about the team's performance that will only enhance the profile of the sport."

On whether she had thought of quitting and her future plans, Mithali said: "I did not think of quitting, be-

cause whatever happened, it happened off the field. I don't know where I will be two or three months from now. I don't know whether I will be part of the 2020-21 World Cup. My focus will be on the immediate series against New Zealand. I can't predict or comment about my future. I have never planned throughout my career, it's always been with the flow."

In the last two years, Purima Rau, Tushar Arothe and Powar have been the coaches. The fourth now is W.V. Raman.

"When a coach comes in, we as a team are very vocal and expressive as to what is required, what will benefit the team. The coach and the players have to be on the same page. "I have not trained under him (Raman), but I have met him a couple of times," she said. "He has played and coached teams at various levels; he has the experience and the expertise."

Crucial stage: Raman

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

W.V. Raman feels that events surrounding the performance of the team in the last 18 months made him apply for the head coach job.

"The team reached the final of the 50-over World Cup and the semifinals of the T20 World Cup. That's the reason I put my hat into the ring. There was an indication that team has great talent and are capable of going places.

"They have set a high standard in the last 18 months. It augurs well, and that's the reason everybody should be looking towards a much better showing than they did in the last 18 months.

Given the talent, they should be able to do it."

The former India left-hander added: "Having watched them play and all that has transpired over the last 18 months, this is a very crucial stage. From here they can sort of skyrocket or if things don't go well, can really go down South. I thought they require somebody with experience and I fancied myself."

"Every coaching assignment is a challenge and this is slightly different because it's a different segment. But the common denominator is cricket. In terms of practice and technique, there is nothing much different."

Man United's revival continues

EURO LEAGUES

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
LONDON

Tottenham Hotspur's Premier League title ambitions suffered a major blow as Marcus Rashford's goal gave Manchester United a 1-0 victory at Wembley on Sunday to maintain caretaker manager Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's perfect start.

Rashford beat Tottenham keeper Hugo Lloris from a tight angle in the 44th minute as rejuvenated United claimed a sixth win from six matches since former striker Solskjaer stepped in following the sacking of Jose Mourinho.

United's Spanish keeper David de Gea then produced a series of superb saves to deny Dele Alli, Harry Kane and Toby Alderweireld after a hard-fought 2-1 win over struggling Newcastle on Saturday.

Solskjaer's side remained in sixth spot but is now level



Impenetrable: United's David de Gea brought off a string of saves to deny Tottenham. ■ AFP

on 41 points with Arsenal while Tottenham has 48 points in third place.

Maurizio Sarri warned his Chelsea stars to improve their mentality after Willian's sublime strike sealed a hard-fought 2-1 win over struggling Newcastle on Saturday.

Sarri's side took the lead through Pedro's early goal, but Ciaran Clark snatched a shock equaliser before half-time.

The results: Premier League: Everton 2 (Zouma 61, Calvert-Lewin 90+5) bt Bournemouth 0; Tottenham 0 lost to Manchester United 1 (Rashford 44).

La Liga: Atletico Madrid 1 (Griezmann 57-pen) bt Levante 0.

Saturday: Premier League: Chelsea 2 (Pedro 9, Willian 57) bt Newcastle 1 (Clark 40).

La Liga: Girona 1 (Stuani 12) drew with Alaves 1 (Borja 50); Villarreal 1 (Cabrera 76-0g) lost to Getafe 2 (Jorge Molina 52, Rodriguez Diaz 89).

Raptors reign supreme

Men's doubles tie clinches it against Rockets in final



Mission accomplished: The victorious Bengaluru Raptors squad. • K. MURALI KUMAR

PBL

ASHWIN ACHAL
BENGALURU

The fate of the Premier Badminton League (PBL) title went down to the fifth and final rubber, and it was Bengaluru Raptors which emerged triumphant. With the summit clash tied at 3-3, it was left to the men's doubles specialists to provide a memorable last hurrah.

The packed crowd at the Sree Kanteerava Indoor Stadium rallied behind the home team, cheering every move made by Hendra Satiawan and Mohammad Ahsan.

Tense affair

At the end of a tense affair, Satiawan-Ahsan prevailed 15-13, 15-10 over the Mumbai Rockets duo of Jung Kim-Dae Lee. The entire Bengaluru squad rushed to the court to celebrate, with jubilant coach Arvind Bhat first on the scene.

Earlier, Mumbai took a

2-0 lead, on the back of Kim Jung and Pia Bernadet's 15-8, 15-14 victory over Marcus Ellis and Lauren Smith. Jung-Pia ran away with the first game, showcasing terrific net play and communication.

Ellis-Lauren fought hard in the second to make it 14-14, before a schoolboy error brought their end. Ellis chose to leave a straightforward service, which landed inside.

Srikanth's perfect record
K. Srikanth capped off his unbeaten run in the tournament with a 15-7, 15-10 win over Anders Antonsen. Srikanth started the rubber with a crosscourt smash winner, and didn't look back. The World No.8, his team's star player, notched up his seventh win on the trot.

Bengaluru's Vu Thi made it 3-2 when she cruised past P. Shreyanshi 15-8, 15-9. Sai Praneeth could have

brought home the trophy early with a positive result in the second men's singles, but he came up against an inspired Sameer Verma.

Praneeth looked in control in the early stages, taking the first game. Sameer then caught fire, leaving Praneeth with no answers.

It was exhibition stuff from Sameer in the decider, pulling out the crispest of smashes and most delicate of drops to record a 7-15, 15-12, 15-3 win.

Sameer pulled his side level to 3-3, leaving it to the doubles specialist to provide a fitting end to the tournament.

The result (final): Bengaluru Raptors bt Mumbai Rockets 4-3 (Marcus Ellis & Lauren Smith lost to Kim Jung & Pia Bernadet (T) 8-15, 14-15; K. Srikanth bt Anders Antonsen 15-7, 15-10; Vu Thi (T) bt P. Shreyanshi 15-8, 15-9; Sai Praneeth lost to Sameer Verma 7-15, 15-12, 15-3; Hendra Satiawan & Mohammad Ahsan bt Jung Kim & Dae Lee 15-13, 15-10).

de Kock, Steyn put S. Africa on course

After the wicketkeeper's ton, speedster rattles Pakistan

PAKISTAN IN SA

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
JOHANNESBURG

A century by wicketkeeper Quinton de Kock and a double strike by Dale Steyn kept South Africa on course to complete a series clean sweep on the third day of the third and final Test against Pakistan at the Wanderers Stadium on Sunday.

SCOREBOARD SOUTH AFRICA VS PAKISTAN, THIRD TEST, DAY THREE

South Africa — 1st innings: 262.
Pakistan — 1st innings: 185.
South Africa — 2nd innings: D. Elgar c Sarfraz b Amir 5, A. Markram c Sarfraz b Abbas 21, H. Amla c Sarfraz b Hasan 71, T. de Bruyn c Shafiq b Ashraf 7, Zubayr Hamza lbw b Ashraf 0, T. Bavuma c Sarfraz b Shadab 23, Q. de Kock c Hasan b Shadab 129, V. Philander lbw b Amir 14, K. Rabada c Shadab 0.

Set to make a daunting 381 to win, Pakistan was 153 for three at the close, needing another 228 runs. de Kock made an imperious 129 (138b, 18x4, 1x6), equalling his highest Test score, before South Africa was bowled out for 303.

Imam-ul-Haq and Shan Masood got Pakistan off to their best start of the series, putting on 67 for the first

wicket. But a change of ends brought immediate results for Steyn. The fast bowler had Imam caught behind with a superb delivery and then claimed the wicket of Masood after umpire Joel Wilson originally gave him not out.

Asad Shafiq and Babar Azam saw Pakistan through to the close with an unbeaten stand of 49.

SCOREROAD

SOUTH AFRICA VS PAKISTAN, THIRD TEST, DAY THREE

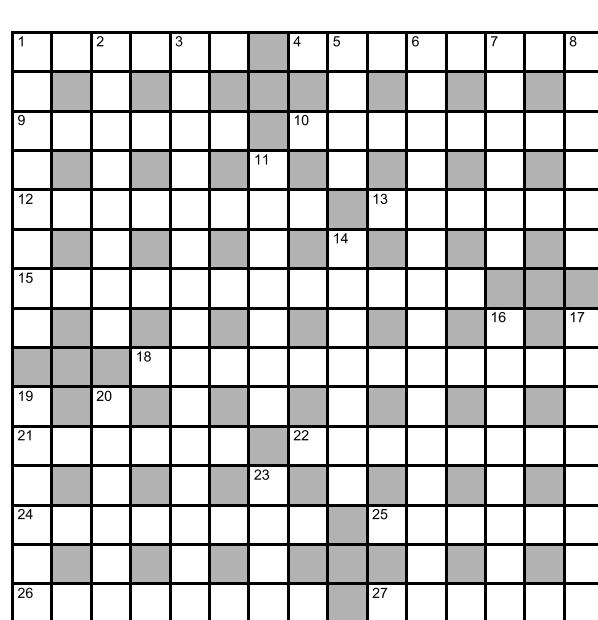
Ashraf 21, D. Steyn (not out) 0, D. Olivier c Sarfraz b Shadab 1; Extras (b-2, lb-6, nb-1, w-1); 11; Total (in 80.3 overs): 303.
Fall of wickets: 1-24, 2-29, 3-45, 4-45, 5-93, 6-195, 7-223, 8-302, 9-302.
Pakistan bowling: Amir 20-2-56-2, Abbas 18-3-73-1, Hasan 17-1-83-1, Ashraf 14-3-42-3, Shadab 11.3-0-41-3.
Pakistan — 2nd innings: Imam-ul-Haq c de Kock b Steyn 35,

Shan Masood c de Kock b Steyn 37, Azhar Ali c de Kock b Olivier 15, Asad Shafiq (batting) 48, Babar Azam (batting) 17; Extras (lb-1); Total (for three wkts. in 40 overs): 153.

Fall of wickets: 1-67, 2-74, 3-104.

South Africa bowling: Steyn 12-1-37-2, Philander 10-3-28-0, Olivier 8-2-41-1, Rabada 10-1-46-0.

THE HINDU CROSSWORD 12523



ACROSS

- 1 Metal bed has almost round shape (6)
- 4 Tax collection is complete waste (8)
- 9 Fix a time before onslaught (6)
- 10 Word list lists Jack's return wearing a halo (8)

12 Cracks appear as girl's admitted amid shouts (8)

13 Food that is served later is corn (6)

15 Number one at hiding these, it's criminal (12)

18 After running a mile talk of improvement (12)

21 Old man could be a hard nut to crack (6)

22 Redeploy all at once, after losing a Knight (8)

24 Scientist's red, not green (8)

25 Make some noise when doctor breaks the law (6)

26 Foreign money comes under a cloud – could be a case of hung jury (8)

27 First Artemis and then a Goddess (6)

DOWN

- 1 Fuel – not even able to support daily business (8)
- 2 Informing to set table outside to catch the sun (8)

(set by Arden)

3 Helen scorns most changes, not one has been seen yet (4,4,7)

5 Fishes on rocks, not right (4)

6 Bank keeps one on tenterhooks – that's another story (8,7)

7 Nothing's clear about the voice (6)

8 Replacement namely by non-professionals (6)

11 Vacant slot for an opener (7)

14 Aim to climb on to a seat (7)

16 Having potential to grow – include those sick in the list (8)

17 It's offensive to see Mike rummage through all the articles (8)

19 Either way it grows on the beach (6)

20 Eggs break, simple! (6)

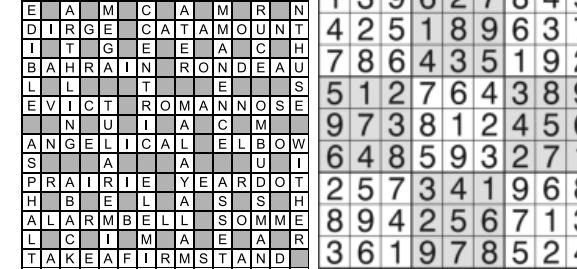
23 Cheese is fine, pour tea later (4)

SUDOKU



DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

Solution to puzzle 12522 Solution to yesterday's Sudoku



FAITH

Ideals of kingship

Tradition holds that kings are the representatives of God on earth and the Ramayana embodies the principles of kingship, besides reinforcing the ideals of human relationships and family values relevant to all times. The rulers of the Solar Dynasty are all reputed for their unstinted commitment to dharma and both Valmiki and Kamban have waxed eloquent about the glories of the kingdom of Ayodhya. One is able to experience the heights of perfection in Ayodhya under Dasaratha's reign through Kamban's poetical graces, pointed out Sri Ram Mohan Doss in a discourse.

When the Ramayana begins, Dasaratha's Ayodhya has already had an ideal spell for 60,000 years. Such is the extent of growth of its hereditary fame that even the celestial beings wish to dwell in this city. The encomiums to hail Dasaratha, 'a king of kings, incarnation of virtue, a loving mother, a medicine to relieve pain and sickness, etc,' flow as an endless list from Kamban to show that he is most fit to be the father of Rama, the very incarnation of the Lord. Generally kings are endowed with good sense, virtue, calmness, valour, generosity, rectitude, etc. All these are inherent in Dasaratha in fullness and he shines in effulgence owing to his goodness in thought, word and deed. His magnanimity extends far and wide. He has performed all the yagas ordained for a king. His subjects are his very life and soul. He is careful not to punish the innocent while he is also alert to see that those who have erred and have to be punished do not go unpunished. The people of Ayodhya in turn are selfless, generous, dedicated and noble.

The golden era of Dasaratha's reign is upheld in impeccable manner during the 14-year phase of Rama Paduka's rule in Ayodhya and also during the period of Rama Rajya.

over two sessions, and rest in the afternoon and at night," she says of her routine. "I get to train with different types of players, the experience has improved my game and made me confident on court."

The results (all finals): Girls:
U-15: Taslim Mir (Gu) bt Manasi Singh (UP) 23-21, 21-16. **Doubles:** Aarya Deshpande & Ananya Shirke (Mah) bt Sakshi Arani & Anushka Mehta (Raj) 21-16, 21-13.

U-17: Akarshi Kashyap (Chd) bt Malvika Bansod (Mah) 21-11, 21-16.

Boys: **U-17:** Gandham Rao (TS) bt Ravi (Har) 15-21, 21-18, 21-11. **Doubles:** Nikunj Pandey & Shubham Patel (Raj) bt C.S. Koushik & R. Vikash Prabhu (TN) 21-15, 22-20.

U-21: Sanjay Aman (Mah) bt Rahul Bharadwaj (Kar) 21-17, 23-21.

"Eight hours of training

over two sessions, and rest in

the afternoon and at night,"

she says of her routine. "I get

to train with different types

of players, the experience

has improved my game and

made me confident on court."

Taslim, who lives in Hyderabad with her mother, gets permission from the Gopi Chand Academy to travel to Gujarat for exams and to catch up with her father (a policeman) and nine-year-old brother, who also plays badminton.

The sport has taken her to

Mandalay (Myanmar) as part

of the Indian squad for the

Badminton Asia junior

championships. She par-

nered Meghana to return

with the U-15 doubles gold.

PBL season four does not

have juniors touring with

squads. So the Pune trip is a

a breather before badminton

classes resume in Gachibowli.

"Eight hours of training

over two sessions, and rest in

the afternoon and at night,"

she says of her routine. "I get

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TV PICKS

Australian Open: SS Select 2 & Sony Six (SD & HD), 5.30 a.m. & 1.30 p.m.
NBA: Sony Ten 1 (SD & HD), 5.30 a.m. & 8 a.m.
Khelo India Youth Games: Star Sports 2 (SD & HD), 1.30 p.m.
South Africa vs Pakistan: Third Test, fourth day, Sony ESPN (SD & HD), 2 p.m.
I-League: Star Sports 3, 4.45 p.m.
PWL: Sony Ten 3 & Six (SD & HD), 6.45 p.m.
Asian Cup: Star Sports 1 & 2 (SD & HD), 9.30 p.m.

IN BRIEF



Griffin on song as Pistons down Clippers

LOS ANGELES
Blake Griffin scored 44 points as Detroit Pistons beat Los Angeles Clippers 109-104 in the NBA on Saturday. Elsewhere, Russell Westbrook tallied 24 points and 10 rebounds and reserve guard Dennis Schroder scored all 10 points in the second half as Oklahoma City Thunder defeated San Antonio Spurs 122-112 on Saturday.
The results: Utah Jazz 110 bt Chicago Bulls 102; Sacramento Kings 104 bt Charlotte Hornets 97; Phoenix Suns 102 bt Denver Nuggets 93; Minnesota Timberwolves 110 bt New Orleans Pelicans 106; Oklahoma City Thunder 122 bt San Antonio Spurs 112; Orlando Magic 105 bt Boston Celtics 103; Miami Heat 112 bt Memphis Grizzlies 108; LA Clippers 104 lost to Detroit Pistons 109.



MUMBAI
Rajasthan Royals has brought back former Team India mental conditioning coach Paddy Upton as the head coach for the forthcoming Indian Premier League season. In his earlier stint, Upton was the head coach for four years and helped the side reach the semifinals in 2013.
PTI



Buenos Aires
Argentine football legend Diego Maradona has undergone a successful surgery for stomach bleeding at a clinic outside Buenos Aires. He is set to be released in a couple of days to resume his duties as manager of Mexican second-division club Dorados de Sinaloa. Efe news reported on Sunday. IANS

Indian Arrows thrashes Lajong

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
SHILLONG

Indian Arrows produced a dominant performance to secure a 3-0 victory over Shillong Lajong in a 12th round I-League football match here on Sunday.

Indian Arrows showed its attacking intent from the first minute and pressed hard. It was constantly troubling the Lajong defence but a good finish eluded.

It took Shillong Lajong around 10 minutes to regroup and start an attack. Lajong first made an attempt to score in the 11th minute, through Kitbrablang, but failed to convert the chance.

Indian Arrows then opened the scoring in the 18th minute through Vikram Pratap. Lalengmawia made it 2-0 in the 32nd minute while Nintoi completed the tally in the first-half injury-time.

Seven-move win for Diptayan

Debashis holds top seed Amonatov, leads with four others

DELHI OPEN

RAKESH RAO
NEW DELHI

Seldom does one get to witness a decisive, seven-move miniature contest involving Grandmasters.

In one such rare occurrence, Diptayan Ghosh was the beneficiary of an oversight by Ziaur Rahman. The veteran Bangladeshi resigned the moment he realised he could not save a minor piece within minutes into the seventh round of the Delhi International Open Grandmasters chess tournament here.

Though Sunday proved an off-day for last year's runner-up Rahman, most title-aspirants stayed in the hunt by treading carefully.

As a result of draws on the top two boards – involving the overnight leaders Debasish Das and Iran's Masoud Mosadeghpour – and victories for Ghosh, Vietnam's Tran Tuan Minh and Belarus' Stupak Kirill, five players shared the lead at six points. Eighteen players, including II Indians, follow at 5.5 points. Three more rounds remain.

Girish stuns Predke
Among those half-point behind the leaders, Girish Koushik made it by stunning second seeded Russian Alex-



Deep in thought: Joint-leader Debasish Das mulling his next move against top seed Farrukh Amonatov. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

andr Predke in 58 moves. The Karnataka youngster called the shots in the second half of the game after Predke wisely traded his rook for a bishop. Girish kept up the pressure and finally crafted a fine win.

On the top board, Debasish is held top seed Farrukh Amonatov in 45 moves after Masoud drew with sixth seed Ivan Popov in 30 moves. Debasish, looking better till the 30th move, misplayed the position and handed over

the advantage to Amonatov. But some accurate defensive moves in the latter stages helped Debasish come out unscathed.

Concurrently, the Category 'C' event for those rated under-1499 opened with what could well be a world record number of entries that stood at 1537. The All India Chess Federation is awaiting a nod from the FIDE, the world body, ratifying the record.

The results: Seventh round:

Debasish Das (6) drew with Farrukh Amonatov (Tjk, 5.5); Ivan Popov (Rs, 5.5) drew with Masoud Mosadeghpour (Iri, 6); Akesej Aleksandrov (Blr, 5) lost to Tran Tuan Minh (Vie, 6).

Ehsan Ghaem Maghami (Iri, 5.5) drew with Abhijeet Gupta (5.5); D. Gukeesh (5.5) drew with S. L. Narayanan (5.5); E. Arjun (5.5) drew with N.R. Visakh (5.5); Ziaur Rahman (Ban, 5) lost to Diptayan Ghosh (6).

N.R. Vignesh (5.5) drew with Deepan Chakkavarthy (5.5); P. Shyam Nikhil (5) lost to Kirill Stupak (Blr, 6).

The results: Seventh round:

It's Sitara vs Butterfly in Byerly Turk Million

HYDERABAD: Local contender Sitara and the Chennai challenger Butterfly may fight out the finish in the Byerly Turk Million (1,200m), the chief event of the races to be held here on Monday (Jan. 14). There will be no false rails.

1. ARISTOCRAT PLATE (1,200m, Cat. II), maiden 3-y-o only (Terms), 1-1 p.m.: 1. Blazer (7) Kuldeep Singh 55, 2. Buzz Light Year (3) Md. Ismail 55, 3. Dillon (5) G. Nares 55, 4. Mehrzad (1) Ashhad Asbar 55, 5. Esteva (6) Akshay Kumar 53.5, 6. Lesley (5) P. Trevor 53.5, 7. Miss Marvelous (9) Sai Kumar 53.5, 8. Red River (2) Koushik 53.5 and 9. Royal Girl (4) Uday Kiran 53.5.

1. ESTEVA, 2. LESLEY, 3. BLAZER

2. STORM TROOPER PLATE (DIV. 1), (1,400m), 5-y-o & over, rated upto 30 (Cat. III), 1-45: 1. Dippy Dip (5) Tanwar 61, 2. Golden Image (7) A.A. Vikrant 61, 3. Rose Patel (3) G. Nares 61, 4. Royal Dancer (4) I. Chisty 61, 5. Golden Xanthus (10) Sal Kumar 60, 6. Semira (2) Akshay Kumar 58.5, 7. Symbol Of Star's (6) P. Trevor 58, 8. All Star General (8) Kuldeep Singh 57, 9. Angels Bay (1) Rafique Sk. 56 and 10. Delmonico (9) Ashhad Asbar 51.

5. RAJA SITHARAM BHUPAL OF DOMARONDA SAMSTHANAM MEMORIAL CUP (DIV. II), (1,200m), rated 58 to 78 (Cat. II), 3-15: 1. Scooby Dooby Doo (2) I. Chisty 60, 2. Champion Bull (3) A. Sandesh 55, 3. Asteria (8) Kuldeep Singh 55.4, 4. King Of Pop (4) Nakhat Singh 55, 5. Newport (9) P. Trevor 54.5, 6. Palace On Wheels (5) Suraj Narredu 54, 7. Magna Carta (8) Sai Kumar 56.5, 8. Flying Spaghetti (2) Koushik 55.5, 9. Digger (II) Md. Ismail 54.5, 10. Big Flash (10) Kiran Naidu 53, 11. Cymbal (9) Akshay Kumar 53 and 12. Royal Green (1) Gaurav Singh 52.5.

1. DIGGER, 2. IKIGAI, 3. CYMBAL

4. RAJA SITHARAM BHUPAL OF DOMARONDA SAMSTHANAM MEMORIAL CUP (DIV. I), (1,200m), 5-y-o & over, rated 58 to 78 (Cat. II), 3-45: 1. Dancing Leaf (8) Jitendra Singh 60, 2. Mt. Baahubali (4) Surya Prakash 59.5, 3. La Romance (7) I. Chisty 56.5, 4. Warrior Supreme (1) Akshay Kumar 55.5, 5. Star Gazer (6) Nakhat Singh 55, 6. Aragona Princess (3) Tanwar 54, 7. Platinum (5) A.A. Vikrant 54.8, 8. Indian Dreams (2) Kuldeep Singh 53.5 and 9. Without Makeup (--) 53.5.

1. WARRIOR SUPREME, 2. LA ROMANCE, 3. ARAGONDA PRINCESS

GLEN, 3. YOGASTHA

7. BYERLY TURK MILLION (1,200m), fillies 3-y-o only (Terms), 4-15: 1. Butterfly (3) P. Trevor 56, 2. Capo Kidnappers (6) Akshay Kumar 56, 3. Liberate (7) Neeraj 56, 4. Roll Call (4) A. Sandesh 56, 5. Sitara (2) Suraj Narredu 56, 6. Star Appearance (--) 56, 7. Gieithorn (5) I. Chisty 52 and 8. Swansea (1) Kuldeep Singh 52.

1. SITARA, 2. BUTTERFLY, 3. CAPE KIDNAPPERS

8. STORM TROOPER PLATE (DIV. II), (1,400m), 5-y-o & over, rated upto 30 (Cat. III), 4-45: 1. Lockhart (2) Sal Kumar 60, 2. Vashishta (7) Afroz Khan 59, 3. Curcumin (10) G. Nares 58.4. His Excellency (8) Akshay Kumar 58.5, 4. Limousine (3) Deepak Singh 57.5, 5. Soul Empress (1) Kiran Naidu 57.5, 6. Willow Glen (1) Jitendra Singh 57.5, 7. Composure (9) B. Dilip 57, 9. Money Time (4) Aneel 56, 10. Darshish (5) Ashhad Asbar 55, 11. Ajmal Birju (12) Santosh Raj 54, 12. Yogastha (6) I. Chisty 54 and 13. Just Like That (13) N. Rawal 53.5.

1. HIS EXCELLENCY, 2. WILLOW

Spanish treat awaits fans

Improved East Bengal will seek to settle scores against CCFC



Getting ready: Chennai City players hone their skills on the eve of the match against East Bengal. ■ M. PERIASAMY

I-LEAGUE

RAYAN ROZARIO
COIMBATORE

East Bengal did not enjoy a great outing at its home against Chennai City FC a couple of months ago.

"They are good players but we are going to play our game and to our strengths."

He said East Bengal is a strong team with a reputable coach (Alejandro Menendez) in its rank.

It may well look forward to do the same against the latter when the two sides clash for the second time in the Hero I-League at the Nehru Stadium here on Monday.

East Bengal has brought in two new Spanish stars in Jaime Santos Colado and An-

tonio Dovate and they have added a lot of energy to the rest of the bunch.

Chennai City chief coach Akbar Nawas knows pretty well that the duo from Spain come with a reputation.

"They are good players but we are going to play our game and to our strengths."

He said East Bengal is a strong team with a reputable coach (Alejandro Menendez) in its rank.

"After we had defeated them, the team has improved much under him and so have we."

"So, we cannot benchmark on the last outing."

Well prepared as always
Talking about the team's preparations, Akbar said it's

done like for any other match and will be competitive like how we have done so far with the other teams."

"Our coaching team has video analysed our opponent's game like how they did for the other games but I have told my boys to go out there and compete."

"Our mindset from the day we started is to take one game at a time," he added.

Thankfully the team has no injury concerns.

And with Nestor Gordillo, Pedro Manzi, Sandro Rodriguez and Roberto Eslava, the awesome foursome from Spain in full flow for Chennai City, it's going to be a Spanish treat from both sides for the fans on match day.

Sacchitt seeded second

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI**

Sacchitt Sharma has been seeded second behind Kasidit Samrej of Thailand in the boys' section in the ITF grade-2 junior tennis tournament to be played at the DLTA Complex from Monday. The quality of competition for the home players could be understood from the fact that Sacchitt was the only seed from India across the boys and girls singles events.

In fact, no Indian player could win any of the qualifying spots owing to the high quality of players.

The seedings: Boys: 1. Kasidit Samrej (Tha); 2. Sacchitt Sharma; 3. Stijn Pel (Ned); 4. Arthur Craig Pantino (Phi); 5. Younes Lalamli Laaroussi (Mar); 6. Alexander Gaponenko (Isr); 7. Sahar Simon (Isr); 8. Guy Den Ouden (Ned).

Girls: 1. Weronika Baszak (Pol); 2. Federica Sacco (Ita); 3. Mai Nappatt Nirundorn (Tha); 4. Jiangxue Han (Chn); 5. Linda Kumhorn (Tha); 6. Ting-Pei Chang; 7. Melissa Boyden (Ned); 8. Anastasia Astakhova (Kaz).

The results (third and final qualifying round): Boys: Bikramjeet Singh Chawla (Us) bt Anurag Agarwal 6-4, 7-6(2); Fons Van Sambeek (Ned) bt V.M. Sandeep 7-5, 6-1; Adil Karimov (Uzb) bt Arjun Sriram 6-2, 2-6, 6-4; Yan Cheng Chen (Tpe) bt Credit Chaiyarin (Tha) 6-3, 6-4. **Girls:** Jiangxue Han (Chn) bt Jagmeet Kaur Grewal 6-4, 3-6, 6-1; Shuoran Wang (Chn) bt Rutuja Chaphalkar (Us) 6-2, 4-6, 6-2; Meshkatolzahrha Safi (Irl) bt Chandrika Joshi 6-1, 6-0; Xinyue Hu (Chn) bt Malaika Rapolu (Us) 7-5, 3-6, 7-5.

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England Lions arrive in Tvm

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM**

A 28-member England Lions team under Sam Billings (captain) and Andy Flower (head coach) arrived here from Abu Dhabi in the wee hours of Sunday to make a start to its 36-day tour of the country.

The Lions will play five one-dayers and two four-day 'Tests' against the India-A squad, which is likely to be announced only after the Ranji Trophy quarterfinals on January 19.

Though its schedule had marked Sunday as a rest day, the team did make its way to the practice venue – the St. Xavier's Stadium, Thumba – for a light warm-up session.

The one-dayers to be played at the Sports Hub, Kariyavattom will be on January 23, 25, 27, 29 and 31, with a 9 a.m. start. The 'Tests' will be played in Krishnagiri (Wayanad) from February 7 to 10 and in Mysuru from February 13 to 16.

Thiruvananthapuram is also scheduled to host the South African under-19 side for two 'Tests' and a quadrangular involving India-A and B teams and either Oman or the UAE.

National u-23 women's cricket

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
KOCHI**

The BCCI National under-23 women's cricket championship begins at the St. Paul's College ground, Kalamassery, and the Rajagiri Engineering College ground, Kakkadan, on Monday.

Kochi is the venue for the Group A matches and seven teams – Baroda

IN BRIEF



Sleeping pill that alerts you in response to threat

TOKYO Japanese scientists have discovered a new class of sleeping pill that can wake you up in response to a threat. The dual orexin receptor antagonists (DORAs) selectively targeted the brain's sleep or wake pathways, which gives them safety advantages over traditional pills, known as benzodiazepines. IANS



New species of antibiotic-resistant bacteria found

BEIJING Researchers have discovered new species of antibiotic-resistant bacteria in the blood of two patients in China, according to a study. The study showed that the patients were carrying unidentified species of *Enterobacter huaixiensis* and *Enterobacter chuanzaensis* that did not respond to penicillin or cephalosporin group of antibiotics. IANS



Study on back pain patterns a ray of hope

TORONTO Scientists have analysed patterns in back pain over time, identifying factors that can help better personalise the medication and therapies to treat different patients. The study identifies patient characteristics and the extent of medication use associated with different patterns. PTI

Noted writer Neelum Saran Gour bags *The Hindu* Prize for fiction

Bengali writer Manoranjan Byapari wins in non-fiction category at Lit for Life

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI

Noted English writer Neelum Saran Gour, author of *Requiem in Raga Janki* and Bengali writer and socio-political activist Manoranjan Byapari, author of *Interrogating my Chandal Life: An Autobiography of a Dalit*, bagged *The Hindu* Prize 2018 for fiction and non-fiction respectively at *The Hindu* Lit for Life 2019 here on Sunday.

N. Ravi, Publisher and former Editor-in-Chief of *The Hindu* presented the award to Ms. Gour. In her acceptance speech, Ms. Gour said she was short of words to describe the feeling and thanked the jury for the award. The award includes a citation and a cash prize of ₹5 lakh.

Mr. Ravi said literature and writing have been of particular interest to *The Hindu* as a newspaper and *The Hindu* Prize for Fiction was instituted in 2010 to recognise excellence in Indian writing in English. "Since then, we have been gratified that the number of books



Top honours: Neelum Saran Gour and Manoranjan Byapari with their awards at the Lit For Life Festival. ■ RAGU

coming for consideration, the quality of writing and the variety of themes have all grown substantially."

Director of The Hindu Group of Publications and Festival Director and Curator of *The Hindu* Lit for Life Nirnala Lakshman and members of the jury – Malayalam writer Paul Zacharia, writer and author Githa Hariharan, writer and critic Radha Chakravarty, poet A.J. Thomas and poet and artist Arundhati Subramanian

were present on the occasion.

New category

Historian and biographer Rajmohan Gandhi handed over the award to Mr. Byapari in the presence of his translator Sipra Mukherjee. Though *The Hindu* Prize has been given for fictional works, the award for non-fiction was instituted this year. The prize includes a citation and a cash award of ₹5 lakh.

An emotional Mr. Byapari

said whatever he wanted to speak was already published in his book and said: "I didn't think I will reach here!"

Members of the jury for the award – sociologist and academician Shiv Visvanathan, former Consulting Editor of *Seminar* Harsh Sethi, publisher Kamini Mahadevan and sociologist and scholar Chandan Gowda – were present.

American novelist Daniel Handler, who writes under the pen name Lemony Snicket handed over *The Hindu* Young World-Goodbooks Award for Best Book Fiction to Venita Coelho for *Bo No: 32*. Mamta Nainy's *A Brush with Indian Art* received *The Hindu* Young World-Goodbooks Award for Best Book Non-Fiction.

The Hindu Young World-Goodbooks Award for Best Picture Book: Story went to Vinayak Varma for his work in *Angry Akku* and *The Hindu* Young World-Goodbooks Award for Best Picture Book: Illustration went to Rajiv Eipe for his work in *Amma-chi's Amazing Machines*.

Coming, a film on bear that served in Second World War

Corporal Wojtek had his own paybook and rations



Comrades in arms: Wojtek among the soldiers of the 22nd Polish Artillery Company in 1943; and right, the brown bear carrying a tree trunk in Castrocaro, Italy, on March 22, 1945. ■ AFP

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
WARSAW

During Second World War, Wojciech Narebski and his fellow Polish servicemen had to lift crate after heavy metal crate of artillery. Fortunately for them, one of the soldiers had superhuman strength: Corporal Wojtek, a Syrian brown bear.

"When he saw that we were struggling, he'd want to help... He'd come over, grab a crate and carry it to the truck," Mr. Narebski, now 93, was speaking of his days with Wojtek in the 22nd Artillery Supply Company.

This can be heavy work, even for a bear. When Wojtek got tired, he would simply stack one crate on top of the other, "which also helped us, because we didn't have to lift the crate off the ground," recounted the veteran who spent two and a half years with the friendly giant he considered a brother.

Taste for beer

"Of course he got a reward. Honey, marmalade. That was his favourite."

Wojtek the Bear also liked to drink beer and smoke (or

rather eat) cigarettes, take showers, snuggle with his handler at night, and wrestle with his comrades.

When an opponent lost, Wojtek would lick their face in apology.

Old photos show the bulky beast – who grew to be over six feet tall and weighed about 220 kg – giving bear hugs, opening his toothy jaw wide for food, and enjoying a day at the beach with smiling soldiers.

The unbelievable true story of the orphaned cub, which was found by Polish troops in Persia and then travelled through Iraq, Syria, Palestine, Egypt, Italy and Scotland as a morale-booster, is now being turned into an animated movie.

The British-Polish filmmakers hope to release the family-friendly *A Bear Named Wojtek* in 2020 on the 75th anniversary of Victory in Europe Day.

But the film's British producer, Iain Harvey, was skeptical when Scottish animator Iain Gardner first approached him.

"To be honest I thought, 'This man has had too many whiskys,'" Mr. Harvey said.

before he realised that: "For once the magic is real."

Douce Wojtek was an enlisted soldier, with his own paybook, rations, and rank – a status he needed to sail from Egypt to Italy with his fellow comrades.

"The port authority is being difficult about the bear and monkey," reads a 1944 entry in the company's journal.

Yes, there was a monkey too.

Need for a companion

In fact there were hundreds of non-humans milling about during the war, according to wartime Polish refugee Krystyna Iwell.

You have no mother, you have no sisters, you have no father, you're all alone, you might die, so of course you find something to love," said the 83-year-old, who put together a London exhibition and compiled a book: *Wojtek Album*.

"Stray dogs, foxes, horses. You name it. Everybody wanted a pet... I remember a bloke who had a ferret, and used to have it under his khaki shirt and the head would appear," she added.

'Women less sensitive to pain than men'

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE
TORONTO

Women tend to forget pain that they suffered more quickly than men, confirmed a new study in mice and humans, challenging the widely held belief that the fairer sex are more sensitive to pain than men.

While men (and male mice) remembered earlier painful experiences clearly, women (and female mice) did not seem to forget.

When experiencing pain again, men seemed to be stressed and hypersensitive in remembering, but women

were not stressed by their earlier experiences of pain.

"If remembered pain is a driving force for chronic pain and we understand how pain is remembered, we may be able to help some sufferers by treating the mechanisms directly," said lead author Loren Martin, Assistant Professor at the UTM.

"What was even more sur-

prising was that men reacted more and that they were stressed out," he added.

For the study, published in the *Current Biology* journal, the team conducted experiments on both humans and mice where they were taken to specific rooms and made to experience low levels of pain caused by heat delivered to their hind paw or forearm.

Barrel voyage

Barrel voyage



Jean-Jacques Savin, 71, working on a ship made from a barrel at the shipyard in Ares, France. He is attempting since December 26, 2018, to cross the Atlantic Ocean in his vessel, pushed only by the ocean currents. ■ AFP

Chinese find a way to destress, they head straight to 'anger room'

Customers vent their frustration on household objects while staff play music

REUTERS
BEIJING

It took Smash customer Qiu Siyu just a few sharp blows with a baseball bat to wreck what looked like an old car radio, after which two friends battered telephones, audio speakers, rice cookers and even a mannequin.

All three paid 158 yuan (\$23) to spend half an hour in an "anger room" in Beijing, where patrons wearing protective gear use hammers and bats to vent their frustration on household objects while staff play music of their choice in the background.

Qiu, a bespectacled 16-year-old high school student with braces, said she was there to vent anger about school.



Anger management: A woman smashing a computer keyboard in an anger room in Beijing. ■ REUTERS

her friends.

Not promoting violence

Not intended to promote violence, Smash aims to help people deal with the pressures of living in big cities like Beijing, Ms. Jin said, adding that their target customers are between 20 and

35 years old. Another customer, Liu Chao, 32, looked relaxed and pleased after his session. "If you have money, you can smash anything – smash some TVs, computers, wine bottles, furniture, mannequins, but the only thing you can't do is to smash someone," said Ms. Liu.

Similar ventures already exist in other countries, including the U.S.

Ms. Jin said around 600 people visit Smash each month. "A woman brought all her wedding photos here, and she smashed them all," Ms. Jin said.

"They affirm our belief that we've provided a safe place to let out negative energy. And we are happy for that."

For Saudi millennials, small is the new beautiful

In the oil-rich country, grooms are increasingly hosting weddings at home, defying family traditions to save money

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
JEDDAH

It was a Saudi wedding like any other – clutching a decorative sword, the groom bobbed and swayed in a traditional dance. But there was one striking difference – a tiny guest list.

Weddings in the oil-rich kingdom are typically lavish affairs, with a bulging guest list which is seen both as a social obligation and a symbol of affluence.

Such expectations are often a source of economic strain for grooms, who foot most of the bill which includes renting out exorbitantly-priced marriage halls where nuptial celebrations are usually held.

But millennials like Basil Albani are increasingly hosting weddings at home, defying

ing family traditions and social pressure and making huge savings instead.

Fewer than two dozen close relatives and friends were invited to the 26-year-old insurance executive's recent wedding feast comprising kabsa – a traditional rice and meat dish – at his ancestral home in western Jeddah.

And there are signs of an impact on the Saudi wedding market.

"People go all crazy with weddings, inviting hundreds of guests and spending millions in one night to get the best singers, best bands, best thobes," said Maan Albani, the 21-year-old brother of the groom, dressed in a gold-trimmed cloak.

"We wanted to do something different with a smaller celebration at home, which

can also be fun."

Statistics on frugal homes are hard to come by, but two wedding planners with a large Saudi clientele said that average spend

on marriages had dropped by 25% over the past year, with many trimming back the pomp and pageantry.

He created a family storm when he suggested a small soiree in the local community centre for his own wedding in 2016.

A physical altercation broke out with his elder brother, who branded the idea shameful because "people will call us poor".

His parents and those of



Savings mindset: A file photo of Basil Albani posing for a selfie with his friends at his wedding in Jeddah. ■ AFP

Nobel-winning scientist loses honorary titles

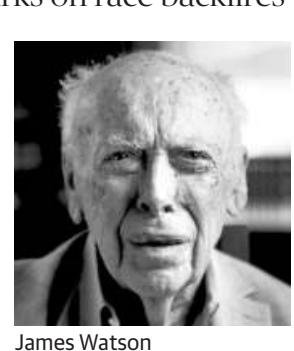
James Watson's remarks on race backfires

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE
WASHINGTON

Nobel laureate James Watson, co-discoverer of the DNA helix and father of the Human Genome Project, has been stripped of honorary titles at the laboratory where he worked for four decades, following "repulsive" remarks on race and ethnicity.

The Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, the New York facility which also has a school named after him, said it was acting in response to his remarks made in a television documentary aired this month.

The 90-year-old geneticist resigned under fire from his laboratory in 2007 after telling a British newspaper that people of African descent tend to have lower intelligence. However, in the new documentary titled *American Masters: Decoding Watson*, when asked about his views on race in the decade since his departure from the lab, Mr. Watson said he stood by his former remarks, citing the difference in IQ tests results to suggest black inferiority.



James Watson

**AIIMS to shift its OPD soon**

The institute's OPD is all set to move to a more spacious accommodation by the end of March **Page 2**

**Sweet shop in every corner**

As the historic Kumbh Mela draws near, we take a pilgrimage of another kind through Allahabad **Page 4**

**Stitching ties, crafting ideas**

Indian and Indonesian artisans showcase their works at the Dastkari Haat Crafts Bazaar **Page 5**

**Our pot runneth over**

The harvest festival brings us the freshest produce that strengthens our immunity **Page 6**

IN BRIEF**Woman sneaks into high-security area**

NEW DELHI Security forces at India Gate went into a tizzy on Sunday after a woman sneaked into a high-security area during the Republic Day rehearsal and shouted anti-India slogans. The police said that a medical examination revealed that the woman was mentally challenged.

CITY ▶ PAGE 3

Speeding luxury car hits bike, two critically injured

NEW DELHI An assistant manager and a trainee with a multinational fast-food chain were critically injured after a speeding luxury car hit their bike in Delhi's Punjabi Bagh on January 12. After hitting the vehicle, the driver of the car managed to flee from the spot, but was later arrested.

CITY ▶ PAGE 3

Air quality of Delhi-NCR

Delhi	414	Gurugram	324
Ghaziabad	428	Faridabad	422
Noida	425	Greater Noida	424
Good	0-50	51-100	101-200
Poor	201-300	301-400	>401

AIR QUALITY INDEX AT 4 P.M., YESTERDAY (AVERAGE OF PAST 24 HOURS) SOURCE: CPCB



posted to the Training Institute, Gurugram, where she stayed till 2007.

The government claimed that she, then, requested for some specific postings in the organisation and starting filing complaints against senior officers. She complained of sexual harassment by one Sunil Uke, then Joint Secretary, and her senior.

'Erratic behaviour'
The government termed her conduct as "indulging in erratic behaviour and indisciplined". It also alleged that when the complaints committee was examining her case in 2007, the officer alleged that she would disrobe and stand naked in front of the official residence of the Secretary.

The government argued that the incident in which she attempted to die by suicide in front of the Prime Minister's residence on August 19, 2008, attracted electronic and print media. This exposed and compromised her as an intelligence officer.

Eventually, the government invoked its powers under Rule 135. This became a subject matter of challenge before the Central Administrative Tribunal, which quashed the order of compulsory retirement. The government then moved the HC against the CAT's verdict.

The former official, who personally argued her case, claimed that Rule 135 is so secret that officials to whom it applies may never know of the factum of its existence – leave alone what it says. The former RAW official submitted that she was subjected to "utterly unwarranted behaviour and open sexual harassment by Mr. Uke".

Her repeated attempts to have this investigated, through complaints to her superior officials and repeated efforts to secure justice at the departmental level met with deaf ears. She also

made certain complaints against Ashok Chaturvedi, who was the former Secretary of RAW.

'Lack of sensitivity'

The complaints committee concluded that the allegations made against Mr. Chaturvedi were unsubstantiated.

However, the panel made certain observations about the lack of sensitivity on the part of the head of the department.

The HC said: "The reports of these committees [Shashi Prabha Committee and the Rathi Vinay Jha Committee] found sufficient material to indict the two officials against whom she had complained...The report also comments adversely on the failure, either deliberate or due to callousness, of the superior officers in ensuring that the former official's posting to the Training Institute for over a month and a half... could not be made effective, because the incumbent Director was not relieved."

"Given the situation that she was in, the official perhaps underwent trauma and agony," the Bench observed.



Kaifayatullah Bukhari (left) and Naved Mustaq.

▪ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

pions.

It has been learnt that small weapons are difficult to arrange in J&K and that the militants are procuring these arms from the National Capital Region.

"We received a tip-off regarding a Hizbul Mujahideen militant who procured sophisticated weapons and would join the ranks of the group as an active militant. A special team was sent to J&K. The team shared the details with the Shopian district police and a trap was laid... two active Hizbul Mujahideen militants were arrested.

The team recovered one

pistol and 14 live cartridges from the accused.

During interrogation, the militants said they were in contact with Naved Mustaq, a former constable and a resident of Nazneenpora, Shopian. Naved aka Naveed Babu had joined the J&K police in 2012 and served as a constable before joining the militant group. He decamped with four weapons in 2017 and is believed to be a district commander of the Hizbul Mujahideen.

Underground hideout

During the operation, an underground hideout, believed to be of Naved Babu, was also discovered.

On September 6, 2018, two militant of ISIS-JK Parvaiz Rashid Lone and Jamshed Zahoor Paul, both residents of Shopian, were arrested by the Delhi Police Special Cell near Red Fort in the national capital, along with arms and ammunition. On November 24, three active militants Tahir Ali Khan, Haris Mustaq Khan and Asif Suhail Nadaf were arrested by the Special Cell in Srinagar. They were carrying hand grenades and weapons.

PM spreading lies and misleading nation: AAP

+ Party reacts to speech given by PM Narendra Modi at Ramlila Maidan on Jan 12

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

Reacting to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's speech at Ramlila Maidan on January 12, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) said that the PM was spreading lies ahead of the 2019 Lok Sabha election.

"The AAP is very clear... the coming Lok Sabha election will determine whether India will remain a democracy. With the Modi-led government approaching the end of its five year undemocratic, anti-federal and dictatorial tenure, the voters of India will decide whether such a regime was in their interest," said the AAP in a statement.

It added that the BJP-led government has no concrete achievement to show the country and that the PM was relying on lies about his tenure to mislead the nation.

The Modi-led government left no stone unturned

The Aam Aadmi Party is very clear... the coming Lok Sabha election will determine whether India will remain a democracy

STATEMENT BY THE AAP

Minister had been raided by the CBI and the Delhi Police.

'Strangled elected govt'

"Residences of the Deputy Chief Minister and two Ministers were raided and they were questioned by central agencies... at least 20 MLAs were arrested on fake charges by politically manipulated Delhi Police and all cases which have been tried so far in courts have fallen flat," said the AAP.

It added that more than 400 files of the Delhi government were illegally seized in a bid to implicate the Chief Minister and Council of Ministers in fake cases, and officers were instigated to remain on strike for four months to paralyse the elected government.

"Officers were directed to speak publicly against the elected government in violation of all laws and rules. Those officers who followed

the Modi government's illegal directions were rewarded and those who opposed it were punished. All important policies and welfare measures of the elected Delhi government were stalled through the illegal use of the Lieutenant-Governor office," the AAP stated.

The party also attacked the PM on his claims of providing a corruption-free government. It said that the PM had been exposed by the way his Centre removed CBI director Alok Verma as he was allegedly going to start a probe into the Rafale deal.

The AAP added that it would be coming out with details of how the Modi government destroyed institutions and democracy during the last five years so that voters know the reality before they decide the future of the country in 2019.

SEE ALSO ▶ PAGE 2

in targeting its political opponents, using all its might through the illegal and blatant misuse of central agencies, and it destroyed all institutions of the country. It is a joke that the PM is talking about having been targeted by the previous central government when he was the Chief Minister of Gujarat and is trying to gain sympathy by claiming he was quizzed for nine hours," said the AAP.

The AAP accused the PM of murdering democracy and strangulating the elected government in Delhi. It also highlighted how the office and home of the Delhi Chief

Minister had been raided by the CBI and the Delhi Police.

'Midnight raids'

Quoting the family members of several workers arrested by the police, the fact-finding team, in its report, said that the workers were picked up near midnight by a team of police from three nearby police stations of Shahjahanpur, Neemrana and Behror in Alwar.

The injured workers included men and women, permanent and contract employees of different companies, but the president of the

workers and also fired rubber bullets, lobbed tear gas shells and water cannons against men and women workers... injuring 40 people, with many requiring hospitalisation for fractures and head injuries," stated the fact-finding team.

"The injured workers included men and women, permanent and contract employees of different companies, but the president of the

police also committed excesses, kicking one Deep Singh while swearing at him, dragging him out of his home in Behror around 11 p.m. Champa, wife of one Ajay Kumar, said the police who came to arrest him were drunk and disrespectful towards her. They showed up at the home around midnight... the couple were well and resting... Champa even lost consciousness during the raid," said the report.

"Preeti, wife of one Ghanshyam Saini, said that eight policemen jumped into their compound in Behror without ringing the bell. Her neighbour, Lal Chand Meher, was also picked up. Lal's wife Jyoti showed the fact-finding team hospital records revealing that her husband had been hurt in the lathicharge... Lal was prescribed medicine for a wound on his thigh," said the report.

"During the arrests, the

Back in action

Former Delhi Chief Minister and Congress city unit president Sheila Dikshit flags off a campaign rally, organised by the Youth Congress to highlight the Rafale deal 'scam', in Nizamuddin on Sunday. ▪ R.V. MOORTHY

Arrest of Neemrana factory workers arbitrary: fact-finding team

Panel was probing Jan 8 clash between police and workers; report accuses factory's management of 'unfair labour practices'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

GURUGRAM

An 11-member fact-finding team set up to probe the January 8 clash between the police and protesting workers of Daikin Airconditioning India Pvt. Ltd. in Neemrana, has stated that the arrest of the employees were "arbitrary" and "backed by no evidence".

The team, which included two members from the People's Union for Civil Liberties, added that the factory's management must put an end to the "unfair labour practices" and "oppressive working conditions".

Met workers' families
The fact-finding team visited Neemrana last week and met the families of the factory staff, who have been demanding that the management recognise the union of the workers and their democratic and trade union rights. On January 8, around



The accused being brought to a local court two days after the January 8 clash. The report noted that all the arrested workers, except one, were permanent employees of Daikin Airconditioning India Pvt. Ltd. ▪ FILE PHOTO

When the workers' rally reached the Daikin company gate around 2 p.m. and tried to raise the union's flag, they were brutally attacked by around 150 police personnel

REPORT BY AN 11-MEMBER FACT-FINDING TEAM

Daikin Air Conditioning Mazdoor Union, Rukumudeen, and general-secretary Daulat Ram, were particularly targeted," it added.

Midnight raids

Quoting the family members of several workers arrested by the police, the fact-finding team, in its report, said that the workers were picked up near midnight by a team of police from three nearby police stations of Shahjahanpur, Neemrana and Behror in Alwar.

The injured workers included men and women, permanent and contract employees of different companies, but the president of the

police also committed excesses, kicking one Deep Singh while swearing at him, dragging him out of his home in Behror around 11 p.m. Champa, wife of one Ajay Kumar, said the police who came to arrest him were drunk and disrespectful towards her. They showed up at the home around midnight... the couple were well and resting... Champa even lost consciousness during the raid," said the report.

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All the arrested workers were permanent staff, except

Safdarjung Hospital docs to go on strike today

Demand better security at institute

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

Doctors at Safdarjung Hospital will go on an indefinite strike starting Monday to demand improved security at the institute, following an assault on one of their colleagues on Sunday morning.

The first attempt at forming the union was in 2013, with a two-month strike, but the management was able to bring a stay order. A later attempt to form a union was countered by terminating most of the union office bearers and active members, said the report.

The third attempt to register the union was successful with intervention from the Rajasthan High Court on August 29, 2018, but the management refused to recognise the union or negotiate with the office bearers, despite it being an independent, registered trade union, added the report.

Following the assault, emergency services at the hospital were affected as resident doctors stayed away from work.

Akshay Kumar (24), the son of a Delhi police head constable posted at Safdarjung Enclave police station, had visited the hospital

with his friend around 7 a

AIIMS in Delhi

- Caters to 35 lakh OPD patients each year
- Has 55 departments
- Has 640 faculty members, 2,000 resident doctors and 5,100 staff nurses



- The new OPD will be able to accommodate 10,000 patients in one go, 2,000 more than the number of cases handled in the old OPD daily

National Centre for Ageing

- A 200-bed block
- Will have a dedicated operation theatre and OPD
- Being constructed at a cost of ₹150 crore



Burns and Plastic Surgery Block

- Specialised ward for burn patients
- To be built next to the Trauma Centre
- ₹100 crore sanctioned for the project



- The Union Cabinet had earlier this year approved a proposal to establish three new AIIMS

Vijaynagar in Jammu's Samba at a cost of ₹1,661 crore
Awantipora in Kashmir's Pulwama at a cost of ₹1,828 crore
Rajkot in Gujarat at a cost of ₹1,195 crore

ILLUSTRATION: RITESH KUMAR

AIIMS to shift its OPD to more spacious accommodation

Besides the new Outpatient Department, located just 500 metres away in the adjacent Masjid Moth area and expected to be functional by March, AIIMS will also get a National Centre for Ageing, and a Burns and Plastic Surgery Block soon, reports *Bindu Shajan Perappadan*



Patients waiting outside the outpatient department (OPD) at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences in New Delhi. Nearly 8,000 patients visit the OPD at the institute daily. ■ PRADEEP KUMAR



The All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) is all set to shift its existing outpatient department (OPD) and move into a more spacious accommodation 500 metres away in the adjacent Masjid Moth area by the end of March.

Currently catering to a patient load of 8,000 per day, the old OPD, hospital sources said, needs to be "decluttered urgently".

With the new 93,000 sq m OPD, AIIMS will be able to accommodate 10,000 patients in one go.

The new block will have the standard clinical and operational areas, and procedure rooms.

To make the transition seamless for patients visiting AIIMS, the institute will run free transport services between the main campus and

the new OPD block.

Departments which need more space will shift to the old OPD building, noted a senior AIIMS official, adding that "we also need space for research, which is the primary focus of the institute".

"The shift is aimed at streamlining a patient's AIIMS experience, and to provide better care in the shortest possible time and in the most systematic manner. Some departments will continue here [on the main campus] and we will ensure that the shift is gradual," he said.

"AIIMS, Delhi, gets patients from across the country. They are often referred here in a critical condition. The institute caters to a patient load many times over and above its actual capacity. The government has been in the process of allowing growth in terms of additional beds and expansion of the existing institute

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HEALTH MINISTRY OFFICIAL

al beds and expansion of the existing institute," said a Health Ministry official.

Besides expanding its OPD services, the institute is

also building a new block specifically to offer treatment to the older population and burn victims.

An official said the institute understood the need for special care for this section of the population, hence the move.

According to the 2011 census, there are nearly 104 million elderly persons (aged 60 years and above) in India – 53 million women and 51 million men.

A report released by the United Nations Population Fund and HelpAge India suggests that the number of is expected to grow to 173 million by 2026.

It is in this light that AIIMS has started work on building the National Centre for Ageing – a 200-bed block with a dedicated operation theatre.

Being constructed at a cost

of ₹150 crore, the facility is expected to be open by March next year.

"The facility will have its own OPD, which will ensure that older patients are catered to in the same block," said an AIIMS official.

AIIMS has also received a nod to build a new Burns and Plastic Surgery Block,

which aims to take the pressure off the Trauma Centre,

which currently caters to

these patients, and shift

these patients into a special-

ised ward.

Coming up next to the Trauma Centre, ₹100 crore has been sanctioned to the institute for this project. "Though staff has not been sanctioned for the facility so far, we shall begin recruitment soon," added the AIIMS official.

The Union Cabinet had

earlier this year approved a proposal to establish three new AIIMS – at Vijaynagar in Jammu's Samba (at a cost of ₹1,661 crore); at Awantipora in Kashmir's Pulwama (at a cost of ₹1,828 crore); and at Rajkot in Gujarat (at a cost of ₹1,195 crore).

Large pool of doctors'

"The three new institutes will not only transform health education and training but also address the shortfall of healthcare professionals in the region. These new institutes will serve the dual purpose of providing super-specialty health care to the population closer to their homes and also create a large pool of doctors and other health workers in various faculty and non-faculty posts."

"Each new AIIMS will add 100 undergraduate [MBBS] and 60 BSc [Nursing] seats. They will have 15-20 super-specialty departments and also add around 750 hospital beds. Each new AIIMS will cater to around 1,500 OPD patients per day and around 1,000 IPD patients per month," he added.

Kejriwal will not contest LS poll from Varanasi'

He wants to focus on his State, AAP to field another candidate: Sanjay Singh

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

LUCKNOW

The Aam Aadmi Party on Sunday said its convener and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal will not contest from Varanasi in the coming Lok Sabha elections but the party will field a strong candidate for the seat.

"Mr. Kejriwal will not contest the Lok Sabha poll as he wants to give special focus to his State. The AAP will con-

test on all Lok Sabha seats in Delhi, Punjab, Haryana and Goa. The party will contest on some seats in Uttar Pradesh. The final modalities will be worked out by February. Apart from Varanasi, the party will contest from seats in eastern and western UP, where the organisation is strong," AAP spokesperson and Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh told *PTI* on the phone.

Mr. Singh said the AAP was working on issues like education, health, farmers, power and providing drinking water in Delhi.

"If we foray into national politics, our issues will be education for all, free education to the economically weaker sections of society, ending unemployment and implementing the recommendations of the Swaminathan Commission," he said.

Reacting to a recent statement by Mr. Kejriwal to not vote for the Congress in the coming Lok Sabha elections, Mr. Singh said, "He was quoted out of context. He had said that in a meeting in the Capital that if you want to defeat the BJP, then do not waste your vote by casting it in favour of the Congress. His statement was in the context of Delhi, where the AAP is contesting on all seats."

CM attacks BJP over fodder for cattle

He was speaking at an event in a cow shelter in Haryana's Sonipat on Sunday

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

Speaking at a cow shelter in Sonipat on Sunday, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal attacked the Bharatiya Janata Party by comparing the Haryana government's efforts to take care of cows with that of his government and said, "Those who ask for votes in the name of cows should at least arrange for their fodder."

"I have learnt that the Haryana government only keeps aside ₹140 per cow per year for their well-being, which comes to about 40 paise per day... But in Delhi, ₹40 is provided per cow per day, following directions by the Supreme Court"

are supposed to pay half the amount or ₹20 but have not done so for the last three years.

Mr. Kejriwal also attacked the BJP-run municipal corporations. He claimed they

taking care of them, Mr. Kejriwal condemned "politicisation" of the issue, which he said was being done across the country today.

The Leader of Opposition in the Delhi Assembly Vijen-

der Gupta had earlier condemned what he termed as "politics" being played on the issue of cow shelters by Mr. Kejriwal. Mr. Gupta said the Delhi government was avoiding its own responsibility by blaming the civic bodies.

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Speaking about how cows are worshipped in his household and the importance of

the Supreme Court

ARVIND KEJRIWAL

Delhi Chief Minister

BJP wants to strip SC/ ST/ OBC, Dalits of their constitutional rights: AAP leader

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

Aam Aadmi Party leader Raghub Chandha on Sunday said the BJP was using the 10% reservation Bill for the economically weak as an appeasement ploy before the general election.

Addressing a 'Samvidhan Samman Sabha' at Harkesh Nagar in Tughlakabad Mr. Chandha told the gathering that he had come to warn them that "the BJP wants to change the Constitution of Babasaheb Ambedkar and

wants to strip the SC/ ST/ OBC [Scheduled Castes / Scheduled Tribes / Other Backward Classes] and Dalits of their constitutional rights".

In 2015, Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh [RSS] chief Mohan Bhagwat had said he wants to end reservation for Dalits and OBCs. Now the BJP wants to snatch the constitutional right of reservation of the exploited and the disadvantaged sections," Mr. Chandha said.

He added that divisive and

casteist forces like the RSS, which was the ideological master of the Bharatiya Janata Party, were determined to destroy the cultural fabric of India.

The AAP leader said the BJP was trying to divide the people on the basis of regions by targeting people from Purvanchali across India.

"Only a few months ago, BJP leaders had beaten up Purvanchalis on the streets of south Delhi and continue to harass them. BJP leaders

Good harvest



People celebrate Lohri on a cold evening in New Delhi on Sunday. Bonfires, an important part of the festivities, are lit as families celebrate the onset of the harvest season. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

B NO-NDE

IN BRIEF



City's air quality in 'severe' category

NEW DELHI
Delhi's air quality was recorded in the 'severe' category on Sunday due to reduced wind speed even as authorities have forecast rain in the next couple of days, which they said might lower the pollution level. The overall PM2.5 level – fine particulate matter in the air with a diameter of less than 2.5 micrometres – in Delhi was at 273, while the PM10 level was at 426, it said. PTI

Man charred to death in fire mishap

GAZIABAD
A 50-year-old man was charred to death in a fire mishap in Ved Vihar Colony of Loni town, the police said on Sunday. "An electric short circuit on the ground floor of a multi-storey building caused the fire. Seven bikes parked there caught fire and soon their fuel tanks exploded. The fire spread to 24 flats in the building," said DIG Upendra Agarwal. Sunil Sagar, a taxi driver, died in the fire. His son Rohit is critical. PTI

'Look into claims of diesel cars inside ITPO'

NEW DELHI
The NGT has directed the traffic police to look into a plea alleging that diesel vehicles were being operated inside the India Trade Promotion Organisation premises at Pragati Maidan here even though only CNG vehicles are allowed. A Bench headed by NGT chairperson Justice Adarsh Kumar Goel directed the DCP (HQ), Delhi Traffic Police, Regional Transport Officer and Delhi Pollution Control Committee to look into the matter. PTI

+ Minors sustain burns while playing

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Two minors sustained burns after they allegedly after they came in contact with a high-tension wire while they were playing near a DDA park at east Delhi's Mandawali area, police said Sunday.

The incident happened on January 12, they added.

The children, while playing in a DDA park, hurled a stone after wrapping it in a polythene with a thread towards the high-tension wire which resulted in short circuit, said Deputy Commissioner of Police (East) Pankaj Singh.

A neighbour, who witnessed the incident, informed the police, after which the victims were rushed to Safdarjung Hospital. They are undergoing treatment at the hospital, he said.

One of the children, aged 12, sustained 40% burns, while the other, also 12, sustained minor injuries, he added.

A case has been registered against unknown person in connection with the matter, said the police. They added that further probe is under way.

DELHI TODAY

Talk: Dr. C.D. Deshmukh Memorial Lecture 2019: "C.D. Deshmukh: Re-organisation of States, and thereafter" by Jairam Ramesh, MP, Chair: N.N. Vohra, President, IIC, at C.D. Deshmukh Auditorium, India International Centre (IIC), 6 p.m.

Talk: "Building India brick by brick: the plight of India's construction workers". Speakers: Eshwar Sharma, founder of Nirvana; Subhash Bhattacharya, member of Nirvana at Gomti Hall, India Habitat Centre (IHC), 7 p.m.

Exhibition: "Welcome 2019" - a group show of paintings at Roop Chand Institute of Fine Art (RCIFA), 23, Central Market, Ashok Vihar, Phase-I, 11 a.m. - 7 p.m.

(Mail your listings to thehindu.co.in)

CMYK

Two injured as speeding luxury vehicle hits bike

Duo sustain fractures and head injuries; accused arrested

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

An assistant manager and a trainee with a multinational fast-food chain were critically injured after a speeding luxury car hit their motorcycle in Delhi's Punjabi Bagh on January 12, the police said.

The car driver fled the spot after the accident but was arrested later from his house in Paschim Vihar. The victims sustained multiple fractures and head injuries due to the accident, said a police officer.

PCR call

The police control room received a call at 2.30 a.m. on January 12 regarding an accident by an unknown vehicle on Ring Road, opposite the Punjabi Bagh crematorium. A police team reached the spot and took the two injured men to a hospital.

The injured men have been identified as Ravinder, a resident of Mahendergarh

C The number plate of the offending vehicle fell at the accident site. That helped the police nab the accused... probe revealed that the car was registered in the name of a west Delhi resident. His 28-year-old son was driving the vehicle at the time of the incident

MONIKA BHARDWAJ
DCP (West)

in Haryana, and Rohit from Hisar.

The victims told the police that they work with a multinational fast-food chain in Gurugram and were returning from Murthal on their bike when the incident happened.

They were opposite Punjabi Bagh crematorium when a speeding car rammed their motorcycle and fled the spot.

"The car's number plate

fell at the accident spot. That helped the police nab the accused. Both injured men were shifted to the Employees' State Insurance [ESI] Model Hospital Basai Darapur Darapur and were discharged after treatment. A case under relevant sections of the Indian Penal Code has been registered and an investigation is on," said Deputy Commissioner of Police (West) Monika Bhardwaj.

Ms. Bhardwaj said investigation revealed that the car was registered in the name of Manjit, a resident of Ambika Vihar in west Delhi. His 28-year-old son Gagandeep was driving the vehicle at the time of the incident.

Medical examination

"The accused has been arrested. We have sent him for medical examination to determine whether he was under the influence of alcohol at the time of incident," said Ms. Bhardwaj.

Providing PSO to Kejriwal's daughter not enough: DCW

Panel tells Delhi Police to submit copy of FIR, status report

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi Commission for Women (DCW) on Sunday took suo motu cognisance of reports that Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's daughter had received abduction and death threats earlier this month. It asked the police to provide a copy of the FIR registered in the matter and status report of the investigation.

The commission said it views the threats as an extremely serious matter, as the family of the elected head of the State is being openly threatened.

C The commission views the threats [to the Chief Minister's daughter] as an extremely serious matter, as the family of the elected head of the State is being openly threatened

DELHI COMMISSION FOR WOMEN

have deputed a PSO with the Chief Minister's daughter and the matter has been referred to the cyber cell. Mere posting of a PSO is not enough. Immediate steps should be taken to nab the culprits as well as ensure complete protection and safety of Mr. Kejriwal and his family," the DCW said.

Stating that the security of the CM and his family had been breached on several

occasions in the past, the commission said this raised serious concerns and therefore it has asked the police to provide a copy of the FIR registered in the matter and status report of the investigation by Wednesday.

The DCW has also asked for details of the email ID and IP address from which the mails were sent and whether the IP address has been tracked and the location/persons identified.

The threat message was received on the Chief Minister's official email address on January 9.

The government had forwarded the threat email to the Delhi Police Commission.

Police sources said the matter was being looked into by the Special Cell.

However, security personnel were able to prevent the woman from entering Amar Jawan Jyoti. She was taken to Parliament Street police station. Medical examination revealed that she is mentally challenged, the police said.

The police said she pushed soldiers and created a ruckus by shouting anti-India slogans. DCP (New Delhi) Madhu Verma said the woman has been identified as a resident of Nizamabad in Telangana. She allegedly left home two days ago to visit a relative in Mumbai but got confused on the way and reached New Delhi instead, the police said.

"There was nothing suspicious about the woman and there is no Pakistan connection. She is an Indian. Her husband's details are unavailable as they got divorced 12 years ago. No case registered," Mr. Verma said.

"She was taken for medical examination and then sent to a women's shelter home. We have contacted

Art of making



Visitors at the Hunar Haat exhibition-cum sale in which master artisans and culinary experts from all parts of the country are participating. The fair, being held at Baba Kharak Singh Marg in the city, will conclude on January 20. ■ R. MOORTHY

Woman sneaks into high-security area

She is mentally challenged, say police

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Security forces at India Gate went into a tizzy after a woman sneaked into a high-security area during Republic Day rehearsals and shouted anti-India slogans in the small hours of Sunday.

However, security personnel were able to prevent the woman from entering Amar Jawan Jyoti. She was taken to Parliament Street police station. Medical examination revealed that she is mentally challenged, the police said.

The police said she pushed soldiers and created a ruckus by shouting anti-India slogans. DCP (New Delhi) Madhu Verma said the woman has been identified as a resident of Nizamabad in Telangana. She allegedly left home two days ago to visit a relative in Mumbai but got confused on the way and reached New Delhi instead, the police said.

"There was nothing suspicious about the woman and there is no Pakistan connection. She is an Indian. Her husband's details are unavailable as they got divorced 12 years ago. No case registered," Mr. Verma said.

"She was taken for medical examination and then sent to a women's shelter home. We have contacted

C There was nothing suspicious about the woman...she is an Indian. Her husband's details are unavailable as they got divorced 12 years ago. No case registered

MADHUR VERMA
DCP (New Delhi)

the police in Nizamabad to inform her relatives. A missing complaint was lodged two days ago in Nizamabad after she left home for Mumbai," said Mr. Verma.

After medical examination, the doctors told the police that the woman was mentally challenged. Other security agencies too verified her details before she was sent to a shelter home, the police added.

"There was nothing suspicious about the woman and there is no Pakistan connection. She is an Indian. Her husband's details are unavailable as they got divorced 12 years ago. No case registered," Mr. Verma said.

The accused, Rehan, who is in his 20s, is also from the same village. The teenager worked in a beauty parlour, from where she went missing, the woman said.

The victim's mother said the teenager had left for work on January 8 but did not return. "I went to the parlour looking for her but

Missing teen's kin accuse youth of abducting her

Claim he lured the girl for money

STAFF REPORTER
NOIDA

The family of a 17-year-old girl from Noida's Morna village, who has been missing for a week, has accused a man of kidnapping and compelling her to marry him for financial gain.

A case has been registered.

C Their phone numbers are under surveillance. We are trying to locate them based on their last location

MITHILESH UPADHYAY
Sector 24 police station SHO

the owner told me she had not turned up for work that day. After returning home, I discovered that she had taken her ATM card, passbook and the family's savings," the woman said.

She added, "Her colleagues told me about Rehan, who has been following her from some time. I suspect the accused coerced her into a relationship for financial gain. Hence, I approached the police."

Sector 24 police station SHO Mithilesh Upadhyay said the police are on the lookout for the missing pair.

"Their phone numbers are under surveillance. We are trying to locate them based on their last location," said Mr. Upadhyay.

Nursery admissions for EWS to begin tomorrow, says DoE

February 14 last date for online application submission

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Nursery admission for the Economically Weaker Sections (EWS), Disadvantaged Group (DG) category and Children With Disabilities (CWD) category in private schools will begin from Tuesday, the Directorate of Education (DoE) said via a computerised online admission system for EWS/DG category admissions at entry level.

It added that the last date for submitting online application forms is Monday.

The admission will be done through a computerised lottery system, informed the DoE, against 25% seats reserved under the provisions of Right to Education Act, 2009, and no school will be allowed to admit any child offline in entry-level classes. It added that 3% seats within the 25%

reserved seats under EWS/DG will be reserved for CWD.

The circular said that private schools recognised/provisionally recognised up to primary level (Class V) by East body and North body have also been included in the computerised online admission system for EWS/DG category admissions at entry level.

It added that the last date for submitting online application forms is Monday.

The DoE said any person residing in Delhi, having the residence proof of Delhi and requisite income certificate (less than ₹1 lakh annually) issued by the Revenue Department of the Government of Delhi, and BPL/AAY (ration card/food security card holder) are eligible for applying in these

33 polluting units sealed by EDMC officials

For operating in non-conforming areas, said a corporation official



A factory being sealed by officials of the East Delhi Municipal Corporation. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

units being sealed are part of the list of 51,837 polluting factories identified by the

Delhi State Industrial and Infrastructure Development Corporation (DSIIDC) sent to

the three municipal corporations earlier, a senior civic body official said.

Approach CVC with plea on fund misappropriation in government hospitals, says HC

Petitioners allege that ₹21 crore sanctioned for work misused; seek investigation

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court has asked two advocates, who had moved a petition seeking investigation into alleged misappropriation of funds to the tune of ₹21 crore in government hospitals here, to approach the Central Vigilance Commission (CVC).

A Bench of Chief Justice Sagar Sharma and Justice Rajendra Menon

C It is submitted that the respondent hospitals are in a dilapidated condition and do not have adequate medical facilities

Petitioner

tation before the CVC on their allegations.

The petition filed in public interest (PIL) claimed that the Directorate General of Health Services had in January 2016 sanctioned ₹21 crore to the Public Works Department for executing the remodelling, upgrading and expansion works in the hospitals.

The amount, the plea said, was sanctioned for pro-

viding better infrastructure and medical facilities at Dr. Baba Saheb Ambedkar Hospital, Lok Nayak Hospital, Guru Teg Bahadur Hospital, Bhagwan Mahavir Hospital, Deen Dayal Upadhyay Hospital, Sanjay Gandhi Memorial Hospital and Lal Bahadur Shastri Hospital.

The plea alleged that the sanctioned amount has been misappropriated, due to which patients were not get-

ting good medical facilities and treatment.

Dilapidated condition
"It is submitted that the respondent hospitals are in a dilapidated condition and do not have adequate medical facilities," the plea claimed.

The plea sought directions for setting up of a special high-power committee to conduct a detailed probe into the allegations.



The plea has sought directions for setting up of a special high-power committee to conduct a detailed probe into the allegations. ■ FILE PHOTO: SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

4 SHOWCASE

ANUBHUTI KRISHNA

Allahabad, or Prayagraj, may be known for the rivers and the Sangam, the temples and the Kumbh, but this historic city is also a treasure trove of flavours. With an extensive spread of sweets, chaats, namkeens, snacks, and possibly the State's first fine dining restaurant, Allahabad should be on your list for some of the finest flavours that Uttar Pradesh has to offer.

"The food in Allahabad is as cosmopolitan as it gets," says Naresh Roy, owner of El Chico, Allahabad's oldest and most popular restaurant. "Khatris, Muslims, Bengalis, English, Parsis, people from all communities came to live in the city and brought with them their food, and that legacy still lives on." The use of pure ingredients, says Naresh, is another aspect that makes the food here so special. Desi ghee, pure milk, fresh produce from the riversides and age-old cooking mediums like angithis with charcoal ensure that the food here is as authentic as it is flavourful.

Food is everywhere in Allahabad – in the shacks that dot the tiny lanes, push carts that appear magically at dusk with lip-smacking chaat, at the hole-in-the-wall shops that have no name but hundreds of people queuing up for their jalebis and samosas.

While these carts, shops, and stalls dot every part of the city, it is in Loknath Gali – a cramped, narrow lane – where you find the most authentic flavours. "This street in Allahabad is famous everywhere for its food," says Saurob Srivastava, a High Court advocate who visits the place often. "Before Independence, it used to be the favourite haunt of the most brilliant minds in the country. Famous men would get together every evening to discuss matters of national importance over food."

The evenings, he says, would begin with chaat at Nirala, and end at the Loknath Temple with kulfifaluda. In between there was rabri, malai, lassi, khurchan, gulab jamun, imarti, and samosas.

Rows of tiny sweet shops manned by elderly men line Loknath Gali today. The shops, set in the verandas of crumbling old mansions and havelis, are lit with bright lamps hanging from naked wires. The light illuminates their respective specialities, from khurchan and fruit cream to gajar ka halwa. Rabri, the thick, mildly



A sweet shop in every corner

As the historic Kumbh Mela draws near, we take a pilgrimage of another kind through the streets of Allahabad

sweet preparation of milk, is one of the oldest products of this lane. The portly man at an unnamed shop tells us how it takes hours of patience and hard work to make just one tray. Thick and chunky, it is not too sweet, and that, we are told, is its speciality.

The khurchan, another speciality, comes in large rectangles. Thick sheets of condensed milk set with layers of castor sugar and nuts are served in long rectangular pieces.

What people like the most, however, is the fruit cream. Stored in large tin containers, it is sweet and chilled. The bite of seasonal fruits is balanced with the smoothness of rich cream. It is sweeter than the rabri and khurchan and also carries the beautiful earthy scent of the clay bowl it is served in.

"The flavours of Allahabad are as authentic as they get," says Sangeeta Khanna, a food writer and consultant who writes extensively about the food of Uttar Pradesh.

"My favourite is the gulab jamun that you find on the highway between Allahabad and Benaras. It is made with the purest khoya on coal, and has the same old taste," she adds.

"You have eaten nothing if you have not eaten Nirala ki chaat," the man at the counter of Nirala, one of Allahabad's most famous chaat shops, tells us. Tamatar (tomato) ki chaat, aloo (potato) tikki, matar (peas) ki chaat, and pani ke batashay top the list. Everything is made in pure ghee.

The tikkis, unlike those in Luck-



Mix and match: Food in the city is a reflection of different communities that have settled here

*SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

now, Agra, or Mathura, are small and crunchy. Tamatar ki chaat is a mash of umpteen ingredients, while the matar is soaked in ghee and topped with rustic spices.

A hint of salt

No conversation about Allahabad's food can be complete without the namkeens and samosas of the city. Made fresh every day, the namkeens are often sold-out by evening. The mind-boggling variety (dalmoth, mathri, sem ke beef, sev, gur ke sev, aloo ke lacche, and the legendary dal ki samosa), flavours, textures, and aromas of these fresh snacks display the city's mastery over its food and the importance it holds in the daily lives of its people.

"Allahabadi are real connoisseurs of food," declares Naresh. "They not only know their food – both at home and outside – but also discuss it with great passion. It is impossible for you to serve average food to an Allahabadi." After having a sample, we cannot help but agree.

SHORT TAKES



Ready for world cinema

Bollywood actors as well as filmmakers will be congregating under one roof as the first edition of Diorama International Film Festival starts at Siri Fort Auditorium in Delhi from this Monday. The film festival seeks to showcase world cinema with multiple genres and entertainment will witness participation of Aamir Khan, Manoj Vajpayee, Adil Hussain, Ranbir Kapoor, Tapsee Pannu and other from the tinsel town. The weeklong festival will see screening of 130 films from over 50 countries. In all, film personalities from 40 countries will come over at the festival, an initiative by Manoj Shrivastava, former CEO, IFFI Goa. Hollywood Actor Erick Avari of *The Mummy* fame will conduct a master class on acting.

Sparrow awards will be given in over 25 film categories. The juries will be headed by Iranian film director Darish Mehrju, Rahul Rawail and Dipak Tijori.

Ranveer begins cricket coaching for 83!

While Balwinder Singh Sandhu will be his cricket coach, Ranveer will intensively train with Kapil Dev to learn his mannerisms both on and off the field.

By now we have all realised that Ranveer Singh is a perfectionist. He constantly puts himself through metamorphosis and becomes and lives the character that he is playing. Ranveer started his training for 83 in which he plays the legendary all-rounder Kapil Dev who lifted the cricket World Cup in 1983.

Ranveer's cricket coaching will be with Balwinder Singh Sandhu - also a key member of the 1983 World Cup winning squad. While Sandhu and Ranveer will work rigorously to perfect the game, Ranveer will also train with the legend Kapil Dev to perfect his iconic bowling action.



POOCH CAFE



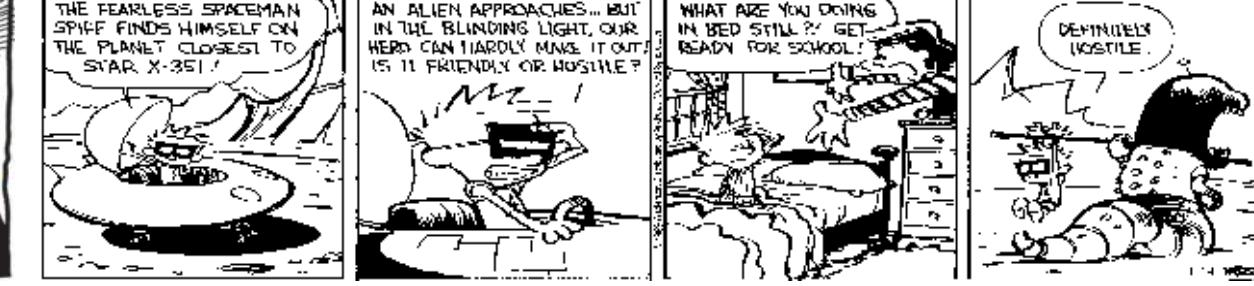
PEANUTS



HAGAR THE HORRIBLE



CALVIN AND HOBBES



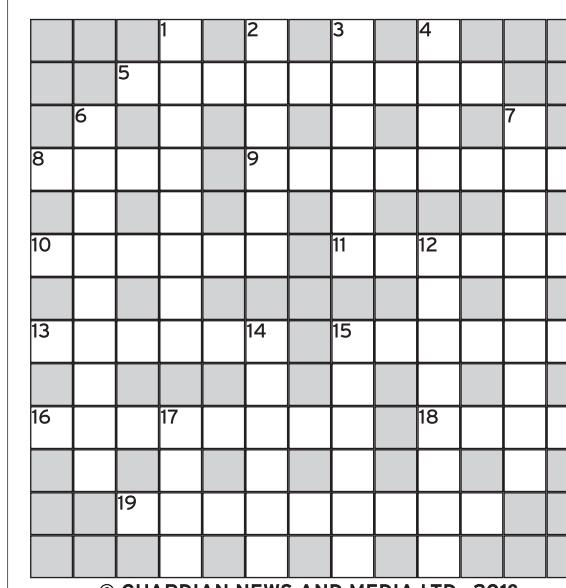
TIGER



GRAFFITI

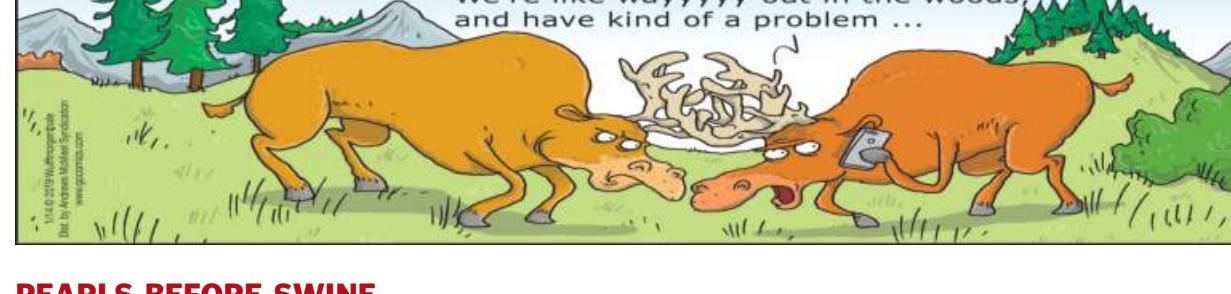


THE GUARDIAN QUICK CROSSWORD-12967

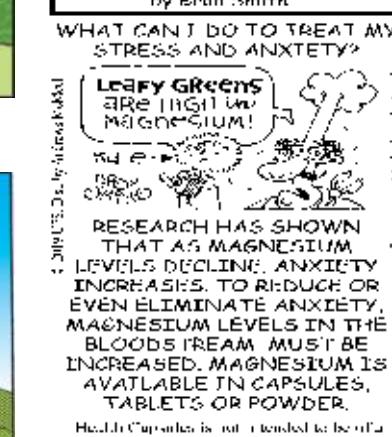


- 3 Wriggle with embarrassment (6)
- 4 Converted stables (4)
- 6 Sleep inducing (9)
- 7 Be missing (or stolen) (2,7)
- 12 More devious (8)
- 14 Seats (that can be electric or musical) (6)
- 15 Muscle that bends a joint (6)
- 17 Constellation – lecher (4)

WUMO



HEALTH CAPSULES

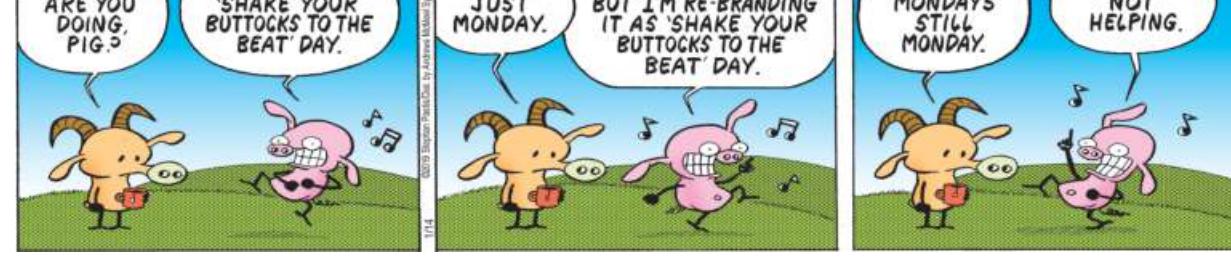


- Across
- 5 Burname – Boers quit (anag) (9)
- 8 Ceremonial elegance and splendour (4)
- 9 Short-distance attempt to reach the green (4,4)
- 10 Andean bird (6)
- 11 Stroke of bad luck (6)
- 12 (Of an engine) made more powerful (6,2)
- 13 Biographical film (6)
- (6)
- 15 In high spirits (6)
- 16 Shame (8)
- 18 Abound (4)
- 19 Horse-drawn carriage with two seats and a folding hood (9)
- Down
- 1 (Of an engine) made more powerful (6,2)
- 2 Restorative drink (6)

Solution will appear in Delhi Metro dated January 15, 2019.

Solution No. 12966

PEARLS BEFORE SWINE



S	M	S	P
D	U	E	R
F	R	R	F
V	I	O	N
A	G	S	E
J	O	S	T
O	U	T	R
M	U	G	O
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T	E	W	I
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Stitching ties, crafting ideas

As Indian and Indonesian artisans showcase their pottery and art works at the ongoing Dastkari Haat Crafts Bazaar, we take a look at the cultural bonds between the two nations

MADHUR TANKHA

Sharing each other craft techniques is the best possible way for artisans to grow in their field of specialisation as well as imbibe each other's culture. Like in the case of Indonesian troika of Bregas Harrimardoyo, Caroline Rika Winata and Yuvita who are working in tie-dye and pottery in a seamless and harmonious way with their Indian counterparts in the fortnightly long mela at Dilli Haat. Just like crafts of the host country, the texture of the Indian cuisine also arouses their curiosity as they take a break from work and partake kidney beans, Kashmiri rista and Lucknowi biryani.

Organised by Dastkari Haat Samiti, the mela marks 70 years of diplomatic relations between India and Indonesia and celebrates 25 years of Dilli Haat. All of them have brushed up their skills in indigenous craft techniques. And the pottery and household items that will come from this constructive collaboration will be on display at the 33rd edition of the Crafts Bazaar at Dilli Haat on January 14.

Cheerful and diligent, potter Bregas is enjoying every bit of his work at Dilli Haat. He is grabbing eyeballs from art aficionados for his work in pottery pieces. "I am using Indian clay and glaze and mixing it with the Indonesian technique. Usually, I make patterns on pottery pieces with graffiti technique. It is like surface carving. I normally do it in the Indonesian stoneware technique. Here I am us-



Cementing ties: (From left) Harikishan and Bregas Harrimardoyo at the festival ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

ing Indian terracotta clay. So I will glaze red terracotta and combine it with black patterns to create new designs, colours and patterns."

He rues that Indonesia does not have the same quality of clay as found in India. "We do not get the red terracotta clay which can produce such fine cups and bowls. I am using both Indonesian and Indian patterns."

Apart from the work front, it is his partnership with master artisan Harikishan that he cherishes more. "We have been working together like brothers for more than a week."

Both of them share the same passion and dedication for crafts but have had different experiences in their respective careers. "Our techniques and designs differ but this work at Dilli Haat has been extremely productive as we have shared new design ideas and techniques which we were ignorant about."

Impressed with his commitment to craft, Harikishan says Bregas loves to work with him. "When we both open the kiln after firing, it feels so good to see the results of our common

work," he adds.

"It is like we have been given birthday gifts," comments Bregas, with a broad smile on his face, as he shows some of the samples.

Similarly, the innovative work done by Caroline Rika Winata with Abdul Wahab Khatri in tie-dye is there to be seen at Dilli Haat.

Learning experience

While they are jointly making lamp shades, they are also striking conversations and thereby sharing knowledge of each other's technique. They have used indigo dyes in a manner that the shades reflect the colours of the sky.

Carolina says: "I am an expert in the Indonesian tie-dye technique. Here I am collaborating with Abdul Wahab Khatri, an expert in Bandhani. It has been a thoroughly enjoyable experience working with such a talented artisan."

For Carolina, learning the Indian intricate patterns of Bandhani, a part of tie-dye textiles, is fascinating. "I find the whole process interesting yet complex. As Bandhani patterns are

so small, it is a challenge to make small motifs like Abdul does. The Indonesian style of tie-dye is with repetitive pattern of block print style, while Indian artisans have a painting style."

Working next to her, Abdul says the duo will make a shawl, two sarongs and one lamp. "We have to work with adequate light as there are so many tiny dots that we have to construct in Bandhani," he adds.

Indeed, Bandhani dates back



From Africa to Japan, craft is still alive. We are probably the richest in crafts. But we want mutual progression

JAYA JAITLEY

to the Indus Valley Civilisation. It is done in Rajasthan as well as Gujarat. Abdul, hailing from Gujarat, says Kutch's Bandhani is special as traditional designs are still intact in their pure form. "Its popularity can be gauged from the fact that big names like Tarun Tahiliani, Ritu Kumar and Abraham and Thakore have worked with us."

It is a win-win situation for both as Abdul too is learning the Indonesian version of tie-dye. "So far, we have made a joint piece with scripts in both languages."

Jaya Jaitly, founder of Dastkari Haat Samiti, says: "Both are tie-dye but there is a difference. The Indian version is about creating small dots in big numbers. It is finer and elaborate, whereas the Indonesian tie-dye is simpler and bigger and is about creating textures."

Dissecting their work as a craft revivalist, Jaitly, says: "One scarf has Indian festive kites floating in the Indonesian Megar-Mendung, which means thunder clouds in the Indonesian language but in India it means clouds. This collaboration will lead to creative artworks that will integrate the two cultures."

Common heritage

On the need for jugalbandi between the two Asian nations, she says, South Asian nations are preferred because they have been maintaining the culture of crafts. "The West and the highly industrialised nations have simply lost it. From Africa to Japan, craft is still alive. We are probably the richest in crafts. But we want mutual progression."

Giving an example, she says: "Take batik for example, it could have gone from here to there or vice versa. It is so old and the relationship between Indonesia and India is so old that it does not matter from where it is. It is part of our common heritage. Similarly there are skills which are more developed. So it takes invigoration; one's own repertoire and long standing people-to-people relationship."



Reuniting with music lovers: Ustad Zakir Hussain ■ SANDEEP SAXENA

Of melody and modesty

Ustad Zakir Hussain on the importance of reinventing oneself

SHAILAJA KHANNA

Ustad Zakir Hussain played a public solo concert in Delhi after eight years; it was as interesting interacting with the maestro prior to his performance, over a cup of tea. Reminiscing about his Delhi link, he remembered his first solo concert at Shankarlal 53 years ago; the concert was of Pt Ravi Shankar with his father Ustad Allah Rakha Khan, but he was invited to play as a "filler", while the invited dignitaries arrived. He also recalled Delhi's great tabla players of his time, Ustad Latif Ahmed Khan and Ustad Shafaat Khan, now there was Ustad Akram Khan from Meerut, he said.

Humility his hallmark

Modest as always, he attributed his success to incredible luck and visibility which he got through the commercial for the Taj tea. "It was sad other tabla players did not have that sort of exposure," he said, "as the finest most and talented musicians today were tabla players." The Ustad also shared that the hottest selling musical instrument globally was the tabla!

Talking about the concert he was going to present, Hussain admitted that having to re-invent himself and his repertoire was inevitable, "We all play the same stuff that has been

around for 200-300 years; there is nothing really new. What is new is how you present it, so it resonates each time. For me to imagine I am doing something humongous is not really correct. Music and the transmission of music has crossed all fences. You don't need to play only tabla repertoire on the tabla; compositions I learnt from my father and he in turn learnt from his father are today being played by a South Indian on a mridangam, or on the dholak. I played with the great Palghat Raghu when I was 16, and today his grandson Anantha is going to play with me."

Creativity paramount

Continuing on the subject of lineage, the tabla maestro spoke of this year being the 100th anniversary of his legendary father. He had played at a commemorative event at Bhaiji sabh, Punjab; Saptak in Ahmedabad had dedicated the festival to his father, and on 29th April they were planning a large event in Mumbai, with drummers from Kerala, the US, over 200 musicians in all, performing through the day.

Hussain also spoke of the importance of creativity in one's life. "It was very important. I told my daughters that even if I have to support you all my lives, that's ok, but please do something creative with your lives, don't go for a 9 to 5 job."

In a new light

In *Lucknow Diaries*, Partha Sarthi Sen Sharma presents the contemporary realities of the city of nawabs

ASHNA CHAUDHARY

In his latest book, author Partha Sarthi Sen Sharma follows the Bildungsroman genre to create the laidback lanes of Lucknow where his three characters, Feroze, Dinesh and Rahul, take physical and spiritual shape. Described as a tale of love and longing, *Lucknow Diaries* (Rupa) present the socio-political complexities of the city where Partha has spent many years.

Edited excerpts:

What propelled you to pen *Lucknow Diaries*? How is it different from your previous works?

Although the title of the book carries the name Lucknow and the book is very substantially set in Lucknow, it is a novel about contemporary India. Of my previous books, "A Passage across Europe" and "Every Mile a Memory" were travelogues. Only "Love Side By Side" was a novel and was read and liked by many. I wanted to write another novel but this time I wanted to write a novel about multiple parallel characters and their life stories intertwined into each other, unlike "Love Side By Side" which dealt with one principal protagonist. I decided to base it in Lucknow because I have lived many years in Lucknow and could realistically base my events in the lanes and by lanes of the city. Also, I felt that there was a dearth of fiction in English that had been written on contemporary Lucknow, as opposed to Nawabi or colonial times.

Ferreting out facts

"During my basic training, I and other officers used to dine in Ochterlony House since it was the CRPF Officers' Mess. Finding ourselves in a totally new environment, I dug out details of the history of Neemuch and Ochterlony House. I again visited Neemuch in 1981 and 1983 for some courses but the curiosity existed to know more about the place and Ochterlony's exploits," says Gill who was again posted there from 2003 to 2005.

Even after retirement his passion to know more about the life of the colourful soldier - statesman continues.

What are your memories of the city?

The city has showered a life full of love, friendships, experiences, hospitality and memories. The memories of listening to an old ghazal singer - a disciple of Begum Akhtar - in a haveli in old Lucknow, his best friends are Dinesh and Rahul. Naturally, some com-



Twist in the tale: Partha Sarthi Sen Sharma ■ SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

mon on open terrace with friends to the new shining cafes and hangout places in new Lucknow. Then there are memories of riding a tonga through the heart of Hazratganj, lined with small paan shops and walks through the Chowk.

The story is set in the turbulent years after Rajiv Gandhi's assassination. Is there a reason for choosing that time period?

Actually, I never named any real life politicians or characters, but the reason why I chose to begin my novel with that event was that I wanted to conveniently slot the events of the novel in a particular time frame that the readers could instantly recognise. So as soon as the novel begins, the reader knows that the novel starts in 1990s.

Does the character of Feroze represent the fear of Muslim youth?

It has nothing to do with any contemporary debate and the so called fears of the Muslim community. Feroze is a very normal, boy next door kind of young man who happens to be Muslim and lives in old Lucknow. His best friends are Dinesh and Rahul. Naturally, some communal events or fears would affect him in a different and perhaps a deeper way than others and he might feel insecure as a result but that is only one of the points of his otherwise normal life as a student and as a journalist. I really don't think when we generalise all Muslims as taking a so called - 'Muslim stance', we are doing full justice to the fact that the real state of affairs is more nuanced, more granular and can't be easily put into neat types.

Tell us about the three characters. They go through similar experiences despite their class differences...

They all belong to the middle income group. Dinesh is definitely richer, being the scion of an old zamindar family and son of a cabinet minister, but ultimately none of them are filthy rich and none of them is hand to mouth. I think in the India of today, if one belongs to this middle class, there is a good chance that one would grow up in varied ways and have different sets of experiences. So, Dinesh becomes a politician, Feroze grows up to be a journalist and Rahul becomes an IAS officer.

DOWN MEMORY LANE

The rise and fall of the crazy star

Known for his determination and negotiating skills, Sir David Ochterlony was one of those British officers who became comfortable in Mughal-Hindustani culture

R.V. SMITH

Among the most colourful Britishers in Delhi in the 19th Century was Major-General David Ochterlony, nicknamed "Loony Akhtar" or crazy star because of his eccentricity, on whom a treatise has been written by ex-CRPF Addl. Director-General Jasbir Singh Gill.

David Ochterlony was born in Boston on 12 February, 1758, the eldest son of Capt. David Ochterlony of Scotland and his American-born wife Katherine Tyler, a niece of Sir William Pepperell. After Captain Ochterlony died insolvent in 1765, the family moved to England where Katherine married Sir Isaac Heard, who was both a father-figure and close confidant to Ochterlony (Jr) throughout his life.

Sir Issac used his influence to send Ochterlony to India as a cadet in 1777. Due to his determination, negotiating skills and understanding of Indian culture, Ochterlony rose through the military ranks, serving under Lord Lake in the battles that released Emperor Shah Alam from Maratha influence. Ochterlony was appointed the first British Resident at Delhi, responsible for the protection of the Emperor and the safety of the city. He successfully defended Delhi in 1804 against an attack by Jaswant Rao Holkar, a Maratha chief, and for his services was bestowed with the Mughal title of "Nasir ud-Daula" (Defender of the State) and appointed permanent Resident at Delhi. One of his favourite summer retreats was Shalimar Bagh, Delhi,

where he caught a fatal chill.

Ochterlony's greatest success came in the Anglo-Nepalese War when he commanded one of four columns under General Hastings that destroyed Kaji Amar Singh Thapa's Gurka army in 1815. Ochterlony used his knowledge of the terrain and intercepted letters to wage a skilful mountain warfare. He also employed his diplomatic skills by enlisting former enemy troops. For his success, he was created a baronet. When the government of Nepal refused to ratify the Treaty of Sugauli, Ochterlony swiftly moved against it, forcing an immediate ratification of the treaty and bringing the war to an end on 5th March, 1816. For his services, he was Knight Grand Cross of the Order of Bath.

In 1825, Durjan Sal tried to seize power in Bharatpur after his uncle Baldeo Singh died, leaving his infant son Bala Singh as Raja. Ochterlony supported the rightful heir and issued a proclamation for defence of the Raja that was however repudiated by Lord Amherst. Amherst's lack of confidence is said to have left Ochterlony feeling "abandoned and dishonoured" and to have hastened his death in Meerut on 15 July 1825, and was buried there at St John's Church, though he had built a mausoleum for himself at the Mughal Mubarak Bagh in Delhi. Incidentally, two months after his demise, Ochterlony's action at the Bharatpur was vindicated by the Governor-General in Council on the persuasion of Sir Thomas Metcalfe, his great friend and admirer.

It is said that Sir David Ochterlony took the evening air in Delhi followed by his 13 wives, each on her own elephant. It was not unusual for British officers serving in India to become comfortable in Mughal-Hindustani culture. Ochterlony's courtly and diplomatic manners earned him the trust and admiration of Shah Alam and his retainers. His favourite wife was Mubarak-al-Nisa, an ambitious woman who gave herself many titles including "Begum Ochterlony". He had six "natural" children with two or more of his Indian wives, but he feared that they would not be fully accepted by either English or Mughal society. His children were part of a new class in India known as Anglo-Indians.

His only son was Roderick Peregrine Ochterlony, born in 1785. Roderick had both an English and Mughal education. In 1808, he married Sarah Nelly, daughter of Col. John Nelly of Bengal at Allahabad. Mubarak Begum, Sir David Ochterlony's favourite wife, fought against the British during the great Indian rebellion of 1857, demonstrating the drastic breakdown in British-Indian relations.

THE AUTHOR IS A VETERAN CHRONICLER OF DELHI



Ochterlony Monument, now known as Shaheed Minar, in Kolkata



Colourful soldier: A painting depicting Sir David Ochterlony at home ■ COURTESY THE BRITISH LIBRARY



Our pot runneth over

Beyond boats and bonfires, kites and community gatherings, the harvest festival brings us the freshest produce that strengthens our immunity

SUNALINI MATHEW AND NUPUR ROOPA

Pongal, Makar Sankranti, Lohri, Pedda Panduga, Magh Bihu – no matter what we call the harvest festival celebrated all over India, it's a time that marks the end of winter (Hemant), the beginning of spring (Vasant), and the period during which a transition is made (Shishir). Like most things in India, underlying the celebrations, run deeper philosophies of health and happiness.

Nutrition first

"The festive foods cooked and served at this time all over India have a few very distinct characteristics: because they're from the harvest, they're at their freshest, which makes them very high in antioxidants and phytochemicals," says Delhi-based dietitian Manjari Chandra.

These help the plant fight disease, so when we ingest them, it helps our bodies do the same. Farm-fresh produce scores over cold-store produce in terms of minimal degeneration of nutrients.

"All the preparations eaten at this time are also anti-inflammatory in nature," says Manjari. Take biotin and choline. "Peanuts and sesame are high in the former, while sweet potato is very rich in the latter – and both form essential parts of several cultures' celebrations. Biotin increases our body's metabolic rate, while choline is great for the digestive system. Both are recommended as supplements when people have high markers for inflammation," she says.

Instead, we're getting them



(Clockwise from top left)
Traditional pongal dish; jaggery preparation in Salem; festive rice cooking in Tirupur; jaggery-sesame laddoo

• B JOITHI RAMALINGAM, LAKSHMI NARAYANAN, M BALAJI AND SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

again, foods popular at this time. Amaranth, says Manjari, is also rich in potassium.

All this helps, with the build-up of viral infections in the air, whether it's swine flu or respiratory trouble. "You can pick up your immunity before all this hits," says Manjari. For starters, stick to the traditional foods that are usually dual-ingredient (jaggery-sesame laddoo, khichri), rather than trying to add too many ingredients that may not work together.

Food joy

If you're trying to begin a meditative eating practice, it's the best time to begin, because it's simple food at its freshest. Plus, there's the texture: the crun-

chy brittle of sesame and jaggery laddoos, the robust flavours of khichri, the hearty mix of seasonal vegetables and steaming hot bajra roti topped with melting ghee.

Dr Archana Gaonkar, an Ayurvedic physician, says that because the digestive power (agni) is at its height, skin and hair become dry. "The festive diet provides the required nutrients," she says. Sesame comes into focus. "Sesame is sweet, pungent, bitter, and astringent in nature. It balances the body and provides lubrication," says Gaonkar. It provides warmth, is good for the respiratory system, is rich in iron and is a cardiac tonic.

It's the best time to eat the last of winter's goodness, and then prepare the body to cut down on food.

How do you do that? Take khichri. Dr Buch says at this time it's made at its thickest, like pongal. As the season changes, so does the consistency, until it reaches its thinness at the height of summer.

THE GUJARATI WAY



• GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

Undhiyu

Ingredients

For Muthiya
2 cups finely chopped fresh fenugreek leaves, 1/2 cup mixture of wheat flour, gram flour, a pinch of asafoetida and turmeric powder, 1/4 tsp chilli powder, salt to taste, water as required (2 or 3 tablespoons or less), 2 tbsp oil, for frying

Method

Make a tight dough of the ingredients, and make smaller balls (*muthiyas*). Brush with oil and bake at 180 degrees for 30 minutes, set aside.

Ingredients

1.5 to 2 cups mixed vegetables (small brinjals, potatoes, sweet potato, fresh pigeon peas, lima beans and flat beans) 1 tsp besan, 1 pinch asafoetida, 1/2 tsp carom seeds, 1 tsp coriander powder, 1 tsp cumin powder, 1/2 tsp of turmeric powder, 1 tsp of red chilli powder, 1/2 tsp sugar, salt to taste, 2 tsp green chilli-ginger-garlic paste, 2 tbsp chopped coriander leaves, 2 tbsp shredded coconut, 1.5 - 2 tbsp oil

Method

Slit brinjals. Mix besan, coriander powder, cumin powder, turmeric powder, chilli powder, salt and sugar. Stuff the brinjals. Cut potatoes and sweet potato in cubes. Heat oil in a large pan.

Add carom seeds and asafoetida, then potatoes and sweet potatoes. Add turmeric powder, chilli powder and salt; cook until done.

Add fresh pigeon peas, lima beans, flat beans. Add green chilli-ginger-garlic paste; cook for 10 minutes.

Add stuffed brinjals; cook until soft. Add the muthiyas and cook for 5 minutes. Garnish with chopped coriander and shredded coconut.

Source: Purnima Patel



FLYING HIGH

Ma Qinghua, from China, set a record in 2006 when she flew 43 kites simultaneously.

THE CREAKING TREE

Men over 40 who gym



SHOVON CHOWDHURY

I know of several men who started doing gymnastics at 40. It's because they ditched their wives and are now dating much younger women. You don't have to be Sherlock Holmes to tell who they are. Their clothes are much sharper. Suddenly they have waistlines. Their hair is darker than you remember. But they are also gaunt and hollow-cheeked. They are extremely ripped, but slightly haggard.

I love watching them at buffets. When they spot the *lachha parathas*, a variety of expressions flash across their faces in rapid succession. Sometimes they have to bite their lower lip to keep it from trembling. They take a few steps forward, and then they step back. It's like watching great cinema. Given the opportunity, I always load up my plate and join them for a spot of conversation. I try to help them in other ways, like asking about gym fees,



• GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

and whether they've gained a kilo or two since I last saw them. They need our help.

Going around with a much younger woman must make them feel younger, but it comes with many challenges. Society has been constantly raising the bar, and these men have to live with the knowledge that right now, as we speak, their girlfriends are checking out Tiger Shroff on Twitter. Frankly, I'm very disappointed with Tiger Shroff. He seems like a nice enough boy, but he really should be thinking about the consequences of his actions. He is setting impossible standards, especially for men over 40. If some of them have heart attacks on the treadmill, or rupture their spleens, we know exactly who to blame.

In cases where the young lady works out too, the situation is even more perilous. I have a friend who has recently started seeing a yoga instructor, and I fear for his life. I understand their motivation. They want to look younger. But I'm not sure that their efforts are working that well. Some of these men were quite handsome, with an intriguing whiff of decay. One of them, a management consultant, used to be pleasantly roly poly in a very Uttam Kumar, Bengali-movie-star kind of way. Now, he is gaunt and skeletal. In Bengali movies, he would now be the fiend who tortures the hero, under instructions from the heroine's father, or the British. The director would expect him to sneer. Every time I see him, I feel like I should feed him something.

No one deserves to live like this. This is why you need to keep a close eye on your middle-aged male friends, so that you can stop them from making this mistake. It begins with the hair. If you come across one of them buying hair dye, take it away from him immediately. You may face a bit of a tussle, but eventually, he will thank you.

In Shovon Chowdhury's most recent novel, *Murder With Bengali Characteristics*, all the members of the Chinese Politburo have jet-black hair.



Pancreas strike

Type 1 diabetes can be traumatic for parents and children. Here, how to minimise the trauma



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of the children with T1DM in South-East Asia," says an article giving overall insights

India accounts for most

on the disease. It also says there is a 3-5% increase every year. But because of low

awareness, parents may miss it.

Catch it early

"Type 1 diabetes should not be confused with other types of diabetes; it is a totally different disease with devastating complications. These children need special care," says Dr Jothydev Kesavadev, a diabetologist and Chairman and Managing Director of Jothydev's Diabetes Research Centre in Thiruvananthapuram. The Kesavadev Trust, which he helms, has been working for the welfare of children with Type 1 diabetes for over 20 years now, and he is the medical advisor for the Kerala Type 1 Diabetes Welfare Society.

He feels there is a need to educate people about Type 1, as in most cases, it goes undiagnosed. Dr Inderpal Singh Kochhar, a paediatric endocrinologist at Apollo Hospital, Delhi, says the number of toddlers who are being diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes has gone up. "It is not preventable. Children who have it are genetically predisposed."

Treat it right

Once diagnosed, it is still not easy. "Type 1 patients are always on a roller-coaster ride. They are prone to constant fluctuations in sugar levels that can lead to diabetic ketoacidosis (a complication resulting in high sugar levels) or hypoglycaemic coma (very low sugar levels). The only way to deal with it is to educate the parent or the caretaker on treatment modalities," he says.

Treatment currently involves four or more insulin injections a day. Before each injection, the blood sugar level must be tested, so that easily means more than a dozen pricks per day. While the injections are given on the arms, thighs and around the navel, the pricks for test-

ing blood sugar are given on the finger tips, which are often painful. "Imagine an eight-month-old child, or a two-year-old, for instance, having to go through this. It is more painful for the parents," says Shana CD, one of the co-ordinators of the welfare society and a mother of a three-year-old with Type 1.

The condition can be extremely traumatic for the parents and children, says Dr Kochhar. "Hospitals should have psychologists to counsel the parents and children to help them understand that they are capable of leading normal lives. Parents should not blame each other. A diabetes nurse should be in regular touch with the parents to help them through the treatment and for emotional support," he says.

The equipment required for treatment is expensive. The glucometer, (an apparatus for checking blood sugar levels) and insulin pen, along with recurring expenses, may be difficult for an average family to handle. There is advanced equipment available, such as continuous glucose sensors, which do away with painful pricks needed in the case of glucometers and insulin pumps that replace insulin injections by automatically sensing sugar levels and administering the required amount of insulin.

Dr Kesavadev hopes to see at least ordinary insulin pumps in Government hospitals, along with a team of doctors and paramedical staff who are properly trained in caring for children with Type 1. At present, the medical community and society make do with conducting camps for teachers on Type 1 diabetes to create awareness and remove stigma. "The ultimate aim is to help these children have longer, more meaningful lives," he says.

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