



Congress will fight all seats in A.P. alone, says Oommen Chandy

Page 5



PSLV all set to launch defence imaging satellite today

Page 7



Kuldeep, Chahal and Shami set up India's big win in Napier ODI

Page 15

NEARBY



Hearing on CBI chief appointment today

NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court is scheduled to hear a petition to bring the CBI Director's entire appointment process under public scrutiny and make it accessible under the RTI Act. The petition, filed by NGO Common Cause and Anjali Bhardwaj, is coming up before the Bench led by Justice A.K. Sikri.

NEWS ▶ PAGE 10

Supreme Court denies bail to Unitech promoters

NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday refused to grant bail to Unitech Ltd. promoters Sanjay Chandra and his brother Ajay Chandra in a case relating to alleged siphoning off homebuyers' money.

DELHI METRO ▶ PAGE 1

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DELHI METRO ▶ 6 PAGES

Rahul appoints Priyanka as Congress general secretary

In a major party reshuffle, she has been put in charge of eastern Uttar Pradesh

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The Congress appointed Priyanka Gandhi Vadra as general secretary in charge of eastern Uttar Pradesh as part of a major reshuffle on Wednesday. The appointment not only gives a formal role to Ms. Vadra, it also makes her a member of the Congress Working Committee (CWC), the party's highest decision-making body.

In an unprecedented move, Congress president Rahul Gandhi split the organisational responsibilities for Uttar Pradesh – a State with 80 Lok Sabha seats – between his sister and senior leader Jyotiraditya Scindia. Kerala MP K.C. Venugopal has been appointed to the key post of general secretary (organisation) in place of Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot and senior leader Ghulam Nabi Azad, who was looking after U.P., will now handle Haryana.

Stronghold of BJP
 Ms. Vadra's appointment came as a surprise to many within the party and was announced soon after the Congress was kept out of the Samajwadi Party and Bahujan Samaj Party alliance. Eastern Uttar Pradesh is known as a stronghold of the BJP, and both Prime Minister Na-



Into the arena, finally: With Wednesday's move, Priyanka Vadra also becomes a member of the Congress Working Committee, the party's highest decision-making body. ■ RAJEEV BHATT

rendra Modi and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath have contested from the area.

So far, Ms. Vadra used to manage her mother, Sonia Gandhi's Lok Sabha constituency, Raebareli, even though she is known to have been consulted on key political issues. Party sources said the decision was taken by the family, with only a select few leaders kept in the loop.

While Mr. Gandhi has been looking at feedback from workers via the Shakti App, and both Prime Minister Na-

run by the party, this particular decision was very much his own. "UP is central to building a new hope-filled & compassionate India. The new UP AICC team led by Priyanka & Jyotiraditya, will herald the dawn of a new kind of politics in the State. We will offer the youth in UP a dynamic new platform to transform the State," Mr. Gandhi tweeted.

TOUGH MESSAGE ▶ PAGE 11
 MORE REPORTS ▶ PAGE 11

What's new, asks BJP

"Good luck to Priyanka. These kind of postings are nothing unusual in that party, except to say with a caveat as to why she has been given the limited role of Eastern UP. Her persona merited a much wider role," said Law Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad.

'FAMILY IS PARTY' ▶ PAGE 11

Oral mentions in SC will soon be history

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL
 NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court is drafting new guidelines that would help ensure that urgent cases automatically come up before a Bench for hearing within four days of their being filed, obviating the need for lawyers to appear before the Chief Justice of India to orally mention their cases for urgent listing.

Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi on Wednesday informed the crowded courtroom that new norms had been settled by which urgent cases would automatically come up before a Bench for hearing.

Time gets lost
 "We are trying to get rid of urgent mentioning before the court, which unnecessarily takes away time," the Chief Justice said.

The CJI added that if such cases did not come up for hearing, the lawyers concerned could make a mention before the Registrar to have their cases listed.

Oral mentioning is a convention by which lawyers circumvent the long-winded filing procedures and make a direct appeal to the CJL, who is the court's administrative head and master of the roster, for early hearing.

Eight of the accused were placed under arrest in the early hours of Wednesday.

A local court in Aurangabad later in the day remanded eight suspects to police custody till February 5, while one minor suspect was produced before the Juvenile Justice Board.

Maharashtra ATS arrests 8 suspects



Shocking claim: The terror suspects being produced in a court in Aurangabad on Wednesday. ■ YOGESH LONDHE

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI

Questioning of the nine persons picked up over the last three days by the Maharashtra Anti-Terrorism Squad has indicated that the terror suspects may have been planning to poison food and water sources at public gatherings, investigators claimed.

The ATS nabbed four suspects from Aurangabad and five from Mumbai, for allegedly planning terrorist activities in the State and elsewhere.

The ATS seized several bottles of chemicals, including hydrogen peroxide, from the suspects. It said it wanted to question the accused if they were out to execute a chemical attack on the Kumbh Mela in Prayagraj or Republic Day events.

have been identified as Mohseen Khan, Salman Khan, Taki Khan, Fahad Shah, Zamen Kutepadi, Mohammad Mazhar Shaikh, Sarfaraz Ahmed, Zahid Shaikh and a 17-year-old.

Chemicals seized

Mohseen, Salman and Taki are brothers, whose main task was to recruit and radicalise young men. They created a social media group called Ummat-e-Mohammed (followers/disciples of Prophet Muhammad) for the purpose.

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The arrested accused

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 10

CBI books ex-AI chief on corruption charge

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The Central Bureau of Investigation has booked Arvind Jadhav, a former Air India Chairman-cum-Managing Director (CMD), and others for allegedly promoting an official against rules and also favouring three other subordinates in getting pecuniary advantage.

Those named in the FIR are Mr. Jadhav, L.P. Nakawa, the then general manager (Medical Services); Captain A. Kathpalia, then additional general manager (Operations); Captain Amitabh Singh; and Captain Rohit Bhaisin, the then additional general manager (Operations).

tions) of Air India. Mr. Jadhav showed "undue favour to Dr. (Ms.) L.P. Nakawa by promoting her against the rules and including her name in the selection panel," says the FIR.

"Mr. Jadhav also entered into a criminal conspiracy with other unknown officers of Air India to favour three selected GMs – Capt. A. Kathpalia, Capt. Amitabh Singh and Capt. Rohit Bhaisin – through which these members were able to get pecuniary advantage," the FIR said.

It was alleged that Mr. Jadhav constituted an illegal promotion panel to recommend candidates for promotion to the post of General Manager (Operations).

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 10

Goyal gets additional charge of Finance

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The government on Wednesday announced it has given Railways and Coal Minister Piyush Goyal the additional charge of the Ministry of Finance while Arun Jaitley recovers his health.

The President of India, as advised by the Prime Minister, hereby directed that during the period of indisposition of Shri Arun Jaitley, Minister, the portfolios of Minister of Finance and Minister of Corporate Affairs held by him, be temporarily

Meanwhile, Mr. Jaitley, who is currently in the U.S. for medical treatment, has undergone surgery at a hospital in New York on Tuesday, sources said. He has been advised at least two weeks rest by the doctors, the sources added. This is the second time Mr. Goyal has taken over from Mr. Jaitley due to the latter's health.

With just about a week left for the presentation of the Vote on Account on February 1, Mr. Goyal's appointment as the Finance Minister makes it extremely likely that he will present it.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 10

Mr. Jaitley would be designated as a Minister without portfolio during the period of his indisposition or till the time he is able to resume work.

"Everybody knows the government has been sitting on some files. There has to be some mechanism by which timelines which are laid down are adhered to," he said.

'Nothing wrong'
 Justice Lokur said there was "nothing wrong" in Prime Minister Narendra Modi attending a dinner hosted by Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi in November last year as it was for a convention of judges from BIMSTEC countries - Bangladesh, Bhutan, Myanmar, Nepal and Thailand.

During the session, Justice Lokur was asked why judges whose names were rejected by the Collegium were not good enough to be promoted to the Supreme Court but were okay to continue as High Court Chief Justices.

Responding to the question, Justice Lokur said, "A person may be a good Chief Justice of a High Court, but not a good Supreme Court judge."

Referring to the row over delayed elevation of Justice K.M. Joseph to the Supreme Court, Justice Lokur said that the government may sit on a file if it does not want

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RISE 21:32	SET 09:41
FRIDAY, JAN. 25	
RISE 07:13	SET 17:55
RISE 22:36	SET 10:22
SATURDAY, JAN. 26	
RISE 07:12	SET 17:55
RISE 23:38	SET 11:01

Delhi Weather max min
Delhi City 20 08
Safdarjang 20 08
Palam 18 09

Delhi Palam Today 19°C Dense fog during chilly cold morning. Day will be free from pollution with bright sunshine.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow 20°C Dry weather with shallow fog/mist during chilly cold morning. Day remain pleasant with few clouds.

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IN BRIEF



10% quota move will

backfire: Tejashwi

NEW DELHI
The move of granting 10% quota to general category poor will "backfire" on the BJP as the "bahujans" (majority) are feeling duped, RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav has said. PTI

Maoist's house sealed in Jharkhand

CHATRA
The Chatra district administration on Wednesday sealed the house of a Maoist at Pratapur block in the district, a senior police officer said here. Superintendent of Police Akhilesh Verier told reporters that the house of absconding Maoist Navin Yadav alias Vijay Yadav was sealed in the presence of Block Development Officer Vijayendra Kumar. PTI

Two ex-dons wait for Cong. ticket in Bihar

Suspense over their candidature in Lok Sabha polls continues as party's State unit claims ignorance

AMARNATH TEWARY
PATNA

With the Lok Sabha elections round the corner, the suspense over the candidature of two don-turned-politicians in Bihar – Anant Singh and Rajesh Ranjan alias Pappu Yadav – for Congress tickets continues.

The two leaders recently claimed that they would contest the general election from Munger and Madhepura constituencies on Congress tickets. The State unit of the Congress, however, has expressed "ignorance" about any such development.

Mega roadshow

Mr. Anant Singh, a three-time MLA from Mokama constituency against whom 16 criminal cases are pending, had organised a mega roadshow on January 18 from Barh to Munger to announce his candidature from Munger parliamentary constituency. The



Anant Singh.



Pappu Yadav

former don is known as "Chhote Sarkar" in his area of influence between Barh and Munger.

He won the Assembly elections in 2005 and 2010 on Nitish Kumar-led Janata Dal (United) ticket, but quit the party after its alliance with the Rashtriya Janata Dal in 2014. He won the 2015 Assembly polls as an Independent candidate despite being in jail in connection with an abduction-murder case. He is currently out on bail.

"Yes, I have had talks with the Congress leaders in Delhi and I will contest the poll on

a Congress ticket. Even if I am denied the ticket, options to contest as an Independent candidate are open for me," he said during the roadshow. The posters adorning the 130-km-long route of his roadshow carried photographs of Congress president Rahul Gandhi, imprisoned RJD chief Lalu Prasad and other grand alliance leaders.

Missing from the posters was Leader of the Opposition in the Assembly, Tejashwi Yadav, who had ruled out Mr. Anant Singh's entry into the RJD. "We cannot have bad elements like Anant Singh in

our party," he had said.

Hindustani Awam Morcha (Secular) leader Jitan Ram Manjhi and CPI(M-L) leader Dipankar Bhattacharya also expressed displeasure over their photographs being used in the posters.

Speaking to *The Hindu*, senior State Congress leader and Rajya Sabha member Akhilesh Singh said: "If an MLA or MP wants to come to the Congress accepting the party's ideology and principles, we will welcome him." When asked about Mr. Anant Singh's criminal profile, he said: "Why raise finger at the Congress when Anant Singh has twice been elected on JD (U) ticket and his brother has long been an RJD leader?"

State Congress chief Madan Mohan Jha and party spokesperson Prem Chandra Mishra claimed to be unaware of Mr. Anant Singh's candidature. "It may be going on at the level of the cen-

tral party leadership," Mr. Mishra told *The Hindu*.

RJD's opposition

Rumours are also rife about expelled RJD MP Pappu Yadav, who is named in 24 criminal cases, contesting the Lok Sabha polls on Congress ticket from Madhepura. His wife Ranjeet Ranjan is a Congress MP from neighbouring Supaul constituency. Mr. Pappu Yadav had recently said that he was in touch with the central Congress leadership. However, sources said, the RJD is opposed to his candidature. "Lalu Prasad and his family don't want Pappu Yadav in the grand alliance," a source said.

Mr. Pappu Yadav had won the 2014 polls on an RJD ticket defeating the then JD(U) candidate Sharad Yadav. He was expelled from the RJD on May 7, 2015 for "anti-party activities". He later formed the Jan Adhikar Party.

"My stand on the use of EVM is very clear. EVMs are perfectly fine. There will not be any problem if VVPAT is made available at every polling station. I do not agree with things which are being said about EVM. In my view, EVM has strengthened people's right to vote," Kumar told reporters.

Tributes to Netaji

He was talking to reporters here after paying tributes to Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose on his 122nd birth anniversary in the capital.

The incidents of bogus voting and booth capturing used to be witnessed during voting through ballot paper but things have improved with the introduction of EVMs, Mr. Kumar, who is also JD(U) national president, said.

RSS worker killed in M.P.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
RATLAM

A 36-year-old RSS worker was allegedly killed and his body found dumped in his field on Wednesday morning at Kamed village in the district, a police officer said.

The deceased, Himmat Patidar, who was former RSS Shivpuri mandal karyavah (president), was found dead in his field located under Bilpuk police station area, the officer said.

"It was five years of misrule. Financial mismanagement was there. Corruption was institutionalised and the public was looted. The Chief Minister remained unavailable for the public for five years," he alleged.

The Chief Minister targeted the former Vasundhara

Police have recovered a torch from the spot and Patidar's motorcycle was found lying around ten metres away, the ASP said.

According to Mr. Sharma, police have got some vital leads in the case and are hopeful of cracking it soon.

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EVMs are perfectly fine, says Nitish

'It strengthened people's right to vote'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar on Wednesday defended Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs), saying it was "perfectly fine" and suggested that there will not be any problem if voter verifiable paper audit trails (VVPAT) are made available at every polling station.

Amid raging debate over EVMs, which Opposition leaders have been critical of, Mr. Kumar said he was not in agreement with the things said.

Dig at Congress

In an apparent dig at the Congress, which is among opposition parties who are criticising EVMs, Mr. Kumar asked "during whose time the EVM system was introduced?"

State Congress chief Madan Mohan Jha and party spokesperson Prem Chandra Mishra claimed to be unaware of Mr. Anant Singh's candidature. "It may be going on at the level of the cen-

More than 70,000 cows died in a gaushala during BJP rule

Gehlot lashes out at the previous govt. led by Raje

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
JAIPUR

Lashing out at the Opposition BJP on the issue of cows, Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot on Wednesday said 74,016 cows had died in Hingonia gaushala in Jaipur during the previous government's five year rule.

He accused the BJP of calling the Congress a party of Muslims but stated the Congress had won elections in the 'cow belt' of Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh.

munity had realised the BJP raises the issue of Ram temple ahead of elections.

The Chief Minister targeted the former Vasundhara



Rajasthan CM Ashok Gehlot

Raje government "for weakening schemes like free medicines which were initiated by the earlier Congress government".

He said the public gave huge mandate to the BJP in 2013 Assembly elections but the Vasundhara Raje government wasted five years and gave misrule to the public.

"It was five years of misrule. Financial mismanagement was there. Corruption was institutionalised and the public was looted. The Chief Minister remained unavailable for the public for five years," he alleged.

Move on quota soon, says CM

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
JAIPUR

The government of Rajasthan is going to take a decision very soon. We will implement 10% reservation in the State," Mr. Gehlot said in his reply to the debate on the Governor's speech in the Assembly.

He said the Hindu com-

sections.

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Plans as per need of village: Minister

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
CHANDIGARH

Haryana Development and Panchayats Minister O.P. Dhankar said on Wednesday that the village panchayats have been authorised to carry out any one development work at their own level.

Jind excluded

"From January 26, the village panchayats (excluding district Jind) will be able to carry out development works at their own level. The panchayats have been authorised to carry out any one important development

work as per the need of the village concerned," said Mr. Dhankar in a press release.

The gram sabhas shall organise special meeting on January 26 for approving any development work.

The Minister said except Jind district, where the model code of conduct is in force in view of by-election, the gram sabhas of remaining districts will pass such proposals.

The gram sabha of a village with population up to three thousand would be able to approve project amounting up to ₹15 lakh.

Panchayats empowered for development work'

Plans as per need of village: Minister

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
CHANDIGARH

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OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE

DEATH

MRS. JALAJA

W/o of R.S. Mahadevan,

passed away on Monday,

January 21, at the age of 80.

She is survived by her family:

S. Rajaram & Sharada, Suguna & Ramkrishna, Dasasith at

Sri Satya Narayana Theertham,

Besant Nagar on 30.1.2019.

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Under My Watch is an initiative by *The Hindu* that celebrates conscious and responsible citizens who make India better, one small act at a time.

Tell

Tripura on alert against Rohingya: DGP

BSF, police intensify vigil along border; 30 refugees apprehended at Churaibari sent to jail

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

AGARTALA

The Border Security Force and the State police have increased vigilance along India-Bangladesh border to check infiltration of Rohingya Muslims, Director-General of Police Akhil Kumar Shukla said on Wednesday, two days after 30 refugees were apprehended at Churaibari in Assam.

The immigrants, including 12 children, were on their way to Guwahati from Agartala in a bus on Monday when the Assam police held them at Churaibari in Karimganj district, about 200 km from here.

They were sent to jail by a district court on Tuesday.

Last week, 31 Rohingya Muslims were holed up be-



A Border Security Force official registers the names of Rohingya Muslims after they were detained at Raimura village on the outskirts of Agartala on Tuesday. ■ FILE PHOTO

hind the barbed wire fencing along the Bangladesh boundary in Tripura, as the border guards of both sides debated over their status.

"The BSF and the State

Tripura shares a 856-km-long border with Bangladesh.

C.L. Belwa, BSF Deputy Inspector General (Tripura Frontier), said Rohingya make their way to India through different routes in the east and then move to other parts of the country for job and livelihood.

The refugees, who were apprehended at Churaibari on Tuesday, had actually entered India through Assam, he said.

"They had come to Tripura to work in brick kilns, but their livelihood issues were not solved here so they were returning to Assam again," Mr. Belwa said.

The 31 Rohingya Muslims, who were holed up in no-man's land since Janu-

ary 18, have been handed over to the Tripura police by the BSF after talks with Border Guards Bangladesh (BGB) failed.

They underwent a medical check-up and were later produced before a court in West Tripura district which sent them to 14-day judicial custody on Tuesday.

More than 700,000 Rohingya Muslims fled Myanmar's Rakhine state to neighbouring Bangladesh since August 2017 after a military crackdown, triggering a massive refugee crisis.

In October 2017, the Union Ministry of Home Affairs had urged all States to take immediate steps to identify and monitor Rohingya immigrants.

Villagers prevent IAF chopper from landing

For not carrying cardamom to Miao

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

ITANAGAR

Residents of Vijaynagar in Changlang district on Wednesday did not allow an IAF helicopter to land at the Advance Landing Ground (ALG), said State's Food and Civil Supply Minister Kamal Mossang.

The residents spread across the runway to prevent landing of the helicopter to protest the IAF chopper not carrying cardamom produced by them to Miao, Mr. Mossang said, quoting a former zila parishad member from Vijaynagar who informed him about the incident.

Residents of 11 villages near Vijaynagar had on January 20 cleaned the ALG runway of the grass and moss

which had grown due to non-operation by any fixed-wing aircraft since 2016.

The villagers claimed that they cleaned the ALG runway on condition that the IAF choppers which return empty to Miao from Vijaynagar would carry cardamom produced by them, he said.

But as the chopper did not carry any cardamom produced by them, the villagers did not allow the chopper to land in the Vijaynagar ALG, Mr. Mossang said.

The villagers said they pay ₹50 for transportation of cardamom to Miao, the nearest town, due to lack of road connectivity. Vijaynagar is the remotest Circle (Tehsil) of Changlang district.

No IAF officers were available for comment.

Teacher held for assaulting minors

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI

A 49-year-old teacher has been arrested on charges of sexually assaulting four minor girl students for three months.

The police said Niladhar Kalita, headmaster in charge of Sunsali Lower Primary School in the Noonmati area, was arrested on Tuesday and a case under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012, was registered against him.

This was the third such case in Guwahati in less than a month.

On December 28, one Raghunath Choudhury, 65, had allegedly molested a 16-year-old girl in a rented house in the Lachitnagar area.

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"Study of Non-Financial Human Capital Measurement with Reference to Competency based Performance Management of Select IT Companies
in Pune City"
from Savitribai Phule Pune University, (Formerly University of Pune)
Sheena, wife of Mr. Abraham Varghese, is working as
Asst. Prof. (HR & IT) at MBA Dept., Y. & M.
AKT's Poona Institute of Management Sciences and Entrepreneurship (PIMSE), Pune.

Rahul, Amit Shah to visit Odisha

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

BHUBANESWAR

Bharatiya Janata Party president Amit Shah and Congress chief Rahul Gandhi are set to tour Odisha this month, following Prime Minister Narendra Modi's back-to-back visits to the

State on February 3, general secretary Prithviraj Harichandan said.

The senior BJP leader's scheduled visit to the State on January 18 was cancelled in view of his illness.

Mr. Shah will address a public meeting at Kulia in Cuttack district on January

told reporters here.

Mr. Gandhi's tour will kick-start on January 25 from Tamando on the outskirts of Bhubaneswar, where he will attend public rallies and meet party workers. "He has a special place in his heart for the people of Odisha, especially the tribal and underprivileged population in the State," Mr. Singh said.

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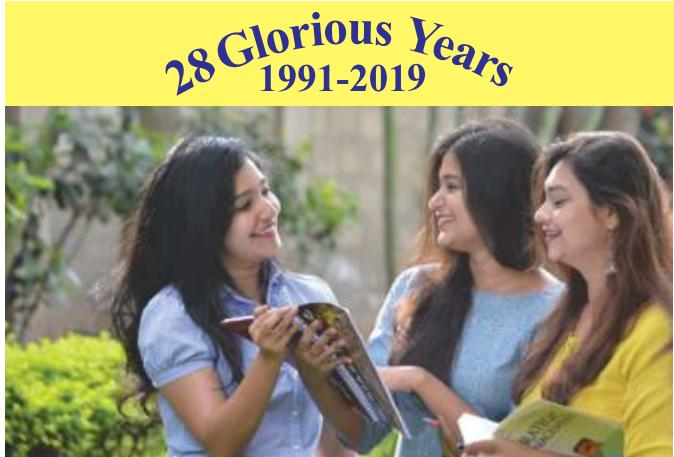
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IN BRIEF



Gauri's sister rubbishes hacker's claim

BENGALURU

Kavita Lankesh, slain journalist Gauri Lankesh's sister, has rubbished the claim made by a U.S.-based self-styled cyber expert and hacker that Gauri was killed because she was planning to write an article on the hacking of Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs). PTI

Kerala HC dismisses plea against notice to 'tantri'

KOCHI

A Division Bench of the Kerala High Court on Wednesday dismissed a writ petition challenging the showcase notice issued by the Travancore Devaswom Board to the Sabarimala 'tantri' seeking explanation for closing the temple for performing purification rituals in the wake of the entry of two young women into the temple.

No arbitrariness in election to Devaswom Board: Kerala

NEW DELHI

The Kerala government on Wednesday denied any arbitrariness in the process of nomination and election to the Cochin and Travancore Devaswom Boards. The reply followed a petition filed in the Supreme Court by BJP MP Subramanian Swamy alleging arbitrariness in nominations and elections to the temple boards.

'Couple who fell off U.S. cliff were intoxicated'

NEW YORK

An Indian couple, who plunged 800 ft to their deaths after taking a selfie at a cliff in California's Yosemite National Park on October 25, were "intoxicated" at the time of the incident, according to autopsy results. Vishnu Viswanath, 29, and his wife, Meenakshi Moorthy, 30, were both engineers from Kerala.

Cong. breaks ties with TDP, to go it alone in Andhra Pradesh

It was Rahul Gandhi's decision, says State party chief Raghuveera Reddy

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA

Making a point: AICC general secretary Oommen Chandy and other leaders at a meet in Vijayawada on Tuesday. ■ V. RAJU

The Congress will go it alone in the general election and field candidates in all the 175 Assembly and 25 Lok Sabha constituencies in Andhra Pradesh, AICC general secretary and party in-charge of the State Oommen Chandy said here on Wednesday.

The announcement came a day after the head of its electoral ally in Telangana, Telugu Desam Party's president N. Chandrababu Naidu, met AICC president Rahul Gandhi in New Delhi.

Mr. Chandy said the 200 conveners of the constituencies and the State executive committee members of the party would meet in Vijayawada on January 31 to finalise election arrangements.

The executive committee

had decided to conduct a Statewide bus yatra under the leadership of Pradesh Congress Committee president N. Raghuveera Reddy in February, he said.

Rahul's promise

He said the people of Andhra Pradesh knew that only the Congress could get them the

Special Category Status (SCS), pointing out that AICC president Rahul Gandhi had said the first file he would sign would be on the SCS if the Congress came to power.

Mr. Chandy said the Congress would again invite the leaders that left it to come back to the party fold.

Asked if he had informed

Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu about the decision, Mr. Chandy said his connection was with the AICC and not with the TDP.

Mr. Raghuveera Reddy said the CWC, in a unanimous resolution, had left the question of alliance with the TDP to Mr. Gandhi and he came out with the decision. He appealed to the public to make the national bandh, being organised against the BJP by the non-BJP parties on February 1, a success.

He said many decisions were being taken in the last session of Parliament. Lakhs of crores of rupees were going to be allocated for various schemes. The NDA government should grant SCS to Andhra Pradesh along with all these benefits to other States, he said.

Karnataka Minister, IPS officer face off

STAFF REPORTER
TUMAKURU

An argument broke out between Karnataka Minister for Tourism S.R. Mahesh and IPS officer Divya Gopinath on Tuesday during the final rites of Siddaganga mutt seer Shivakumara Swami, who passed away on Monday. Mr. Mahesh's name was reportedly not in the VVIP list of people to be allowed inside the sanctum at the mutt.

When he wanted to go in, Ms. Gopinath objected to it on the grounds that it violated security protocol.

Replies to a query on Wednesday, Ms. Gopinath said: "I have just done my duty as per the instruction of my higher-ups." She added that owing to lack of space, only a limited number of people were being allowed inside.

The Minister said he had not used abusive language.

'Missing' Karnataka MLA will soon be arrested: Minister

He will not be spared, says M.B. Patil

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU

M.B. Patil

"the government has no intention of suppressing facts. No protection will be given by misusing power. Law will take its own course."

'New low'

Meanwhile, Deputy Chief Minister G. Parameshwara termed the brawl at the resort as "one of the lowest level of politics" he had seen during his political career of three decades.

He said the party had constituted a committee, comprising himself and Ministers K.J. George and Krishna Byre Gowda, to probe the matter and recommend action against Mr. Ganesh. "No one is above the law. An FIR has been lodged. The Congress has also taken disciplinary action by suspending him. The police are doing their duty and looking out for him."

Search intensified

The Bidadi police have intensified the search for Mr. Ganesh.

They have conducted spot inspection at the resort and have also questioned the staff and recorded their statements.

The police are also verifying CCTV footage to gather evidence.

T.N. worker saved from the gallows in Kuwait

Donations help fund 'blood money'

STAFF REPORTER
MALAPPURAM

Kuwait's government commuted the death sentence of a Tamil worker to life imprisonment after his impoverished family raised ₹30 lakh compensation or 'blood money' to pay the victim's family with the help of contributions, including from a young Muslim leader from Kerala's Panakkad, Sayed Munawwarali Shihab Thangal.

"Alhamdulillah [Thank God in Arabic], a human soul could be saved from sure death because of our little effort," said Mr. Mu-

nawwarali on receipt of the news about the commutation of Arjunan Athimuthu's death sentence to life imprisonment. "It's a moment to rejoice for humanity."

Athimuthu, who hails from Athivettu village in Thanjavur district of Tamil Nadu, was sentenced to death by a Kuwait court, which found him guilty of killing a Keralite, Abdul Wajid, in September 2013 in Kuwait.

The victim's family, from Vattaloor in Malappuram district, had demanded ₹30 lakh as 'blood money' for pardoning Athimuthu.

Telangana driver suffers heart attack but stops bus safely

Passenger takes over, drives vehicle to hospital

K.M. DAYASHANKAR
PEDDAPALLI

D. Mahender undergoing treatment in Karimnagar. ■ K.M. DAYASHANKAR

Telangana State Road Transport Corporation driver Dariini Mahender, 35, who suffered a heart attack while driving, had the presence of mind to stop the bus by the road before he collapsed on the steering wheel. The bus, with 50 passengers, was travelling from Godavarikhani to JBS (Secunderabad) in Peddapalli district on Wednesday.

A doctor from Singareni, Chandrashekhar, who was travelling in the bus, provided first aid to the driver

er passenger Tirupathi, also an RTC driver, came forward and, through conductor Ranji, took permission from RTC authorities to drive the bus to the government hospital in Peddapalli town.

Ironically, there were no doctors at the hospital and after an hour, a doctor arrived but failed to provide treatment.

The conductor then hired a private ambulance and shifted the driver to a private hospital in Karimnagar town, where he is undergoing treatment and is said to be out of danger.

while the passengers tried calling an ambulance but in vain. At this juncture, another

Corrigendum No-08 to E-Tender Enquiry No-14/TS/FBD/2018-19

HARYANA VIDYUT PRASARAN NIGAM LIMITED

Shakti Bhawan, Panchkula, CIN:U40101HR1997SGC033683

The last date of online bid submission is extended up to 24.01.2019 at 13:00 Hrs. and same will be opened on 24.01.2019 at 15:00 Hrs.

Detail NIT and tender document is available at website https://haryanaeprocurement.org.in, https://www.hvpn.org.in

(Sd) Executive Engineer / TS Division Faridabad

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IN BRIEF



'Decision on alliance with Cong. in Odisha soon'

BARIPADA (ODISHA)
Jharkhand Mukti Morcha chief Sibu Soren on Wednesday said that his party will on January 30 take a decision on alliance with the Congress in Odisha ahead of the upcoming elections. At a public meeting organised by the party in Mayurbhanj district, he said that without development of tribals, development of India will not be possible. PTI

Wanted criminal nabbed in Agra: Haryana STF

CHANDIGARH
Haryana's Special Task Force has arrested a wanted sharpshooter, carrying a reward of ₹75,000, from Agra in Uttar Pradesh, officials said on Wednesday. A police spokesman said the arrested was identified as Amit, alias Chottu alias Sultan, of Soop village in Baghpat, U.P. PTI

Prohibitory orders in a part of Odisha town

KENDRAPARA (ODISHA)
The Kendrapara district administration on Wednesday clamped prohibitory orders under Section 144 of CrPC in a part of district headquarter town as a precautionary measure following a quarrel between two groups. Tension increased as the two groups were locked in a verbal duel over organisation of a function at the local government high school playground, said the SDPO. PTI

Fake currency notes seized; one arrested

KOLKATA
The BSF has seized fake Indian currency notes with a face value of ₹4.76 lakh and nabbed one person in Malda district, sources said on Wednesday. On a tip-off, a BSF party on Tuesday night apprehended one person and three bundles of fake notes in the denomination of ₹2,000 were recovered from him, they said. PTI

Virbhadr Singh, wife move Delhi HC

Seek quashing of trial court order to frame charges against them in DA case

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Former Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Virbhadr Singh and his wife Pratibha Singh moved the Delhi High Court on Wednesday challenging a local court order to frame charges against them for allegedly amassing disproportionate assets.

The 82-year-old Congress leader and his wife have sought quashing of the December 10, 2018, trial court order directing framing of charges against them.

The case is likely to come up for hearing on Thursday.

The trial court has fixed the matter for January 29 to formally frame charges against the couple and the other accused.

Mr. Singh claimed in the plea that the offence of pos-



Virbhadr Singh ■ FILE PHOTO

ed without consent and not to look into the law as to whether consent was necessary.

The CBI had registered the case against Mr. Singh and seven others for allegedly amassing assets worth ₹10 crore disproportionate to their known source of income when he was a Union Minister in the UPA government.

The matter was transferred by the Supreme Court from the Himachal Pradesh High Court to the Delhi High Court, which on April 6, 2016, asked the CBI not to arrest Mr. Singh and had directed him to join the probe.

The other seven accused are LIC agent Anand Chauhan, Chunni Lal Chauhan, Joginder Singh Ghalta, Prem Raj, Vakumalla Chandrasek-

har, Lawan Kumar Roach and Ram Prakash Bhatia.

The court in its 105-page order had said that Virbhadr Singh and Anand Chauhan "fraudulently and dishonestly" signed a MoU by ante-dating it to give an impression that it was signed on June 15, 2008.

It had added that since the document was made for showing unaccounted money as sale proceeds of apples, they were liable to be charged for the offence of forgery.

A chargesheet running in to over 500 pages, filed in the court, claims that Mr. Singh had amassed assets worth ₹10 crore which were disproportionate by 192% of his total income during his tenure as Union Minister.

(With PTI inputs)

Governor Malik gets a fourth adviser

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
JAMMU

Skandan Krishnan, a retired IAS officer of the 1982-batch, was on Wednesday appointed as the fourth adviser to Jammu and Kashmir Governor Satya Pal Malik, an official spokesman said.

Former IAS officers Khurshid Ahmad Ganai and Kewal Krishan Sharma and former IPS officer K. Vijay Kumar are the other three advisers. The appointment of Mr. Krishnan comes over a month after B.B. Vyas resigned from the post in December last year on the eve of his appointment as the member of the UPSC.

The Union Home Ministry had on Tuesday approved the appointment.

WEATHER WATCH

RAINFALL, TEMPERATURE & AIR QUALITY IN SELECT METROS YESTERDAY



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

Forecast for Thursday: Dense to very dense fog likely in isolated pockets over Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh, Delhi, west Uttar Pradesh, north Rajasthan and north Madhya Pradesh. Cold wave conditions likely at isolated places over Saurashtra & Kutch

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	—	29.5	10.0	Kozhikode	—	33.8	21.4
Ahmedabad	26.8	12.6	—	Kurnool	—	32.8	18.7
Aizawl	28.2	—	—	Lucknow	13.2	22.8	14.2
Allahabad	2.1	20.3	15.3	Madurai	—	33.4	20.2
Bengaluru	29.6	16.2	—	Mangaluru	—	30.0	20.4
Bhopal	25.2	13.2	—	Mumbai	—	27.2	19.2
Bhubaneswar	30.7	17.0	—	Mysuru	—	30.5	15.9
Chandigarh	6.9	20.5	7.2	New Delhi	27.8	19.9	8.0
Chennai	30.0	21.0	—	Patna	—	24.0	16.2
Coimbatore	31.8	18.8	—	Poona Blair	—	29.8	25.6
Dehradun	34.5	18.4	8.2	Puducherry	—	30.2	20.0
Gangtok	10.9	6.9	—	Pune	—	28.8	10.9
Goa	31.8	19.0	—	Rajpur	—	30.0	16.3
Guwahati	26.5	10.1	—	Ranchi	—	31.0	12.0
Hubballi	29.0	16.0	—	Shillong	—	17.9	7.4
Hyderabad	29.9	17.9	—	Shimla	44.5	6.5	—
Imphal	23.7	3.2	—	Srinagar	—	5.4	-0.3
Jaipur	20.0	10.6	—	Trivandrum	—	34.2	19.6
Kochi	30.6	22.0	—	Tiruchi	—	32.1	20.4
Kohima	18.6	6.5	—	Vijayawada	—	30.0	19.1
Kolkata	29.6	14.1	—	Visakhapatnam	—	29.0	19.5

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

Yesterday

CITIES	SO ₂	NO _x	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	88	97	34	188	—	■
Bengaluru	—	38	36	176	—	■
Chennai	43	15	53	46	—	■
Delhi	22	74	74	296	212	■■
Hyderabad	—	87	39	160	118	■
Kolkata	18	77	26	442	390	■■
Lucknow	17	45	69	318	—	■
Mumbai	28	51	74	42	101	■
Pune	13	32	18	78	78	■■■
Visakhapatnam	—	—	—	—	—	—

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Howrah, West Bengal quality index (AQI) score of 373 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Khanna, Punjab recorded a healthy AQI score of 22

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 by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

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

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

Faesal to go solo in politics

Asks people to fund 'a people's movement' to work for 'clean politics'

PEERZADA ASHIQ
SRINAGAR

Indian Administrative Service topper Shah Faesal, who quit government service recently, launched a crowdfunding campaign on Wednesday in an apparent bid to go solo in politics.

Public movement*

Asking people to fund "a people's movement", Mr. Faesal pledged to work towards "clean politics" and a "corruption-free administration".

"People are the only agency who will help this succeed," he said.

Mr. Faesal, 35, who resigned as Managing Director



Shah Faesal ■ FILE PHOTO

ty earlier this month, Mr. Faesal said he has decided to chart his own independent political journey "while respecting the public sentiment".

"In this new phase of public service, my mission is to support the true cause of humanity, stand up for the poor, marginalised and dispossessed, and speak up for injustices wherever in this world, irrespective of caste, colour, region and religion," he said.

The IAS topper of the 2010 batch said he will partner with a new generation of young leaders who can stand up for human rights, environment, free speech and rule of law.

"My idea is to seek help from the people of India, build alliances with civil society and intellectual class to humanise the narrative around Kashmir conflict so that lasting peace can be achieved in J&K," he said.

BJP sweeps Assam tribal council elections

Cong. gets 2 seats, AGP 1 in NCHAC polls

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI

The BJP on Wednesday swept a tribal council poll in Assam despite statewide protests against the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2016, that was perceived to dent its performance.

The party won 19 of the 28 seats in the North Cachar Hills Autonomous Council where elections were held on January 19.

The victory came less than two months after the BJP won 41% of the seats in the panchayat elections that were held after the Asom Gana Parishad announced its decision to quit the alliance over the Bill.

"Assam reposes its faith in leadership of Sri @narendramodi and Sri @AmitShah. The results of the North Cachar Autonomous

Hills Council amply prove this... Congratulations to all my dear colleagues who won," Assam Finance and Health Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma tweeted.

The Congress bagged two seats while the AGP managed a solitary seat. The remaining six seats went to independent candidates.

The BJP had drawn a blank in the 2013 NCHAC elections while the Congress and Independent candidates had won 10 seats each.

But 17 elected members, including some from the Congress, had defected to the BJP.

The Congress received a major setback with district party president Nirmal Langthasa and former chief executive member Depola Hojai biting the dust.

Directorate of Tourism, Government of Jharkhand

MDI Building, 2nd floor
HEC Campus, Dhurwa, Ranchi - 04
Tele Fax : 0651-2331828

Email: dirjharkhandtourism@gmail.com

Ref. No. :-57/2019 Ranchi/Dated:-22/01/2019
Selection of System Integrator (SI) for Annual Maintenance & Support of Jharkhand Tourism Website & Web based Application for Jharkhand Tourism Development Corporation Limited (JTDC) Re-Tender

The Jharkhand Tourism Development Corporation Limited (JTDC), Government of Jharkhand (GoJ) intends to select reputed Agencies for Selection of System Integrator (SI) for Annual Maintenance & Support of Jharkhand Tourism Website & Web based Application for Jharkhand Tourism Development Corporation Limited (JTDC).

Interested agencies may download the document from 22/01/2019 onwards from the Department of Tourism website--www.jharkhandtourism.gov.in and submit their Applications. The Application Due Date is on 13/02/2019 at 1400 hours.

A pre-application conference will be held on 29/01/2019 by 1500 Hours at Jharkhand Tourism Development Corporation Limited, 5, Mahatma Gandhi Marg, Ranchi, Jharkhand - 834001, Phone No: +(91)-651-2331828 & 2331643 Fax: +(91)-651-2331828, E-MAIL: jtdcldt@gmail.com. All subsequent notifications, changes and amendments will be posted only on the website.

IN BRIEF



DRI arrests businessman for smuggling gold

NEW DELHI
The Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) has arrested Govind Bharwani, an Indian origin businessman operating from Dubai, for allegedly financing an international syndicate that smuggled 70 kg of gold into India and took away foreign currency worth ₹21 crore in May-August last year.

Monkey fever case confirmed in Wayanad

KALPETA
A case of Kyasanur Forest Disease, a viral disease transmitted to humans through a species of ticks usually found on monkeys, has been reported from the Aranappa hamlet Wayanad district after an interval of two years. A 36-year-old patient, who is at the district hospital, is reportedly out of critical condition.

Meghalaya: trapped miner's body out of reach

SHILLONG
The body of one of the 15 trapped miners, spotted last week, has disintegrated and slipped to the bottom of the mine in the course of the Navy's efforts to pull it out, officials said. PTI

Farmer killed by jumbo in Karnataka

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHIKKAMAGALURU
A wild elephant trampled to death a farmer at Aravind Nagar, near Hosakote, in Chikkamagaluru taluk on Tuesday night. The incident occurred at a place close to the Kamenahalli Reserve Forest area, known for movement of elephants.

+
Kumar Naik, 45, encountered the pachyderm while he was returning to his ginger field at 9 p.m. to spend the night there to protect the crop. "The place is close to the forest and it is covered by trees. It looks like he did not notice the elephant's movements," S.L. Shilpa, Range Forest Officer, told *The Hindu*.

23,000 Railway posts for the poor

Goyal plans huge recruitment drive

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Almost four months ahead of the 2019 general election, the government-owned Railways on Wednesday announced a massive recruitment drive to hire about 2.30 lakh people in the next two years.

Following the 103rd Constitutional Amendment, 10% of the vacancies, i.e. around 23,000 vacancies will be reserved for candidates from economically weaker sections, Railway Minister Piyush Goyal said. The drive will fix long-standing issues.



Railway Minister Piyush Goyal said the drive will fix long-standing issues.

ple, 1,31,428 posts will still be vacant. It is estimated that about 53,000 and 46,000 employees will retire in 2019-20 and 2020-21 respectively, creating about 99,000 additional vacancies.

"These recruitment drives will fix long-standing issues. With the increase in investment in Railways, recruitment needs have also increased," Mr. Goyal added.

Currently, Indian Railways has a sanctioned strength of 15,06,598 employees, of which 12,23,622 personnel are on the rolls, leaving 2,82,976 vacant posts. With the current drive to recruit 1,51,548 people,

ISRO to launch military satellite tonight

Microsat-R put together by a handful of DRDO laboratories; PSLV-C44 will lift off from Sriharikota

■ PHOTO: ISRO

Pride of place

The PSLV-C44 will launch the military grade Microsat-R and Kalamsat, a nano satellite which would be the first to use the rocket's fourth stage as an orbital platform

MISSION DESCRIPTION

Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle - C44
is the 46th flight of PSLV. The launcher, a new variant called PSLV-DL, will have two strap-on boosters

Launch: Thursday midnight from SHAR, Sriharikota

Fourth stage orbital platform:

The launcher: In PSLV-C44, the fourth stage (PS4) of the vehicle will be moved to a higher circular orbit so as to establish an orbital platform for carrying out experiments

Kalamsat: A nano-satellite weighing 1.2kg with a life span of 2 months. Cost: ₹12 lakh

Microsat-R: A 100-kg-class military imaging satellite reportedly having a DRDO payload. It will be launched into a 277-km polar orbit, the lowest orbit where the PSLV has ever released a satellite

PSLV-C44 STAGES

STAGE 1
Height: 20m
Diameter: 2.8m
Propellant: HTPB*

STAGE 2
Height: 12.8m | Diameter: 2.8m | Propellant: UH25 & N₂O₄

STAGE 3
Height: 3.6m | Diameter: 2 m | Propellant: HTPB

STAGE 4
Height: 2.5m
Diameter: 1.34 m
Propellant: MMH + MON₃

HTPB: Hydroxyl-terminated polybutadiene | **MMH:** Monomethylhydrazine | **UH25:** A mixture of 75% dimethylhydrazine and 25% hydrazine hydrate | **MON₃:** Mixed oxides of nitrogen | **N₂O₄:** Dinitrogen tetroxide

Sriharikota in Andhra Pradesh. For its part, ISRO is experimenting on two aspects of the vehicle. One is to reuse a waste stage.

"For us, the excitement is about reusing the spent fourth stage [PS4] of the rocket as an orbiting platform for future experiments," an official said. Kalamsat, a small student

payload, will be the first to use PS4 as an orbital platform.

Amid the 28-hour countdown for the launch, ISRO Chairman K.Sivan said the PS4-Kalamsat experiment would be short-lived.

It would start about 1.5 hours from take-off and last about 14 hours until Friday midday. Later experiments

with PS4 will be improved gradually, he said.

For the third time in ISRO's recent history, the mission team is slated to cut off and restart the PS4 engine twice over a flight lasting around 100 minutes.

ISRO's pre-launch brochure said, "In PSLV-C44, the fourth stage (PS4) of the vehicle will be moved to

higher circular orbit so as to establish an orbital platform for carrying out experiments."

The other experiment with the launcher PSLV-C44 vehicle will be a new third variant having two strap-on boosters. Called the PSLV-DL, D standing for demonstration, it ranges between the older two variants.

A slice of history



Deep dive: A visitor at the museum in the Red Fort complex in Delhi. Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated museums on Subhash Chandra Bose, the Jallianwala Bagh and 1857 - the first war of Independence on Wednesday. ■ ARUN SHARMA

FCI job scam: FIR filed against Delhi-based firm

Sabotage in written exam: officials

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Central Bureau of Investigation has registered an FIR against a Delhi-based company and 14 others for alleged irregularities in the recruitment of 53 watch & ward staff for the Food Corporation (FCI).

In 2017, the FCI had outsourced the process of recruitment to Ace Integrated Solutions. Accordingly, a written examination was conducted in February 2018 and 171 candidates were short-listed. In all, 96 had qualified.

While 53 candidates were empanelled by the agency, 43 were kept on the waiting list. However, during the



Workers at the FCI storage house in Morinda, Punjab.

4 granted bail in Naroda Patiya case

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court has granted bail to four convicts in the Naroda Patiya massacre case in Gujarat.

Over 90 people were killed by a mob in Naroda Patiya during the 2002 Gujarat riots.

A Bench led by Justice A.M. Khanwilkar allowed the bail applications of Umeshbhau Surabhai Bharwad, Rajkumar, Padmedrasinh Jaswantsinh Rajput and Harshad, alias Mungda Jila Govind Chhara Parmar.

The Gujarat High Court, on April 20 last year, upheld the conviction of 12 of the 29 accused who were held guilty on various charges by the trial court.

2 rhinos raised at Kaziranga find a new home at Manas

Displaced by 2016 floods, they were cared for by forest staff



One of the rhinos at Manas National Park. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

SHIV SAHAY SINGH
KOLKATA

They were only a few months old when floods in August 2016 at Kaziranga National Park displaced them. When rescuers found the two rhino calves, they were so small that they had to be fed milk in bottles.

Almost 30 months later, the calves, one male and other female, will find a new home at Manas National Park, about 450 km away from Kaziranga.

On January 22, they were transported to an enclosure, where they will get acclimated to the surroundings of the Manas National Park, before they are released in the wild. Officials overseeing the translocation said that both the animals, who grew up together at Centre for Wildlife Rehabilitation and Conservation (CWRC) at Kaziranga,

have been radio-collared so that their movement in the wild are monitored.

Abhishek Narayanan, head of the Wildlife Rescue Division of Wildlife Trust of India, said that since 2002, when CWRC started, more than 50 calves stranded in the wild at Kaziranga National Park for various reasons, in most cases due to floods, have been rescued.

"Out of these, 16 were translocated to Manas. A few gave birth to calves, thus augmenting the number of rhinos at the Manas National Park by around 20," Mr Narayanan said. The number of rhinos there at present is 38.

The augmentation of Rhinos were part of the initiative "Bring Back Manas", a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Union Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman assured support from the Centre for investors in defence and other sectors.

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Investors' meet a grand success: CM

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami on Wednesday termed the second edition of the Global Investors Meet (GIM) a "grand success", and said it had exceeded the targeted investment of ₹2 lakh crore.

"The response in terms of both investment proposals as well as delegate registration for GIM 2019 has far exceeded our expectations. Proposals for new investments have been pouring in ever since we started preparations... This is a momentous occasion in the history of industrialisation of Tamil Nadu, which will set new records of investment," Mr. Palaniswami said in his address at the start of the two-day event.

Union Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman assured support from the Centre for investors in defence and other sectors.

This involves the evaluation of critical areas and processes, including inter-agency coordination, information sharing and technical surveillance. "Multi-

India conducts 'largest coastal security drill'

Tests preparedness along coastline

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Ten years after the 26/11 Mumbai terror attack, India conducted its largest coastal defence drill, Exercise Sea Vigil, to test its preparedness along the entire 7,516.6 km-long coastline and exclusive economic zone of the country.

"In an effort to test the preparedness and coordination, some rogue elements tried to breach the surveillance network and reach the coast during the exercise," an official said.

Post 26/11, the Navy was designated as the agency responsible for overall maritime security, including offshore and coastal security, while the Coast Guard was designated as the agency responsible for coastal security in territorial waters.

A multi-tiered patrol and surveillance mechanism with focus on technical surveillance and augmenting Maritime Domain Awareness through the coastal radar chain was adopted.

This involves the evaluation of critical areas and processes, including inter-agency coordination, information sharing and technical surveillance. "Multi-

agency audit and identification of gaps, shortfalls and incorporation of lessons learnt into Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) are also the desired outcomes," the Navy stated.

"Exercise Sea Vigil aims to comprehensively and holistically validate the efficacy of the measures taken since 26/11. It aims to simultaneously activate the coastal security mechanism across all 13 coastal States and Union Territories," the Navy said in a statement.

The first of its kind exercise was conducted on January 22 and 23 and coordinated by the Navy.

"Exercise Sea Vigil aims to comprehensively and holistically validate the efficacy of the measures taken since 26/11. It aims to simultaneously activate the coastal security mechanism across all 13 coastal States and Union Territories," the Navy said in a statement.

This involves the evaluation of critical areas and processes, including inter-agency coordination, information sharing and technical surveillance. "Multi-



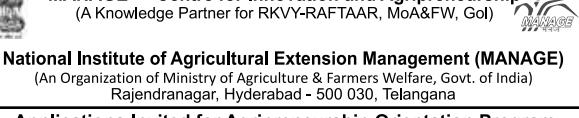
Walk-in interview will be held on 07/02/2019 in the above address for the selection of one Consultant (Veterinarian), one JRF (Chemistry) and one SRF (Pharmacology) required in this institute. For further details please visit our web site www.crisidha.in.nic.in

[Dr.P.Sathyarajeswaran] Director (SIC)/CIC

TRANSMISSION CORPORATION OF ANDHRA PRADESH LIMITED VIDYUT SOUDHA :: VIZAYAWADA NOTIFICATION

The Notification dt: 18/01/2012 issued for filling up of 1648 number of Junior Lineman posts by direct recruitment on regular basis in United Andhra Pradesh is hereby cancelled. The orders issued by APTRANSCO in this regard vide T.O.O/Addl.Secy-Per Ms.No: 1067, dt: 23.01.2019 may be accessed at www.aptransco.gov.in . RO No.70/18

Sl/- CHAIRMAN & MANAGING DIRECTOR



MANAGE — Centre for Innovation and Agripreneurship (A Knowledge Partner for RKVY-RAFTAAr, MoA&FW, GoI)

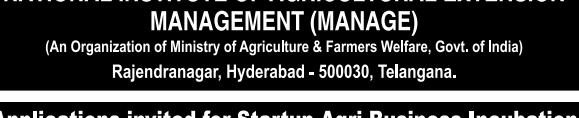
National Institute of Agricultural Extension Management (MANAGE) (An Organization of Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, Govt. of India) Rajendranagar, Hyderabad - 500 030, Telangana

Applications Invited for Agripreneurship Orientation Program

MANAGE Centre for Innovation and Agripreneurship launches Agripreneurship Orientation Program supported by RKVY-RAFTAAr, Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare, Govt. of India.

Youth/students having an innovative idea and want to start an agri-business venture are encouraged to apply. The program will provide two months training cum hands on internship with startups, Rs.10,000 per month stipend, grant in aid up to Rs.5 lakhs to selected entrepreneurs, and assistance in incorporating a startup business. Last date for application is 30th January 2019.

For more details: www.manage.gov.in Director (Agricultural Extension)



MANAGE - CENTRE FOR INNOVATION AND AGRIPRENEURSHIP

(A Knowledge Partner for RKVY-RAFTAAr, MoA&FW, GoI)

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION MANAGEMENT (MANAGE)

(An Organization of Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, Govt. of India)

Rajendranagar, Hyderabad - 500030, Telangana.

Applications invited for Startup Agri-Business Incubation

MANAGE Centre for Innovation and Agripreneurship launches Startup Agri-Business Incubation Program supported by RKVY-RAFTAAr, Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare, Government of India.

Startup Agri-Business entrepreneur looking to scale-up the business can avail incubation facilities at the centre, which includes up to Rs.25 Lakhs grant-in-aid, extensive mentoring from experts, technical and business support, and long term incubation support.

Last date for application is 30th January, 20

8 EDITORIAL



The gap within

We need to address the issue of slower growth in our poorer States

India, as the world's fastest-growing major economy, may well be catching up with the richer economies in terms of absolute size. But economic convergence within the country remains a distant dream as poorer States continue to lag behind the richer ones in economic growth. A report from the rating agency Crisil found that the inter-State disparities have widened in recent years even as the larger economy grows in size and influence on the global stage. Many low-income States have experienced isolated years of strong economic growth above the national average. Bihar, in fact, was the fastest-growing State this year among the 17 non-special category States evaluated by the report. But they have still failed to bridge their widening gap with the richer States since they have simply not been able to maintain a healthy growth rate over a sustained period of time. Richer States like Gujarat, for instance, have been able to achieve sustained economic growth and increase their gap over other States. The report found that there was a slight, albeit weak, convergence in the per capita income levels of the poorer and richer States between fiscal years 2008 and 2013, but the trend was reversed in the subsequent years. Between fiscal years 2013 and 2018, there has been a significant divergence rather than convergence in the economic fortunes of the poorer and richer States. This was the result of richer States continuing to show strong growth while the poorer States fell behind. In fact, only two of the eight low-income States in 2013 had growth rates above the national average over the next five years. On the other hand, six out of the nine high-income States recorded rates higher than the national average during 2013-18.

What explains the divergence in the economic fortunes of States? The report suggests that, at least during fiscal year 2018, government spending may be what boosted gross domestic product growth in the top-performing States, particularly in Bihar and Andhra Pradesh whose double-digit growth rates have come along with a burgeoning fiscal deficit. The impact of greater spending was that 10 of the 17 States breached the 3% fiscal deficit limit set by the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Act. Many other big-spending States, however, have not managed to achieve growth above the national average. Punjab and Kerala, which are at the bottom of the growth table, are ranked as profligates by the report. This suggests that the size of public spending is probably not what differentiates the richer States from the poorer ones. Other variables like the strength of State-level institutions, as gauged by their ability to uphold the rule of law and create a free, competitive marketplace for businesses to thrive, and the quality of public spending could be crucial determinants of the long-run growth prospects of States.

A reckless experiment

Editing the 'human germline'

is an exercise fraught with unknown risks

The saga of the Chinese scientist who created the world's first gene-edited babies last November has forced researchers everywhere to take a hard look at the ethics of gene-editing. Chinese authorities have since condemned the researcher, He Jiankui, with a government report this week saying he violated both ethics and laws. But though Mr. He's actions drew international outrage, they weren't revolutionary in technological terms. Editing DNA to correct disease mutations has been possible for a while now, which means others can also do what Mr. He did. The promises of such gene-editing are boundless; over a dozen clinical trials are currently on to treat diseases like HIV, multiple myeloma and other forms of cancer, using the Crispr-Cas9 editing system. But none of them involve editing the so-called human germ-line; instead, they have restricted themselves to fixing genetic flaws in sick adults. In contrast, Mr. He deactivated a gene in two human embryos, which means that the changes he made could be inherited by the next generation. In doing so, he violated the widely held ethical consensus that it is too early for germline editing, for we simply don't know enough yet about the risks of such fiddling.

One pitfall of embryo gene-editing is that it is not as precise as we need it to be today. Studies have shown that the technology can result in unintended mutations, which in turn can cause cancers. Then there is the danger of mosaicism, in which some cells inherit the target mutation, while others don't. To be sure, the error-rates of Crispr are falling with each passing year. But we aren't in the clear yet. What is more, even when gene-editing becomes fool-proof, the decision to edit embryos will still be a weighty one. This is because, today, scientists are far from understanding how exactly individual genes influence phenotypes, or the visible traits of people. Every gene likely influences multiple traits, depending on the environment it interacts with. This makes it hard to predict the ultimate outcome of an embryo-editing exercise without decades of follow-up. This uncertainty became evident in Mr. He's experiment, in which he sought to immunise a pair of twins from HIV by tinkering with a gene called CCR5. The problem is that while protecting against HIV, a deactivated CCR5 gene can also make people more susceptible to West-Nile Fever. Every gene influences such trade-offs, which scientists barely understand today. This is why several scientific societies have advised abundant caution while fiddling with the human germline. In a 2017 report, the U.S.'s National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine said such an intervention would be defensible only in very rare situations, where no alternative exists. The He Jiankui incident shows it is time to translate these advisories into regulations. Unless this happens, the Crispr revolution could well go awry.

An electoral intervention that has clicked

Improvements to the EVM are certainly possible, but a return to paper ballots is an untenable proposition



SRINIVASAN RAMANI

The implementation or evaluation of any policy decision must consider not just abstract reasoning but base it on empirical and historical evidence. This holds true for the debate on the question of persisting with the electronic voting machine, or EVM, in the Indian electoral process. Much has been said by commentators and political party representatives about the futility of using the EVM because of the possibility of electoral fraud by manipulating the technology that drives the machine. Informed critiques of the EVM and its handling have helped in some ways, one of them being the universal implementation of the Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) that allows for a layer of verification to the electoral process.

Misrepresentation

But more often than not, there have been accusations made about the EVM that do not stand up to scrutiny or reality, primarily made by political parties that have chosen to blame EVM manipulation as an easy excuse for their losses in various elections. Also, despite there being barely any shred of evidence to show that any election held recently was subject to electoral fraud through manipulation of EVMs, and repeated assurances by the Election Commission of India (ECI) of the robustness of the administrative and technical safeguards in place to prevent EVM tampering, the swirl of accusations refuses to die down.

While glitches and machine failures have been reported or misreported as outcomes of "EVM hacking", administrative errors in transporting the machines have been presented as evidence of tampering. The fact that glitches being reported have gone up is true enough. The replacement rate for machines deployed in the by-elections of Uttar Pradesh in 2018 went up to as high as 20% because of failures – primarily of the VVPAT machine that is adjunct to the control and ballot units of the EVM. These glitches had caused difficulties in conducting polls in the Karnataka Assembly elections, in May 2018, as well. But there were specific reasons for these.

Complex layer

The introduction of the VVPAT to allow for a paper count of the registered votes has also added a level of complexity to the otherwise simple technology that runs the EVM. The VVPAT was also rushed into service because of the constant carping about the possibility of EVM hacking by political parties. The VVPAT failure rates were high early on in elections held in late 2017 and early 2018, with hardware issues occurring during transportation and exposure to extreme weather conditions. The ECI sought to correct these problems by repairing components related to the printing spool of the VVPAT machines and the deployment of many corrected machines in the three Assembly elections held recently – Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh – resulted in much reduced replacement rates (close to 2.5% in Madhya Pradesh and 1.9% in Chhattisgarh). This suggests that the ECI is relatively better prepared to handle VVPAT-related glitches in the upcoming Lok Sabha elections.

The VVPAT's introduction and



use is also necessary to address doubts related to the possibility of EVM hacking despite the safeguards in place.

Checks and balances

The ECI has reassured us many a time that the simplicity of the architecture of the EVM (software written onto a one-time programmable chip; standalone machines that are not networked; the lack of any frequency receiver or wireless decoder that will allow for communication externally; and advancements in newly deployed machines that allow for self-diagnostics to render the machines tamper-proof among other things) has helped it evade some of the misgivings experienced by EVMs used in other countries.

Combining this with administrative safeguards that allow for rigorous checks at various levels, such as after manufacture, during deployment, and so on; randomisation of deployment of machines, a listing of candidates in alphabetical order rather than on party basis on ballot units; sealing of machines by political party representatives after polling and storing in high security "strong-rooms", the ECI has asserted that all these have made tampering impossible.

With these safeguards in place, it would require "insider mis-

chief" by officials of the ECI, or by employees of the EVM manufacturers (Bharat Electronics Limited and the Electronics Corporation of India Limited) or the introduction of Trojans (malicious software) at the chip burning stage (a process currently outsourced to overseas firms) and which remain undetected by the manufacturers during their "first level checks" of the firmware, to create problems. Critics of the EVM suggest that there is a non-zero possibility of such ways that will result in the deployment of tampered EVMs susceptible to manipulation. These are far-fetched but technically possible scenarios that assume malicious actions by vendors that are deliberately ignored by the manufacturers, "insider fraud" that remains undetected, and coordinated actions by agents who manage to shift vote counts in favour of their party using the manipulation that is possible with the tampered EVMs.

More about the VVPAT

Fortunately, the implementation of the VVPAT as a device has rendered it possible to verify if at all such schemes have happened to subvert the mandate of voters. VVPATs will help find if there is anything malicious that has gone on by comparing machine tallies with the hand-counted tally of the slips.

Currently, the ECI allows for the votes recorded in the VVPAT to be counted in only one randomly chosen polling booth in each Assembly segment. Statisticians such as Atanu Biswas of the Indian Statistical Institute, Kolkata, and former bureaucrat K. Ashok Vardhan Shetty have argued that this is not enough. Mr. Shetty has suggested that a more robust count of VVPAT slips would entail the setting of a State-wise number of the booths to be counted, that is ad-

justed for population, voting turnout and other factors. This is a legitimate suggestion that the ECI should pay heed to in order to dispel any lingering doubts about the electoral process.

That being said, the idea that EVMs should be junked because of the possibilities mentioned above and that we should return to paper ballots as the means of voting is not just problematic but is also an ahistorical argument. In a recent paper, researchers such as Shamika Ravi et al have shown that the use of EVMs had led to a significant decline in election fraud such as rigging, booth capturing, ballot stuffing, etc in many States and even resulted in increased voter turnout especially of the vulnerable and poorer sections of the Indian electorate. I had found, in a statistical study for The Hindu in April 2016, that not only had EVMs rendered "invalid votes" to be a complete non-factor but also invalid votes had significantly affected several Assembly elections in the past.

In other words, the EVM has served the purpose which was the reason for its deployment by the ECI in the first place – to assure free and fair elections, and to ease the process of voting. Improvements to the EVM are certainly possible, but a return to paper ballots is an untenable proposition.

In sum, the best possible way of improving upon our electoral process and bringing in greater trust in it is a continuing and constructive critique of India's EVM through a scrutiny of the election process including technical assessments of the devices used. But there should be no place for an uninformed dismissal of the EVM as a part of the discourse as this will only increase distrust in our democratic process.

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Moving away from 1%

Sluggish health spending can be reversed with a substantial increase in the allocation for health in the Union Budget



SOUMITRA GHOSH

India's neighbours, in the past two decades, have made great strides on the development front. Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Bhutan now have better health indicators than India, which has puzzled many. How could these countries make the great escape from the diseases of poverty earlier than their much bigger neighbour? India's health achievements are very modest even in comparison to large and populous countries such as China, Indonesia or Brazil.

Clear trends

Therefore, it is imperative to understand why India is not doing as well as these countries on the health front. Looking at other developed and transitional economies over many years, two important trends can be discerned: as countries become richer, they tend to invest more on health, and the share of health spending that is paid out of the pocket declines. Economists have sought to explain this phenomena as "health financing transition", akin to demographic and epidemiologic transitions.

The point to be noted is that

similar to these transitions, the health financing transition is not bound to happen, though it is widespread.

As with the other two transitions, countries differ in terms of timing to start the transition, vary in speed with which they transition through it, and, sometimes, may even experience reversals. Economic, political and technological factors move countries through this health financing transition. Of these, social solidarity for redistribution of resources to the less advantaged is the key element in pushing for public policies that expand pooled funding to provide health care. Out-of-pocket payments push millions of people into poverty and deter the poor from using health services. Prepaid financing mechanisms, such as general tax revenue or social health insurance (not for profit), collect taxes or premium contributions from people based on their income, but allow them to use health care based on their need and not on the basis of how much they would be expected to pay in to the pooled fund.

Hence, most countries, which includes the developing ones, have adopted either of the above two financing arrangements or a hybrid model to achieve Universal Health Care (UHC) for their respective populations. For example, according to the World Health Organisation's recent estimates, out-of-pocket expenditure contributed

only 20% to total health expenditure in Bhutan in 2015 whereas general government expenditure on health accounted for 72%, which is about 2.6% of its GDP. Similarly, public expenditure represents 2%-4% of GDP among the developing countries with significant UHC coverage, examples being Ghana, Thailand, Sri Lanka, China and South Africa.

Low spending, interventions

Unlike these countries, India has not invested in health sufficiently, though its fiscal capacity to raise general revenues increased substantially from 5% of GDP in 1950-51 to 17% in 2016-17. India's public spending on health continues to hover around 1% of GDP for many decades, accounting for less than 30% of total health expenditure. Besides low public spending, neither the Central nor the State governments have undertaken any significant policy intervention, except the National Health Mission, to redress the issue of widening socioeconomic inequalities in

health. But the NHM, with a budget of less than 0.2% of GDP, is far too less to make a major impact. And worryingly, the budgetary provision for the NHM has decreased by 2% in 2018-19 from the previous year.

Last year, the Union government launched the Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana with much fanfare but only ₹2,000 crore was allocated to this so called 'game-changer' initiative. This assumes importance as the National Health Policy 2017 envisaged raising public spending on health to 2.5% of GDP by 2025. Certain key indicators suggest that public health expenditure has stagnated since the National Democratic Alliance came to power in 2014.

As a percentage of GDP, total government spending (Centre and State) was a mere 0.98% in 2014-15 and 1.02% in 2015-16. Although the revised estimate of government expenditure for 2016-17 and budget estimate for 2017-18 show an apparent increase in allocation (1.17 and 1.28%, respectively), actual expenditure might turn out to be quite less. This could be explained by looking at the difference between the revised allocation and actual expenditure for the years 2014-15 and 2015-16. Actual expenditure dropped by 0.14 and 0.13 percentage points, respectively.

Assuming that the trend did not change in the last couple of years, India's public expenditure on

health would be around 1.1% even in 2017-18. This 'sticky public health spending rate' of 1%, which does not increase despite robust economic growth for years, is partly due to a decline in the Centre's expenditure, which fell from 0.40% of GDP in 2013-14 to 0.30% of GDP in 2016-17 (As per 2018-19 budget allocation, 0.33% of GDP).

Increase allocation

If this sluggish public health spending has to be reversed, there is a need for a substantial increase in the allocation for health in the forthcoming Union Budget. However, the rise in government health spending also depends on health spending by States as they account for more than two-thirds of total spending.

Hence, both the Centre and States must increase their health spending efforts, which would reduce the burden of out-of-pocket expenditure and improve the health status of the population. Else, the 2019 Budget would also see public health spending sticking at 1% of GDP. This would mean India, would, without doubt, miss the 2025 target, and thereby fail to achieve UHC in a foreseeable future.

Soumitra Ghosh is Assistant Professor, Centre for Health Policy, Planning and Management, School of Health Systems Studies, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai

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.

The Left today

Given the declining support base of the CPI(M), its general secretary Sitaram Yechury's cautious optimism about the party's likely performance in the coming Lok Sabha elections is quite understandable (OpEd page, 'The Wednesday Interview' – "Sabarimala will have a positive impact on the Lok Sabha elections", January 23). It should be a matter of serious concern to the party leadership that its ideological arch rival, the Bharatiya Janata Party, has edged out the Left even in West Bengal, even increasing its vote share as well. Organisationaly, the CPI(M)'s cadre base started declining with the emergence of the Trinamool Congress's Mamata Banerjee as an

undisputed leader of the party. Very little has been done by the Left's ageing and even uninspiring leadership to attract young aspirants to its fold. It does face an existential threat. The least that can be done is to first merge all Left-leaning parties under one umbrella.

S.K. CHOWDHURY,
Bengaluru

■ The interview only reaffirms the precarious position of the CPI(M) – that it is in 'no man's land' as far as fighting the general election as part of a combined opposition is concerned. There is no way the party can be a part of the Opposition group being promoted by Trinamool Congress chief Mamata Banerjee. Moreover with its depleting influence among

voters, the party has hardly any bargaining power. The political snub to the Congress in Uttar Pradesh, a Communist party in the wilderness and the indifferent response to the Kolkata rally from the leaders of the Biju Janata Dal and the Telangana Rashtra Samiti, respectively, give enough breathing space to the BJP to gather itself together and project itself as the only party that can provide a stable government at the Centre.

V. SUBRAMANIAN,
Chennai

■ The interview only reaffirms the precarious position of the CPI(M) – that it is in 'no man's land' as far as fighting the general election as part of a combined opposition is concerned. There is no way the party can be a part of the Opposition group being promoted by Trinamool Congress chief Mamata Banerjee. Moreover with its depleting influence among

ratio of women and men in Indian political space.
UNNIKRISHNAN MANGALASERI,
Manjeri, Malappuram, Kerala

Talking about drought

The writer has attempted to press home the issue of water scarcity, but droughts are the product of multiple reasons, key among them being global warming. Climate change has no geographical boundaries. Also, it is not appropriate to try and lay the blame at the government's door (Editorial page, "India stares at water scarcity", January 23).

DEEPAK SINGHAL,
Noida

■ If the ideas enshrined in the article are extrapolated, one gets a glimpse of the problems farmers would face, made worse by the politics in this country. The

Green Revolution has helped the world tackle hunger, but our water usage tripled. It is of utmost exigency that the government changes its attitude towards the farmer as meticulous resource allocation of water should be orchestrated. As the unreliability of rains has been increasing exponentially due to environmental factors, investments should be used to procure future proof technologies like osmotic water plants and drip irrigation. India must take a leaf out of the page from the book of countries that have conducted extensive research and planning of agriculture.

JACOB J. PUTHENVEETIL,
Chennai

■ One has hardly heard of any political party focussing

on the issue of water scarcity. One hopes that some solutions are reflected in their manifestoes for 2019. ANISH ESTEVES, Mumbai

King Kohli
The choice of Virat Kohli as the winner of the Sir Garfield Sobers ICC Trophy for Men's Cricketer of the Year, and also captain of the ICC's Test and ODI teams of the year is in recognition of his tenacity and as a player with good stroke play and timing. As the Indian captain, he has shown the ability to rotate his bowlers and exploit their mettle.

South Africa's new Indian migrants

For India-South Africa relations to take shape, we need to move beyond Gandhi and the Indian diaspora



ESEA KUNDURI &
PRAGNA RUGUNANAN



"Even as South African Indians grapple with the idea of India as their homeland, their idea of South Africa as 'home' has led to antagonism towards the new Indian migrants." Indian migrant traders in South Africa in 1913. ■ GETTY IMAGES

Walking through the former Indian township of Lenasia (south of Johannesburg) in November 2017, we met a Nigerian migrant listening to a Hindi song. Curiosity led to a brief conversation and he told us that while he could not follow the lyrics of the song, he found the music enthralling. Within minutes of the conversation, we met the friend from whose phone the migrant had copied the song. He told us that he had arrived less than a decade ago from Surat and works at a mobile shop in Lenasia.

The close links between India and South Africa from the perspective of migration is well known. There is vast documentation of historical migrant streams – from the arrival of indentured labourers in Natal in 1860 to the arrival of Indian traders after 1880. Durban, in particular, is known to host one of the largest concentrations of the Indian diaspora. Data from the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) show the population of Overseas Indians in South Africa in December 2018 to be over 1.5 million: 60,000 Non-Resident Indians and 15,00,000 Persons of Indian Origin.

The invitation to South African President Cyril Ramaphosa as the chief guest for India's Republic Day celebrations this year has put the spotlight on two important pillars of bilateral ties: Mahatma Gandhi's connection to South Africa, and a large Indian diaspora. President Ramaphosa's visit assumes significance as India celebrates the 150th birth anniversary of Gandhi. In June last year, External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj's visit to South Africa honoured 25 years of diplomatic relations between the two countries, the 100th birth anniversary of Nelson Mandela, and 125 years of the Pietermaritzburg train incident.

Drivers of business
Little, however, is known about the new migrants to South Africa's shores, like the Gujarati migrant we

met in Lenasia. Why is the figure of the contemporary Indian migrant critical to consider, and should it be differentiated from an older diasporic Indian population in South Africa?

Post its democratic transition, South Africa witnessed an influx of migrants from developing countries such as Mozambique, Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Pakistan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, India, and Lesotho, who came to the country in the hope of social and economic success. These migration streams are reflective of wider shifts in global migration trends, of South-South migration emerging rapidly as a viable alternative in comparison to the costs of migrating to the Global North, or as an intermediate stop in further pursuit of migration to the Global North.

Indian migrants are driven to South Africa because of cultural relatedness and the presence of networks from the home country. In the Gauteng province, for instance, Indian migrants first arrive in areas with existing Indian concentrations, such as Fordsburg, Lenasia, and Laudium. Fordsburg is well known as one of the most vibrant places in Johannesburg, for its iconic Oriental Plaza and variety of street foods, halal shops and Indian sweetmeats. New Indian migrants have set up businesses here alongside Pakistanis, Bangladeshis, and Egyptians. It is not uncommon to see Malawis assisting as cooks in *dhabas* (eateries) run by

Indian and Pakistani migrants. The migrants have been critical drivers of businesses and employment generation in these and various other neighbourhoods.

Raman (name changed), who hails from Mumbai, and runs a telecommunications business in South Africa, remarks about setting shop in Fordsburg: "I moved from India to Dubai for two years. When I was doing business in Dubai, most of my clients were based in South Africa. So then I said, fine, there is some potential in the country, and because people are buying so much from us, from Dubai, if I move to South Africa, it will be good exposure for me and for them to interact with me on a day-to-day basis... I have a more intimate relationship with them."

On the one hand, the influx of migrant groups has resulted in the exchange of ideas, goods and cultures at a micro neighbourhood/street level. The African migrant who listens to Bollywood songs in Lenasia symbolises this. On the other hand, not all is pleasant among the new Indian migrants and the South Africans of Indian origin. Even as South African Indians grapple with the idea of India as their homeland, their idea of South Africa as 'home' has given rise to antagonism towards the new Indian migrants. Furthermore, Indian migrant traders, alongside Chinese traders, have been at the receiving end of xenophobic attacks and violence. China Malls, the Oriental Plaza

and other trading spaces have witnessed violent burglaries and break-ins. Much of this is driven by hatred stemming from the perception that migrants are taking away the jobs of local South Africans.

The real story, however, is that migrants have made positive contributions to South Africa's economy and society. In fact, cities like Johannesburg are driven by migrants. Yet, this receives little attention in mainstream policy discourse or in bilateral/multilateral relationships.

For robust relations

Recent developments signal some change. Speaking along the sidelines of the African Union Summit in Kigali, Rwanda, in March 2018, President Ramaphosa urged South Africans to welcome and embrace foreign nationals from the [African] continent," arguing that movement of people allows for new opportunities for business and learning. More recently, at the informal meeting of BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) leaders in Buenos Aires, Prime Minister Narendra Modi spoke of the need for "smooth movement of labour worldwide" in the context of managing labour relations in global value chains.

For India-South Africa relations to truly take shape in contemporary times, it is no longer enough to glorify the Indian diaspora or commemorate Gandhi's role in South Africa, which have been the two key highlights of top-level foreign visits and meetings thus far. Contemporary India and South Africa need to recognise and harness the potential of new migratory flows. Only then can we realise our true strength as allies in BRICS or IBSA (India, Brazil, South Africa). The emphasis on skill development, South-South cooperation, and people-to-people contact, significant as it is, cannot be delinked from cross-border flows of people, who are rapidly transforming the employment and migration landscape in both countries. At the same time, free labour mobility on its own is not enough; we need measures to safeguard and uphold labour standards globally.

Esha Kunduri is Research Associate, Centre for Policy Research, New Delhi, and Pragna Rugunan is Associate Professor of Sociology, University of Johannesburg. Views are personal

The hard power imperative

India needs to urgently modernise the armed forces



MANMOHAN BAHADUR

In a new programme called 'Insect Allies', launched by the Defence Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA), which is responsible for developing military technologies in the U.S., researchers have been asked to evolve insects that introduce genetically modified viruses into crops. This is being done ostensibly to address infections. One is yet to come across a more ingenious explanation for a lethal weapon system being developed. Imagining these insects being let loose in fields with their genes deviously modified? Is this agricultural warfare? The journal, *Science*, acknowledges that the programme "may be widely perceived as an effort to develop biological agents for hostile purposes". The DARPA has denied that this is its intention, but history has proven that noble human intentions have been overpowered by the lure of obtaining a technological advantage to enhance power.

Developing hard power

No country calling itself a power can afford to lag behind its adversaries in the technology innovation cycle. China realised this early, and its advancements in weapons technology has been impressive. With research and development (R&D) allocation growing from \$13.4 billion in 1991 to \$377 billion in 2015 (20% of the world's R&D budget), China moved from an era of reverse engineering to creative adaptations and now to disruptive innovations, as seen in its J-20 stealth fighter and the hypersonic wave rider vehicle programmes. On mastering the latter, China would be able to strike any target in the world within an hour of the decision being taken. With such technological breakthroughs, and as part of its influence operations, it is no surprise that China is changing rules that govern geopolitical relations. Accordingly, it has moved from Deng Xiaoping's philosophy – 'hide your strength and bide your time' – to Xi Jinping's propagation of aggressive aggrandisement.

However, the narrative in Delhi is stuck on the mundane issues of third- and fourth-generation fighter programmes of Tejas and Rafale. India seems to hope for an environment sans war. Soft power processes such as the Wuhan summit and the waiver for India under CAATSA (Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act) are important but they are not substitutes for the hard power necessary to buttress nation-building. Chi-

na and the U.S. may be adversaries, but economic reasons will not let their rhetoric and mutual trade wars cross the rubicon. Cold calculations of national interest drive their decision-making, and collateral damage by way of broken promises and overlooked pledges of friendships with less powerful nations, India included, are plausible. Promises of friendships between unequal do not withstand the lure of economic give and take of the powerful engaged in a geo-economic tussle; it is a truism that while capability takes time to build, intentions can change overnight. It is time that India stands on its own with its indigenous hard power.

Needed: An adequate budget and time
Hard power grows only if there is an adequate budget, and if time is given for acquiring intellectual property in the military. According to the World Bank, India's total investment in R&D has stayed static at 0.63% of the GDP for a 20-year period! More worrying is that three-fifths of this is in sectors other than defence. In the same period, China's R&D investment has gone up from 0.56% to 2.07% of its GDP. Reports state that the Indian Air Force has delayed payment to HAL and that the Defence Ministry has not paid military contractors. The scene thus appears grim vis-à-vis monies available for strengthening the war-waging potential of the services. Due to several false starts in arms acquisitions, 'India fatigue' pervades the defence manufacturing sector. The poor participation of major weapon manufacturers with their top-line products at the last two Aero India and DefExpo exhibitions is proof of this.

Military power does not come with purchase of sniper rifles, the emergency acquisition of which caused euphoria in some circles recently. It is also a given that not one election cycle but decades are needed to build military power, which is the life span of at least three governments. The rise of Japan's military in the early 19th century, Germany's military between 1920 and 1940, and China's military between 1980 and 2005 attest to decades-long commitment of focussed political and scientific attention and assured availability of adequate monies. With the strengthening of China-Pakistan relations, and the modernisation of their militaries, it is vital that India's 2019-20 Budget (as also the interim vote on account) addresses the need to urgently modernise the armed forces. Developing intellectual property through indigenous R&D is key to this endeavour. What India's polity needs is some serious bipartisan introspection and discussion, which will be in national interest.

Manmohan Bahadur, a retired Air Vice Marshal, is Additional Director General, Centre for Air Power Studies, New Delhi. Views are personal

SINGLE FILE

China's compromise

A new draft Bill seeks to address some of the West's concerns on forced technology transfers

GARIMELLA SUBRAMANIAM

The 'Made in China 2025' industrial policy aims to transform China from a low-wage copycat manufacturing economy to a high-value generator. But Beijing's aspiration for global dominance in sectors including aerospace and aviation, robotics and artificial intelligence, 5G communications and self-driven cars has been dubbed a threat to the world order.

There have been concerns for a while now that Chinese joint ventures, in violation of World Trade Organisation rules, coerce investors to share proprietary intellectual property (IP) in return for access to lucrative domestic markets. For instance, a 2017 law required foreign automobile manufacturers to disclose sensitive technology regarding new energy vehicles, causing an uproar among investors. Authorities quickly backed down from such preconditions.

U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer's 2017 probe targeted precisely those sectors of Beijing's 2025 policy that it believed would impact national security. The investigation was triggered under the infamous Section 301 of the 1974 Trade Act, which authorises unilateral retaliation against the unfair trade practices of other nations. As a consequence, the total amount of tariffs, effective and proposed, against China stood at \$517 billion in 2018. These are in addition to the punitive levies slapped in early 2018 against global steel and aluminium imports. In coordinated actions, the U.S. Justice and Commerce Departments have pursued Chinese state-owned firms and intelligence agents for economic espionage in the aerospace, aircraft engine and semiconductor technology arenas. Fujian Jinhua is at the centre of criminal litigation for alleged theft of trade secrets worth billions of dollars from U.S. firms. The company is the high-tech parallel to the Chinese telecom giant Huawei, which Washington and its allies have barred from bidding for 5G network contracts, seeing it as a national security threat.

The row over the loss of new energy vehicles technology by automobile firms, in return for access to the Chinese markets, is one of many areas where the EU and the U.S. found common cause. Along with Japan, they came together that year to counter the structural factors they believe fuel Beijing's forced IP transfers and other market distortions. But such joint efforts are unlikely to fructify, as the U.S. prefers unilateralism in pursuit of its 'America First' agenda. The flip side of disregarding multilateral rules is resorting to arbitrary action to serve political ends. The Section 301 tariffs, for example, are said to have been applied to ancillary industries in the supply chain. Similarly, import exemptions on Chinese goods have been allowed where Beijing is the sole supplier and denied if there are other exporters.

The U.S. and China will have to find greater common ground for the smooth flow of two-way trade. China's new Bill promising to end forced technology transfers will hopefully be a step in this direction.

The writer is a Deputy Editor at The Hindu in Chennai

CMYK

AN-NO-NDE



FAQ

Sedition and its discontents

The scope and limits of an old provision that many want repealed or amended

K. VENKATARAMAN

What does Section 124-A of the IPC say?

The section deals with the offence of sedition, a term that covers speech or writing, or any form of visible representation, which brings the government into hatred or contempt, or excites disaffection towards the government, or attempts to do so. It is punishable with three years in prison or a life term. "Disaffection", it says, includes disloyalty and feelings of enmity. However, it also says expressing disapproval of government measures or actions, with a view to getting them changed by lawful means, without promoting hatred or disaffection or contempt towards the government will not come under this section.

Is it constitutionally valid?

Two high courts had found it unconstitutional after Independence, as it violated the freedom of speech and expression. The Constitution was amended to include 'public order' as one of the 'reasonable restrictions' on which free speech could be abridged by law. Thereafter, the Supreme Court, in *Kedar Nath Singh v. State of Bihar* (1962) upheld its validity. At the same time, it limited its application to acts that involve "intention or tenden-

cy to create disorder" or incitement to violence. Thus, even strongly worded remarks, as long as they do not excite disloyalty and enmity, or incite violence, are not an offence under this section.

Why the controversy now?

In recent times, the resort to this section is seen as disturbingly frequent. Activists, cartoonists and intellectuals have been arrested under this section, drawing criticism from liberals that it is being used to suppress dissent and silence critics. Authorities and the police who invoke this section defend the measure as a necessary step to prevent public disorder and anti-national activities. Jawaharlal Nehru University students and activists, Assamese scholar Hiren Gohain and Manipur journalist Kishor Chandra Wangkhem are prominent among those booked in re-

cent days. Wangkhem has also been detained under the National Security Act.

What is being done about it?

Liberals and rights activists have been demanding the scrapping of Section 124A from the statute books, arguing that it has no place in a democracy and that it is being invoked even in cases where there is no incitement to violence or tendency to create public disorder. It is argued that the provision is "overbroad", i.e., it defines the offence in wide terms threatening the liberty of citizens. The Law Commission released a consultation paper last year calling for a reconsideration of the section. It has pointed out that Britain abolished it more than a decade ago and raised the question whether a provision introduced by the British to put down the freedom struggle should continue to be law in India.

FROM The Hindu ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO JANUARY 24, 1969

Platform tickets for cars

Motor vehicles driving into the Egmore railway station will soon have to buy platform tickets. The Southern Railway proposes to charge 50 paise for cars, taxis and autorickshaws, and Rs. 5 for buses. This is apart from the platform tickets that the occupants of the vehicles have to purchase, if they do not hold journey tickets. SRVS lorries and vehicles belonging to newspaper concerns and Government (both Central and State) will, however, be exempted from the levy. A Railway official said Howrah was the only other station in the country where the facility of driving into platforms was available, one Rupee being charged. Besides fetching some income, the new levy will relieve, to some extent, traffic congestion on the platforms, which had increased enormously in recent years. A drive-in counter has been put up to enable the motorists to get their tickets without having to stir from their seats.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO JANUARY 24, 1919

Ongole Cattle.

In his observations on the report of the Ongole Cattle Show Association, Mr. G.A.D. Stuart, the Director of Agriculture, disbelieves the view that has of late been widely held that the export of Ongole cattle abroad has resulted in the serious depletion of the breed. "There were no signs of any deterioration in the breed," comments Mr. Stuart on the President's report. "As he there states," he continues, "the quality of the exhibits compared favourably with the previous shows, this being especially the case among the young bulls; so that extra prizes were given." "This fact," he jubilantly exclaims, "points to the falsity of the strong popular belief" in deterioration which the President mentions." Far from showing the falsity of the popular belief, the President's statement may be shown to emphasise the belief.

CONCEPTUAL Circadian rhythm

BIOLOGY

This refers to the 24-hour cycle that influences the various physiological processes that take place within the human body. Among others, the circadian rhythm most commonly determines the hours that a human being is asleep or awake during a day. Other important things like the metabolic rate, body temperature, blood pressure, and the secretion of various hormones are also influenced by the circadian rhythm. It is believed that disturbances to the circadian rhythm, which is seen by some scientists as an adaptation to conditions prevalent on earth over a long period of time, due to changes in a person's lifestyle, for instance, can lead to adverse effects on the human body.

MORE ON THE WEB

In conversation with Alt News' Pratik Sinha on fake news

<http://bit.ly/PratikSinhaInterview>

FROM PAGE ONE

Oral mentions in SC will soon be history

The CJI takes a call on the spot, whether the case deserves to be heard out-of-turn. This would mean pushing other cases off the list. The CJI has often complained about how cases that were orally represented by a lawyer during mentioning, did not turn out to be urgent.

"For over an hour every day the CJI is made to read the case papers just to see whether a case mentioned is important enough to deserve an urgent hearing... this is a waste of judicial time," Justice Gogoi had once complained in court.

During the past few years oral mentioning has both sparked controversy and witnessed reform.

It was the oral mentioning of the Lucknow Medical College scam case before Justice (now retired) J.S. Chelameswar that triggered the row about the CJI's powers as 'master of roster.'

A writ petition was mentioned before Justice Chelameswar because then Chief Justice Dipak Misra was

heading a Constitution Bench that day. Justice Chelameswar ordered a Bench to be formed to hear the petition. This order was countenanced that very afternoon by a Constitution Bench, which held that none but the CJI has the authority to allocate cases and set up Benches.

The convention also went through a positive transformation when Chief Justice (now retired) Misra realised how senior advocates take advantage of their standing in court to get early dates during oral mentioning. Justice Misra made it a level playing field for all lawyers by allowing only advocates-on-record to mention cases.

Justice Gogoi has repeatedly advised the Bar to be circumspect about orally mentioning cases, and to be careful that only absolutely urgent cases are brought before him. He reminded lawyers that the court cannot be seen to be wasting time when hundreds of death penalty cases are waiting for years to be heard.

Maharashtra police bust plot to poison food, water

They have been charged under Section 120 b (criminal conspiracy) of the Indian Penal Code and Section 19 (punishment for harbouring), Section 20 (punishment for being member of terrorist gang or organisation), Section 38 (offence relating to membership of a terrorist organisation), and Section 39 (offence relating to support given to a terrorist organisation) of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act 1967.

Investigating officers said the accused were in constant touch with each other through the internet.

"We had been monitoring their cyber activities for several weeks and moved in three days ago when their activities indicated that they were actually taking a step

further. We have recovered several bottles of various chemicals from them which, if combined, would be harmful when ingested. The quantity seized from them indicates that their plan was at the experimental stage when they were picked up," an officer said.

The officer said the accused were in touch with their handlers from the Islamic State based across the border, and the locations of these handlers are being verified.

"The IS is no longer limited to Syria and also has a presence in Afghanistan and Bangladesh. The Internet has made it possible for terrorist elements to stay on the move and still coordinate with their recruits," the officer said.

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"We had been monitoring their cyber activities for several weeks and moved in three days ago when their activities indicated that they were actually taking a step

CBI books ex-AI chief on corruption charge

Dr. Nakhwa was not eligible to be a member of the panel, but he nominated her. The panel selected three officers for the post even when criminal cases/complaints were pending against them, said the agency.

The CBI found that a criminal case had been registered

against Capt. Kathpalia at a Mumbai police station, but Air India's Vigilance wing gave clearance in his favour.

Complaints against Capt. Singh and Capt. Bhasin were also pending at the time of their interview in December 2010.

AIADMK forms panel for seat-sharing talks

Manifesto committee also constituted

leadership of former Chief Minister Jayalalithaa had decided to contest alone in the 2014 Lok Sabha polls and in all but seven Assembly constituencies during 2016, the latest development was a pointer to the party's willingness to have allies now.

"We are conscious of the changed situation. What held good at the time of Amma [Jayalalithaa] no longer exists," two senior leaders in the party acknowledged.

Two more committees, one for the preparation of election manifesto and another for coordinating election campaign, have been set up. In separate releases issued by Mr. Palaniswami and Mr. Panneerselvam, the AIADMK announced its decisions.

C. Ponnaiyan, Natham R. Viswanathan and S. Semmala, former Ministers, D Jayakumar and C.Ve. Shanmugam, Ministers, and P. H. Manoj Pandian and A. W. Rabi Bernard, former MPs would be on the manifesto committee.

It was on Tuesday that Fisheries Minister D. Jayakumar spoke about alliance partners. On different occasions, Edappadi K. Palaniswami, Chief Minister and co-coordinator, and O. Panneerselvam, Deputy Chief Minister and coordinator of the party, had hinted at the need for an electoral tie-up. Even though such a committee was in place even when the party under the

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The CBI found that

The party will benefit from her good personality, her way of presenting herself and her ability to strike a chord with the voters. She has the qualities of her grandmother... while going out to vote, people will see Indira Gandhi in her

- MANISHA KAYANDE,
Shiv Sena spokesperson



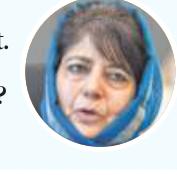
I congratulate Ms. Priyanka Gandhi for her new role in the @INCIndia as AICC general secretary in charge of the Uttar Pradesh (East). I welcome her decision to join active politics

- H.D. KUMARASWAMY,
Karnataka Chief Minister



Welcome Priyanka Gandhi to the rough and tumble of politics. She brings with her the grace of Gandhi-Nehru lineage and her immense personal charm. Wish her the best. Could she become the X factor of 2019 poll battle?

- MEHBOOBA MUFTI,
PDP chief



The Congress has basically publicly announced that Rahul Gandhi has failed and needs crutches from within the family. Because of his rejection by the grand alliance parties, he has opted for a family alliance

- SAMBIT PATRA,
BJP spokesperson



One of the most awaited entries in Indian politics is finally here! While people may debate the timing, exact role and position, to me, the real news is that she finally decided to take the plunge! Congratulations and best wishes to Priyanka Gandhi

- PRASHANT KISHOR,
Poll strategist and JD(U) leader



Rahul hints at larger role for sister in U.P.

'The Congress will now work to seat its own Chief Minister in the State'

OMAR RASHID

LUCKNOW

Congress president Rahul Gandhi on Wednesday hinted at a larger role for his sister Priyanka Gandhi Vadra in Uttar Pradesh politics, beyond the 2019 Lok Sabha election. He said the party would now work to usher in a Congress Chief Minister in the State.

Asserting that he was not sending Ms. Vadra to Uttar Pradesh as general secretary in-charge of Purvanchal for just two months, Mr. Gandhi said it would instead be "a mission" to "fight for the true ideology" of the party.

Addressing a public meeting in his Lok Sabha constituency Amethi soon after the appointment of his sister, Mr. Gandhi said: "Today, I appointed Priyanka as a general secretary for U.P. Now, the Congress will work to seat its own Chief Minister here."

'Front foot play'

Earlier speaking to reporters on his way to Amethi, Mr. Gandhi described Ms. Vadra as "very capable and hard-working" and said he was personally happy to be going to work with her. Mr. Gandhi also praised Jyotiraditya Scindia, who was appointed in-charge of west Uttar Pradesh, as a "dynamic young leader."

When asked if Ms. Vadra

would contest elections, Mr. Gandhi said it was up to her. "My main point is that we are not playing on the back foot anywhere, be it Gujarat or Uttar Pradesh. We do politics for the people and for development, and wherever we get an opportunity, we will play on the front foot," he said. "Congress party is fighting a battle of ideologies. It is fighting for its ideology. Be it Priyanka or Jyotiraditya, they are powerful leaders of the Congress and through these two young leaders we want to alter the politics of Uttar Pradesh," Mr. Gandhi said.

'No animosity'

Asked if his sister's appointment was a reaction to the SP-BSP alliance in the State, Mr. Gandhi said he held no animosity towards Bahujan Samaj Party chief Mayawati or Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav, and had "no problem" in co-operating with them to stop the BJP or holding talks.

"I have full respect for Mayawati and Akhileshji. All three of us have the same goal of defeating the BJP. We don't have any animosity towards Mayawati and Akhileshji, there is affection. But we have to fight for the ideology of the Congress party, and so we will fight in U.P. with full force," Mr. Gandhi said.

While in the past there had been speculation that Ms. Vadra would enter electoral politics, especially during the 2017 Uttar Pradesh

Assembly poll, there were also naysayers who felt that it would create parallel centres of power within the party.

However, after the party tasted success in the recently conducted Assembly polls in five States, of which the Congress won three, it was felt that more bold moves were required.

"Rahul Gandhi has been quite his own man when it comes to decisions and strategy, including persisting with the 'Chowkidar chor hai' line on Rafale, and the appointments he made in the organisation. The simple take away from Ms. Vadra's appointment is that it is very typical of the new Congress president, to play on the

front foot," said a senior leader in the Congress.

"This is the most aggressive move that we could make and we are giving a clear message that we will not be a B-team of anyone. The voter wants to vote out the BJP and they need an alternative. The BSP-SP is a caste-based alliance and would not have been an option for the forward castes," a senior Congress leader from U.P. said.

According to sources, her appointment was also based on the ground survey among the Congress workers. Through the organisational reshuffle, Mr. Gandhi has asserted his position within the party and sent a clear message to the old guard.

His party colleagues, however, were much more direct, with spokesperson Sambit Patra stating that while in the BJP, "the party was the parivar (family)" in the Congress "the parivar (family) is the party."

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in an indirect reference to the appointment while interacting with booth-level workers in Maharashtra via video bridge, said: "BJP does not take de-



Bigger role: Priyanka campaigning for Sonia Gandhi in Rae Bareli, in this file photo. ■REUTERS

Cong. chief's tough message

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Priyanka Vadra's appointment as Congress general secretary in charge of eastern Uttar Pradesh comes at a time when the party has only seven seats in the State Assembly and holds only two Lok Sabha seats, of the family boroughs in Amethi and Rae Bareli.

The Congress's recent best performance in the State was in 2009 when it won 21 Lok Sabha seats. Party president Rahul Gandhi was credited as the brain behind that good showing.

While in the past there had been speculation that Ms. Vadra would enter electoral politics, especially during the 2017 Uttar Pradesh

asserted. "There will be legal hurdles because in their application for NRC they claimed to be Indians. You cannot suddenly change your stand. There won't be a blanket citizenship offer."

The Intelligence Bureau (IB) told a joint parliamentary committee on the Citizenship Bill that those who have come to India from the three countries under reference due to religious persecution but have not declared so at the time of their arrival in India "will have to prove that they came to India due to religious persecution, if they had not declared so at that time of their arrival in India."

Sources said that the petition was dismissed on the grounds that it was a 'belated application' and that it was made with an attempt to scrap the evidence already recorded at the Commission by various doctors.

In Congress, family is the party, says BJP

Priyanka's posting nothing unusual'

NISTULA HEBBAR

NEW DELHI

The BJP reiterated its attack on dynasty politics on the day Priyanka Gandhi Vadra was appointed All India Congress Committee (AICC) general secretary in charge of eastern Uttar Pradesh, while at the same time insisting that the move would help split the anti-BJP vote in the State now consolidated behind the Samajwadi Party-Bahujan Samaj Party alliance.

Union Law Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad, when asked for a comment on the appointment, said: "Good luck to Priyanka Gandhi on her appointment as Congress general secretary. These kind of postings are nothing unusual in that party, except to say with a caveat as to why she has been given the limited role of eastern Uttar Pradesh. Her persona merited a much wider role."

His party colleagues, however, were much more direct, with spokesperson Sambit Patra stating that while in the BJP, "the party was the parivar (family)" in the Congress "the parivar (family) is the party."

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in an indirect reference to the appointment while interacting with booth-level workers in Maharashtra via video bridge, said: "BJP does not take de-



Ravi Shankar Prasad

cisions based on what one person or one family wants, and that's why it is said mostly in the country that family is party, but in the BJP, the party is the family."

Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said in Chennai, "It is two steps forward for dynastic politics. Though there are several party cadre, it shows that Congress gives importance to only one family."

Rashtriya Janata Dal leader Tejashwi Yadav said that the move will motivate 50% of Indian population: women who have been sidelined all this while. "Congratulations to Priyanka Gandhi on her appointment as general secretary. A good decision by CP Rahul Gandhi. We wholeheartedly welcome her entry in active politics. Her appointment will not only energise youth & cadre but motivate 50% female population of India in politics." Mr. Yadav tweeted.

There was, however, no word from either the Samajwadi Party or the Bahujan Samaj Party.

Priyanka greeted with enthusiasm

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Leaders from across the political spectrum welcomed the news of Priyanka Gandhi Vadra making a formal entry into politics with her appointment on Wednesday as the Congress party's general secretary (eastern Uttar Pradesh).

"Welcome Priyanka Gandhi to the rough and tumble of politics. She brings with her the grace of Gandhi-Nehru lineage and her immense personal charm. Wish her the best. Could she become the X factor of 2019 poll battle?" People's Democratic Party leader Mehbuba Mufti tweeted.

Rashtriya Janata Dal leader Tejashwi Yadav said that the move will motivate 50% of Indian population: women who have been sidelined all this while. "Congratulations to Priyanka Gandhi on her appointment as general secretary. A good decision by CP Rahul Gandhi. We wholeheartedly welcome her entry in active politics. Her appointment will not only energise youth & cadre but motivate 50% female population of India in politics." Mr. Yadav tweeted.

There was, however, no word from either the Samajwadi Party or the Bahujan Samaj Party.

+ Bill won't directly benefit NRC excludees'

Call to boycott R-Day

VIJAYA SINGH

NEW DELHI

Non-Muslims excluded from the National Register of Citizens (NRC) in Assam would not immediately or directly benefit from the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, a senior Home Ministry official said.

The comment by the official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity, comes as the Centre faces a backlash in the northeast, including in BJP-ruled Assam, over the Bill. Those vehemently opposed to the Bill fear that it would make it possible for the government to grant Indian citizenship mostly to illegal Hindu migrants from Bangladesh in Assam, who

were excluded from the NRC in Assam would not immediately or directly benefit from the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, a senior Home Ministry official said.

came after March 1971, in violation of the agreement of the Assam Accord, 1985.

Almost 40 lakh people were excluded from Assam's final draft of the National Register of Citizens (NRC) that was published on July 30 last year. Almost 30 lakh of those excluded from the NRC have

organisations such as the Democratic Students' Alliance of Manipur and the Mizoram-based NGO Coordination Committee, comprising five civil society and students' groups, said they would boycott functions.

filed claims to be included in the list of citizens. Government officials would now examine these claims and the final NRC would be published later.

"Those who will not make it to the final NRC, does not mean they will immediately get citizenship," the official

asserted. "There will be legal hurdles because in their application for NRC they claimed to be Indians. You cannot suddenly change your stand. There won't be a blanket citizenship offer."

The Intelligence Bureau (IB) told a joint parliamentary committee on the Citizenship Bill that those who have come to India from the three countries under reference due to religious persecution but have not declared so at the time of their arrival in India "will have to prove that they came to India due to religious persecution, if they had not declared so at that time of their arrival in India."

Sources said that the petition was dismissed on the grounds that it was a 'belated application' and that it was made with an attempt to scrap the evidence already recorded at the Commission by various doctors.

Karmapa says India didn't issue visa to him, wants to return

VIJAYA SINGH

SUHASINI HAIDAR

NEW DELHI

Tibetan monk Ogyen Trinley Dorje, who acquired a Dominica passport, has said in a video message that after a lot of "back and forth" he couldn't get an Indian visa but he hoped to "return quickly."

This is contrary to the claims made by Indian officials who have said that Dorje, who has been living in the U.S. for more than a year now, never applied for a visa. Senior government sources on Wednesday said



Ogyen Trinley Dorje

they stood by their earlier position that the government doesn't recognise him as the "sole 17th Karmapa Lama and there are other contenders" as well.

The source said that he was free to get a visa and has never in fact "presented his passport" for a visa to be

granted. "He... has been living in India as a Tibetan refugee. He wanted to travel abroad and we gave him an IC (Identity Certificate). When he acquired the Dominica passport, he didn't share the information with India. We have conveyed to him that we are ready to give him a visa on his Dominica passport, his IC is now invalid," said the source.

"I have not been able to return but we continue our conversations with the Indian government. I hope to return to India just as quickly as I can," the monk said.

IN BRIEF



Asthana's appointment as BCAS chief challenged

NEW DELHI

M.L. Sharma, a lawyer, on Wednesday moved the Supreme Court challenging the appointment of Rakesh Asthana as the head of the Bureau of Civil Aviation Security. Mr. Sharma alleged that Mr. Asthana should be suspended in view of the pending investigation against him. The Delhi High Court had on January 11 refused to quash the FIR lodged against Mr. Asthana on bribery allegations.

Six Indians among the dead in Crimea accident

MOSCOW/NEW DELHI

At least six Indian sailors were among those killed in Monday's Kerch strait incident, when two fuel ships carrying Indian and Turkish crew members caught fire, officials said on Wednesday. They added that four Indian sailors have been rescued by Russian authorities, while six of them are still missing. Turkey's Milenium Denizcilik Gemi company is believed to own both ships. PTI

Cabinet decides to strengthen northeast autonomous councils

Approves constitutional amendment to grant more power

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved a constitutional amendment to increase the financial and executive powers of the 10 autonomous councils in the Sixth Schedule areas of the northeast.

The amendment would impact a population of about 1 crore tribals living in Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram, according to the Centre.

The Finance Commission would be mandated to recommend devolution of financial resources to the councils, the government said in an official statement.

Till now, the autonomous councils have depended on grants from Central Ministries and the State governments for specific projects.

A Bill in this regard is expected to be introduced in the upcoming session of Parliament, a Home Ministry official said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

"This will be a game changer, as it will substantially enhance the funds available to these local government institutions for undertaking development works in these tribal areas," the official

stated. The financial resources and powers of the autonomous districts councils in Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Tripura, fulfilling long-standing aspirations of the tribal population in these northeastern States," the government said.

A Bill in this regard is expected to be introduced in the upcoming session of Parliament, a Home Ministry official said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

The proposed amendments provide for elected village municipal councils, ensuring democracy at the grass-roots level. The State Election Commissions would hold elections to the autonomous councils, village and municipal councils in the areas of Assam, Mizoram and Tripura.

The proposed amendments provide for elected village municipal councils, ensuring democracy at the grass-roots level. The State Election Commissions would hold elections to the autonomous councils, village and municipal councils



ELSEWHERE

Kamala Harris raises \$1.5 million within a day

WASHINGTON Kamala Harris has raised more than \$1 million funds within 24 hours of announcing her presidential bid for 2020, according to a media report. In the 24 hours after she made the announcement on Monday, 38,000 donors gave \$1.5 million to her campaign, the Fox News reported. **PTI**

Thai national poll on March 24, first since coup

BANGKOK Thailand will hold a general election on March 24, authorities said on Wednesday, the first national poll since a 2014 coup knocked out the Yingluck Shinawatra government. "March 24 will be the election day," Election Commission head Ittiporn Boonpracang told reporters, hours after the publication of a decree signed by King Maha Vajiralongkorn empowering his agency to give a date. **AFP**

Saudi sisters' death in U.S. in Oct. ruled as suicide

Medical examiner gives confirmation

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE



The two Saudi sisters whose bodies were found taped together in late October on the banks of a New York river committed suicide, the city's medical examiner said on Tuesday. The bodies of Rotana Farea, 22, and her sister Tala, 16, were found beside Hudson river with no visible signs of trauma, dressed all in black with fur-trimmed coat collars.

"My office determined that the death of the Farea sisters was the result of suicide, in which the young women bound themselves together before descending into Hudson river," Chief Medical Examiner Barbara Sampson said.

After their deaths, a police official appeared to confirm that the sisters had applied for asylum, but did not provide further details.

Rotana Farea, one of the two sisters whose bodies were found in October.

They had run away several times from their family's home in Virginia, where they had not lived since the end of 2017. U.S. media quoted police as saying the sisters had indicated that they would rather harm themselves than return to Saudi Arabia.

MARKET WATCH

	PRICE	CHANGE
Sensex	36,108	-0.92
US Dollar	71.33	-0.15
Gold	33,210	-0.34
Brent oil	61.43	-0.75

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	385.20	-5.40
Asian Paints	1396.55	-10.40
Axius Bank	661.60	0.00
Bajaj Auto	2674.10	-14.25
Bajaj Finserv	6493.15	57.60
Bajaj Finance	2634.35	12.45
Bharti Airtel	303.70	-1.15
BPCL	357.15	3.35
Cipla	509.30	2.20
Coal India	225.55	-2.20
Dr Reddys Lab	2646.75	6.45
Eicher Motors	2089.15	65.55
GAIL (India)	334.20	1.30
Grasim Ind	782.15	-22.20
HCL Tech	944.45	3.70
HDPC	1958.25	-21.15
HDFC Bank	2105.40	-30.45
Hero MotoCorp	2795.95	-28.95
Hindalco	205.45	1.90
HPLC	241.85	-0.15
Hind Unilever	1767.20	17.00
Indiabulls HFL	778.70	-18.65
ICICI Bank	367.40	-1.65
IndusInd Bank	1495.00	-6.60
Bharti InfraNet	277.00	-0.65
Infosys	731.65	-13.70
Indian Oil Corp	136.10	0.15
ITC	277.30	-12.45
JSW Steel	280.90	2.90
Kotak Bank	1276.50	-15.25
L&T	1301.45	0.30
M&M	695.85	-12.65
Maurti Suzuki	7045.40	-23.45
NTPC	140.75	-2.05
ONGC	143.30	-1.05
PowerGrid Corp	186.30	-3.40
Reliance Ind	1226.30	-8.85
State Bank	286.65	-3.60
Sun Pharma	431.00	12.05
Tata Motors	180.25	-0.60
Tata Steel	464.60	8.05
TCS	1875.60	-26.30
Tech Mahindra	720.70	6.50
Titan	962.15	-20.50
UltraTech Cement	3850.65	-9.85
UPL	762.85	-0.45
Vedanta	192.80	1.30
Wipro	351.55	5.05
YES Bank	197.25	5.05
Zee Entertainment	432.85	7.60

Decide on Essar case by Jan. 31'

Appellate body tells NCLT to pass order on steel company's resolution plan

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI**Seizing the issue:** The NCLAT said it will pass an order in the matter if the NCLT, Ahmedabad fails to decide. ■ PTI

A two-member bench of the NCLAT, headed by Justice S.J. Mukhopadhyay, said that if the Ahmedabad bench of the NCLT did not pass any order by January 31, then it would call the matter and pass an order accordingly on the next date of hearing.

The appellate tribunal has directed to list the matter on February 4 for next hearing.

"We allow designated authority [NCLT] to pass appropriate orders by next date, failing which this appellate tribunal will decide," NCLAT said. The matter is listed before the Ahmedabad bench of NCLT on January 31

for hearing. The appellate tribunal was hearing an application filed by the CoC seeking an early decision.

Earlier on January 3, NCLAT had asked the Ahmedabad bench of NCLT to expediently take a final decision in the Essar Steel insolvency case, where ArcelorMittal emerged as the highest bidder.

It had asked the NCLT bench to take an early deci-

sion in the matter as per the order passed by the Supreme Court in this regard.

No to undervalued plan Meanwhile, an Essar Steel spokesperson said that the creditors of Essar Steel should not be forced to accept a resolution plan that undervalued the company and its assets.

"The proposal made by

Essar Steel shareholders pro-

vides for payment of a total of ₹54,389 crore to various creditors, which exceeds the resolution plan currently approved by the creditors by more than ₹12,000 crore.

This proposal has been submitted under the recently introduced Section 12A of the IBC. Under the proposal made by the shareholders, all classes of creditors would receive full recovery of their claims," an Essar spokesperson said. According to ArcelorMittal, in the case of Essar Steel, opportunities have been provided to bidders for nearly a year – first, to be eligible, and second, to make a compelling offer.

"ArcelorMittal has followed the process from the start. We fully expect the process to continue to be implemented correctly and as per the law. Statements attempting to convince otherwise will not be given any credibility," an ArcelorMittal spokesperson said.

(With inputs from Piyush Pandey in Mumbai)

Australia looks to invest A\$100 billion in India

T.N. a key investment destination

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI

du Global Investors Meet 2019. An announcement on the investment would be made in three months, Ms. Grace said.

Education

She also said one of the key areas Australia could help India was education.

"Australia is the fourth

largest country having top 100 universities, after the U.S., U.K. and Canada. Already, there are 70,000 Indian students in Australia," Ms. Grace said.

"Currently, our investments account for only one fifth of the target and we are looking to invest a lot more," she said at a press conference during the Tamil Na-

IndiGo returns to black in Q3 with ₹190 crore PAT

Year-on-year net profit nosedives 75% on increase in fuel cost rise and rupee depreciation

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

Metrics	Q3 FY19	Q3 FY18	% Growth
Total revenue (₹ cr.)	7,916.22	6,177.88	28.13
Net profit (₹ cr.)	190.88	762.03	-74.95
EPS (₹)	4.97	19.83	-

the Indian rupee as compared to the same period last year.

During the period, revenue increased 28% to ₹7,916

crore as compared to ₹6,177.9 crore in the same period last year.

Yield improved 3.7% due to more sales of tickets in the

0 to 15 days booking window and increased sales during the festive season of November and December, 2018.

"We posted ₹190 crore profit in continued difficult environment and have grown our fleet by one aircraft a week for a 33% capacity increase for the quarter.

We have set very ambitious growth plans," said Rahul Bhatia, co-founder & interim CEO, InterGlobe Aviation Ltd.

He said during the calendar year 2018, IndiGo inducted 55 new aircraft, including 19 in the October to Decem-

ber quarter. As on December 31, 2018, the airline had a fleet of 208 aircraft which include 127 A320ceos, 66 A320neos, 1 A321neo and 14 ATRs.

Having acquired a 42% share in the domestic market, IndiGo will now focus on international expansion besides growing its presence in Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities in India, top company executives said. They said that the airline will now progressively induct A321neos to serve international markets and highly saturated metro airports.

Provision for bad loans rose to ₹4,538.28 crore

due to higher provision for bad loans. The bank posted

₹596.70 crore in the Oct.-Dec. period of the previous financial year.

Provision for bad loans shot up to ₹4,538.28 crore during the reporting period, as compared to ₹3,434.62 crore in the year-ago period.

The lender, under prompt corrective action, saw asset quality improving with gross NPA ratio coming down to 17.3% of gross advances from 19.05% a year ago and net NPA ratio declined to 5.91% from 12.17%.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved the creation of a National Bench of the Goods and Services Tax Appellate Tribunal (GSTAT), which would serve as the forum of second appeals to do with the applicability of GST, and will also be the first common forum of dispute resolution between the Centre and the States.

Composition

The National Bench of the Appellate Tribunal, to be situated in New Delhi, will be presided over by its president. It will consist of a technical member from the Centre and a representative of the States. "This is part and parcel of the GST provisions," L. Badri Narayanan,

the CGST Act provides for an appeal and review mechanism for dispute resolution under the GST regime. Section 109 of this chapter empowers the Centre to constitute, on the recommendation of the GST Council, an appellate tribunal for hearing appeals against the orders passed by the Appellate Authority.

The government, it is learnt, was initially planning an appellate tribunal in each State. However, the idea was discarded in favour of one at the national level following the experience with the various state-level advance ruling authorities, which often gave conflicting judgments.

The creation of the National Bench would involve a one-time expenditure of ₹92.50 lakh.

Partner at Lakshminikaran & Sridharan, said. "They had to create the Tribunal. The way they had envisaged it was that assessment would be done by people below the rank of Commissioner, and the appeals would be with the Commissioner. The Commissioner (Appeals) could then go to the Tribunal. They have now approved the setting up of that Tribunal." Chapter XVIII of

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IN BRIEF



VA Tech Wabag bags ₹467-cr. MRPL order

CHENNAI
VA Tech Wabag has secured a ₹467-crore order from Mangalore Refinery and Petrochemicals Ltd. for setting up a 30 million litre per day (MLD) sea water desalination plant in Mangaluru. Wabag would construct and commission the project in 22 months. The order provides for project size to be expanded up to 70 MLD. Wabag would build the plant using state-of-the-art technologies, said a company release.

Wendt India Q3 net profit rises 51.85%

CHENNAI
Wendt (India) Ltd., a Murugappa Group firm, has reported 51.85% increase in its standalone net profit for the third quarter ended December 2018 at ₹4.10 crore against ₹2.70 crore for the corresponding year-earlier period on increased income. The firm posted total income of ₹37.84 crore against ₹31.66 crore. The board declared an interim dividend of ₹15 per equity share.

Glenmark gets USFDA nod for cancer drug

NEW DELHI
Glenmark Pharmaceuticals has received tentative nod from the U.S. health regulator for Abiraterone Acetate tablets, used in the treatment of prostate cancer. The approved product is a generic version of Janssen Biotech Inc's Zytiga tablets. The firm's current portfolio consists of 148 products authorised for distribution in the U.S. and 54 abbreviated new drug applications pending USFDA approval. PTI

Vodafone Idea board approves ₹25,000-crore rights issue

Promoter-shareholders Vodafone Group and Aditya Birla Group to participate

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

The board of Vodafone Idea Limited on Wednesday approved a proposal to raise ₹25,000 crore by way of rights issue to existing shareholders of the company.

"The board has considered and approved the offer and issue of fully paid-up and/or partly paid-up equity shares of the company and/or other securities convertible into equity shares of the company, including but not limited to compulsorily convertible debentures, for an amount aggregating up to ₹25,000 crore, by way of a rights issue to existing eligible equity shareholders of



Clear idea: The Vodafone and Aditya Birla groups will invest up to ₹11,000 crore and ₹7,250 crore, respectively. ■ REUTERS

the company as at the record date," the company said in a filing with the exchanges.

The promoter-shareholders – Vodafone Group and Aditya Birla Group – have

reiterated to the board that they intend to contribute up to ₹11,000 crore and up to ₹7,250 crore, respectively, as part of such rights issue.

The promoter-sharehol-

ders have indicated that in case the rights issue is under-subscribed, each of the promoter-shareholders reserves the right to subscribe to a part or the whole amount of the unsubscribed portion, subject to applicable law, the company said in a statement.

Shares rise

For the purpose of giving effect to the rights issue, the board has authorised the capital raising committee to decide the terms and conditions of the rights issue.

Vodafone Idea shares rose 0.90% to close at ₹33.75 on the BSE in a weak Mumbai market on Wednesday.

Nissan rolls out sport utility vehicle KICKS

It comes at a price tag of ₹9.55 lakh

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI

Nissan Motor India has rolled out its latest intelligent sport utility vehicle (SUV) Nissan KICKS.

The new vehicle would take on the likes of Hyundai Creta and Renault Captur.

"We have rolled out our SUV by incorporating certain features for the domestic market," said Peter Clisold, vice-president, marketing, Nissan Motor India Pvt. Ltd. "This SUV is targeted at young Indians," he added.

KICKS, he said, was a global product produced at its Oragadam plant with some exclusive features for the domestic market. "Initially, it will cater to the needs of

domestic market," he added.

Nissan KICKS, he said, came with a taller, wider and longer body, 360-degree parking view, Nissan Connect and a floating entertainment screen, among others.

Deliveries had already commenced, and the vehicle would be made available at an introductory price of ₹9.55 lakh across India, he said. The petrol version will have two variants and the diesel four. It will come with a three-year free maintenance package. Nissan KICKS can also be personalised with 27 different accessory categories and tailor-made as per customer requirements.

Outlook for power 'stable to negative'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

India Ratings and Research (Ind-Ra) anticipates slower-than-expected resolution of the stressed thermal capacity, domestic coal availability challenges, and limited appetite of discoms to sign long-term power purchase agreements.

The agency has maintained a stable-to-negative outlook on the power sector for FY20 despite its anticipation of a healthy 6%-7% growth in power demand and an improvement in all-India coal-based PLFs to 62%-63%. The pace of resolution of stressed thermal capacities continues to be slow, with actual resolution of around 2GW only so far, Ind-Ra said.

Tata Motors bets big on Harrier

The premium SUV is developed on Land Rover platform

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

Game-changer: Harrier is a proof of our Turnaround 2.0 strategy, says CEO Guenter Butschek. ■ PAVAN NORONHA

(OMEGA) platform.

Guenter Butschek, CEO and MD, Tata Motors, said: "The Harrier is a strong proof point of our Turnaround 2.0 strategy and it will be a game changer in the market."

Mayank Pareek, president of passenger vehicle business unit, said: "The all-new Harrier is our most premium offering yet and will attract aspiring buyers. Built on the OMEGA ARC, which is derived from Land Rover's legendary D8 Platform, the Harrier is a testament of our continued efforts to deliver global products. So you are getting a JLR product at Indian price."

Moody's upgrades IDBI Bank's rating

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

Days after LIC infused capital and picked up 51% stake in IDBI Bank, Moody's Investors Service has upgraded the lender's long term foreign currency senior unsecured rating and its Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC) Branch to Ba2 from B1, up by two notches.

The long term local and foreign currency bank deposit ratings of the lender was also upgraded to Ba2 from B1. IDBI Bank's Baseline Credit Assessment is upgraded three notches up to b2 from caal, Moody's said, adding the outlook, where applicable, had been changed to positive from ratings under review.

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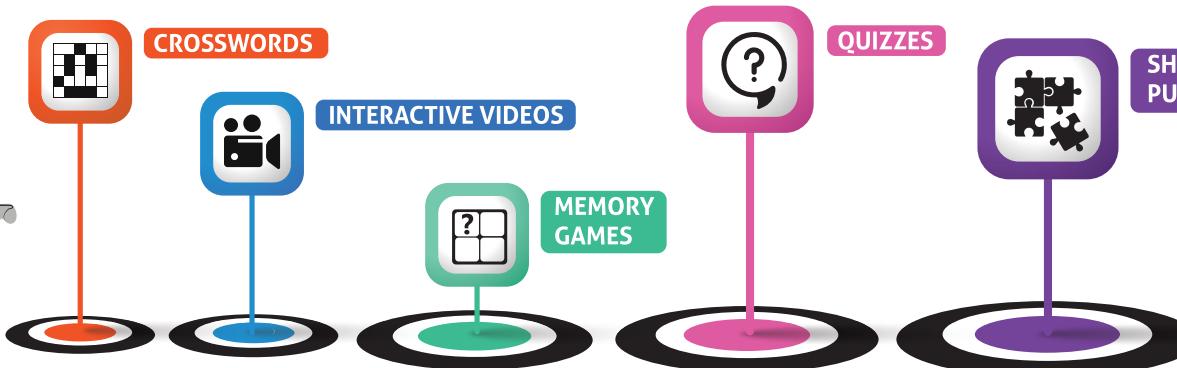
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Kulcha and Shami prove too good for New Zealand

India rides on Dhawan's delightful knock, romps home with plenty to spare



Spin twins: Kuldeep Yadav, right, and Yuzvendra Chahal spun a web around the New Zealand batsmen. ■ AFP

INDIA IN NZ

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
NAPIER

A match billed as a runfest was turned upside down by India's spin twins Kuldeep Yadav and Yuzvendra Chahal – Kulcha – as New Zealand was crushed by eight wickets in the first ODI on Wednesday.

India arrived at the ground with captain Virat Kohli expecting 300-plus to be a par score but when his bowlers rolled over New Zealand for 157 the outcome be-

came a formality.

Yadav and Chahal delivered a spin bowling master-class, mesmerising the New Zealand batsmen and sharing six wickets between them, while Mohammed Shami claimed three as the Kiwis were bundled out with 12 overs remaining.

India's target was reduced by two runs and one over following a 30-minute break when the setting sun blinded the eyes of players and umpires. But the interruption made no difference to Shikhar Dhawan who remained on 75 as India chased down

the target in 34.5 overs.

The New Zealand innings folded so quickly that India had time to bat for nine overs before the scheduled break. Rohit was dismissed off the second ball after the interval, with Doug Bracewell making the breakthrough, before the players left the field again when the setting sun reached a dangerously low angle.

When the match restarted, Dhawan, on 31, was dropped by wicketkeeper Tom Latham. It proved a costly error as the left-hander, who passed 5,000 ODI

runs during the course of the innings, went on to make his 26th half-century and take India home.

Early strikes

In the morning, when New Zealand opted to bat, it took Shami only eight deliveries to send back openers Martin Guptill and Colin Munro before Kuldeep and Chahal worked their magic.

Williamson, often saddled with the task of rescuing his side, reached 64 before falling to Kuldeep who finished with four for 39. Chahal took two for 43, while Shami had

three for 19 off six overs.

Kohli rested

According to a BCCI release on Wednesday, Kohli has been rested for the last two games of the ODI series as well as the T20I series owing to his "workload in the last few months."

Vice-captain Rohit Sharma will lead in his absence.

■ The second ODI will be played on Jan. 26 (Saturday) at Mount Maunganui

Stat attack

India registered its first ODI victory against the Kiwis in New Zealand after 10 years

■ Shami is the fastest Indian to reach 100 wickets in ODIs (56 matches), bettering Irfan Pathan who got to the landmark in 59 games. The other Indians to follow are: Zaheer (65), Agarkar (67) and Srinath (68)

■ This is Dhawan's first 50-plus score in nine ODIs and, in the process, he became the second fastest Indian to 5000 runs (118 innings) after Kohli (114) in the format

■ Kohli (10430, 212 innings) broke into the top-10 in the list of highest ODI scorers, surpassing Lara (10366, 289). For the record, Tendulkar (18426, 452) leads the chart

■ Kuldeep's figures of 4/39 is the third best by an Indian in ODI in New Zealand, after Kumble (5/33) and Srinath (4/23)

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Karnataka wary of Saurashtra

Mayank's return boosts the host; another chance for the visitor to go the distance

RANJI SEMIFINALS

SHREEDUTTA CHIDANANDA
BENGALURU

Karnataka and Saurashtra will perhaps approach their Ranji Trophy semifinal fixture differently.

To Karnataka, a winner of eight titles, two of which have come in the last five years, getting this far in the competition is a basic expectation. To Saurashtra, which in its current avatar has never won the championship, and has lost two finals in the last six years, this is another season of opportunity.

But, as the two teams head into their clash at the M. Chinnaswamy Stadium, starting on Thursday, Karnataka will be wary of an opponent that has proven hugely difficult to overcome in the recent past.

Saurashtra has prevailed in all of the last three Ranji Trophy meetings between the sides: an 87-run win last month, another group-stage victory in Patiala in 2016, and a quarterfinal success six years ago.

Transitional season

This has been a transitional season for Karnataka, where India and India-A players have gone in and out, and eight caps have been handed out. This has also been a campaign of ups and downs, with three wins and two losses in the group stages.

In last week's quarterfinal, if not for R. Vinay Kumar's fighting 83, the outcome may easily have been different. Things improved



Will it be fourth time lucky? The fact that Karnataka emerged second best in its previous three clashes against Saurashtra should provide added motivation to the host. ■ SUDHAKARA JAIN

in the second innings, though, and the manner in which Manish Pandey took control of a floundering run chase, smashing Rajasthan out of sight, should fill the side with confidence.

The return of Mayank Agarwal, fresh from an impressive India debut, will be welcomed. One of D. Nischal or R. Samarth will have to make way for him at the top of the order and it is here that Karnataka has a tough decision to take.

Nischal has scored over 600 runs this season while Samarth has struggled; the latter, however, is a proven performer.

The team management could choose form over record. Off-spinner K. Gowtham suffered a blow on his right hand in the nets. The team will hope there is no se-

rious issue.

Saurashtra's journey this far has been built on the contributions of a number of players. Young Harvik Desai has aggregated 738 runs while Sheldon Jackson (692), Snell Patel (561) and Arpit Vasavada (455) have all chipped in.

Left-arm pacers Jaydev Unadkat and Cheteshwar Pujara should trouble batsmen with the new ball while left-arm spinner Dharmendra Singh Jadeja, who tormented Karnataka in Rajkot, has 45 wickets this season.

But one name stands out: Cheteshwar Pujara. After an incredible Australian series, when his stature rose immensely, Pujara returned to India to play his role in Saurashtra's historic run-chase in Lucknow.

"If a team like Australia is

worried when Pujara is at the crease, any Indian domestic team would feel the same," said Saurashtra coach Sitanshu Kotak.

The teams (from):
Karnataka: Manish Pandey (Capt.), Shreyas Gopal, R. Vinay Kumar, Mayank Agarwal, D. Nischal, Karun Nair, R. Samarth, A. Mithun, Ronit More, K. Gowtham, Prasidh Krishna, K.V. Siddharth, J. Suchith, B.R. Sharrath, and Sharath Srinivas.

Saurashtra: Jaydev Unadkat (Capt.), Arpit Vasavada, Cheteshwar Pujara, Sheldon Jackson, Snell Patel, Harvik Desai, Prerak Mankad, Chirag Jani, Avi Barot, Kishan Parmar, Dharmendra Singh Jadeja, Hardik Rathod, Vardit Jivrajani, Kamlesh Makwana, Chetan Sakariya, and Vishwaraj Jadeja.

72 wickets in the competition.

M.D. Nidheesh has proved an ideal third seamer, while Jalaj Saxena will be keen to add to his tally of 28 wickets.

Leading scorer

The Indore-born all-rounder is also Kerala's leading run-getter with 537 runs. The team needs him to carry on,

P.K. AJITH KUMAR
KRISHNAGIRI (WAYANAD)

If Kerala needs more inspiration to extend its dream run at the Ranji Trophy tournament, it needs to look only at its semifinal opponent. Last year, Vidarbha not only reached the final, but went on to claim its maiden crown.

Dav Whatmore's boys, however, seem confident that they could overcome the loss of such an impact player. There is some depth in the batting, yes.

Vidarbha also provides an opportunity to the host for a payback. Chandrakant Pandit's boys had thrashed Kerala by 412 runs in the quarterfinal at Surat last season.

That was Kerala's first knockout in its six-decade old Ranji history.

A year later, it finds itself in the semifinal, which gets underway at the Wayanad Cricket Stadium on Thurs-

day. especially in the absence of its most accomplished batsman Sanju Samson, who is out of action after breaking a finger during the Gujarat match.

Dav Whatmore's boys, however, seem confident that they could overcome the loss of such an impact player. There is some depth in the batting, yes.

Captain Baby and P. Rahul have been fairly consistent, while a host of other batsmen – some of them picked in the squad primarily for

their bowling – have played vital innings to rescue the team from precarious situations.

Problem of plenty
Vidarbha, though, hasn't had to face such batting crises. Runs have flowed freely

from the bats of the ageless wonder Wasim Jaffer (969), Akshay Wadkar (680), skipper Faiz Fazal (651) and Ganesh Satish (440). There is, in fact, a problem of plenty

for the team management, with Sanjay Ramaswamy and Mohit Kale also in the squad.

Huge plus
Test bowler Umesh Yadav's return to the team after India's tour of Australia is a huge plus.

The pacer wasted no time, as he helped Vidarbha to an innings victory in the quarterfinal against Uttarakhand at Nagpur, claiming nine wickets. Spinners Aditya Saravate (44 wickets) and Akshay Wakhare (27) too are in fine form.

The pitch would also be in



Friend from foe's camp: Kerala's Sandeep Warrier, Basil Thampi and Abhishek Mohan are all ears to the team's former coach Chandrakant Pandit. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

West Indies
132 for three

'Not desperate anymore'

Unadkat pleased with the pitch rolled out for semifinal tie



Vital cogs: Jaydev Unadkat and Cheteshwar Pujara will be key to Saurashtra's prospects. ■ SUDHAKARA JAIN

"We were a bit more eager to show we can win the championship. But having played a couple of finals and now that we have a set-up where players have established themselves in the team, we are not really desperate to show anything. We are enjoying ourselves as a unit. In the last game, even when we weren't doing well, we were still together, laugh-

ing and having fun in the field. That's when teams win big games."

Unadkat was pleased with the pitch rolled out for the semifinal tie at the M. Chinnaswamy Stadium. "It looks like a good surface. They've kept some grass so that it lasts for five days. It will provide some help for the fast bowlers initially and later on for the spinners," he said.

TV PICKS

Australian Open: Sony Ten 2 & Six (SD & HD), 5.30 a.m. & 1.30 p.m.

New Zealand Women vs India Women: 1st ODI: Star Sports 1 (SD & HD), 6.30 a.m.

Australia vs Sri Lanka: 1st Test, Sony Ten 3 (SD & HD), 8.30 a.m.

Ranji Trophy: Karnataka vs Saurashtra, Star Sports 2 (SD & HD), 9.30 a.m.

Indian trio moves up

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

JAKARTA

P.V. Sindhu, Saina Nehwal and K. Srikanth advanced to the second round of the ₹350,000 Indonesia Masters on Wednesday.

The results: Men: Chen Long (Chn) bt B. Sai Praneeth 21-12, 21-16; Viktor Axelsen (Den) bt Subhankar Dey 21-14, 19-21, 21-15; K. Srikanth bt Chong Wei Feng (Mas) 21-12 21-8. **Doubles:** Manu Attri & B. Sumeeth Reddy bt Mads Pieler Kolding & Niclas Nohr (Den) 14-21, 21-19, 21-15. **Women:** Saina Nehwal bt Dinar Dyah Ayustine (Ind) 7-21, 21-16, 21-11; P.V. Sindhu bt Li Xuerui (Chn) 21-8, 21-17. **Doubles:** Jongkolpanit Kititharakul & Rawinda Prajognai bt Ashwini Ponnappa & N. Sikki Reddy 21-14, 21-14.

No one better than Harendra for the Indian team: Sandeep

He is against the constant chopping and changing of players

UTHRA GANESAN
NEW DELHI

Harendra Singh continues to get the backing of former players in the country as the best Indian hockey coach. On Wednesday, Sandeep Singh added his voice to the same.

"There is no one better than him for the Indian team. I have played under him at all levels – junior and senior in the national team and at Indian Airlines as well. There is hardly anyone who has the know-how of modern hockey in India and he is one of the few," Sandeep said on the sidelines of the launch of Flicker Brothers, his brand of hockey academies here.

"Not just in sports or coaching, in any job a person takes three-four months to settle down and plan his work ahead. Here, he had only that much to coach the Indian team. And with the

The former star drag-flicker, along with his brother Bikramjit Singh, also a former India international, has tied up with Frantel Biz, a franchise management company with the ambitious plan of having 100 academies across India in the next three years with possible international expansion in future.



Sandeep Singh. ■ FILE PHOTO: PTI

Italians' rankings won't intimidate Indians, says Bhupathi

Places his confidence on Prajnesh and Ramkumar's ability

DAVIS CUP

AMITABHA DAS SHARMA
KOLKATA

The Indian Davis Cup team began its preparations for the World Group qualifier against Italy in right earnest with non-playing captain Mahesh Bhupathi saying the task of upstaging the visitor was difficult but not impossible.

The team had its first day of practice on the grass courts of the Calcutta Gymkhana Clubs, giving itself eight days time to get prepared for an opposition which is way superior on paper.

Italy has four players in top-60 – Marco Cecchinato (18), Andreas Seppi (35) and Matteo Berrettini (54). With the Italians deciding to travel without their topmost player Fabio Fognini, Cecchinato will spearhead the challenge.

When Bhupathi was asked if the high rankings will play on the minds of Indians, the former World No. 1 in doubles said his team would not be intimidated by rankings.

"I think my boys are experienced enough to understand that the rankings are



Relaxed mood: Non-playing captain Mahesh Bhupathi sharing a light moment with his Davis Cup squad. ■ AP

not a factor in Davis Cup. They have all played at the highest level now.

"Both Prajnesh (Guneswaran) and Ramkumar (Ramanathan) have played Grand Slams and Tour events. So, it is not like that they would be intimidated.

"When I was playing Davis Cup, if I played a top-ranked player it was different because I was always competing at the challenger level. But with these guys I do not think ranking plays a factor."

"I think they truly believe that they are capable of beating them if they play well."

The Indian captain placed

his confidence on the form and ability of Prajnesh and Ramkumar.

"Prajnesh qualified for his first Grand Slam, so he is on an all-time high confidence wise. He had an amazing breakthrough year last year.

"He is a late bloomer, because of injury, but is definitely brimming with confidence," Bhupathi said of the player currently ranked 109.

"On these courts Ram is going to be super dangerous. We all saw what he did in Newport last year as he reached the final, which he should have won."

"So we are positive," added Bhupathi.

Holy Smoke tipped for main event

MUMBAI: The seven-year-old Holy Smoke, who is in good shape as evidenced by his track performance, may score over his rivals in the Royal Calcutta Turf Club Trophy, the main event of Thursday's (Jan. 24) afternoon races. Rails will be placed 2 metres wide from 1400m to 1000m and thereafter 5 metres wide from 800m to the winning post.

1 RAO SAHEB D K PARKAR TROPHY (1,400m), Cl. IV, rated 20 to 46, 3.00 p.m.: 1. Kanchenjunga (5) L Roche 59, 2. Its A Deal (3) Merchant 56, 3. Jetfire (8) Neeraj 55.5, 4. Sullivan (6) Zervan 54.5, 5. Imperial Heritage (2) Jaykumar 54, 6. Angels Harmony (7) S.J. Sunil 52, 7. Boomerang (1) Raghuveer 50.5 and 8. Nusrat (3) Nadeem 49.

1. JETFIRE, 2. SULLIVAN, 3. KANCHENJUNGA

2 ROYAL CALCUTTA TURF CLUB TROPHY (1,200m), Cl. I, rated 80 and upward, 3.30: 1. Clymene (5) Dashrath 60, 2. Holy Smoke (3) Zervan 55.5, 3. Bateleur (6) Neeraj 49, 4. Queen Credible (4) Peter 49, 5. Wild Fire (2) Aniket 49 and 6. Wise Child (1) Nadeem 49.

1. HOLY SMOKE, 2. BATELEUR

3 MARCHETTA PLATE (1,600m), Cl. II, rated 60 to 86, 4.00: 1. Turning Point (4) C.S. Jodha 59, 2. Arabia (2) L. Roche 57.5, 3. Zenon 10, Master Of Studies (4) Nazil 51, 12. Forever Free (12) S. Amit 50, 12. Devoted (5) Neeraj 49, 13. Paradise (10) Kuldeep 49 and 14. Whoop-sidaisya (7) Nadeem 49.

1. SYLVESTER, 2. ROGUE ONE, 3. ARRECIFE

4 SMASHING PLATE DIV. I (1,200m), Cl. IV, rated 20 to 46, 4.30: 1. Royston Rock (14) Malam 59, 2. Democrat (4) C.S. Jodha 58, 3. Ustad Pedro (1) Hanuman 57.5, 4. We Break The Rules (1) Chouhan 56.5, 5. Adam's Beginning (12) Shubham 56, 6. Make It Shine (13) Raghveer 54, 7. She's A Tiger (6) Merchant 53.5, 8. Star Anise (9) G. Amit 53, 9. Thea O Thea (2) Aniket 52.5, 10. Choo Mantar (8) Sandesh 51, 11. Cray Cray (3) Vishal 51, 12. Eternal Dancer (7) Nirmal 51, 13. Name Of The Game (10) Nazil 49.5 and 14. Golden Orchid (5) S. Kamble 49.

1. DEMOCRAT, 2. ROYSTON ROCK, 3. MAKE IT SHINE

5 ISN'T SHE SPECIAL PLATE (1,800m), Cl. V, rated 4 to 30, 5.00: 1. Arreccife (3) Peter 61, 2. Savage Kingdom (4) L. Roche 61, 3. Rogue One (6) Dashrath 60.5, 4. Sylvester (9) Sandesh 60.5, 5. Fanfare (8) C.S. Jodha 56, 6. Sweeping Move (13) Bhawani 56, 7. Shivalik 52.

1. FLOWER DUST, 2. BOUNTY QUEEN, 3. ADELE

Day's best: ARABIA

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Tanala: All races.

Super Jackpot: All races.

Fives (2) Merchant 55.5, 8.

Dazzling Eyes (1) R. Downey 54, 9.

His Master's Vice (11) Nirmal 51,

10. Master Of Studies (4) Nazil 51,

11. Forever Free (12) S. Amit 50,

12. Devoted (5) Neeraj 49, 13. Paradise (10) Kuldeep 49 and 14. Whoop-sidaisya (7) Nadeem 49.

1. WILD FIRE, 2. ANIKET 49 and 6.

Wise Child (1) Nadeem 49.

1. HOLY SMOKE, 2. BATELEUR

Sanjita's provisional suspension revoked

Y.B. SARANGI
KOLKATA

The International Weightlifting Federation (IWF) has revoked the provisional suspension on weightlifter K. Sanjita Chanu after eight months.

Sanjita, who returned a positive result for an anabolic steroid in an out-of-competition test in the run-up to the World championships in Anaheim, USA, in November 2017, was provisionally suspended on May 15 last.

In a letter to the Indian Weightlifting Federation (IWF) on Tuesday, the IWF said that it decided to lift the provisional suspension on Sanjita "on the basis of the information at its disposal."

"It is spoiling my chance of (taking part in) Olympic qualifiers. Further, the delay amounts to mental harassment," Sanjita, who has been highlighting some technical flaws in her case, said in the letter to WADA.

Following the revoking of the provisional suspension, 24-year-old Sanjita is now eligible to compete in any course.

In case she is held guilty in the final order of the hearing panel, then all her results during this period will be annulled.

Jeevan-Verbeek

advance

SPORTS BUREAU
BURNIE (AUSTRALIA)

Jeevan Nedunchezhiyan and Sem Verbeek made the quarterfinals with a 3-6, 6-2, [11-9] win over Hiroki Moriya and Mohamed Safwat in the \$54,160 Challenge tennis on Wednesday.



Sanjita Chanu ■ FILE PHOTO

"The delay in result management has already made me miss two major international events (Asian Games and World championships in 2018).

"The IWF hearing panel will render its decision in due course."

Interestingly, the decision has come after Sanjita wrote to the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) on January 17 requesting it to intervene as the IWF's delay in result management, even after completion of the hearing process in Budapest in October, would prevent her from taking part in the Olympic qualifiers.

Following the revoking of the provisional suspension, 24-year-old Sanjita is now eligible to compete in any event.

In case she is held guilty in the final order of the hearing panel, then all her results during this period will be annulled.



For detailed information visit: [https://www.eprocure.gov.in/epublish/app/](http://www.eprocure.gov.in/epublish/app/)

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'Keepers need time to mature: Abhay

We have a rich pool of talented gloveman, says the former stumper

VIJAY LOKAPALLY
NEW DELHI

For Abhay Sharma, former India under-19 captain and Railways wicketkeeper for more than a decade, working with Rahul Dravid has been the most constructive phase of his post-retirement association with the game. "His work culture and the freedom he allows us to express our opinion is outstanding. I am learning every day," says Abhay, the fielding and wicketkeeping coach of the India-A team.

Abhay and Dravid are involved in working with the juniors and the supply line for the senior team. The National selection committee acknowledges their support in fast-tracking players with potential – Rishabh Pant, Hanuma Vihari, Shubman Gill being the prominent ones.

Abhay's specific involvement is with wicketkeepers where India boasts of some exceptional talent in Pant, K.S. Bharat and Ishan Kishan. The presence of Widdhiman Saha, Parthiv Patel and Dinesh Karthik creates healthy competition. "We have a rich pool which really opens up competition. I can

Saha, emphasises Abhay, is a model wicketkeeper. "Saha is brilliant. His glove-work, footwork and head position is ideal. None can match MS (Dhoni) in head position. It allows him to stay close to the stumps. Dhoni is a cool collector of the ball and you can see his hand will always reach the stumps when stumping on running out a batsman."

In Abhay's view, a "pure" wicketkeeper will always have his place in current times when captains can be tempted to go for a "package" wicketkeeper. "A pure, or a technically excellent wicketkeeper, will never be found wanting when the ball swings or spins. The biggest test comes when there is lot of reverse swing. Skills will always count and win you a place. I am teaching young wicketkeepers to go for the second-slip ball. That is the trend."

Abhay insists the preparation of a wicketkeeper is crucial. "Everything depends on how you prepare the wicketkeeper. Also, you have to be patient with them because wicketkeepers take time to mature. Most of them peak at

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