

NEARBY



Mukul Roy booked in TMC MLA murder case

KOLKATA
 Two persons have been arrested for the gunning down of Trinamool Congress MLA Satyajit Biswas late on Saturday. The district police registered an FIR naming four persons, including top BJP leader Mukul Roy, while the BJP has blamed infighting in the Trinamool for the MLA's murder.

NEWS ▶ PAGE 10

'Misleading calls': Delhi CEO registers complaint

NEW DELHI
 The Chief Electoral Officer of Delhi on Saturday registered a complaint at the office of the Police Commissioner against "misleading telephonic calls" to the people about the city's electoral rolls.

DELHI METRO ▶ PAGE 1

AAP to host Opposition rally on Wednesday

NEW DELHI
 The Aam Aadmi Party on Sunday said it will be organising a rally - "Remove Dictatorship Save Democracy" - at Jantar Mantar on Wednesday in which leaders from several non-BJP parties are expected to participate.

DELHI METRO ▶ PAGE 1

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EDGE ▶ 4 PAGES

DELHI METRO ▶ 4 PAGES

Government waived anti-corruption clauses in Rafale deal

It also overruled Financial Advisers' recommendation for an escrow account after PMO forced a waiver of sovereign or bank guarantee

N. RAM

alleged corruption in defence deals struck during the United Progressive Alliance Government.

It is significant that neither this nor other important information published by *The Hindu* on the "parallel negotiations" conducted by the Prime Minister's Office and the National Security Adviser seems to have found a place in the material submitted by the government to the Supreme Court of India.

The high-level political intervention meant that standard Defence Procurement Procedure (DPPP) clauses on "Penalty for use of Undue Influence," Agents/Agency

Commission, and Access to Company accounts" of Dassault Aviation and MBDA France were dropped by the Indian government in the supply protocols. Under the

EXCLUSIVE

terms of the IGA signed between India and France in Delhi on September 23, 2016, Dassault is the supplier of the Rafale aircraft package while MBDA France is the supplier of the weapons package to the Indian Air Force.

Official documents available to *The Hindu* reveal that the Defence Acquisition

Council (DAC) chaired by the then Defence Minister, Manohar Parrikar, met in September 2016, and "ratified and approved" eight changes in the IGA, supply protocols, offset contracts and offset schedules (see Box 1). This was done after the IGA and associated documents had been approved by the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS), chaired by Prime Minister Modi on August 24, 2016.

The most significant among these eight changes, recorded in a note signed by Vice Admiral Ajit Kumar, DCIDS (PP&FD) who was the member-secretary of the

DAC, is at sub-para (c). This states: "Non-inclusion of the Standard DPP Clauses related to 'Penalty for Undue Influence,' 'Agents/Agency Commission' and 'Access to Company Accounts' in the Supply Protocols."

It is highly significant that these clauses were dropped by the Indian government from the supply protocols. While the IGA was the overarching agreement between the governments of India and France, the supply protocols were to be executed by Dassault and MBDA, the two private companies.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 11

Box 1

The DAC ratified and approved the following:-

- a] Revised Article 5 of the IGA.
- b] Revised Clause 21 (Arbitration) of the Supply Protocols.
- c] Non-inclusion of the Standard DPP Clauses related to 'Penalty for Undue Influence,' 'Agents/ Agency Commission' and 'Access to Accounts' in the Supply Protocols.
- d] Minor Variations from DPP 2013 guidelines for Clauses 8.1, 27 and 29 of Aircraft and Weapons Package Supply Protocols and xxx of Weapons Package Supply Protocol.
- e] Inclusion of additional Articles 9 to 17 of Offset Contracts to those specified in model Offset Contract of DPP 2013.
- f] Revised Article 9 of the Offset Contracts aligned with the xx clause of the Supply Protocols.
- g] Revised Article 12 of the Offset Contracts aligned with the Contract.
- h] Revised Offset Schedules of DA and MBDA.

Venkaiah disapproves of competitive populism

Calls for structural changes to sustainably increase incomes

STAFF REPORTER

BENGALURU

Competitive populism among political parties and offers of loan waivers and free power in the run-up to elections are just temporary solutions that do not address the need for structural changes to sustainably develop incomes in the country, Vice-President Venkaiah Naidu said on Sunday.

'Short-term fixes'

Delivering the Chief Guest address at The Huddle, a thought conclave organised here by *The Hindu*, he said:



Venkaiah Naidu at The Huddle in Bengaluru on Sunday. ■ K. MURALI KUMAR

"Promises of free power mean that first we'll get low power and then no power... Loan waivers [similarly] are temporary solutions. Farmers need credit every sea-

son. What we need are structural changes." Populist measures may have short-term political gains, but lead to long-term economic problems as they are "unproductive," he said.

Mr. Naidu termed them "competitive populism" that is fraught with "tall and impractical" programmes. "We're supposed to be a mature democracy. But people get away with these promises and handing out lollipops to voters," he said.

CODE OF CONDUCT ▶ PAGE 12
 THE COUNTDOWN ▶ PAGE 13

People first, not cows, says Sachin Pilot

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

BENGALURU

The Madhya Pradesh government could have "done better" by prioritising heinous crimes over the "cow issue," Rajasthan Deputy Chief Minister Sachin Pilot said on Sunday.

"My personal opinion is that we must first make stringent laws for people committing rape, acts of inhumanity against each other, and strict laws to prevent people who attack the dignity of fellow human beings," Mr. Pilot said at *The Hindu* Huddle Conclave.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 10
 CONGRESS AND COW
 ▶ EDITORIAL

Five militants killed in J&K's Kulgam

Joint operation in sub-zero conditions

PEERZADA ASHIQ

SRINAGAR

Five militants were killed on Sunday in a security operation in Kulgam in south Kashmir. In a separate incident, 10 persons, including a woman, were injured in a grenade blast in Srinagar.

A group of militants from both the Hizbul Mujahideen and the Lashkar-e-Taiba was encircled by personnel of the Army's 9 Rashtriya Rifles, the police and the CRPF after an intelligence input about their presence at Devsar's Kellan village, an official said. The operation was carried out in sub-zero temperatures.

On spotting the militants,



Army jawans near the encounter site at Kellan in Kulgam district on Sunday. ■ NISSAR AHMAD

the security forces engaged them in a fierce gunfight, in which three militants were killed.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 10

Gujar quota stir turns violent

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

JAIPUR

The Gujarat agitation in Rajasthan for 5% reservation in government jobs and educational institutions took a violent turn on Sunday, as the protesters opened fire, torched vehicles and hurled stones on the police force in Dholpur district, 270 km east of Jaipur. The police lobbed tear-gas shells to disperse the mob.

DSP Ajay Singh said half-a-dozen policemen were injured in the clash, but the protesters did not succeed in their attempt to block National Highway-3 connecting Dholpur to Gwalior.

DETAILS ON ▶ PAGE 7

 BOEING

THE
 FUTURE OF
 DEFENCE
 IS BUILT
 HERE



AH-64 APACHE

DELHI Timings		
MONDAY, FEB. 11		
RISE 07:03	SET 18:08	
RISE 10:48	SET 23:48	
TUESDAY, FEB. 12		
RISE 07:02	SET 18:09	
RISE 11:24	SET 00:00	
WEDNESDAY, FEB. 13		
RISE 07:02	SET 18:09	
RISE 12:03	SET 00:45	

Delhi Weather

max min

Delhi City 22 06

Safdarjung 22 06

Palam 20 08

Delhi Palam Today 22°C Moderate fog/mist is likely during morning. Day will be pleasant with light winds and cloudy sky.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow 24°C Temperatures and pollution level will rise. Moderate fog/mist will continue. Day will be comfortable with cloudy sky.

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Man dies in Himachal road accident

A 34-year-old man riding a motorcycle was killed after he collided with a tempo on the Pathankot-Mandi national highway in Himachal Pradesh's Kangra district, police said on Sunday. The accident occurred on Saturday at the district's Ghatnalu village, police said.

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AAP plans to highlight stray cattle menace in Punjab

Farmers' bodies are up in arms against the growing problem in the State

VIKAS VASUDEVA
CHANDIGARH

With farmers' bodies up in arms against stray cattle menace in Punjab, The Opposition Aam Aadmi Party has now also decided to take up the issue.

The party plans to highlight the issue in the upcoming budget session of the Assembly.

"The State government has failed to find a solution to the menace, the government collects cow cess and other taxes in the name of taking care of stray animals but the problem continues to grow," said Harpal Singh Cheema, the Leader of the Opposition.

"We will bring a calling attention motion on the issue during the budget session. People want to know how



Bovine problem: Farmers say stray cattle are destroying crops. •

the money, which is being collected as cess, is being utilised by the government," he said.

Mr. Cheema said that it is the sole responsibility of the State government to protect the lives and belongings of people but unfortunately it

has turned a deaf ear towards the problems of the people.

Meanwhile, angry over damage to their crops by stray cattle, several farmers of Pedhni village in Sangrur district, under the banner of Bhartiya Kisan Union (Ugrahan), reached the Deputy Commissioner's office last week with stray cattle loaded on tractor-trailers. They were adamant on releasing them on the office premises. The local authorities, however, finally managed to pacify them.

Other farmers' outfits have also been demanding that the State government solve the problem which has been causing difficulty not just to farmers but others as well.

Pargat Singh, the Bhartiya

Kisan Union (Sidhpur) chief patron of Rupnagar, told *The Hindu* that even after repeated requests made to the State government the menace of stray cattle continues.

Concrete steps sought
"They (cattle) destroy our standing crops and we are helpless. Be it sugarcane, wheat, potato or seasonal vegetables, stray cattle damage the crop in almost every season. The government should take concrete steps to solve the problem otherwise we will be forced to start an agitation," he said.

Expressing concern over the problem, Chief Minister Amarinder Singh had last week admitted during a meeting that stray cattle was now posing a major threat.

Teething troubles in Ladakh

Protest in Kargil against permanent shifting of offices to Leh

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
JAMMU

Thousands of people on Sunday marched the streets of Kargil in Jammu and Kashmir against the administration's decision to permanently post the divisional commissioner and Inspector General of Police (IGP) offices for the newly created Ladakh division in Leh town.

The people of Kargil are demanding that divisional commissioner and IGP offices function on rotational basis - in Kargil during summers and in Leh during winters.

The procession was taken out under the banner of two

influential religious organisations - Islamic school and Khuman Memorial Trust - and ended peacefully after a delegation met the Deputy Commissioner and submitted a memorandum to highlight their demands, officials said.

They said the people from all walks of life, including politicians, religious leaders and social workers, participated in the rally which started from Islamia school chowk at 10.30 a.m. and concluded at Baroo after marching the streets of the town for nearly four hours.

Urging the Governor Satya Pal Malik to review his

decision, the participants were seen chanting slogans throughout the rally, pledging support to the "united movement" in support of the "genuine rights" of the people of Kargil.

In a major decision on Friday, the Jammu and Kashmir administration sanctioned creation of a separate administrative and revenue division for Ladakh, with its headquarters at Leh.

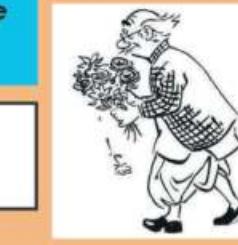
Cutting across party lines, prominent politicians from Kargil on Saturday came together and threatened mass agitation if the Governor's administration did not review its decision.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
SRINAGAR

The police on Sunday ordered a probe into alleged manhandling of woman by cops in Shopian district of Jammu and Kashmir.

Video clip
The inquiry was ordered after a 15-second video clip, showing two cops manhandling a woman in a village in Shopian on Saturday night, went viral on social media.

"The video is being probed and an inquiry is ordered to examine the conduct of the policemen," a police spokesman said.



Citizens of Delhi
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All Electors are advised to check their names in the Electoral Roll as given below

TO CHECK YOUR NAME

- I. Visit www.nvsp.in or
- II. SMS<EPIC><SPACE><EPIC NO> to 7738299899 or
- III. Call Voter Helpline no: 1950 or
- IV. Visit your Voter Centre (list available on www.ceodelhi.gov.in)

If not found please apply immediately in Form 6.

For correction in any of your details in the voter list, fill form 8.

FOR BECOMING A VOTER

If you are 18 years or more on 1st January 2019 ENROLL IMMEDIATELY

1. Apply Online: Fill Form 6 at www.nvsp.in or www.ceodelhi.gov.in
2. Apply Offline: Fill details in Form 6 and submit to your Voter Centre
3. Form 6 to be accompanied with:

- i. One recent passport size colour photograph
- ii. Copy of documentary proof of age (for age between 18-21 years)
- iii. Proof of residence.

For query/complaint

1950
Voter Helpline



Chief Electoral Officer, Delhi
Old St. Stephen's College Building, Kashmere Gate, Delhi-110006
www.ceodelhi.gov.in

No Voter to be Left Behind

Super show



Children performing a dance during Basant Panchami celebrations in Patna on Sunday.

■ RANJEET KUMAR

Jaipur birding fair dedicated to conservation of waders

The Indian subcontinent hosts 84 species of wading birds

MOHAMMED IQBAL
JAIPUR

The 22nd Indian Birding Fair, organised on the banks of Man Sagar Lake here over the weekend, was dedicated to the conservation of waders, which are tiny birds mostly confined to the edges of water and are observed feeding across moist surfaces. The Indian subcontinent hosts 84 species of wading birds, 64 of which are migratory.

Hundreds of nature lovers, bird watchers and students and teachers of local schools - enthused to spot waders in their natural habitat - thronged the lake banks during the two-day fair. Wading birds such as little stint, green sandpiper, small pratincole, pied avocet, Jerdon's courser, black winged stilt and many more species were spotted on the occasion.

Artificial lake
Man Sagar Lake is an artificial lake named after Man Singh, the then ruler of Amber and a trusted general of Mughal Emperor Akbar,

who had built it in 1610 AD by damming the Dravayavati river. A palace, Jal Mahal, is situated in the middle of the lake. The fair was organised by the Tourism & Wildlife Society of India and supported by Jaipur Zoo and some philanthropic bodies and overseas organisations.

TWSI honorary secretary Harsh Vardhan said the biggest attraction of the fair were the numerous bird-watching sites available at the lake.

Children took part in the activities such as open air sessions, bird watching, tattoo making and face painting.

Doctor fails to give ventilator, kid dies in M.P.
Brand connect initiative
Providing a voice to the slums

Meet Chandni and Dev from Noida, founders of 'Voice of Slum', an organisation which aims to integrate children from slums into mainstream society, by providing them access to education and employment.

"We started this organisation three years ago but Chandni has been involved in working with the slums for nearly ten years. Our main aim is to provide equal opportunities for the underprivileged children and we have four programs: providing education

"Running an NGO is really challenging. 'Voice of Slum'

by running a school for slum children with nearly 150 students, helping the youth to get jobs, running India's first ever magazine run by the underprivileged children, named 'Slum Post', and providing vocational training for jobs in graphic designing, electrical repairs, etc." says Dev. Apart from these activities, the duo has also helped victims of child

sexual abuse seek rehabilitation. "Chandni was a rag picker till she was nearly ten years old and I, too, have been a rag picker and lived on the railway station for three years. But we were lucky enough to get access to education and be employed in good positions, and not a lot of children from the slums lead similar lives. We want to empower them so that they can lead dignified lives," adds Dev.

"Running an NGO is really challenging. 'Voice of Slum'

runs with the help of social media and its followers but working with nearly hundred children and running a school requires funds. Initially when we wanted to start this NGO, people did not believe in us as both of us were not formally educated and hardly had any funds. But here we are, running a school for children despite all the obstacles," says Dev.

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I WILL HELP THE UNDERPRIVILEGED

CM YK

Special peace prayer in Nagaland

For a solution to the Naga political problem before the Lok Sabha elections

RAHUL KARMAKAR
GUWAHATI

Nagas have turned to God after more than two decades of wait for a political solution to the peace process between the Centre and extremist groups, primarily the Isak-Muivah faction of the National Socialist Council of Nagaland.

The Nagaland Joint Christian Forum on Sunday organised a special prayer for a solution to the "Indo-Naga political problem" before the upcoming Lok Sabha elections. The prayer was held simultaneously across 11 districts and churches belonging to all the Christian denominations.

Seeking God's help

Responding to the forum's call last week, thousands of Christians attended the special church service. They hoped the prayers would make "God grant His wisdom and direction to the leaders of the Government of India and the Naga national political (extremist) groups".

More than 90% of the



NSCN(I-M) cadets in Hebron near Dimapur. ■ FILE PHOTO

population of Nagaland is Christian.

"It was a beautiful congregation. The turnout made the day very special," said Chuba Ozukum, president of Naga Hoho, the apex body of all Naga tribes.

"It has become the attitude of the Government of India to sideline the issues arising from Nagaland and this time around, it has become very clear that they investigate a non-issue to cover up and drag the issue at hand. These are things that we must commit to God so

Extremism by Naga groups across Nagaland, Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh and Myanmar began in the 1950s under the leadership of A.Z. Phizo of the Naga National Council, which signed the Shillong Accord in 1975 signalling an end to a violent separatist movement.

'Meek surrender'

A section of NNC leaders, however, rejected this accord that they felt was a meek surrender by the Nagas to India. They broke away to form the NSCN in 1980, which suffered several splits since 1988.

The NSCN(I-M), the largest of these groups, declared a ceasefire with India security forces in July 1997 to start the peace process.

A solution had appeared in sight when the Narendra Modi government signed a Framework Agreement with the outfit in August 2015.

At least six other Naga extremist groups were subsequently brought to the talks table, but the final peace deal is yet to be worked out.

that with the prayer of believers, God will intervene," a statement issued by the forum on Wednesday had stated.

'Non-issue'

The "non-issue" is believed to be a reference to the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2016, that seeks to fast-track the process of granting citizenship to non-Muslims who have allegedly fled religious persecution in Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan till December 31, 2014.

Mr. Jamuda, a retired IAS officer, said the government should take the services of retired revenue inspectors and aims to expedite implementation.

Demarcation of land regulated under Individual Forest Right and correction of preparation of record of rights have been completed only in case of Bhadrak district. Similarly, in case of correction of RoRs, cumulative achievement has so far been 1,78,039 titles, only representing 41.83% of the titles distributed.

In all these seven districts the Collectors should undertake special drive for demarcation of land. The amins posted in other tehsils may be re-deployed in tehsils having more number of pending cases for demarcation," Mr. Jamuda directed.

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Despite a series of instructions, the extent of land developed utilising Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme funds till December 2018 is only 56,340.53 acres. In five districts there was no activity in this regard," said Mr. Jamuda.

The developmental projects include a bridge on the Salandi river costing ₹15 crore, renovation of the Kandhamal-Gudimaska road at a cost of ₹8 crore and ₹7 crore worth piped water supply projects for the Baliguda Notified Area Council.

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Demarcation of land regulated under Individual Forest Right and correction of preparation of record of rights have been completed only in case of Bhadrak district.

Similarly, in case of correction of RoRs, cumulative achievement has so far been 1,78,039 titles, only representing 41.83% of the titles distributed.

Despite a series of instructions, the extent of land developed utilising Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme funds till December 2018 is only 56,340.53 acres. In five districts there was no activity in this regard," said Mr. Jamuda.

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4 WEST

THE HINDU
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2019

Poll strategy: Ambedkar targets fishing community, OBC voters

To hold conference on OBC reservation; seeks high compensation for fisherfolk

ALOK DESHPANDE

MUMBAI

Bharipa Bahujan Mahasangh (BBM) president Prakash Ambedkar on Sunday announced to hold a conference on the OBC reservation in the city, and gave a son-of-the-soil call on the lines of the Shiv Sena and Maharashtra Navnirman Sena. This is being seen as Mr. Ambedkar's bid to woo the fishing community and the OBC voters.

The agri, koli, bhandari and east Indian population in Mumbai have over 200 gaonthans. They are the original inhabitants, and should get property cards along with the right to self-development. The fisherfolk, who are going to be affected by projects such as coastal road, Nhava Sheva, sea link, and the Chhatrapati Shivaji statue in the Arabian Sea,



Call to action: Prakash Ambedkar (right) addresses a press conference in Mumbai on Sunday. ■ EMMANUEL YOGINI

must get four times the compensation offered under the 2013 land acquisition Act," he said.

Mr. Ambedkar said, "The government is planning to implement slum rehabilitation projects in gaon-

areas despite the fact that it is not allowed. This is nothing but an attempt to throw original residents of the city out."

The BBM leader said 30% reservation should be given to the fisherfolk in the Navy,

marine tourism industry, and the sea trade. He also demanded interest-free loan up to ₹3 crore along with state-of-the-art ports and ships for the fishing community and a marine university.

Mr. Ambedkar has formed an alliance with Asaduddin Owaisi-led AIMIM to contest the general elections in Maharashtra. The alliance threatens to harm the interest of the Congress and the Nationalist Congress Party by dividing anti-BJP votes.

When asked about whether the Congress has made any proposal for the seat sharing, Mr. Ambedkar said the ball is in the Congress' court. "We are not going to indulge in dialogue with the Congress until they give us a plan on how to bring the RSS under constitutional scrutiny," he said.

State forts to get a ₹600-cr. revamp

Raigad conservation to get ₹113 crore; conference to bring together stakeholders

RENNI ABRAHAM

MUMBAI

The Raigad Development Authority (RDA) has put in place a ₹600-crore joint funding plan for the scientific restoration and conservation of numerous forts in Maharashtra, including access roads leading to the heritage sites. Works worth ₹28 crore are already under way.

"The authority has been working for the past two years. However, we decided to reach out to people only after work had started in right earnest," said chairman of the RDA, Sambhaji Chhatrapati. Out of a total outlay of ₹600 crore, ₹113 crore has been allocated for the conservation of the Raigad fort, besides a Central government financial assistance of ₹236 crore for the Mahad-Raigad approach road to the fort, he said. "Scientific restoration of the Jagdeshwar Temple using locally-available raw materials and manpower for the pro-



Heritage makeover: Maharashtra has more than 300 forts in forest areas. ■ FILE PHOTO

ject are intrinsic to the refurbishment."

The State has over 300 forts in forest areas. In the past, individual efforts at restoration and upkeep of forts such as Vishalgad and Raigad initiated by self-help organisations were often stymied due to either the Forest Act regulations or heritage laws. "This leads to a lot of frustration among the nearly 200 organisations working in the field for several years," he said. To overcome that, a

C We are keen to exploit the forts of Maharashtra as professionally managed tourism locations.

SAMBHAJI CHHATRAPATI
Chairman, Raigad Development Authority

one-day Fort Conference on Monday, at Raigad, will bring together all the stakeholders involved in the forts' conservation. While 45 forts come under the purview of the Ar-

chaeology Society of India (ASI) at the Centre, 33 fall under the State ASI domain. "We are seeking to create a single umbrella ecosystem for the positive work on forts in Maharashtra," said the RDA chairperson, who is also a descendant of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj from Kolhapur.

The Centre has separately promised ₹100 crore for the accelerated conservation efforts of 10 forts, including Panhala, Sindhudurg, Juna Killa (Bhoikot fort) in Solapur, Vidarbha and Shivneri forts. "We are keen to exploit the forts of Maharashtra as professionally managed tourism locations, as is seen in Europe and the United Kingdom. We are also being prudent with spends, as may be seen recently when we utilised only ₹14 crore out of the allocated ₹34 crore for setting up the infrastructure for light and sound shows to be held at the forts," Mr. Raje said.

'Not research nor analysis, but a look at poverty in 125 villages'

Educationist and author Heramb Kulkarni talks about his report on food, loans, healthcare, migration in rural areas

ALOK DESHPANDE

MUMBAI

Namdev Savra of Jawhar tehsil in Palghar lost his child to malnutrition in 2016 and despite the State's Women and Child Welfare department sanctioning a flour mill for him, the installed mill was taken away as he could not pay ₹2,000 to officials.

This is one experience out of hundreds recorded by Heramb Kulkarni, educationist and author based in Ahmednagar, in his report, *Darddryachi Shodhyatra* (Searching for poverty), which was penned after visiting 125 of the poorest villages in 24 dis-

tricts of Maharashtra. It was written to find out whether 25 years of opening up the economy helped India reduce poverty.

Mr. Kulkarni travelled the State between June 2017 and February 2018, on his own. "I wanted to bring out the real picture of the State and had kept it in mind before selecting villages. The report isn't a research paper nor a survey, but a focused group discussion with villagers from all classes and castes," he said.

The report delves into issues like food consumed, availability of jobs under the employment guarantee

scheme, migration of agricultural labourers, alcoholism, farmer suicides, farm loan problem, Dalits, women self-help groups (SHG), excessive

expenditure on health, and conditions of nomadic tribes. "One key observation was increased migration – around 50 lakh people were moving

from the tribal belt to irrigated land and from villages to cities every year. People want to minimise dependence on the government, and chose to migrate immediately after they didn't find work in their villages," Mr. Kulkarni said.

The report chronicles farming cycle, which is letting farmers and agricultural labourers down, leading them to suicides. "Farm area is decreasing, leading to lower crop production, while input cost is increasing. As a result, farmers aren't willing to pay more to labourers," he said.

Mr. Kulkarni points out that agricultural reform is the

only way to eradicate poverty. "The government apathy in recording farmer suicide was visible," he said. Excess money is being spent on healthcare due to the breakdown of the public health system, forcing people to go to private doctors. Private money lending companies are also replacing women SHGs.

The report, a collection of interviews and case studies, was published in January. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT



The report, a collection of interviews and case studies, was published in January. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

1 killed in firing as police stop weapon-loaded car

Three cops injured in scuffle in Solapur

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

MUMBAI

One person was killed in retaliatory firing by the police when he and his associates allegedly attacked the latter for intercepting their car laden with weapons in Solapur on Sunday morning, an official said.

Three policemen were also injured, he said.

Solapur taluka police station-in-charge Vijay Patil and three policemen were on night patrol duty when they intercepted the vehi-

cle, carrying four to five people, on suspicion around 3.30 a.m. in Ulegaon, he said. The team found some inflammable material and weapons.

On asking about the weapons, the car occupants allegedly hurled stones at the policemen and manhandled them, he said.

One policeman allegedly fired in retaliation, killing a vehicle occupant, another police official said.

Further details are awaited, he said.

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IN BRIEF



Willing to contest on Cong. ticket: Sumalatha

MANDYA
Sumalatha, wife of the late actor-turned-politician M.H. Ambareesh, visited the Adichunchanagiri Mutt at Bellur in Mandya district on Sunday and held discussions with Nirmalanandanatha Swami. Expressing her willingness to contest from Mandya on a Congress ticket, she told presspersons: "I don't want to take any hasty decision. I will announce my stand after discussing with Ambareesh's fans and senior leaders in the district."

Help cut GST on premier hotels, Alphons tells Kerala

VARKALA
Union Minister of State for Tourism K.J. Alphons has sought the help of Kerala to lower Goods and Services Tax (GST) rates for high-end hotels and increase tourist footfall thereby. He was speaking after laying the foundation stone for the ₹69.47-crore Sri Narayana Guru spiritual tourism circuit from Aruvippuram to Sivagiri here on Sunday.

Row after MLA's remarks against Subcollector

IDUKKI
Devikulam, MLA, S. Rajendran has landed in a controversy following media reports that he had used abusive language against Devikulam Subcollector Renu Raj when a team of Revenue Department officials reached the Munna grama panchayat shopping complex under construction last week to issue a stop memo. It was found that the complex under the name Woman Industrial Centre was constructed without adhering to the rules under the River Protection Act. In a televised statement on Sunday, Mr. Rajendran tendered an apology for his derogatory comments.

Naidu was unable to answer queries on funds use: Modi

A.P. CM's aim is not Sunrise State but 'Son Rise State', says Prime Minister

P. SAMUEL JONATHAN

GUNTUR
Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday criticised Andhra Pradesh CM Chandrababu Naidu for joining the Opposition parties that had formed an "unholy alliance" against the BJP.

Claiming that he had been the "chowkidar" of the country for four years, Mr. Modi said he had taken a vow to protect the lives and interests of the people and work for their development.

Addressing a public meeting here, he said Mr. Naidu had begun differing with him only after he had sought accountability in his spending.

"The main problem of the AP CM is I have asked for Utilisation Certificates of the money spent on various projects. I am a 'chowkidar' and



Volley of charges: PM Modi and A.P. BJP president Kanna Lakshminarayana in Guntur on Sunday. ■ CH. VIJAYA BHASKAR

I have every right to seek accountability of every rupee of the tax payer. Mr. Naidu often talks of 'wealth creation,' yes, from Polavaram to Amaravati, we have seen how he has amassed wealth for himself." Mr. Modi said.

Mr. Modi also accused Mr. Naidu of taking a U-turn at the cost of the development

of the State. "Mr. Naidu has forgotten the rebuilding of the State a long time back and is now busy rebuilding his party which is in tatters. He is trying to fool everyone by claiming that he is building a Sunrise State but is, in fact, trying to make his son Chief Minister, marking a new phase in the State —

Naidu keeps off

STAFF REPORTER

VIJAYAWADA

Giving protocol the go-by, CM Chandrababu Naidu did not show up to receive Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the Gannavaram airport near here. Nor did his Cabinet colleagues receive Mr. Modi.

'Son Rise State.'

'Adulterated alliance'

In Tirupur, Tamil Nadu, Mr. Modi accused the Opposition parties of forming an "adulterated" "mahamilawat" (grand alliance) with the sole aim of pointing guns at him. He believed the people would reject the alliance.

Met JD(S) MLA's son: Yeddyurappa

Kumaraswamy scripted the conversation'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

HUBBALLI

Reversing his earlier stand, former Karnataka Chief Minister B.S. Yeddyurappa, on Sunday admitted that he had met Sharanagouda, son of Gurmitkal MLA Nagangouda Kandukur. Mr. Yeddyurappa's admission came a day after Congress leaders urged the Chief Justice of India to take *suo motu* notice of the contents of an audio clip released by Chief Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy, in which the BJP leader is heard trying to lure Mr. Sharanagouda to join the BJP.

Earlier Mr. Yeddyurappa

BJP offered money: Kolar MLA

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

BENGALURU

K. Srinivas Gowda, Janata Dal (S) legislator from Kolar, on Sunday accused the BJP of trying to lure him with money.

He told presspersons on Sunday that while ₹5 crore had been given to him, ₹25

had dismissed the audio clip as mimicry.

Speaking to reporters at Hubballi airport before the arrival of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Mr. Yeddyurappa, however, accused Mr. Kumaraswamy of writing the script for the recording. "Mr. Kumaraswamy is in-

crore more was promised, besides positions. He said C.N. Ashwath Narayan (Malleswaram MLA), S.R. Vishwanath (Yelahanka MLA), and the former Channapatna legislator C.P. Yogeshwar came to his house about three months ago to lure him to the BJP.

dulg in third-grade politics. It is true that I met Shankargouda [Sharanagouda]. Mr. Kumaraswamy sent the MLA's son to me to make me speak according to their requirements and then used whatever was useful for them. But they have covered up a few truths," he said.

Nuns not to accept bar on stay order

STAFF REPORTER

KOTTAYAM

The five nuns who had been part of a public protest against Bishop Franco Mulakkal, accused of raping a nun, on Sunday affirmed that they would not accept the letter that seeks to annul the stay on their transfer orders.

"We strongly suspect the intervention of Bishop Franco behind this latest development. Come whatever may, we are going to remain at the St. Francis Mission in Kuravangadu till the case is over," said a nun Sister Anupama Kelamangalathuveliyil.

Commemorative volume on Sri Raghavendra Swamy

'Peetathipathi' releases the special book in Mantralayam

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MANTRALAYAM (KURNool DIST.)

The 'Peetathipathi' of the Sri Raghavendra Swamy Math Sri Subudhendra Theertha on Sunday released the special commemorative volume *Sri Raghavendra Swamy: The Living Saint of Mantralayam* brought out by The Hindu.

Complimenting The Hindu Group of Publications for bringing out the special volume on Sri Raghavendra Swamy, Sri Subudhendra Theertha praised *The Hindu* for maintaining integrity and etching a prime place for itself in the world of media.

He said that *The Hindu* is a 'Bheeshma' among newspapers, whatever appeared as news in it is "taken as a gospel of truth by everybody."

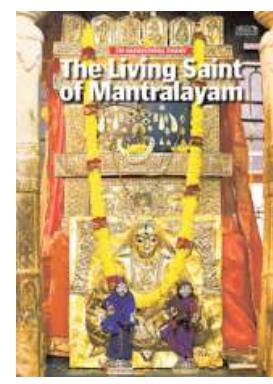
"The Hindu's rich contribution toward promoting socio-religious aspects and accurate coverage of political and international events is worth emulating," the Swamiji remarked.

He added, "If one has to master himself in the world of literature and English, he or she should read *The Hindu*, which has maintained high standards in the world of journalism since its inception, and will continue this legacy in the future."

'Yeoman service'

Sri Subudhendra Theertha said that by bringing out the special volume on Sri Raghavendra Swamy the paper has done yeoman service to society.

He praised the editorial team for producing the commemorative volume with well-researched arti-



Sri Subudhendra Theertha taking a look at the volume on Sri Raghavendra Swamy and, right, the cover of the book.

cles, rare photographs and high quality printing.

The volume was released at a valedictory function on the occasion of the three-day birth centenary celebrations of the previous 'Peetathipathi' Sri Sudhakarendra Theertha, considered the architect of the present Sri Raghavendra Swamy Math after it was devastated by floods in the Tungabhadra river in 2009.

Non-stop recital

Members of the Dasasahitya Project of the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams recited the entire volume of the 'Srihari Kathamrutha Sara' penned by the legendary Haridasa Sri Jagannatha Dasa for six hours non-stop, on the math premises, on the occasion.

Sri Subudhendra Theertha complimented members of the Bhajan Mandal for it.

The Living Saint of Mantralayam is a rich tribute to the sage Sri Raghavendra Swamy, and to the holy town of Mantralayam, a standing testimony to one of the greatest religious scholars India has pro-

duced. The temple offers hope to millions of believers and holds out the promise of relief and salvation to devotees of Sri Raghavendra Swamy.

Rare photographs

The scholar, guru and saint Sri Raghavendra Swamy is known for his clear and vivid commentary on the Upanishads; his interpretations of the works of Sri Madhvacharya, Sri Teekacharya and Vyasaraja are considered impeccable. The volume contains some rare photographs of the 'brindavana' of the sage, and also includes a detailed interview with Sri Subudhendra Theertha, outlining the math's future plans.

Prominent among those present at the event were the math's regional heads of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh T. Ravi and S.D.T.

Rao respectively; C. Vijayarama Raju, assistant manager in Vishakapatnam; Sri Raja Girijacharya, the 'purvashrama' father of the present 'Peetathipathi'; Sri Suyumendra Acharya; L.R.D. Gowtham Acharya; and Anantacharya.

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IN BRIEF



11 injured during teachers' protest

PATIALA
Eleven persons, including a cop, were injured on Sunday as the police lathicharged a group of teachers that was marching towards Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh's residence to protest against conditions for their regularisation, the police said. An SP-rank officer was also injured in the melee, they said. PTI

'Dignity March' reaches Rajasthan

JAIPUR
Dignity March, comprising rape and sexual violence survivors, reached here on Sunday after striding through several States to raise awareness about sexual violence. The 10,000-km march is in its 54th day after starting off from Mumbai on December 20 last year. PTI

Two women killed, 3 injured in road accident

MATHURA
Two women were killed and three injured after their car overturned before hitting a divider in the Naujihil area here on Sunday, the police said. The incident took place in the morning on the Yamuna Expressway under the Naujihil police station area, they said. PTI

26.5 kg of looted gold recovered, three held

PATNA/MUZAFFARPUR
The police on Sunday recovered 26.5 kg of stolen gold and arrested three persons from different places of Bihar in connection with the loot of gold from a private finance company in Muzaffarpur. Armed miscreants had looted 32 kg of gold worth around ₹ 10 crore from Muthoot Finance company's Bhagwanpur branch in Muzaffarpur on February 6, 2019. PTI

'BSP-LSP alliance will have little impact on Haryana politics'

It may cause a minor dent in the vote share of BJP and Congress, feel analysts

ASHOK KUMAR
GURUGRAM

The alliance between the Bahujan Samaj Party and the newly-formed Loktantra Suraksha Party, announced in Chandigarh on Saturday, might cause a minor dent in the vote bank of both the ruling BJP and the Congress in the State, but is not expected to have much bearing on the Haryana politics, say political analysts.

With the Scheduled Castes, especially the Jatavs, being the traditional Congress voters in Haryana, the BSP never had much of a presence in the State and its vote share in the Lok Sabha elections has been around 5% since 1996, except in 2009 when it polled nearly 15% votes.

"The Jind by-election, where the Indian National Lok Dal-BSP alliance candidate Umed Redhu managed to secure only 3,454 votes out of the total 1.30 lakh votes polled, showed that the Scheduled Castes did not



LSP chief Raj Kumar Saini and BSP Haryana in-charge Meghraj with other leaders in Chandigarh on Saturday. ■ FILE PHOTO

vote for him. In fact, a sizeable number of them chose to go with the Congress," said former Haryana Agriculture University professor and political analyst Ram Kanwar.

If the performance of the LSP during the Jind by-election and the municipal elections last year is anything to go by, the party, founded by rebel Kurukshetra BJP Lok Sabha MP Raj Kumar Saini, seems to have failed to catch the fancy of the electorate so far. The party finished a poor fourth in the by-elec-

tion with its candidate Pan-dit Vinod Arshi losing the security deposit.

Though both parties do not have much stake in the Haryana politics, together they can harm the interests of the Congress and the BJP—with the BSP having appeal among the Scheduled Castes, which comprise around 20% of the State population, and the LSP mostly catering to the non-Jats, the traditional vote bank of the BJP.

"Jatavs, like Jats and Brah-

mins, are a politically conscious community and have mostly preferred to vote for the Congress over the BSP because of the latter's poor choice of candidates, among other reasons," said Dr. Kanwar.

Prof. Ranbir Singh, Senior Fellow, Institute of Social Sciences, New Delhi, said given the correct choice of candidates, the alliance could fare better in some constituencies and around Ambala. In 1998, BSP's Aman Kumar Nagra had won the Ambala Lok Sabha constituency.

Among the two, the LSP is more likely to benefit from the alliance, said Dr. Kanwar, adding that a tie-up between the Janayak Janta Party, the BSP and the Aam Aadmi Party could have been more formidable with its Jat-Baniya-Scheduled Caste combination.

"The Jind by-election has proved that the Jat vote bank of the INLD has migrated to the JJP," said Dr. Kanwar.

Priyanka seeks action in hooch tragedy

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
LUCKNOW

Congress general secretary in-charge of East Uttar Pradesh Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Sunday took a dig at the BJP governments in Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh over the mounting toll due to spurious liquor. She said it was unimaginable that the business of illegal liquor was being operated on such a large scale under the patronage of the two governments.

Ms. Vadra said no amount of condemnation was enough for "this heart-wrenching incident".

Ms. Vadra said no amount of condemnation was enough for "this heart-wrenching incident".

"I am shocked and saddened to hear that over 100 people have died in Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh's Saharanpur and Kushinagar due to spurious liquor and the death toll is still rising," said Ms. Vadra in a statement.

Two people were arrested on Sunday in connection with the hooch tragedy that claimed over 70 lives in two adjoining districts in Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh, the police said.

The death toll in Uttarakhand rose to 36 on Sunday, with 11 more people succumbing after consuming the spurious liquor in a village in Haridwar district.

According to an U.P. government statement, 36 died in Saharanpur district which adjoins Uttarakhand.

According to the police, the arrested father-son duo, Fakira and Sonu, told investigators that they had procured the spurious liquor from U.P. and sold it in Balapur and its neighbouring villages in Uttarakhand's Haridwar district.

He alleged that Mr. Kushwaha tried to silence him by saying that Mr. Anand had used his corporate connections to get ₹9 crore for the party.

Reacting to Nagmani's allegations, the RLSP office here shot off a release dismissing his claims about the Motihari Lok Sabha seat.

(with PTI inputs)

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 Monday: No weather warning

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	—	26.6	17.4	Kozhikode	—	34.9	25.6
Ahmedabad	—	26.9	8.6	Kurnool	—	35.3	20.4
Aizawl	—	30.4	—	Lucknow	—	23.6	9.4
Allahabad	—	25.3	6.9	Madurai	0.5	35.0	23.8
Bengaluru	58...	29.7	19.1	Mangaluru	—	33.4	22.2
Bhopal	—	23.4	6.4	Mumbai	—	32.3	12.4
Bhubaneswar	—	29.6	18.0	Mysuru	—	32.8	18.8
Chandigarh	—	18.4	7.4	New Delhi	—	21.6	6.0
Chennai	—	32.0	25.0	Patna	—	23.5	10.0
Coimbatore	—	34.0	24.0	Port Blair	—	31.4	23.0
Dehradun	—	20.7	7.4	Puducherry	—	32.0	24.3
Gangtok	10...	14.4	3.5	Pune	—	31.4	6.2
Goa	—	32.8	18.0	Raipur	—	26.2	12.9
Guwahati	0.2...	26.0	12.8	Ranchi	—	23.7	8.6
Hubballi	—	32.0	19.0	Shillong	0.3	16.1	4.9
Hyderabad	—	31.2	15.2	Shimla	—	11.5	2.5
Imphal	—	21.7	8.2	Srinagar	—	9.6	3.4
Jaipur	—	21.5	8.0	Trivandrum	—	30.9	25.2
Kochi	—	31.4	25.4	Tiruchi	—	34.0	25.0
Kohima	—	20.7	10.0	Vijayawada	—	31.8	20.0
Kolkata	0.5	26.1	16.7	Visakhapatnam	—	29.6	23.4

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES	SO ₂	NO ₂	CO	PM _{2.5}	PM ₁₀	CODE
Ahmedabad	51	88	22	70	—	—
Bengaluru	6	52	77	125	—	99
Chennai	10	15	57	31	—	—
Delhi	20	62	38	319	181	—
Hyderabad	65	77	29	147	152	—
Kolkata	79	9	21	184	131	—
Lucknow	10	44	51	211	—	—
Mumbai	33	38	95	181	183	—
Pune	65	36	40	233	181	—
Visakhapatnam	8	41	35	148	—	—

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing Yesterday

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Pollutants in the air you are breathing Yesterday

CITIES	SO ₂	NO ₂ </
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IN BRIEF



Meals on board Train 18 will not be optional

NEW DELHI
Meals on board the soon-to-be-launched Vande Bharat Express or Train 18 will not be optional for passengers, unlike in premium trains such as the Shatabdi, Rajdhani and Duronto Expresses, where travellers can choose not to take catering services, officials said. PTI

Over 1,800 mementos received by PM auctioned

NEW DELHI
Over 1,800 mementos received by Prime Minister Narendra Modi were auctioned in a fortnight-long exercise, which began last month, the PM's office said on Sunday. The proceeds will be used for the 'Namami Gange', a Central government project to clean the Ganga. PTI

Bollywood actor Mahesh Anand found dead

MUMBAI
Popular Bollywood villain Mahesh Anand, 57, was found dead at his home in Mumbai, a police official said. Neighbours alerted the police when he did not open the door. The actor may have died two days ago and the cause of death would be known after an autopsy, the police said. PTI

32 IndiGo flights to be cancelled today

NEW DELHI
IndiGo, which has cancelled several flights over two days, will not be operating around 32 flights on Monday following shortage of pilots, a source said. The country's largest airline has cancelled flights from Delhi, Kolkata, Chennai, Bengaluru and Hyderabad, the aviation industry source said. PTI

Nalini on fast in support of her husband

VELLORE
Nalini, a life convict in the former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi assassination case, has begun observing a fast at the Special Prison for Women on Sunday in support of her husband Murugan, who has been on a fast at the Vellore Central Prison since February 2 pressing for his release.

50 students fall ill after taking 'prasad' in school

LOHARDAGA
At least 50 students fell ill after taking *bundi* in a school in Lohardaga district on Sunday, Civil Surgeon Dr. Vijay Kumar said. The students of the school at Ita village had taken the 'prasad' after a puja. "All of them are out of danger," Dr. Kumar said. PTI

Father of kidnap victim pleads for justice or death

Bihar resident's daughter was abducted from their Muzaffarpur residence by the land mafia

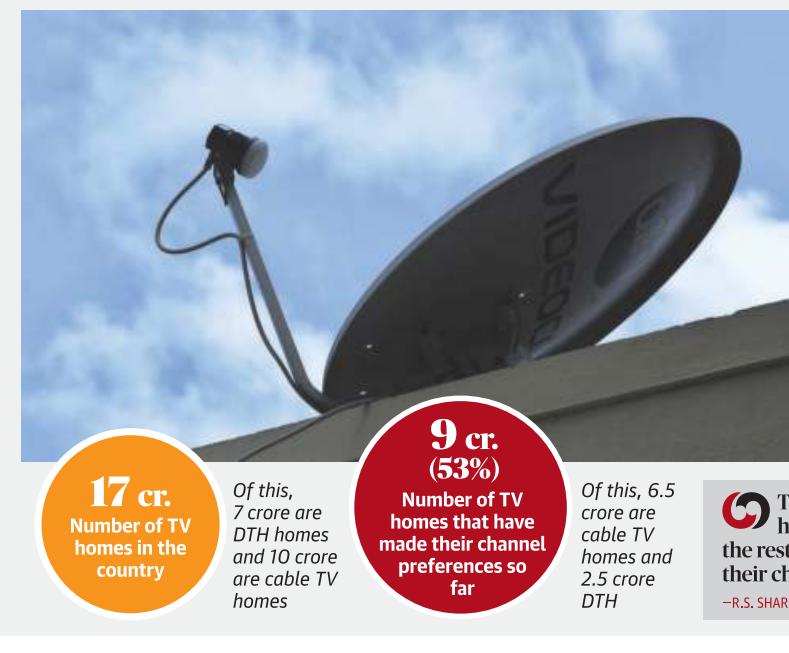
AMARNATH TEWARY
PATNA

The Supreme Court recently slammed the Bihar government and the Central Bureau of Investigation while shifting the Muzaffarpur shelter abuse case of 34 minor girls to Delhi.

A sexagenarian, whose minor daughter too was abducted over six years ago from the same town of Muzaffarpur, and the SC-monitored case is being

Channel watch

On February 1, the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India's new tariff and regulatory framework for broadcasting and cable services came into effect. A look at some facts presented by the TRAI Chairman



Source: PTI

New regulation

- Consumers can now opt for channels they wish to view, and pay only for them
- Every channel should be offered à la carte, with a transparent display of rates on electronic programme guide
- Players can also choose to offer discounts, even waive the network capacity fee (a maximum of ₹130) on the subsequent connections in the same household
- But such discounts have to be offered uniformly in a location and declared transparently on the operator's website

Will it raise overall cost?

- A recent Crisis report claimed that costs of TV viewing may rise by 25% under the new regime

▪ However TRAI has strongly refuted it and cited specific data from two market players to argue that prices in specific locations like Delhi and Mumbai have come down

R.S. SHARMA, Chairman, TRAI

The speed (of onboarding) has increased... and we expect the rest of the people to register their choice of channels soon

R.S. SHARMA, Chairman, TRAI

Only 4 UDAN routes in northeast operational

JAGRITI CHANDRA

NEW DELHI

Two years since the launch of the ambitious low-cost flying scheme, aerial connectivity continues to elude the northeastern region. While as many as 20 bi-directional routes were awarded to various airlines during this period, only four are currently operational.

The routes that have been connected are Guwahati-Pokhri-Guwahati (SpiceJet), Jorhat-Kolkata-Jorhat (IndiGo), Lilabari-Kolkata-Lilabari (SpiceJet) and Pakyong-Delhi-Pakyong (SpiceJet).

When the scheme was launched in March 2017, a total of five routes were identified from the northeast for the regional connectivity scheme (RCS), also known as Ude Desh Ka Aam Nagrik (UDAN). Under the scheme, the government provides a subsidy to airlines, who have to cap airfares for 50% of the total seats at ₹2,500 per hour of flight.

These routes, connecting Shillong with five other destinations in Meghalaya, were bagged by Air Deccan.

All of them now stand withdrawn because of the failure on the part of the airline to commence operations on some routes, and due to erratic services on others.

I was interrupted for raising issues: Palekar

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

MUMBAI

Veteran actor-director Amol Palekar, whose speech was interrupted by some members of the National Gallery of Modern Art (NGMA) here last week, said he was only trying to seek the reasons behind the cancellation of retrospectives of two senior artists.

A video of his speech on social media showed Mr. Palekar criticising the Ministry of Culture for scrapping the advisory committees at the gallery's Mumbai and Bengaluru centres. He told reporters in Pune on Sunday that the artistes' advisory committee at NGMA had ap-

proved holding of retrospectives of three artists, of whom Prabhakar Barwe's work was inaugurated. "Without any communication to the committee, the next two retrospectives were cancelled by Mumbai NGMA's new director Anita Rupavaram. I wanted to raise these issues," he said.

Amol Palekar

proved holding of retrospectives of three artists, of whom Prabhakar Barwe's work was inaugurated. "Without any communication to the committee, the next two retrospectives were cancelled by Mumbai NGMA's new director Anita Rupavaram. I wanted to raise these issues," he said.

Agitation spreads

The agitation spread to other areas in the State on the third day of Gujar Aarkshan Sangharsh Samiti's blockade of Delhi-Mumbai railway tracks at Sawai Madhopur district's Malarna village.

The protesters also blocked the Karauli-Hindon and Bundi-Bhilwara roads and briefly disrupted traffic

Gujjar quota stir turns violent in Rajasthan

Protesters open fire, torch vehicles and clash with police

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

JAIPUR

The Gujjar agitation in Rajasthan for 5% reservation in government jobs and educational institutions took a violent turn on Sunday, as the protesters opened fire, torched vehicles and hurled stones on the police force in Dholpur district, 270 km east of Jaipur. The police lobbed teargas shells to disperse the mob.

Dholpur Superintendent of Police Ajay Singh said half-a-dozen policemen were injured in the clash, but the protesters did not succeed in their attempt to block National Highway-3 connecting Dholpur to Gwalior.

Unidentified miscreants reportedly climbed the nearby houses on the sides of the highway and opened fire from country-made pistols.

The traffic on the highway was cleared within an hour after the agitators gathered on the road and halted vehicular movement. Mr. Singh said the vehicles torched in Kotwali area included a police jeep, a car and a bus.

As many as 26 trains in the Kota division were cancelled till February 13.

Shocking, says CM

Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot, who returned here from his two-day tour to New Delhi, told reporters that though the government was willing to hold talks with Gujjars, it was "shocking that the violence has occurred despite [Gujjar leader] Kirori Singh Bainsla's call for a peaceful protest."

"It seems that some anti-social elements sneaked into



Loud and clear: Gujjar community members blocking the National Highway in Ajmer on Sunday. •PTI

on the Jaipur-Ajmer highway.

Trains diverted

The sit-in on the railway tracks which began on Friday evening has forced the West Central Railway to divert, cancel or partially terminate about 200 trains during the last two days.

As many as 26 trains in the Kota division were cancelled till February 13.

Shockingly, says CM

Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot, who returned here from his two-day tour to New Delhi, told reporters that though the government was willing to hold talks with Gujjars, it was "shocking that the violence has occurred despite [Gujjar leader] Kirori Singh Bainsla's call for a peaceful protest."

"Our stand is very clear. We will get up from here only after getting 5% reservation," he said.

"We will remain on dharna. We do not want to talk to the government. We are waiting for it to give the order for 5% reservation," Vijay Bainsla, son of Col. Bainsla, said.

the crowd of Gujjars in Dholpur and gave a violent turn to the agitation," Mr. Gehlot said, while calling upon Col. Bainsla to lift the "illegal blockade" and come to the negotiating table.

As thousands of protesters continued to occupy the railway tracks between Malarna and Meemod railway stations, over a one-km-long stretch, Col. Bainsla – who is leading the agitation – said Tourism Minister Vishvendra Singh had come to the protest site on Saturday "without any agenda."

"Our stand is very clear. We will get up from here only after getting 5% reservation," he said.

"We will remain on dharna. We do not want to talk to the government. We are waiting for it to give the order for 5% reservation," Vijay Bainsla, son of Col. Bainsla, said.

Talking statues at the Ambedkar Park in Uttar Pradesh capital

Opinion on Bahujan Samaj Party supremo Mayawati's expenditure on statues may be divided, but everybody likes a good garden

OMAR RASHID

LUCKNOW

Vijay Pratap feels it's unfair of the Supreme Court to observe that the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) chief Mayawati might have to deposit public money spent by her in erecting parks and memorials in parts of Uttar Pradesh during her tenure.

Standing in the sprawling Ambedkar Memorial Park, built on the banks of river Gomti in Lucknow by the Mayawati government, Mr. Pratap who works in the National Rural Livelihood Mission in Bahraich district, claims the issue is being raised now, months before the 2019 Lok Sabha election, with an eye to create "a negative thinking" among voters

towards the BSP supremo.

Mr. Pratap believes Ms. Mayawati is being targeted for her caste.

"Why are these memorials a wastage? According to the caste structure, all castes have pushed up their icons. But when it comes to Dalit icons, they are pained and only see corruption. Nobody has a problem with the statue of Sardar Patel," said Mr. Pratap.

Had Ambedkar been a 'savarna' ('general category' in reservations), the park would have been glorified, adds Mr. Pratap.

Like hundreds of people do daily, he has come to relax at the Ambedkar Park, known for its magnificent stone structures and domes,

a massive 'elephant gallery' and statues of Dalit icons. With the massive memorials and statues built by BSP chief Mayawati during her tenure once again the focus of public attention, *The Hindu* spoke to a range of people at the sprawling park on what they thought about the controversy.

Praised for beauty

Across sections, the park was praised for its beauty and architecture, especially with Dalits linking it to their pride and to movement for social upliftment.

Opinions on the justification of the expenditure mirrored political divisions in the State, where Ms. Mayawati's constructions have

been used as a tool by political opponents to target her. Sensing the damage done to her image by the propaganda, and to appease non-Dalit voters, in the 2017 Assembly polls, Ms. Mayawati even declared that if she came to power, she would not build any more statues, parks or memorials, but focus on development and on ridding the State of goondais, mafia and communal elements.

Jyoti Saini, a teacher, praises the park as a breath

of fresh air. However, she is also critical of Ms. Mayawati, accusing her of only focussing on Dalits, while ignoring upper castes and Other Backward Classes (OBC), be it in jobs or other positions while in power. "It's beyond doubt – she only works for her caste," said Ms. Saini.

Ahmed Khan, Masters student in Urdu at the Lucknow University, is also a regular visitor to the park; it helps him de-stress, he says. "Lucknow ki shaan" ('pride of Lucknow'), he calls it. "It is a historic place, not a wastage of money. By that parameter then, the money spent on the Patel statue should also be handed back," said Mr. Khan.

His friend, Afzal Raza, a



Jumbo display: A view of the Ambedkar Memorial Park in Lucknow. •RAJEEV BHATT

"This is not wastage of money, provided it is not linked to politics. Such things are needed to bind society together. But if we only connect it to a particular caste, things get political," said Mr. Singh.

Staff at the park say around 1,000-1,500 persons visit it daily, with figures rising to more than 2,000 on weekends. Among them are tourists like Amarjeet Singh, a civil engineer who moved here from Mumbai. Mr. Singh praises the park for its aesthetics but wants it to be de-linked from politics.

"This is not wastage of money, provided it is not linked to politics. Such things are needed to bind society together. But if we only connect it to a particular caste, things get political," said Mr. Singh.

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Search on for tiger 'seen' in Gujarat in viral photo

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

AHMEDABAD

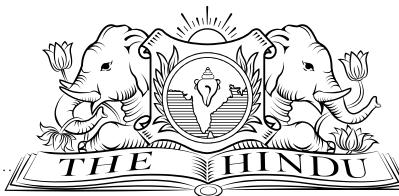
The Gujarat Forest department has begun efforts to locate a tiger after a photo of it crossing a road in Lunawada taluka of Mahisagar district went viral on social media, a senior official said.

Mahesh Maher, a school teacher, on Sunday claimed he saw a tiger crossing a road near Boriya village in Mahisagar, over 120 kilometres from here, on February 6 and clicked its picture on his mobile phone and shared it with friends on social media platforms.

The photo soon went viral and alerted the State's forest department on the unlikely presence of a

tiger in the area. Acting on Mr. Maher's claims, the forest department set up two camera traps and deployed staff to confirm the big cat's presence, a senior official said.

<p



Congress and cow

The Madhya Pradesh government's use of the NSA for cattle offences is out of line

The detention of five people under the National Security Act in Madhya Pradesh last week, all of them alleged to have committed offences related to cattle laws, amounts to gross misuse of a law meant solely to prevent activities that endanger the country's security or public order. India has unfortunately become habituated to the abuse of preventive detention laws. In recent times, they have been wrongly invoked against political dissenters and vocal critics, with total disregard for constitutional freedoms. The latest instances point to a new form of misuse. This is possibly the first time that a law that provides for a maximum of one year in prison through an executive order without trial or bail is being used against those suspected of offences against cows. The implications are terrifying. It means that law-enforcers will stop at nothing to demonstrate ideological adherence to majoritarian beliefs. This poses a grave danger to the freedom of movement and vocation, as well as the dietary choices, of sections of society that do not share the majority community's reverence for the cow. In the first case in Khandwa district, the police, who recovered a cow carcass, traced three men who had allegedly killed the animal. In the second case, authorities in Agar Malwa district claim there was some disturbance due to two men who were allegedly transporting cows. The ostensible reason to book them under the NSA is that they were likely to cause disruption of peace. This is too flimsy a ground to invoke so stringent a law, especially when there is no evidence of security or order being under grave threat.

In its order last year directing a series of measures against mob violence and public lynching, of which those transporting cows were frequent victims, the Supreme Court had warned against the dangers of a socio-political framework based on disrespect for an inclusive social order, and wanted the state to take preventive and remedial measures. In its apparent eagerness to prevent incidents that may lead to a communal backlash, the Madhya Pradesh government is detaining potential victims to prevent them from indulging in provocative acts! In invoking the NSA in respect of minor offences, solely out of fear of aggressive protests by right-wing Hindu groups, the Congress regime in Madhya Pradesh is displaying utter craveness. It is not clear why the police is not content with prosecuting them under laws that ban cow slaughter. There is some unease among Congress leaders over these actions of the party's new government in the State. However, it is not enough for the party to voice mild disapproval of the Kamal Nath regime's actions: its leadership has to denounce the gross misuse of the law to mollify cow vigilantes and the short-sighted aim of neutralising the BJP's campaign that the Congress is against Hindu beliefs. The State government must revoke the detention.

No zero-sum games

India and the U.S. must work to halt trade hostilities urgently

There are alarm bells in India over a possible decision by the U.S. Trade Representative to withdraw the Generalised System of Preferences status. Under this, India is able to export about 2,000 product lines to the U.S. under zero tariff. The revocation of the GSP, which was first extended to India in 1976 as part of a global concession by the U.S. to help developing countries build their economies, will be a blow to Indian exporters, and the biggest in a series of measures taken by the Trump administration against India to reduce its trade deficit. President Donald Trump's case on what he calls "unequal tariffs" from India rests on the trade relationship in favour of India: Indian exports to the U.S. in 2017-18 stood at \$47.9 billion, while imports were \$26.7 billion. The measures are in line with Mr. Trump's campaign promises. On the matter of Harley-Davidson motorcycles, he spoke directly to Prime Minister Narendra Modi on at least three occasions, demanding that India zero out tariffs to match U.S. rates on Indian motorcycles. In March 2018, the U.S. began imposing tariffs on several Indian products, and in April, the USTR began a review of India's GSP status, based on complaints of trade barriers from India it had received from the dairy industry and manufacturers of medical devices. In November the U.S. withdrew GSP status on at least 50 Indian products.

In retaliation, India proposed tariffs of about \$235 million on 29 American goods, but has put off implementing these five times in the past year in the hope that a negotiated trade settlement will come through. The latest deadline expires on March 1. India has also attempted to address the trade deficit with purchase of American oil, energy and aircraft. There have been dozens of rounds of talks between officials over the past few months, but no breakthrough. U.S. officials say the decision on data localisation for all companies operating in India, and the more recent tightening norms for FDI in e-commerce have aggravated the situation. Both sides should work towards calling a halt to trade hostilities and speed up efforts for a comprehensive trade "package", rather than try to match each concern product by product. The U.S. must realise that India is heading into elections, and offer more flexibility in the next few months. India must keep in mind that the larger, global picture is about U.S.-China trade issues, and if a trade deal with the U.S. is reached, India could be the biggest beneficiary of business deals lost by China. The visit of U.S. Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross to India this week will be watched not as much for substance, as for signals that New Delhi and Washington understand the urgency in breaking the deadlock.

Caught between two extremisms

Wahhabi influence and Hindu nationalism are responsible for the radicalisation of a small segment of Muslim youth



MOHAMMED AYOOB

Needs reports about occasional acts of terrorism outside of Jammu and Kashmir, which for historical reasons forms a special case, attributed to young Indian Muslims have appeared intermittently in the press. In addition, several recent reports suggest that global jihadi organisations such as the Islamic State and Al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS) have recruited a few Indian Muslim youth primarily by exploiting the latter's local grievances to serve their own goals.

Many analysts, Indian and foreign, had assumed until recently that Indian Muslims were immune to extremist propaganda because of both the syncretic and moderate nature of Indian Islam and the democratic and secular character of the country which made them feel they were equal participants in the political process. Both these assumptions are now problematic, as several factors have been at work in the past three decades that challenge this conventional wisdom.

Wahhabi influence

The first is the increasing influence of Saudi Wahhabism and related forms of Salafism on Islam as practised in the Indian subcontinent. This is the result of several inter-related variables but the most important of these is the vast increase in employment opportunities in the energy-rich West Asian countries following the oil

boom of the 1970s. This resulted in many Indians of all faiths temporarily locating to these countries in search of higher earnings. While a much larger number of Indians belonging to other religions moved to West Asia in search of lucrative jobs, both white and blue-collar, the religio-cultural impact of the encounter with the fundamentalist form of Islam followed in these countries, especially Saudi Arabia, on a section of Indian Muslim emigrants was qualitatively different.

Several of these temporary migrants returned to India enamoured with the obscurantist ethos of these oil-rich countries. This fascination was publicly exhibited above all in the adoption by a section of Muslim women, often under patriarchal pressure, of an ultraconservative dress code, including the niqab, or full face covering, popular in Saudi Arabia and some other West Asian countries. This dress code is very different from the traditional concept of purdah (covering up or modesty) practised by conservative Muslim families in the Indian subcontinent.

Protected by Sufism

But this display of presumed orthodoxy constituted merely the tip of the iceberg. The impact of Wahhabi/Salafi Islam on the mindset of a segment of returnees, who also passed on their preferences to a much larger group of relatives and acquaintances already impressed by the former's newly acquired prosperity, was more profound. Islamic beliefs and practices among some Indian Muslims began to approximate the harsh Wahhabi dogma, which stands in stark contrast to the indigenous version of Islam in India. The vast majority of Muslims in the Indian subcontinent belong to the Hanafi sect based on



the most liberal school of Islamic jurisprudence.

Moreover, traditionally Indian Islam has been greatly influenced by Sufi teachings and is, therefore, tolerant and accepting of religious diversity. Visitors to major Sufi shrines, such as those of Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti in Ajmer and Nizamuddin Aulia in Delhi, where people of all confessions come to pray and seek blessings, can testify to the syncretic spirit of Indian Islam. Consequently, it harbours natural defences against extremism in belief and practice. The ideological infiltration of Wahhabism/Salafism has eroded some of these defences and made a section of Muslims more insular and, therefore, open to extremist ideas.

Equally important, the spectacular rise of Hindutva or Hindu nationalism from the 1990s has had a major psychological impact on a section of Muslim youth, prompting their estrangement from the national mainstream. Inter-religious riots in which Muslims suffered disproportionately had been common in India since Independence. In some cases the police killed Muslim youth in fake encounters. The Hashimpura massacre in Uttar Pradesh by members of the Provincial Armed Constabulary in 1987 was the most macabre example of such incidents.

However, until the 1990s the vast majority of Indian Muslims

treated such occurrences as aberrations and their belief in the secular and non-discriminatory character of the Indian state remained unshaken. The demolition in 1992 of the Babri mosque by a Hindu mob under the direction of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) luminaries and the riots that ensued, in which scores of Muslims lost their lives, shook the confidence of many Muslims in the secular character of the Indian state. What was most galling was the Central government's apathy in the face of this brazen act of mob violence despite the fact that it had been forewarned. This event began the process of alienation among a section of Muslim youth from the Indian state.

This feeling grew exponentially a decade later in 2002 with the massacre of about 1,000 Muslims in Gujarat under BJP rule to avenge the death of 59 kar sevaks who were burnt to death in a train at Godhra after an altercation with local Muslims. What added insult to injury was the inaction, or, as the Human Rights Watch report on the bloodbath put it, the refusal of the state machinery to protect Muslim citizens.

More recently, the disenchantment caused by these earlier events has been reinforced by the lynching of several Muslims in northern and central India on the pretext that they were taking cows for slaughter or eating beef. The lynching of Mohammad Akhlaq in Dadri, in western Uttar Pradesh, in 2015 on suspicion that he had stored beef in his house was the most chilling example of such incidents. It was followed by additional acts of mob violence carried out with relative impunity by the so-called gau rakshak (cow protector) vigilantes. Such incidents have led to a widespread feeling among In-

dian Muslims that the state, instead of providing security to them, now colludes with those determined to intimidate them into submission. This series of actions and reactions makes it evident that the growth of Hindu nationalism has acted as a major stimulus for the radicalisation of a section of Muslim society in India and that the two phenomena feed off each other.

Onus on governing elites

Opinion leaders and religious scholars from within the Muslim community have the primary duty to confront and defeat the malign Wahhabi-Salafi influence on Indian Muslims in order to preserve the liberal and syncretic nature of Indian Islam thus pre-empting the spread of extremist ideology among Muslim youth. However, the impact of the growth of Hindu nationalism on the Muslim psyche can be countered only by the policies and actions of the governing elites at the Centre and in the States. Only they can take concrete steps, such as quick and impartial action against those responsible for creating mayhem in the name of religion, to reassure Muslims that the state will not

shirk its responsibility of providing them physical security and ensuring that they are treated with fairness and dignity. This will be the best antidote to the percolation of radical ideas among Muslim youth by removing their sense of alienation from the Indian state that in the long run can threaten the country's security.

Mohammed Ayoob is University Distinguished Professor Emeritus of International Relations, Michigan State University and Non-Resident Senior Fellow, Center for Global Policy, Washington DC

The solution is universal

Strengthening the MGNREGA would be more prudent than a targeted cash transfer plan like PM-KISAN



RAJENDRAN NARAYANAN &
DEBMALYA NANDY

Rural distress has hit unprecedented levels. According to news reports, unemployment is the highest in 45 years. To allay some misgivings of the distress, one of the announcements in the Budget speech was that "vulnerable landholding farmer families, having cultivable land up to 2 hectares, will be provided direct income support at the rate of ₹ 6,000 per year".

This cash transfer scheme has been called Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN). The

Ministry of Agriculture has written to State governments to prepare a database of all eligible beneficiaries along with their Aadhaar numbers, and update land records "expeditiously". The letter further states that changes in land records after February 1, 2019 shall not be considered for this scheme.

A comparison

Undoubtedly, farmers' distress needs urgent attention but let's see if the PM-KISAN is a reasonable solution. Let us first compare some basic numbers with the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA). For example, if two members of a household in Jharkhand work under MGNREGA (picture) for 30 days, they would earn ₹10,080 and

a household of two in Haryana would earn ₹16,860 in 30 days. Jharkhand has the lowest daily MGNREGA wage rate, and Haryana the highest. Put simply, a month of MGNREGA earnings for a household is more than a year's income support through PM-KISAN anywhere in the country.

PM-KISAN is a targeted cash transfer programme and MGNREGA is a universal programme. Any rural household willing to do manual work is eligible under the Act. According to the 2011 Socio-Economic and Caste Census, around 40% of rural households are landless and depend on manual labour. The landless can earn through the MGNREGA but are not eligible for the PM-KISAN scheme. Notwithstanding the meagre amount, the PM-KISAN might be putting the landless against a small farmer.

Further, it is unclear how tenant farmers, those without titles, and women farmers would be within the ambit of the scheme. There is also substantial evidence to demonstrate that universal schemes are less prone to corruption than targeted schemes. In targeted programmes, it is very common to have errors of exclusion, i.e., genuine beneficiaries get left out. Such errors go unrecorded and people continue to be left out.

It is in some of these contexts that strengthening an existing universal programme such as the MGNREGA would have been a prudent move instead of introducing a hasty targeted cash transfer programme.

The Agriculture Ministry's letter states that "funds will be electron-



FILE PHOTO: R.M. RAJARATHINAM

ically transferred to the beneficiary's bank account by [Government of India] through State Notional Account on a pattern similar to MGNREGS". There are important lessons to be learned from the MGNREGA implementation. The Centre has frequently tinkered with the wage payments system in the MGNREGA. It's creditable that timely generation of pay-orders have improved, but contrary to the Centre's claims, less than a third of the payments were made on time. And in contempt of the Supreme Court orders, the Centre alone has been causing a delay of more than 50 days in disbursing wages.

Field realities

Moreover, repeated changes in processes result in a hurried bureaucratic reorientation on the ground, and much chaos among workers and field functionaries alike. Field functionaries are pushed to meet stiff targets. Being short-staffed and inadequately trained, this results in many technical and unforeseen errors. A case in point is the rushed manner in which Aadhaar has been implemented for the MGNREGA.

Several MGNREGA payments have been rejected, diverted, or frozen as a consequence. In the

last four years alone, more than ₹1,300 crore of the MGNREGA wage payments have been rejected due to technical errors such as incorrect account numbers or faulty Aadhaar mapping. There have been no clear national guidelines to rectify these. There are numerous cases of MGNREGA payments getting diverted to Airtel wallets and ICICI bank accounts. In a recently concluded survey on common service centres in Jharkhand for Aadhaar-based payments, it was found that 42% of the biometric authentications failed in the first attempt, compelling them to come later. This continued harassment faced by people would have been a more humane question to address rather than brushing them aside as "teething problems" and build a new scheme on similar shaky platforms.

The success of the PM-KISAN is contingent on there being reliable digital land records and reliable rural banking infrastructure – both are questionable at best. While ₹75,000 crore has been earmarked for this scheme, the MGNREGA continues to be pushed to a severe crisis. The MGNREGA allocation for 2019-20 is ₹60,000 crore, lower than the revised budget of ₹61,084 crore in 2018-19. In the last four years, on an average, around 20% of the Budget allocation has been unpaid pending payments from previous years. Thus, subtracting the pending liabilities, in real terms, the Budget allocation has been lower than 2010-11. Despite a letter to the Prime Minister by citizens and MPs in January 2019, (as of February 8) all MGNREGA funds have been ex-

hausted. While the country stares at an impending drought, workers languish in unemployment. The MGNREGA is neither an income support programme nor just an asset creation programme. It is a labour programme meant to strengthen participatory democracy through community works. It is a legislative mechanism to strengthen the constitutional principle of the right to life. That the MGNREGA works have demonstrably strong multiplier effects are yet another reason to improve its implementation. Despite all this, the MGNREGA wage rates in 18 States have been kept lower than the States' minimum agricultural wage rates. This acts as a deterrent for the landless. Yet, work demand has been 33% more than the employment provided this year – underscoring the desperation to work. By routinely under-funding this Act, the Bharatiya Janata Party government continues to undermine the constitutional guarantee.

In an employment programme, adequacy of fund allocation and respectable wages are crucial, so meaningless claims of "highest ever allocation" and other dubious claims through a management information system are unhealthy for democracy.

At a time of such acute distress, does it not behove the Central government to improve the existing universal infrastructure of the MGNREGA before plunging into a programme pretending to augment farmers' income?

Rajendran Narayanan teaches at Azim Premji University, Bengaluru. Debmalya Nandy is a social worker

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.

Rafale deal revelations

It was surprising that *The Hindu* should have printed half-truths without ascertaining the full details, and given ammunition to Congress President Rahul Gandhi who has exhausted his torrent of abuse against the Prime Minister and has only been looking for additional material with which to denigrate the country's leader (Page 1, 'Exclusive', "MoD protested against PMO undermining Rafale negotiations", February 8). The ethics of journalism warrant that the comments by the then Defence Minister should have also been published. Mr. Gandhi is only misleading people with 'shoot and scoot'.

comments for his political gains. His unjustified and abusive comments against the Prime Minister will surely rebound on him and the Congress party.

R.V. REDDY,
Secunderabad

■ An indelible impression has gained currency that there is some hidden agenda/motive behind the publication of the "exclusive". Officials associated with the Defence Ministry and the Indian negotiating team have categorically denied the charge of the Prime Minister's Office having been involved in parallel negotiations. The highest court of the land too did not find anything adverse in the

deal. There is not even an iota of evidence to show any kickback/quid pro quo. Then why jump the gun and cry foul? Defence procurement deals and negotiations are highly classified and are not subjects for discussion and debate in the public domain. As a well-wisher, I find it disturbing that the paper's enviable image of upholding the highest standards of professional journalism stands tarnished.

S. SESHADRI,
Chennai

■ I am shocked by letters from some readers castigating *The Hindu* for its revelations. As a long-time reader, I appreciate the efforts of the paper to bring out the truth in the public

domain – which no other media outlet has done. Notwithstanding stout denials from the government, there remain unanswered pertinent questions. The common man wants to know: how a new company was preferred over a well-experienced defence public sector unit; why there was a three-fold increase in the price of the jets and whether the private company which has now been given the contract is indeed capable of meeting its contractual obligations in light of the problems being faced by its parent company.

J. ANANTHA PADMANABHAN,
Tiruchi

■ That the then Defence Minister – who is naturally a

part of the politics of his party and its government – tried to soothe the concerns raised by his Ministry officials is neither surprising nor pertinent to the report. The report was specifically about the negotiating team's concerns and frustration over the PMO's interference. Those readers who appear to be "disappointed" that the *The Hindu*'s "standards", "reputation" and "credibility" have been "besmirched" should well remember that it was this very same newspaper that exposed the corruption in the Bofors deal. It is hypocritical if these readers who are reverent about this paper's reportage on Bofors back then, feel angry now over the reporting on

the Rafale deal. Instead, as it was then, the government is now morally bound to order an impartial inquiry. 'Rafale' is an issue that has everyone, political or otherwise, asking for answers.

S. SANKAR,
Thiruvananthapuram

On Test cricket

Links beyond boundaries

To insist that the Aryans were a distinct people is to impose present-day borders on the remote past



ROMILA THAPAR

Problems with the definition of 'Aryan' continue even though the term was first used a couple of centuries ago, writes eminent historian Romila Thapar in the foreword to Which Of Us Are Aryans: Rethinking the Concept of Our Origins. In the book, Professor Thapar and other scholars and experts critically examine the Aryan question by analysing history, genetics, early Vedic compositions, archaeology and linguistics, and challenge various myths and theories doing the rounds. Professor Thapar examines the definition of 'Aryan', its earliest use in Vedic and Iranian compositions, and the change it underwent. An extract:

In any discussion of the 'Aryan' a good place to begin would be to set out the space and time of the subject. In terms of space we tend to think only of the geography of the Indian subcontinent and the boundaries of pre-partition India as they existed for British India. The focus is then narrowed down to north-western India. But the geographical area of the archaeological and linguistic evidence is far more extensive. The links therefore are way beyond just the boundaries of north-west British India and involve some familiarity with more distant cultures.

In terms of archaeology, the more extensive earlier reach was that of the Harappa Culture or the Indus Civilisation. From Shortughai in the Pamirs, evidence of Harappan settlements extends all the way south to the Indus plain and further to the Arabian Sea, westwards into Baluchistan and Makran and touching the Indo-Iranian borderlands, and eastwards into Punjab and Haryana. More recently finds have been located in Oman in the Arabian peninsula, particularly in the vicinity of copper mines. The Harappans were known to have had trading relations with the Gulf and Mesopotamia. People of the ancient past did not confine themselves to one place. They travelled, migrated, traded and communicated

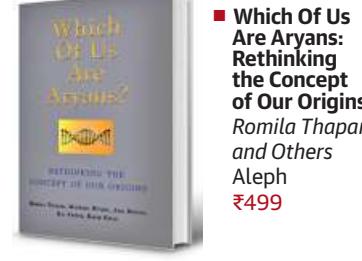


"Varieties of Indo-Aryan and Indo-Iranian speakers can only be given an approximate geographical location which is not as firm as that of archaeological cultures." A furnace discovered at an Indus Valley Civilisation site in Binjor, Rajasthan. • V. KRISHNAN

across vast distances. This would probably have been too vast an area to host a single, unified culture. We have to consider the possibility of a multiplicity of cultures and societies, some fairly isolated and others in close contact but possibly functioning under a recognised and similar sociopolitical rubric.

Covering extensive areas

Varieties of Indo-Aryan and Indo-Iranian speakers can only be given an approximate geographical location which is not as firm as that of archaeological cultures. The geographical area of all these languages is extensive but not all are referred to in the same text and they vary with the text. The wider geography of Proto-Indo-European takes a different direction from that of the Harappa Culture. Northern Syria and Anatolia are the locations possibly linked to Proto-Indo-Aryan, north-eastern Iran is the location for Old Iranian linked to the Avesta, and the speakers of Indo-Aryan as known from the *Rig Veda* are restricted to the Indo-Iranian borderlands and Punjab up to the Doab, which is geographically a small area. The history of the Indo-Aryan language has been extended backwards in time to the ancestral language of Indo-European and this brings in adjoining parts of Central Asia. The presence of Indo-Aryan in the Ganga plain is attested to in the post-Rig Vedic period.



Thus although the focus is often only on the Punjab we should not forget that there was also a large area of West Asia and Central Asia that had a bearing on this history, even if the Indo-Aryan of the *Rig Veda* was not spoken in such a vast geographical area. The need for familiarity with the archaeology and linguistic history of other areas further complicates the problem. The geographical overlap between the Harappan sites and the place names associated with Indo-Aryan and Indo-Iranian is a limited area covering virtually only the Indo-Iranian borderlands and the Punjab. The thrust of the Harappan locations is southwards with maritime links westwards along the Persian Gulf, whereas the Indo-Aryan speakers show up overland and move south-eastwards to the Ganga plain.

The chronology of the two is also different. The time bracket covers many centuries. There are some dates well established among historians and archaeologists. The Harappan urban cultures, referred to as the

Mature Harappan, date from about 2600 to about 1700 BCE, after urbanism slowly peters out. The *Rig Veda* is generally dated to the period after the decline of urbanism and would therefore date from about 1500 BCE or a couple of centuries later. The subsequent Vedas – the *Samaveda*, *Yajurveda* and *Atharvaveda* – relating also to the Ganga plain are dated to the early first millennium BCE.

Placing the Vedas

However there are those who differ and would like to date the *Rig Veda* to 3000 BCE or even earlier and identify its culture with the Harappan cities. They maintain that the Aryans are indigenous and there was therefore not even a migration of any kind, let alone any invasion as was thought in the nineteenth century. To maintain this position it is even said that the *Rig Veda* is prior to the Harappa Culture or that the authors of the Harappa Culture were Rigvedic Aryans. These views have become a matter of rather extensive controversy to say the least. This latter chronology, apart from not being able to muster firm evidence, creates huge problems for the historian. The discrepancy between Harappan urbanism and Rigvedic agro-pastoralism negates equivalence. Such an early chronology for the *Rig Veda* would, for example, create a gap of at least 1,500 years between the *Rig Veda* and the other Vedas and therefore break what is known to be the continuity between the four Vedas. Taking it back to the third millennium BCE creates major problems of parallels and correlations with archaeological evidence. It leads to a long chronological hiatus between the first and the later three Vedas – the *Samaveda*, *Yajurveda* and *Atharvaveda* – as the dating of these to the first millennium BC remains firm.

The insistence that the Aryans were a distinct people and that they were indigenous to the territory of British India is to impose present-day boundaries on the remote past, which makes the statement anachronistic. Concepts such as 'indigenous' and 'alien' have to be precisely defined, which they are not in this case, and the definition has to conform to the time context for when it is being used.

Extracted with permission from Aleph

SINGLE FILE

The art of the state

In his address, Amol Palekar was only shedding light on the state's insidious takeover of institutions of culture

VAISHNA ROY

K. BHAGYA PRAKASH

Constitutional values are undermined every time someone who is invited to speak at a government or public event is cut off because her opinion is unpatriotic. Yet this is the very nadir that freedom of speech in India has now reached. First, there was the unseemly cancellation of renowned writer Nayantara Sahgal's talk in January. This weekend, actor and director Amol Palekar's address at the opening of an exhibition in memory of artist Prabhakar Barwe at Mumbai's National Gallery of Modern Art (NGMA) was interrupted.

As this government completes its fifth year in power, the attempts to shut down criticism are getting stronger. The difficulty lies in reconciling this fear of public disapproval with the barrage of factoids that paint a rosy picture of the achievements of the last few years. If this were indeed so, how easy it would be to say, "Speaker, do your worst. We can prove every one of your accusations wrong."

Mr Palekar in his speech quoted the artist Rene Magritte: "We must not fear daylight just because it almost always illuminates a miserable world." But that's exactly what the authorities seem to fear nowadays: daylight. What else was Mr Palekar doing but shedding light on the state's insidious takeover of institutions of culture and learning? He was expressing concern that the Culture Ministry, having dissolved local committees of advisory artists, might now directly decide which artists will be allowed to exhibit at the NGMAs, when he was rudely interrupted by curator Jesal Thacker.

Anyone who imagines the government should be allowed to handle arts and culture has not met the bureaucrats regularly posted as heads of art institutions and museums. For these officials, from ministries as varied as agriculture or health, these are punishment postings. Still, the worst that the arts and culture faced under the Congress was corruption and indifference. To that is now added a system of surveillance to vet everything for ideological compliance.

In 2015, the government took over the autonomous Lalit Kala Akademi (LKA), and it took three years for a non-bureaucrat chairman to be carefully placed, while most regional LKAs still don't have full-time heads. Decisions on everything from light bulbs to wall paints are ferried from Delhi. The two regional NGMAs in Bengaluru and Mumbai scramble similarly for permissions from Delhi. Vague accusations are made in hushed tones, and ideological backgrounds discreetly checked.

There is a general feeling among the populace, perhaps fuelled by signals from the highest offices, that any criticism of the government is tantamount to criticising the country. Interestingly, NGMA director Anita Rupavataram echoed this idea. When she took the mic after Mr. Palekar was shut down, she said, "You should appreciate that this is the NGMA, a government gallery." In other words, the silencing, if not criminalising, of criticism is now complete.

DATA POINT

Discernible shift

Uttar Pradesh

2014 Lok Sabha: BJP+: 73, SP: 5, Cong.: 2, BSP: 0

2017 LS segments: BJP+: 71, SP: 5, BSP: 3, Cong.: 1 (extrapolated from Assembly results)

2017 Hypothetical 1: (BSP+SP+RLD alliance) BJP+: 30, BSP+SP+RLD: 50

2017 Hypothetical 2: SP+BSP+Cong.+RLD: 64, BJP: 16

Madhya Pradesh

2014 Lok Sabha: BJP: 27, Cong.: 2

2018 LS segments: BJP: 16, Cong.: 13

Rajasthan

2014 Lok Sabha: BJP: 25, Cong.: 0

2018 LS segments: BJP: 13, Cong.: 12

Tripura

2014 Lok Sabha: CPI(M): 2, BJP: 0,

Cong.: 0

2018 LS segments: CPI(M): 1, BJP: 1

Nagaland

2014 Lok Sabha: NPF: 1

2018 segment: NPF: 1

Chhattisgarh

2014 Lok Sabha: BJP: 10, Cong.: 1

2018 LS segments: Cong.: 10, BJP: 1

Gujarat

2014 Lok Sabha: BJP: 26, Cong.: 0

2017 LS segments: BJP: 21, Cong.: 5

Meghalaya

2014 Lok Sabha: Cong.: 1, NPP: 1

2017 LS segments: Cong.: 2

Mizoram

2014 Lok Sabha: Cong.: 1

2017 LS segment: MNF: 1

Karnataka

2014 Lok Sabha: BJP: 9, JD(S): 2

2018 LS segments: BJP: 13, Congress: 11, JD(S): 4

2018 Hypothetical: Congress+JD(S): 23, BJP: 5

Punjab

2014 Lok Sabha: SAD+BJP: 6, AAP: 4, Congress: 3

2017 LS segment: Cong.: 12, AAP: 1

Uttarakhand

2014 LS: BJP: 5, Congress: 0

2017 LS segment: BJP: 5, Cong.: 0

Himachal Pradesh

2014 LS: BJP: 4, Congress: 0

2017 LS segment: BJP: 4, Cong.: 0

Manipur

2014 LS: Congress: 2, BJP: 0

2017 LS segment: BJP: 1, Cong.: 1

Goa

2014 LS: BJP: 2, Congress: 0

2017 LS segment: BJP: 1, Cong.: 1

Assembly elections held close to the Lok Sabha polls have, with caveats, provided indications of the mood of the electorate. Srinivasan Ramani tallies Assembly poll results from 2017 and 2018 onto Lok Sabha seats and compares these with seat tallies in the 2014 Lok Sabha election. The BJP registers a drop in seat terms based on this exercise

MAYAWATI SHOULD RETURN THE PUBLIC MONEY SHE SPENT ON STATUES.

SC

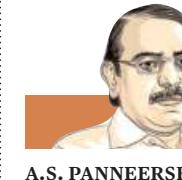
J. Surendran

Excerpted with permission from Aleph

FROM THE READERS' EDITOR

Major investigations are never stand-alone stories

It takes several reports on a topic to give us the larger picture



A.S. PANNEERSELVAN

the note by the Defence Minister, the entire report gives a twisted meaning and has brought down the reputation of *The Hindu* by several notches."

It is important to recognise that the note from the Defence Minister does not contradict the arguments of *The Hindu*'s story but, in an oblique manner, validates it.

Let's also look at the dates to understand the sequence of events. On November 24, 2015, Deputy Secretary S.K. Sharma put out

a note registering protest against the parallel negotiation by the Prime Minister's Office.

On December 1, the then Defence Secretary, G. Mohan Kumar, made this official notation in his own hand:

"RM may pl. see. It is desirable that such discussions be avoided by the PMO as it undermines our negotiating position seriously."

To this, then Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar responded on January 19, 2016: "It appears PMO and

French President office are monitoring the progress of the issue which was an outcome of the summit meeting. Para 5 appears to be an over reaction. Defence secretary (G. Mohan Kumar) may resolve the matter in consultation with principal secretary to PM."

Dribbs and drabs

In a different report, "Four reasons why the attacks on *The Hindu*'s Rafale story are shallow and self-imposing" (<http://bit.ly/RafaleAnalysis>), Varghese K. George explains the salient features of serious and ongoing investigative reportage. He explains how no single report on a topic is the last word on it and that investigative stories come in dribs and drabs. Mr. Parrikar was careful in his note and used the word "appears" only with reference to Para 5. Further, he did not reject the fears of his bureaucratic colleagues when it came to Para 4, which read: "The discussions between Diplomatic Adviser to the French Defence Minister and Joint Secretary to PM tantamount to parallel negotiation."

The stories gain importance because they draw our attention to the fact that both the Supreme Court and Parliament have been deliberately misled. N. Ram's relentless journalism shows how our systems are not transparent and lack accountability. It has helped to call out the deliberate lies and the weakening of our legal institutions governed by the growth of the jurisprudence of the "sealed cover".

readerseditor@thehindu.co.in

FROM The Hindu ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO FEBRUARY 11, 1969

Karunanidhi's Cabinet

A seven-member Cabinet for Tamil Nadu, headed by Mr. M. Karunanidhi, was sworn in by the Governor, Sardar Ujjal Singh, at Raj Bhavan this afternoon [February 10, Madras]. All the seven Ministers were members of the previous Annadurai Cabinet. Mr. V.R. Neduncelzhan, who was No. 2 in the previous Ministry and acted as Chief Minister after the passing away of Mr. Annadurai, is not in the new team. The Chief Minister, Mr. M. Karunanidhi, told newsmen that he was still striving his best to persuade Mr. Neduncelzhan to join his Cabinet. The members of the new Cabinet are: Mr. M. Karunanidhi, Mr. K.A. Mathialagan, Mr. A. Govindaswami, Mrs. Satyavani, Mr. S. Madhavan, Mr. S.J. Sadiq Pasha and Mr. M. Muthuswami. The swearing in ceremony lasted 20 minutes. All the Ministers took the oath in Tamil.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO FEBRUARY 11, 1919

The New Germany. Coalition Cabinet.

According to "Vossische Zeitung", the German Cabinet will be composed

FROM PAGE ONE

Five militants killed in Kulgam operation

Two militants then holed themselves up in nearby houses and fired.

"All five militants were killed," said IGP, Kashmir, S.P. Pani.

They were identified as Wasim Ahmad Rather, Aqib Nazir Mir, Parvaiz Ahmad Bhat, Idrees Ahmad Bhat and Zahid Ahmad Paray.

People first, not cows, says Sachin Pilot

He said that in Rajasthan, the government would react differently to the "illegal transportation" and slaughter of cows, in which men have been charged under the National Security Act.

The Kamal Nath-led Congress government in Madhya Pradesh has come in for criticism over two cases,

It was a combined group of Hizbul Mujahideen and Lashkar-e-Taiba. Waseem, Aqib and Parvaiz were involved in the killings of a civilian and a local Army man," said the police.

This group was also involved a series of grenade attacks in Anantnag and Kulgam districts, it added.

The final call will be taken at the Central Committee, the party's highest decision-making body, in March.

Party general secretary Sitaram Yechury had told the media on Saturday that the party's poll strategy would depend on local factors and necessities. "No pre-poll alliance in *mahagathbandhan* [grand alliance] is possible as of now. It will depend on the State-wise reports on the electoral tactics," he said.

The Polit Bureau, for the very first time, stressed the

charging five men in all under the NSA, most notably from Congress leaders P. Chidambaram and Salman Khurshid. "It is fine to protect animals that are sacred... but I think we could have done a better job by prioritising those issues first and then taken on the cow issue," Mr. Pilot said.

'Brother-sister team will be gamechanger'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Priyanka Gandhi Vadra will complement Congress president Rahul Gandhi's efforts in winning over young voters and the brother-sister combine will be a gamechanger for the party in the Lok Sabha polls as the country needs a young team, technocrat-turned-politician Sam Pitroda said Sunday.

He said the Rahul-Priyanka duo will make a "great team", along with many other young leaders active in the party, including Sachin Pilot, Jyotiraditya Scindia and Milind Deora, as people who can take the country forward, rather than keeping it hung up on history and religion.

Mr. Pitroda, the Indian Overseas Congress chief and a long-time friend of the Gandhi family, also said that Mr. Gandhi had learnt a lot from the 2014 elections, is more "mature, stronger, wiser" and "ready to take on the job of Prime Minister."

In an interview to PTI from Chicago, he said that India needs a young person with a new, inclusive vision for the future, a focus on employment, and new opportunities for all.

"Rahul is at the right age to lead India," Mr. Pitroda said. On Priyanka Gandhi-Vadra's entry into active politics, he said, "She will be a great asset and a good politician."

Vadra to be quizzed in Bikaner land case

ED too will record his statement again

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate may again record the statement of Robert Vadra, husband of Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, in connection with its probe into some London-based properties. The agency has already quizzed him thrice this past week.

"We will soon decide the next date for continuing the process of recording the statement. He also has to appear before another probe team pertaining to the Bikaner land case," said a senior official.

As decided by the Rajasthan High Court last month, Mr. Vadra has to join investigations in the Bikaner land case on February 12. The High Court has asked the partners of his company Skylight Hospitality Private Limited to cooperate with the ED in the probe.

Stay on arrest

Accordingly, Mr. Vadra and his mother Maureen Vadra, as directors of the company, are to appear before the ED. The agency had earlier issued three summonses under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA).

However, the stay on Mr. Vadra's arrest in the case still continues, according to the High Court directive. The probe is based on cases and chargesheets filed by

CPI(M) for tactical tie-up with Congress in West Bengal

Polit Bureau decision will have to be cleared at central committee meet in March

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The CPI(M) Polit Bureau, at the end of its two-day meeting on Sunday to discuss electoral strategy, resolved to have a tactical understanding in select constituencies with the Congress in West Bengal, to consolidate the anti-BJP and anti-Trinamool Congress votes.

The final call will be taken at the Central Committee, the party's highest decision-making body, in March.

Party general secretary

Sitaram Yechury had told the media on Saturday that the party's poll strategy would depend on local factors and necessities. "No pre-poll alliance in *mahagathbandhan* [grand alliance] is possible as of now. It will depend on the State-wise reports on the electoral tactics," he said.

The Polit Bureau, for the



Poll necessities: A file photo of Congress chief Rahul Gandhi and CPI(M) leader Sitaram Yechury at a rally. ■ R.V. MOORTHY

need to increase the strength of the CPI(M) in the Lok Sabha. The party is down to nine MPs in the House and even its national party status is threatened if the tally goes down any further.

The Kerala unit of the party, which had resisted any al-

liance or understanding with the Congress, has reduced its pitch by a few notches. The Bengal unit presented figures of killings and attacks on its cadres to highlight the dire situation in the State.

"We have discussed the tactics to be followed in all

the States and asked the State committees to discuss them further and employ appropriate measures based on the Party Congress decision. I have no other clarification to offer," S. Ramachandran Pillai, Polit Bureau member from Kerala, said.

At a meeting of the Pradesh Congress Committee presidents with Congress chief Rahul Gandhi, West Bengal PCC president Somendra Nath Mitra had ruled out the possibility of a tie-up with the Trinamool. He said the Trinamool did not accept Mr. Gandhi as leader. He also pressed for a tactical understanding with the CPI(M) in select seats.

The West Bengal unit of the party that had a similar understanding with the Congress for Assembly polls, has again sought a tie-up, which it sees as essential for the CPI(M)'s survival in the State.

Police chief grilled on Rose Valley scam

CBI also questions ex-Trinamool MP

RAHUL KARMAKAR
SHILLONG

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on Sunday included the Rose Valley scam in its ongoing interrogation of Kolkata Police Commissioner Rajeev Kumar in Shillong in connection with the Saradha chit fund scam.

"He was quizzed individually, first in connection with the Saradha case and then with the Rose Valley case before the accused (Mr. Ghosh) joined him in the evening," a CBI officer said on condition of anonymity.

Moral victory

Mr. Ghosh, whose interrogation took place in tandem with that of Mr. Kumar, told reporters: "The CBI is interrogating the very police officer who grilled me. This is my moral victory."

Mr. Ghosh had earlier implicated BJP leader and former Union Minister Mukul Roy and 12 others in the Saradha scam.

Valley scam, which rocked West Bengal in 2013, was a bigger financial fraud than Saradha. Mr. Kumar headed the Special Investigation Team (SIT) set up by the West Bengal government to investigate both cases.

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Moral victory

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Two held for murder of Trinamool MLA

BJP leader Mukul Roy named in FIR; BJP blames the killing on internal conflicts in Bengal's ruling party

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
KOLKATA

Two persons have been arrested for the gunning down of Trinamool Congress MLA Satyajit Biswas late on Saturday.

The district police registered an FIR naming four persons, including top BJP leader Mukul Roy, while the BJP has blamed infighting in the Trinamool for the MLA's murder. The officer in charge of the local Hanskhali police station and one of Mr. Biswas' bodyguards have been suspended.

Revolver recovered

Mr. Biswas was shot from behind by gunmen near his house in the Phoolbari area of Nadia district in south Bengal when he was attending a Saraswati puja.

According to one eyewitness, three miscreants "shot

at" Mr. Biswas and a country-made revolver was recovered from the area. At the time of the incident, the MLA was in the middle of several local Trinamool activists, the eyewitness said.

Sujit Mandal and Kartik Mandal were taken into custody, while three persons

have been detained for interrogation, district police officials said.

However, family members of the arrested men have denied their involvement in the murder. The wife of Kartik Mandal said he was not associated with the BJP; Sujit Mandal joined the BJP only recently, his mother said.

Seeks CBI probe

Mukul Roy, former general secretary of the Trinamool and party's ex-MP from Nadia, denied any links with the killing.

"The incident is unfortunate. My name is dragged into it to give it political colour. Mamata Banerjee is terrified after witnessing people's participation in the Prime Minister's recent rallies and thus trying to entangle us in such cases. Biswas was a victim of Trinamool's

internal feud," he said.

BJP State president Dilip Ghosh said, "Whenever any violence will take place, the Trinamool will blame the BJP completely suppressing the fact that they have huge internecine factional feuds. They are engaged in various kinds of illegal trade like sand mining or soil mining and these killings are connected to the distribution of money." He has demanded a CBI probe into the killing.

However, several Trinamool leaders who attended Mr. Biswas's last rites blamed the BJP. "Where is sand or soil mining in Nadia? Satyajit was killed as the BJP realised that it is impossible for them to control the area if he is around," said Minister and Mayor of Kolkata Firhad Haikim. Trinamool secretary-general Partha Chatterjee echoed the allegations.

Courts can't reduce minimum sentence, says SC

Madhya Pradesh had appealed against an HC order that cut short a six-month jail term to 11 days

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The courts cannot impose less than the minimum sentence prescribed by lawmakers for an offence, the Supreme Court has held.

The ruling came on an appeal by the Madhya Pradesh government against the 2012 decision of the High Court, which cut short the six-

month prison sentence awarded to Vikram Das — who was found guilty under the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 — to the 11 days he had served so far.

"Where the minimum sentence is provided for, the court cannot impose less than the minimum sentence.

The trial court has awarded the minimum punishment of six months and ₹500 in fine for the offence under

Section 3(l)(ix) of the Act. The minimum punishment under the section is six months. The convict moved the High Court for the limited relief of further reduction in the sentence. The court reduced the term, but increased the fine to ₹3,000.

The Supreme Court allowed the appeal and held the "High Court could not

award sentence less than the minimum sentence contemplated by the statute" even if it was done in exercise of its inherent powers under Article 142 of the Constitution. "The respondent [Das] shall undergo the remaining period of the sentence. The respondent shall surrender before the court within four weeks," the judgment said.

Don't use Nirbhaya fund for other purposes: panel

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

A parliamentary panel, headed by Congress leader P. Chidambaram, has taken strong exception to the utilisation of the Nirbhaya Fund for the construction of buildings, saying such allocations defeat the very purpose of the project — that of safety for women.

In a report submitted to the Rajya Sabha last week, the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Home Affairs said, "The committee is also of the firm view that funds

for the construction of buildings should come from other sources and not from the Nirbhaya Fund."

The committee also said that sanctioning money from the Nirbhaya Fund for schemes pertaining to compensation would render it as a fund merely for disbursal and would not have a desired impact at the ground level in enhancing the security scenario for women.

The Nirbhaya Fund was started in 2013 by the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance government.

Congress does not exist in Andhra'

Former party leader says his problem is not with Rahul but those with him

SOBHANA K. NAIR

A six-time MP, former Congress Working Committee member, head of the party's Adivasi cell and former Tribal Affairs Minister, Kishore Chandra Deo, who quit the party earlier this month, is categorical that the Congress has no future in Andhra Pradesh in the present circumstances.

What are your reasons to quit the Congress?

■ It was not a spontaneous decision. I was among the very few Congress leaders who did not oppose bifurcation of the State, since the party had already taken the decision and it was in our manifesto. I had made a few suggestions on how to go about it. I don't think these suggestions were even discussed. The manner and timing of bifurcation was not correct.

So, why now?

■ I waited till the very end. Those who are at the helm of affairs in Andhra Pradesh, they come from the YSR Reddy stream. After his son formed a new party, these

people continued to be there. Once Oommen Chandy came from Kerala as the general secretary in charge of the State, I expected that he would restore the party and strengthen it in the State. I met Mr. Chandy and spoke to him on several instances but nothing happened. For all practical purposes, the party does not exist in Andhra. People are questioning my timing because of the upcoming election. But I have not decided to join this way or that. But if your voice is not heard in the party, your mails do not receive acknowledgement, your suggestions are not considered what is the point in remaining in such a party?

Was it because Congress

people led the party to total liquidation in Andhra. How do you see the prospects of the Congress in Andhra and rest of the nation?

■ In Andhra, at least, I believe that Congress will get fewer votes than it got in 2014. As far as the rest of the nation is concerned, where there are regional parties, they will take care of the Narendra Modi-Amit Shah combine and wherever regional parties are not there, the Congress will win by default. I wish the Congress well.

Did you expect that party under Rahul Gandhi would change for the better?

■ When he became vice-president, I was there in Jaipur in January 2013. Even if he had implemented 60-70% of what he had promised in his speech, the Congress would have been in a much better position.



APPEAL
5½ years old Baby Rakshana needs your support in bringing a lasting change and a new life. She suffers from Recurrent Germ Cell Tumor and has to undergo Chemotherapy & Surgery at V.S. Hospital, Chennai. She urgently needs ₹6,20,000/- for the whole treatment. Donations sent through ChD.DINET Transfer (Syndicate Bank, Nungambakkam Branch, A/c No.60182010063310, IFSC No.SYNB0006018) favouring WOMEN'S WELFARE SYNDICATE is exempted under 80G IT Act. All correspondence is done through WWS, Regd. Public Charitable Trust, Flat No.GF 1, Corridor Apartments, O.No.13, N.No.29, Pycroft Lane, Chennai-600006, Ph: 044-42137401/2823532 E Mail: womenswelfaresyndicate@gmail.com Website: www.womenswelfaresyndicate.org

WWS

Naidu to observe a day's fast in Delhi

Opposition parties may offer support

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu will observe a daylong hunger strike in the national capital on Monday over the Centre's failure to deliver on special status to

Congress accuses CAG of conflict of interest

Rajiv Mehrishi was part of Rafale negotiations, says party

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Ahead of the possible tabling of the Comptroller and Auditor-General's report on the Rafale deal in Parliament, the Congress has questioned how CAG Rajiv Mehrishi could conduct the audit when he himself had been part of the Rafale negotiations.

In a strongly worded letter to Mr. Mehrishi, Congress leaders Kapil Sibal and Ghulam Nabi Azad pointed out that Mr. Mehrishi was the Finance Secretary when the Rafale deal was signed. "It is an act of gross impropriety for you to deal with the audit of the 36 Rafale aircraft deal on account of patent conflict of interest writ large. You are constitutionally, legally and morally disentitled to either conduct an audit or to present a report before the PAC [Public Accounts Committee] and Parliament. We urge upon you to recuse yourself and publicly accept the gross impropriety committed by you in initiating the audit of the 36 Rafale aircraft deal," the letter read.

In the letter, the Congress further accused Mr. Meh-

C Mr. Mehrishi was the Finance Secretary on June 24, 2015, when the contracts for the 126 Rafale aircraft was cancelled. He still held the post when the negotiations were going on. In fact, the Finance Ministry plays an important role in these negotiations... Now it is clear that the Rafale deal happened under Rajiv Mehrishi

KAPIL SIBAL, Congress leader

rishi of trying to save the go-

Bid to save govt'

"We understand that at the fag end of this government's tenure, you, as CAG, are attempting to help the government by giving it a clean chit certificate through a report likely to be tabled in Parliament."

Senior Congress leader Kapil Sibal told reporters that Mr. Mehrishi was likely to present the report on the Rafale deal in Parliament on Monday.

Mr. Mehrishi was Finance Secretary from October 24, 2014 to August 30, 2015, and in between Prime Minister Narendra Modi went to Paris on April 10, 2015 and announced the signing of the Rafale deal.

"Mr. Mehrishi was the Fi-

nance Secretary on June 24, 2015, when the contract for the 126 aircraft was cancelled. He still held the post when the negotiations were going on. In fact, the Finance Ministry plays an important role in these negotiations... Now it is clear that the Rafale deal happened under Rajiv Mehrishi," Mr. Sibal said.

He also pointed out that a government affidavit, which formed the basis of a Supreme Court judgment on a PIL petition on the Rafale deal, said the CAG report on the deal had already been tabled in Parliament. The report did not exist till then but the affidavit, Mr. Sibal said, pointed out that "the government possibly has advance knowledge of the goings-on in the CAG and the contents of the CAG report".

The Rafale deal was signed

between India and France under the terms of DPP-2013. The Standard Clauses in Contract are mentioned in Enclosure 8 of DPP-2013. This has sections on penalties for the use of undue influence, an integrity pact, agents/agency commission and Access to book of accounts. Paragraph 37 of Request for Proposal (RFP) in DPP-2013 states that "the Standard Contract Document at Chapter V of DPP-2013 [bit.ly/DPP-2013] indicates the general conditions of contract that would be the guideline for all acquisitions."

Despite the DPP stating explicitly that the Standard Contract Document "would be the guideline for all acquisitions", the Indian government chose to remove these clauses from the supply protocols with the two private defence suppliers. This assumes particular importance as the government also chose to do away with a sovereign or bank guarantee from France and settled for a letter of comfort, which is not legally binding, from the French Prime Minister.

The letter of comfort is-

Review petitions

The review petitions filed by Yashwant Sinha, Arun Shourie, Prashant Bhushan and Aam Aadmi party MP Sanjay Singh are also pending. They allege that the apex court judgment is riddled with fault lines. They want the apex court to reconsider its "erroneous" judgment, which relies on a "non-existent" CAG report to uphold the Rafale deal.

The petitioners contend that the judgment based on a hypothetical CAG report was not merely a "clerical or arithmetical slip" but a substantial error.

They want a "recall" of the verdict.

The petitioners have also questioned the judgment's dismissal of lack of sovereign guarantee from the French government's side as a "minor deviation."

Govt. application to correct Rafale verdict awaits hearing

Claimed SC erred in grammar to 'misinterpret' information

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL

NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court is yet to hear an application filed by the government on December 15, 2018, for a correction in the Rafale judgment.

The silence that shrouds the application belies the urgency with which the government returned to the apex court on December 15 – the very next day of the pronouncement of the judgment. The government has so far not made any oral mention before the court for an early hearing of its application.

In the application, the government claimed the apex court judgment erred in English grammar to "misinterpret" information submitted to it in a sealed cover note about the pricing of the deal for 36 Rafale jets.

It had filed the application in the face of a political storm whipped up by the verdict.

The Opposition had gone public about how the Supreme Court was made to believe by the government that the pricing details of the Rafale jets were shared with



The government submitted the petition on December 15.

an apology from the government.

The government had said that the court misinterpreted its "is" in the note as "has been." It was only citing procedure and not an actuality that happened.

Review petitions

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Budget shortfall worries Defence Services

May derail capacity enhancement, modernisation and maintenance under way; major deals coming up

DINAKAR PERI

NEW DELHI

The shortfall in Defence allocation in the interim Budget 2019-20, especially in its capital allocation, has left the Services worried as it threatens to derail the capability enhancement and modernisation under way. This comes at a time of fast-paced developments in the region, and China's rapid advancements will only leave India further behind in terms of military capabilities.

Significant shortfall

A look at the numbers reveals the shortfall is so significant that, for the Navy and the Air Force, the capital allocation does even meet the committed liabilities, that is, payments for deals already contracted. The Army, meanwhile, is looking at a shortfall in its non-salary revenue expenditure.

The Services have conveyed their concerns to the Defence Ministry. Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman

Widening deficit

A look at the allocation for the services in the interim Budget

SERVICE	C A P I T A L		
	Projected (in ₹ crore)	Allotted	Committed liabilities
Army	36,000	29,700	21,600
Navy	35,714	22,227	25,461
Air Force	74,895	39,347	47,413

C As far as we are concerned, the state today is 68% of our equipment is in the vintage category, just about 24% in the current, and 8% in the state of the art category

LT. GEN. SARATH CHAND, Vice Chief of Army Staff to the parliamentary standing committee last year

is taking up the matter with the Finance Ministry to address it," a Defence official said.

For instance, the Air Force, which has signed major deals in the past two years, including for the 36 Rafale jets and S-400 air defence systems, and is beginning to induct platforms like CH-47F Chinook heavy lift helicopters and AH-64

Apache attack helicopters, has committed liabilities of ₹47,413 crore. In contrast, the entire capital allocation is ₹33,347 crore and the projected capital requirement is ₹47,895 crore. Similarly, for the Navy, the committed liabilities for the coming year stand at ₹25,461 crore, while the total capital allocation is ₹22,227 crore.

The Defence allocation in

FROM PAGE ONE

Government waived anti-corruption clauses

N. RAM

This direct dealing with the commercial suppliers, under cover of an IGA, was highlighted in a detailed note of dissent signed by three members of the Indian Negotiating Team – M. P. Singh, Adviser (Cost), A.R. Sule, Financial Manager (Air), and Rajeev Verma, Joint Secretary and Acquisitions Manager (Air). The document, which is available to *The Hindu*, reveals that these three members took a strong stand against what was being rammed through. On the direct dealing with the two companies, they noted:

"Notwithstanding the fact that the procurement is on Government-to-Government basis, the IGA involves 'Transfer of Rights and Obligations' relating to supplies of equipment and related industrial services by French Government to the French Industrial Suppliers, and the payment is also being made to the French Industrial Suppliers and not to the French Government; therefore, it is not advisable to sacrifice the basic requirement of financial prudence."

Sections on penalties

The Rafale deal was signed between India and France under the terms of DPP-2013. The Standard Clauses in Contract are mentioned in Enclosure 8 of DPP-2013. This has sections on penalties for the use of undue influence, an integrity pact, agents/agency commission and Access to book of accounts. Paragraph 37 of Request for Proposal (RFP) in DPP-2013 states that "the Standard Contract Document at Chapter V of DPP-2013 [bit.ly/DPP-2013] indicates the general conditions of contract that would be the guideline for all acquisitions."

Despite the DPP stating explicitly that the Standard Contract Document "would be the guideline for all acquisitions", the Indian government chose to remove these clauses from the supply protocols with the two private defence suppliers. This assumes particular importance as the government also chose to do away with a sovereign or bank guarantee from France and settled for a letter of comfort, which is not legally binding, from the French Prime Minister.

The letter of comfort is-

Box 2

Modified Para 50 (b):

■ Acceptance of the Letter of Comfort from the French Prime Minister along with other associated guarantees/assurances in the IGA in lieu of Bank Guarantee subject to payment through an escrow account or any other safeguards MOD shall work out in consultation with the Government, with the assurance by the French Government they shall provide effective oversight on the payments released to the French Industrial Suppliers.

sued by the French Prime Minister on September 8, 2016, was moved by Smita Nagaraj, Director General Acquisitions, in the Defence Ministry.

the CCS on August 24, 2016, was recommended by Sudhansu Mohanty, Financial Adviser (DS) on January 14, 2016. It was in Note-263, which begins with this qualification,

"I wish I had sufficient time to go through the entire file and mull over the various issues raised. However, in view of the fact that the file has to be submitted to RM immediately, I would like to make the following quick observations from the Finance point of view."

The proposal, which states that "this issues under the direction of Raksha Mantri," asked the CCS to issue a corrigendum to the minutes, amending Para 50(b) of the note giving approval to the IGA. It reads: "Raksha Mantri has directed that attention of Secretariat is drawn to the fact that in the context of the proposal contained in Para 50(b) of the CCS Note, stated that in the event of payment into escrow account is not found feasible, MOD shall work out alternative safeguards in consultation with the French Government, in which an assurance will be obtained from the French Government to provide effective oversight of utilization of payments released to the two companies. This proposal to amend the IGA, which had been approved by

The amended Para 50(b) of the CCS Note approving the IGA [see Box 2] did away with the need for ensuring

Note-263

I wish I had sufficient time to go through the entire file and mull over the various issues raised. However, in view of the fact that the file has to be submitted to RM immediately, I would like to make the following quick observations from the Finance point of view.

(i) In view of the fact that as brought out in para 3 of the Note 263 (P.S.L.K) that neither sovereign/government guarantee nor bank guarantee are forthcoming, it will be rather difficult for us to enter into any terms & conditions that protect government interests. As well-known, as per extant orders, any release by way of advance from the government account is to be backed by appropriate bank guarantee. This may have to be looked into.

(ii) Flowing from para (i) above, it is imperative for us to be careful about the costs for the purpose of benchmarking to initiate any negotiations. In the absence of a sovereign/government guarantee, the cost to us will be the cost towards bank guarantee is loaded. If this be so, which quite is likely, we necessarily have to start negotiating from a higher cost than what otherwise would be a sovereign guarantee forthcoming. This may not work out in our favour. A view needs to be taken on this. It may not be a bad idea to get two quotes, one with bank guarantee and the other without so that we are on firm grounds on benchmarking and while carrying out the negotiations.

(iii) In the absence of a sovereign/bank guarantee, in a case like where an IGA is to be signed, it would be prudent to involve the French Govt. as far as releases are concerned. This possibly could be done through an Escrow account or a variant of the same where the money released by the buyer (Govt. of India) is paid to the Escrow account held under the charge of French Govt. to make further payments to the firm as per terms & conditions agreed to by the Indian and French Govt. through IGA. This would make French Govt. morally and materially responsible for the procurement so proposed. Since they are one of the parties to the IGA and also jointly and severally responsible for the execution of the supply protocol, they should not be having any reservation about it."

(Sudhansu Mohanty,
Financial Adviser (DS)
14.01.2016)

Financial Adviser Sudhansu Mohanty's observations in an official note, in facsimile.

Congress launching fake campaigns, says Jaitley

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI

Accusing the Congress of launching "fake campaigns" against the Defence Forces, judiciary and the Reserve Bank of India, Union Minister Arun Jaitley on Sunday

said, "It is about time that India and its institutions are protected from these 'institution wreckers'."

Mr. Jaitley, in a Facebook post titled 'Institutions Under Attack - The Latest Fabrication', said that Congress

led governments would interfere with institutions like the RBI, judiciary and the Central Bureau of Investigation. He said the past two months had witnessed several "fake campaigns" that failed to cut much ice as "fal-

sehood does not have longevity." Accusing Rahul Gandhi of stalling functioning of Parliament, Mr. Jaitley said his two speeches on Rafale were based on a personal hatred for the Prime Minister emanating from envy.

Four Chinook copters arrive

negotiation with the French side... may be detrimental to our interests as the French side may take advantage of same by interpreting such discussions to their benefit and weakening the position taken by the Indian Negotiating Team. This has precisely happened in this case." The Defence Ministry note, which was dated November 24, 2015, cited as "a glaring example" how the parallel negotiations had undercut "the position taken by MoD and conveyed to Indian Negotiating Team that the commercial offer should be preferably backed by Sovereign/Government Guarantee or otherwise by Bank Guarantees."

Contrary positions
Another example cited in the note was the contrary positions taken on the arbitration arrangement.

The then Defence Secretary, G. Mohan Kumar, who now says "there were no parallel negotiations" and that the Rafale deal was negotiated in the "most transparent way", had endorsed the protest note in his own hand on November 24, 2015: "RM may pl. see. It is desirable that such discussions by avoided by the PMO as it undermines our negotiating position seriously."

The need for a sovereign or a bank guarantee was also highlighted by the Ministry of Law and Justice in its communications to the Defence Ministry, documents available to *The Hindu* show.

Active push
As for the part played by Mr. Parrikar in the Rafale deal, what has been established is this. From a stance of being non-committal, as evidenced by his hand-written notation of January 11, 2016, he shifted later that year to actively pushing for the changes, giving the financial experts little time to study the proposals.

12 THE HUDDLE

Respect separation of powers, says Venkaiah

STAFF REPORTER

Vice-President M. Venkaiah Naidu on Sunday sought a code of conduct for media personnel to contain sensationalisation of news and the scourge of paid news, as well as one for industry and corporate organisations to "weed out" individuals and companies that had tarnished the image of the country through economic offences.

He was addressing The Huddle, a thought conclave organised by *The Hindu*, in Bengaluru.

During his speech, peppered with trademark catchphrases and witticisms, Mr. Naidu also stressed the need for the three wings of democracy, the executive, legislature and the judiciary, to maintain the delicate balance as envisioned by the framers of the Constitution.

"Now you are seeing the trend of one wing encroaching on the other while forgetting its own responsibilities. Nobody should encroach into the domain of others," said Mr. Naidu.

Sustainable development was the theme of his address, with the Vice-President pointing out that despite the positive impact of government programmes and policies, the country should ask itself if the economic growth has been inclusive, particularly in rural areas and those engaged in agriculture.

"Making people living in rural areas an integral part in the developmental process should be the aim of the policy makers and planners. Promoting investments in modernising agriculture, mainstreaming of rural livelihoods and creating market avenues for rural population will help in ensuring equitable development," he said.

The Vice-President said he was holding consultations with the Prime Minister, politicians and State leaders to come up with ideas for improving farmer incomes. These ideas, he said, were passed on to the government.

Tweets

It's absolutely impossible to be equidistant from all religions if govt gets involved in religious matter as we are seeing. We should encourage the understanding of state being totally separate from religion. That's the only way the government can truly be equidistant from all
— JAMIKOSHY (@JAMIKOSHY)

Great psephologists on the panel speaking only on Hindi heartland impact on 2019 elections, unfortunately nothing said about southern states specifically the challenge KCR has posed to Modi post assembly elections
— TEJUSSGAME (@TEJUSSGAME)

Sunday first half well spent attending @_thehuddle in Bangalore. Wish there were more such platforms where perspectives are appreciated, debated but not diluted. Thank you for inviting me over to this wonderful event
— MANOJKHILNANI (@MANOJKHILNANI)

Hindi is not necessary now, as people are used to transacting in local languages in every mobile app. English is anyway available
— KSKYER (@KSKYER)

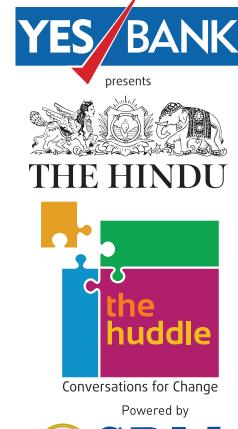
Death of a language is similar to death of an identity so need is to learn more and more language rather than forgiving own identity to adopt the other one. Well said
— KATEWAVIPIN (@KATEWAVIPIN)

Brilliant opening statement by @mafokprajan at thehuddle. Thrilled to hear him offer to the other Southern States what I had proposed That they must make a federation for economic and cultural cooperation!
— TARAKAR (@TARAKAR)

@MVenkaiahNaidu spoke @_thehuddle about parties coming to the Parliament just to disrupt. High time we demand party leaders and candidates in this election to swear against this practice. Tax payers money is burned in every session #thehuddle2019
— BALAJIVENKATA (@BALAJIVENKATA)

HRD should support all Indian languages. Completely with you if genuine demands have been denied by the Centre. But need to come out with facts & details
— RAHULDEV2 (@RAHULDEV2)

It was so nice to be at The Huddle of Hindu. Extremely well organised!
— AJAY_ALPHA (@AJAY_ALPHA)



What the south wants in a changing India

A coalition of States to push for their interests with an integrative approach on socio-economic and cultural fronts

K.V. ADITYA BHARADWAJ

In a fast-changing economic, political and cultural landscape amid concerns of the Centre trying to redraw federal relations, is an alliance of the southern States the way forward?

Ma Foi K Pandiarajan, Tamil Nadu Minister for Tamil Official Language and Tamil Culture, suggested that all the southern States adopt a broader regional approach, sign MoUs to promote industries and probably even conduct a Global Investors Meet (GIM) together. This, he said, must be an integrative approach at socio-economic and cultural fronts, speaking at "The future of the South: The southern States in a changing economic and political landscape".

Beyond geography

Reacting to a question from the moderator of the session, Narayan Lakshman, Associate Editor, *The Hindu*, Mr. Pandiarajan said that while the idea of Dravida Nadu was a non-starter as a geographic concept, alliances could prove beneficial to all States.

Krishna Byre Gowda, Karnataka Minister for Rural Development and Panchayat Raj, batted for honouring the status quo on the long-drawn consensus over federal relations on economic, cultural and political fronts. He pointed out that rejecting the earlier consensus on using the 1971 census population as the basis for tax devolution among States, the 15th Finance Commission was now using 2011 census population figures as the basis. On the cultural front, there was increasing imposition of Hindi, he said.

"There is a retrograde tendency to go back in time to the 1960s when tensions between the



Southern push: Karnataka Minister Krishna Byre Gowda (right); Tamil Nadu Minister Ma Foi K. Pandiarajan (second from left); and Jayan Jose Thomas (left), Associate Professor at IIT-Delhi, in conversation with Narayan Lakshman, Associate Editor, *The Hindu*. ■ K. MURALI KUMAR

States in the south and the Centre existed, with attempts to redraw the long-drawn consensus on federalism under the current dispensation," he said. "Considering 2011 census as the basis for tax devolution will only penalise the southern States for responsible population control measures. Are you penalising or incentivising progress?"

Mr. Pandiarajan concurred with this view, and said that even after the recent enhancement of devolution of tax share, the State suffered a net loss. Mr. Gowda said that same was the case with Karnataka.

Political implications

Now that the decision to keep the 1971 census population as the base was opened up, what prevents the Election Commission from delimiting constituencies as per the 2021 census population the next time, asked Mr.

We are only demanding equity and parity within the system

KRISHNA BYRE GOWDA
Karnataka Minister

Gowda, pointing out that the concerns were not only economic but also political.

"Kerala Finance minister Thomas Isaac articulated it thus: While the centre of gravity of the economy has moved south, the centre of gravity of politics has moved north. I don't know if this balance will change," Mr. Pandiarajan said.

Mr. Gowda was careful to add a rider that this debate must not be construed as a north versus south one, and the southern States were not averse to contributing to the collective development of the country and share the resources generated here with the States in need of them. "We are only demanding equity

and parity within the system," he said.

The panel saw the Centre's attempts to promote only Hindi also as problematic. "There is a large expat Tamil population across the world and we want to start a Tamil Prachar Sabha on the lines of the Hindi Prachar Sabha. But we got no support from the Union Culture Ministry, even as the Prime Minister sings praises on the language. The Union government promotes only Hindi and Sanskrit," Mr. Pandiarajan said.

Mr. Gowda recalled how "those pontificating from Delhi studios" cried foul when Karnataka wanted official recognition for the State flag. If the Centre acted as a flag bearer of Hindi, it was bound to get a reaction from the southern States, he argued.

The demographic was fast turning older in the south and in the days to come the growth

would only get tough, said Jayan Jose Thomas, member, State Planning Board, Kerala, and Associate Professor of Economics, IIT, Delhi. "Service sector-led growth is usually inequitable and there are only so many jobs you can create from this model. The southern States need to now focus on knowledge intensive industries to create jobs to match the aspirations of its citizens. This only means high investment in a scenario where the States have less resources at its disposal," he said.

On the challenge of mobilising more resources locally, Dr. Thomas argued that high income in the southern States also meant higher savings, which the States were not able to leverage now. "Kerala is starting a Kerala Bank which will probably go a long way to leverage the savings generated in this region for the development of this region," he said.



Matter of faith: R. Jagannathan (right), journalist, Rajeev Bhargava (left), political theorist, and former Minister Arif Mohammed Khan (second from left) with N. Ravi, Publisher of *The Hindu*. ■ G.P. SAMPATH KUMAR

Keeping an arm's length from faith and religious practices

Exploring the nuances around India as a secular country

THOMAS K. THOMAS

Governments should not interfere in personal faith and religious practices, except when there is a violation of basic human rights as enshrined in the Indian Constitution. The panel on "God and government: should the state leave religion alone?" moderated by N. Ravi, Publisher, *The Hindu*, explored the nuances around India as a secular country and whether practices associated with religion trump all other values.

R. Jagannathan, editorial director, *Swarajya*, said that between god and government, there should be no nexus. There should not be any interference, except if there was a human rights violation. The Indian state did not say it would not interfere in religion. It said the state was equidistant from all religions, he said adding that the temples under the control of the state should be freed.

Rajeev Bhargava, political theorist, said that in spiritual exercises, there was no reason for the government to interfere. But religion had often meant something more. Sometimes, there was no way to conduct these spiritual exercises, without joining an organised group, he said.

Constitution makes it amply clear where the government is duty-bound to intervene

ARIF MOHAMMED KHAN
Former Minister

"It is not just about state leaving religion alone. Religion should leave the state alone. In a diverse society, some people believe in one god, some in many gods, some in no god. All should have equal opportunity to influence ethical aspects of the State," he said.

Arif Mohammed Khan, who was a member of the Rajiv Gandhi and V.P. Singh Ministries, said the state had no role in religion but in practices that run contrary to public morality or repugnant to constitutional morality, the state had to intervene. "Constitution makes it amply clear where the government is duty-bound to intervene," Mr. Khan said.

He raised a pertinent question on the context of using the term secular and whether the question about religion and the state was being asked in the Indian paradigm or in the context of the Church and the state in the West. "My understanding is that it applies to eastern contexts, which includes Islam as well. Indian paradigm is *Sanatana Dharma*,"

Mr. Khan said.

Mr. Bhargava said that in the western European model, there was no strict separation. There was a time when there was great hostility when the state was emancipating itself from the Church. Over a period of time, the state had had a friendly relationship with the Church. "In India, the Constitution celebrates religious diversity. But we should be alert to intra- and inter-religious domination," he said.

The speakers delved into contentious issues such as triple talaq and the decision to allow women to enter the Sabarimala temple. "In the matter of triple talaq, the record of the government is shameful. No government tried to improve the situation. Thanks to the Supreme Court, it has been declared unlawful," Mr. Khan said.

On allowing women into the Sabarimala temple, there was a difference of opinion between the panellists. While Mr. Jagannathan supported the view that traditions associated with a religious value should be upheld, Mr. Khan and Mr. Bhargava said that women should be allowed to go to Sabarimala because the underlying reason linking menstruation to impurity was against human dignity.

Congress can pull off a 2004-like surprise: Pilot

Today it is different. Indian politics is so unpredictable'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

The PM and his Ministers have not been able to convince people that there was no wrongdoing in the Rafale deal

cretary, Mr. Pilot said what was clear is the impact of the move on the ruling party. On Monday, Ms. Gandhi is expected to make her first appearance in Uttar Pradesh after being appointed.

The fact that Priyanka Gandhi has been made party general secretary...why is it giving the BJP such heartburn? She has not been made Chief Minister or Governor or given an office of profit. She has a job in the party, but the kind of political uncertainty it has caused for the ruling party is telling me that they have a reason to fear," he said.

Asked if the Congress, which is not part of the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) and Samajwadi Party (SP) alliance in the State, would agree to make a leader from the alliance like BSP chief Mayawati, who is a Dalit, the Prime Minister, he said such scenarios are "hypothetical at present."

"What is interesting is that people are now willing to consider the possibility that Prime Minister Modi may not return to power," adding that the Congress, which had appointed "the first woman President and the first Dalit President, was pro-women and pro-Dalit."

Mr. Pilot brushed off a question on infighting in the Congress as well as reports of tensions between him and Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot.

"I am the third generation of a fauji [army soldier], so when I was told what the party leadership wanted me to do, I just thought about how I have to do this," he said. To a question from the audience about whether "a Pilot or any non Gandhi" could become a Congress Prime Minister, Mr. Pilot said that in its history, the Congress had appointed many Prime Ministers and party presidents who were not members of the Gandhi family, and credited Mr. Gandhi with giving many young people party posts.



Sachin Pilot with Amit Baruah, Resident Editor, *The Hindu*, Delhi. ■ K. MURALI KUMAR

'Time for Congress to take country back to middle path'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Expressing distress over the growing extremes in the country's democratic polity, former Union Minister Ashwani Kumar said it was time for the Congress to lead the nation towards reclaiming the moderate middle path that defines the constitutional values of freedom.

"We are witnessing an age of extremes in the country. Intimidation of Opposition and minorities, assault on institutions of democracy, instances such as mob lynching, intrusions on liberties and freedom of people in terms of what one should eat, one should wear or who one should be friends with and above all scant disregard for the constitutional conscience of the country are some of the worrying features of our democratic polity today," Mr. Kumar said on the sidelines of The Huddle.

He said the Lok Sabha election should be "fought and won for the vindication of constitutional values for the unceasing quest for the moderate centre".

For, "at the end of the day, democracy as a form of governance and philosophy is about accommodation of competing interests and adjustments, which are so very essential for maintaining stability of order".

Mr. Kumar regretted that the country had lost the "even playing field" that guaranteed social stability.

So, the Congress, as a party involved in the freedom movement, should play a "pivotal role in marshalling the forces of secularism, inclusion and egalitarianism to ensure that fear is vanquished and freedom prevails as the defining feature of our nation."

On the accusations levelled at the Congress occasionally of practising "soft Hindutva", Mr. Kumar sought to clarify that the notion of soft Hindutva was a misunderstood one.

"Visiting temples and proclaiming beliefs in the finest tenets of Hinduism cannot be dubbed as being soft on communalism if that is what soft Hindutva is intended to imply," he said.

From the wings



Rafale impact

Yogendra Yadav of Swaraj India, delineating the factors that would impact the 2019 Lok Sabha election, referred to *The Hindu's* Rafale exposé. He said that apart from the economy issues that might impact the election, "another front page story by N. Ram" would make a difference, referring to two recent stories by N. Ram, Chairman of The Hindu Group, on the controversy.



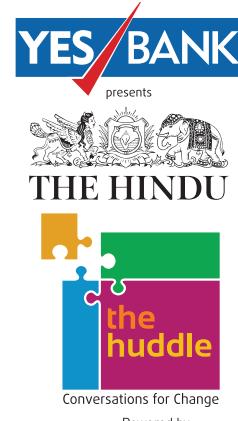
Venkaiah's life turns

Vice-President Venkaiah Naidu's oratory is often characterised by humour. He showcased this while recounting his journey through various portfolios, first as Rural Development Minister and then Urban Development Minister. "As the son of a farmer, I was surprised I've been given urban development. Then I asked my friends. With so much rural to urban migration happening, they said I could take care of the rural migrants in urban areas," he said. Earlier, N. Ravi, Publisher of *The Hindu*, talked about the Vice-President's first steps into RSS. "He thought the RSS was an organisation where they do not eat non-vegetarian food. He joined only when he was assured that there was no such restriction," he said.



Selfie with the stars

The session on women in Indian cinema was smart, incisive and no-holds-barred when it came to the politics of the country. They were asked whether they, despite their ideals, would take selfies with the powers-that-be, perhaps to promote their films. This was an oblique reference to the selfie taken by Bollywood stars with Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Richa Chadha said self-deprecatingly: "Perhaps, they do not want to take selfies with me." And equally quick, Tillotama Shome quipped: "They won't be interested in selfies with us, with the kind of films [art-house and niche movies] we make."



The countdown to the election season

Will it be a bruising battle in the Hindi belt? Will jobs and economic issues prevail over identity politics?

NISTULA HEBBAR

Is the road to victory in the Lok Sabha election via the Hindi belt, will it be one national election or one decided State by State as national and regional parties stitch together alliances, and will economic issues prevail over identity politics and others?

These were just some of the questions discussed in the session "2019: Which way will the elections go?" moderated by Mukund Padmanabhan, Editor, *The Hindu*.

While the panellists – political activist Yogendra Yadav and political scientists Manisha Priyam and Rahul Verma – agreed more or less that the Hindi belt and the BJP's showing in these polls will determine who gets to rule Delhi, there were differences in degrees and nuances. Mr. Yadav saw the BJP losing at least 100 (40 in Uttar Pradesh alone) of the 226 seats up for grabs in the Hindi belt, and considered it the most significant factor in deciding the election.

"The situation in the 226 seats of the Hindi belt will see the most change, in the remaining 325 seats other than this belt, the changes will cancel each other out as far as the BJP is concerned," he said.

"Historically, the evidence shows that apart from an exception in 1999 in Rajasthan, the party that wins the Assembly polls (that take place right before the Lok Sabha election) in the three States of Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh goes on to win the larger number of Lok Sabha seats. We must not take it for granted though as in Rajasthan we see a bounce back for the BJP, not so much in Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh," he said.

Mr. Verma flagged high polling and its effect on vote share to seat conversion as an important



Battle of the ballot: Political activist Yogendra Yadav (second from left) and political scientists Manisha Priyam (left) and Rahul Verma (right) in conversation with Mukund Padmanabhan, Editor, *The Hindu*. ■ G.P. SAMPATH KUMAR

factor for assessing what might happen. "We don't have a good understanding of the 2014 election. When we look at just high voter turnouts, we find that in seats where the voter turnout rose by 15% or more, the BJP's seat conversion to vote share was 96% and where the turnout was the same as last time, the vote share to seat conversion was 34%," he said.

He said the turnout factor explained what subsequently happened with the bypolls in Gorakhpur, Phulpur and Kairana, where turnouts were low but the BJP managed to maintain its vote share. "I maintain that we are in a BJP-dominated party system and therefore the election will be shaped by how the BJP plays

C The situation in the 226 seats of the Hindi belt will see the most change, in the remaining 325 seats other than this belt, the changes will cancel each other out as far as the BJP is concerned

YOGENDRA YADAV
Political activist

the game. The 2019 election may have no precedent in terms of past elections," he said.

The question of whether this would be a personality-centric election or go State by State also elicited interesting answers. Ms. Priyam maintained that even in 2014, the election was State by State.

"The election of 2014 was also about many Indias and the many local compacts that [Prime Minister Narendra] Modi made with his over 500 rallies across the country. It was always a campaign with the PM face, but then in the larger narrative to pitch local issues and colour," she said.

Mr. Yadav said the BJP would prefer it to be one national election. "Modi, as any astute political player, knows that success depends on a national narrative. In the larger narrative, he knows where to pitch and what kind of regional colour is required," he said.

On the issues that will affect the elections, economic factors, rural distress and jobs were flagged as the most important,

Ladies Special: how women are rewriting the silver screen script

Multiplexes, digital streaming have brought about a change

VEENA VENUGOPAL

Making non-formulaic films, a trend that started when multiplexes became an urban phenomenon, has now got bigger with the option of digital streaming. As the film industry – Hindi and regional languages – find newer audience niches, the kind of stories they get to tell have also transformed. One happy result of this is that the portrayal of women in Indian cinema has undergone significant transformation.

"I see more empowered and diverse characters now. It is no longer just the mother figure or the virgin," actor Richa Chadha said. Ms. Chadha was part of a panel on "Actors all: the new face of women in Indian cinema" moderated by Namrata Joshi, Cinema Editor of *The Hindu*.

This metamorphosis of the film industry has also resulted in a lot of "outsiders" bagging acting opportunities that didn't exist previously. Despite their success though, the speakers on the panel – Rasika Dugal, Tillotama Shome and Richa Chadha – are still considered "outsiders" in the industry.

"I have always felt like an outsider. However, as a grown-up now, I treasure the fact that I am an outsider. It allows me the perspective to see things in the industry for what they really are,"

C Even though there is diversity now, there is no inclusion

RICHIA CHADHA
Actor

Ms. Shome said. "Even though there is diversity now, there is no inclusion," Ms. Chadha added.

The young millennials chasing acting careers now, are shaking up the industry in more ways than one. For one, they are not slaves of the tried and tested, and would rather explore themes and nuances of female characters that were previously considered taboo. And more importantly, they have introduced their "millennial" sensibilities to the industry and are vocal about issues of social justice, class inequality and sexual harassment.

Question of portrayal

"With digital streaming, which is still largely uncensored, in our stories we have at last managed to acknowledge women as sexual beings," Ms. Dugal said, adding "although sometimes even if the writing is good, there is a difficulty in understanding how to portray this on screen."

That Indian cinema has mostly looked at its women through the prism of the male gaze continues to be a problem, although the entry of women as writers and directors has led to a small, but cer-

tain change in that.

"If the male gaze exists in society, it will exist in cinema too," observed Ms. Chadha. "All of us are constantly taking selfies and wondering if we look fat in it. Beauty filters have entered our lives. But we are getting somewhere."

Speaking of her experience in working on the film *Sir*, in which a young, prosperous man falls in love with his domestic help, Ms. Shome said it had made her more acutely aware of the inherent indifference to the lower classes.

There cannot be a discussion on the current state of cinema, without delving into the rampant sexual harassment and abuse in the industry. While the actresses have initiated talks of implementing the regulatory requirements to deal with complaints of sexual harassment, the power structure in the industry is so lopsided that harassment is unlikely to be eliminated. While Ms. Shome, Ms. Dugal and Ms. Chadha are talented actors, their contribution to the industry is likely to be more than through their films – their ability to fearlessly articulate the ills that plague their industry, which has survived for too long by brushing things under the carpet, will certainly leave a lasting impact.

These "outsiders" will prevail. These questions may have confounded even those who first saw the trick played in dusty Indian villages nearly 1,400 years ago. A version of this trick was even played to the Mughal ruler Jehangir who was a great admirer of magicians, says John Zubrzycki, a former Australian diplomat, journalist and historian. He is the author of *Jadoowallahs, Jugglers and Jinns*, which traces the evolution of the conjuring traditions of India, and he narrated the historical importance and influence of Indian magic during the session "Making Jadoo: A journey through the street magic of India" at *The Huddle*.

The trick derives itself from the legend of Buddha who used to perform miracles under the mango tree. "Fearing this, heretics chopped down all the mango trees in the area," Mr. Zubrzycki said. However, Buddha threw a mango seed in the ground which immediately sprouted a 50-foot mango tree under which he performed miracles.

The trick has since captured and captivated not only the country but also the West where it has been called the "most perfect achievement of the conjurer's art" and proof of India as a "land of miracles", Mr. Zubrzycki said.

But street magic is a sight rarely seen in India's cities and towns now. At The Huddle, the familiar environs of a village surrounding the magician with a keen eye to spot every trick were recreated as participants gathered close to Shamshuddin. Tunes of Mohammad Rafi played on in a flute in an attempt to bring out a "snake". The magician has the crowd eating out from the palm of hands as he throws multiple red herrings. A rubber snake is pulled out, but he explains the trick. The real trick, he says, starts with a mango seed. Under a cloth and a basket, some water and mud is sprinkled. When the basket is pulled out, a small mango sapling is seen. "It is small. Maybe, it was under my lungi all along," he said. Again, underneath the cloth, he puts some water and mud. The gods are summoned and incantations recited. The basket rises and when the cloth is pulled out, a larger mango tree pops out.



Actors All: Rasika Dugal, Richa Chadha, Tillotama Shome with Namrata Joshi, Cinema Editor, *The Hindu*, after the session on women in cinema. ■ K. MURALI KUMAR

A quick meeting



Common ground: Vice-President M. Venkaiah Naidu is greeted by Namal Rajapaksa, son of Mahinda Rajapaksa, Leader of the Opposition in Sri Lanka. N. Ram, Chairman of The Hindu Group, is seen. ■ K. MURALI KUMAR

The great Indian mango trick

How India became a 'land of miracles' in popular culture

MOHIT M. RAO

Shamshuddin, who looks younger than the 62 years he claims to be, sits on the stage with baskets and an assortment of tools. He is in a blue-chequered lungi and a vest, while his son Mustafa is dressed in modern clothes.

The great Indian mango trick is to be performed. Shamshuddin is a fifth-generation practitioner of the street magic trick. Is the basket rigged? Does the lungi itself hold secrets of the trick?

These questions may have confounded even those who first saw the trick played in dusty Indian villages nearly 1,400 years ago. A version of this trick was even played to the Mughal ruler Jehangir who was a great admirer of magicians, says John Zubrzycki, a former Australian diplomat, journalist and historian. He is the author of *Jadoowallahs, Jugglers and Jinns*, which traces the evolution of the conjuring traditions of India, and he narrated the historical importance and influence of Indian magic during the session "Making Jadoo: A journey through the street magic of India" at *The Huddle*.

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ELSEWHERE

Party could be banned for nominating Princess

BANGKOK Thai Raksa Chart, the party that nominated Princess Ubolratana as its candidate for Prime Minister, could be banned from the March 24 general election after an activist said on Sunday he would file a petition seeking its dissolution. **REUTERS**

Toll in Turkey building collapse rises to 21

ISTANBUL The death toll from the collapse of an eight-storey building in Istanbul has risen to 21 while 14 others were injured, Interior Minister Suleyman Soylu told Turkey's Demiroren news agency. The residential building, in the Kartal district on the Asian side of the city, collapsed on Wednesday. It was not immediately clear what caused the collapse. **REUTERS**

Military official drops allegiance to Maduro

CARACAS A Venezuelan Army Colonel, who is also a military doctor, has dropped his allegiance to President Nicolás Maduro, backing Opposition Leader Juan Guaidó instead. "90% of us in the armed forces are really unhappy," said Colonel Rubén Paz Jiménez in a video released on Saturday. **AFP**

U.K. govt. to seek more time from Parliament

LONDON The U.K. government sought to win more time on Sunday to secure concessions that could pass Parliament. MPs are set to vote on the Brexit options on February 14. But a member of Prime Minister Theresa May's Cabinet pledged on Sunday to give Parliament another ballot two weeks later. **REUTERS**

Taliban says no agreement reached on ending hostilities

Nothing concrete achieved that would compel us to end the war: militants



Talking peace, waging war: Taliban officials praying during the Afghan talks in Moscow last week. ■ AP

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
ISLAMABAD

The Afghan Taliban has said that despite the ongoing talks with the U.S. and other regional powers, it had "not yet reached" any conclusion that would entail an immediate end to hostilities, according to a media report.

Speaking to Pakistan's Dawn News channel, Taliban spokesperson Zabiullah Mujahid said that, even in Moscow talks, nothing concrete was achieved that would compel the militants to end the war. He insisted that the Taliban is holding talks with the U.S. "on its own initiative".

Pakistan's role

When asked about Pakistan's role in bringing the Taliban to the negotiating table, Mr. Mujahid said: "There is no role being played by any outside country. This has always

been our own initiative and policy." He, however, said that if the Taliban does end up having a say in the Afghan polity one day, it will approach Pakistan "as a brother and a neighbour", seeking "comprehensive ties based on mutual respect."

He acknowledged that Pakistan had remained "the most important hub" for Afghanistan during the Soviet invasion.

Mr. Mujahid said that while the Taliban does not have a codified manifesto, their "clear" objectives were the end of the occupation of Afghanistan, establishment of an Islamic government, establishment of peace and security, reconstruction of Afghanistan and the provi-

sion of administrative services. He also said a new Constitution will be drafted and "implemented in light of the teachings of (the) sharia.

On a question regarding the possible formation of an interim government in Afghanistan, he said that the Taliban had neither held any discussions regarding an interim government nor had they proposed such an idea.

Explaining the Taliban position on refusing to talk to the government in Kabul, Mr. Mujahid said that any talks with Afghan President Ashraf Ghani regime would have symbolic ramifications.

If the Taliban were held talks with the Kabul government, it would mean that it had "accepted this stooge regime as a legitimate government (even though it was) imposed upon us by air craft and (the) bombing of invaders", he said.

21 civilians killed in two Afghan strikes

Both happened in the Sangin district

ASSOCIATED PRESS
KABUL

Airstrikes in Afghanistan's southern Helmand Province have killed 21 civilians, including women and children, a lawmaker from the region said on Sunday.

Mohammad Hashim Alkozai said 13 civilians were killed in one strike and eight in another. Both were carried out late on Friday in the Sangin district. Mr. Alkozai said at least five other people were wounded in the air strikes.

"Innocent people, women and children, are the only victims of the air strikes," he said.



An Afghan National Army soldier in Sangin in August 2013. ■ NYT

ment, the Afghan intelligence service said it had arrested three members of the Haqqani group, in connection with two bombings in Kabul that killed and wounded dozens of people.

The National Directorate of Security said the three suspects confessed to taking part in a truck bombing near the German Embassy in May 2017 that killed at least 90 people, and a November 2018 attack that killed five security contractors, including a British national.

Taliban spurns Ghani's offer of office in Kabul

REUTERS
KABUL

Afghan President Ashraf Ghani on Sunday offered the Taliban the possibility of opening an office in Afghanistan but the proposal was swiftly spurned by the group that is determined to keep his government out of accelerating peace talks.

"If the Taliban want an office, I will give it to them in Kabul, Nangarhar or Kandahar by tomorrow," Mr. Ghani said while visiting the province of Nangarhar, a hotbed of insurgent violence.

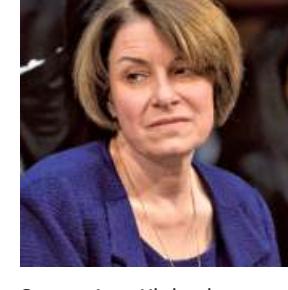
Taliban spokesman Suhail Shahin said that the focus was international recognition of their existing site in Doha. He said Mr. Ghani was trying to harm the peace efforts with his offer. "Our demand about having an official political office is clear, we want that our office in Doha is recognised by the international community and the United Nations," Mr. Shahin said.

Senator Klobuchar joins crowded presidential race

REUTERS

U.S. Senator Amy Klobuchar was expected to enter the 2020 presidential race on Sunday, becoming the first moderate in an increasingly crowded field of Democrats vying to challenge Republican President Donald Trump.

Ms. Klobuchar, 58, now in her third six-year term as a Senator for Minnesota, will seek to position herself as a contrast to Mr. Trump, who is expected to be the Republican candidate in the November 2020 election, focusing on both policy differences but also style and



Senate Amy Klobuchar. ■ AP

tact. A former prosecutor and corporate attorney, Ms. Klobuchar joins a list of Democratic hopefuls that includes fellow Senators Cory Booker of New Jersey, Kamala Harris of California and Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts.

Heading to Iowa

Ms. Warren headed to Iowa to campaign on Sunday after formally launching her bid on Saturday. Mr. Booker is also spending the weekend in the Midwestern farm State.

Ms. Klobuchars campaign announcement came amid several news reports that

strategists. Ms. Klobuchar gained national attention in 2018 when she sparred with Brett Kavanaugh during Senate hearings on his Supreme Court nomination.

Building a profile

Her questions earned her recognition in Democratic circles for working to advance the #MeToo movement against sexual harassment and assault. But the Senator will have work to do to build a national profile. She rarely registers in early opinion polls of potential Democratic candidates.

She hopes her moderate policies and

strong electoral record in Minnesota will help her win back States Mr. Trump took from Democrats in the 2016 White House contest, including nearby Iowa, Wisconsin and Michigan, Wisconsin, as well as Pennsylvania.

Ms. Klobuchar has focused her efforts on issues like antitrust oversight, agriculture and voter security. Recently, she pushed for Senate investigations into whether Facebook Inc. broke the law when it resisted oversight on how Russians used its platform to meddle in the 2016 presidential election.

Turkey calls on China to close Xinjiang camps

'They are a great shame for humanity'

REUTERS
ISTANBUL

Turkey called on China to close its internment camps for Muslims, saying the camps, which reportedly hold a million Uighur people, are a "great shame for humanity".

Last week, rights activists urged European and Muslim nations to take the lead in establishing a UN investigation into China's detention and "forced indoctrination" of up to one million Uighurs and other Muslims.

"The policy of systematic assimilation against the Uighur Turks carried out by the authorities of China is a great shame for humanity," Turkish Foreign Ministry spokesman Hami Aksoy said in a statement late on Saturday.

"It is no longer a secret that more than one million Uighur Turks incurring arbitrary arrests are subjected to torture and political brainwashing in internment camps and prisons," Mr. Aksoy said.

S. Korea agrees to pay more for U.S. troops

REUTERS
SEOUL

Officials signed a short-term agreement on Sunday to boost South Korea's contribution toward the upkeep of U.S. troops on the peninsula, after a previous deal lapsed amid U.S. President Donald Trump's call for the South to pay more.

About 28,500 U.S. troops are stationed in South Korea, where the U.S. has maintained a military presence since the Korean War. The deal would boost Seoul's contribution to 1.03 trillion won (\$890 million) from 960 billion won in 2018. Unlike past agreements, this one is scheduled to expire in a year, forcing both sides back to the bargaining table within months.

Lethal cocktail

The U.S., one of the handful of developed countries still having capital punishment in their statute books, last week carried out its second execution of 2019. Alabama's Muslim inmate Dominique Ray, who was denied permission to have an imam by his side, was executed using lethal injection. A look at the history of capital punishment in the U.S. and some States that still practise this form of punishment

History of death penalty in the U.S.

First execution: 1608: Captain George Kendall executed by the firing squad for spying for the Spanish government

1794: Pennsylvania becomes the first State to repeal the death penalty for all offences except first degree murder

1800s: Michigan, Rhode Island and Wisconsin abolish the death penalty

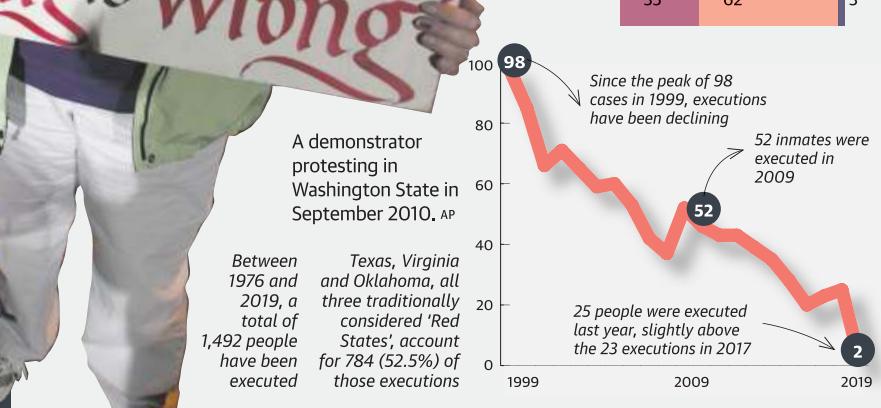
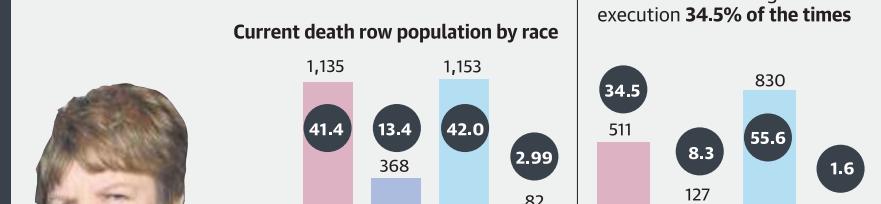
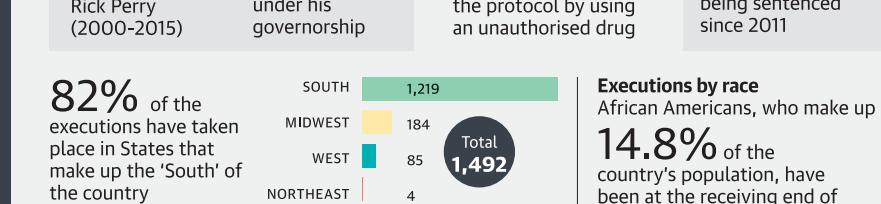
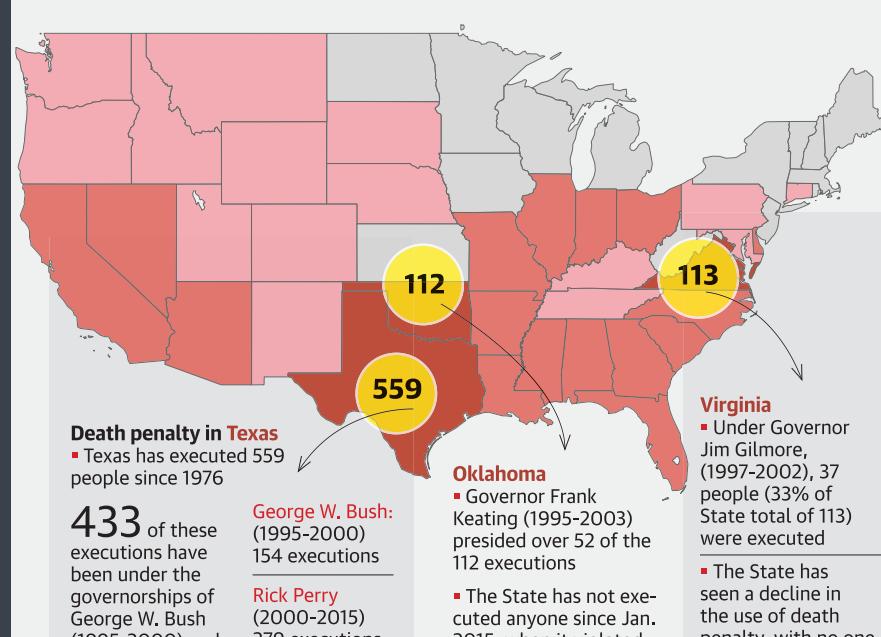
1907-1917: Six other States outlaw capital punishment

1972: Furman v. Georgia court case: U.S. Supreme Court concludes that giving a jury the total discretion while deciding on capital punishment is "cruel and unusual" and in violation of the Eighth Amendment

1976: Gregg v. Georgia case: SC brings back death penalty following a moratorium of four years

2013: Texas carries out its 500th execution

2018: 19 States match record lows for the number of death sentences imposed



SOURCE: DEATHPENALTYINFO.ORG | GRAPHIC: KARTHIK S.T.

Indian doctors in U.K. campaign against 'unfair' health surcharge

It is imposed on anyone staying for more than six months

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
LONDON

U.K.-based Indian doctors and health-care professionals are campaigning against what they describe as an "unfair" doubling of a health surcharge imposed on professionals from outside European Union (EU) living and working in Britain.

The "Immigration Health Surcharge" was introduced in April 2015 and from December last year, it was hiked from £200 to £400 per year.

Clinicians wishing to work in the U.K. are already facing burdensome processes relating to regulation and immigration, and this surcharge is only going to see U.K. losing out on quality health-care professionals from non-EU countries, notes a letter

from BAPIO president Ramesh Mehta and secretary Parag Singhal, sent to U.K. Home Secretary Sajid Javid earlier this month.

Staff shortage

According to the organisation, one in 11 NHS clinical posts are currently unfilled, rising to one in eight for nursing vacancies, and the severe shortage is likely to grow to around 2,500 by 2030.

Doctors, nurses and other health-care professionals from countries like India are considered the backbone of the U.K.'s health-care system as they take up critical posts across hospitals and clinics in the country, the BAPIO pointed out.

Prince Philip is putting down the car keys at age 97. Prince Philip, the husband of Queen Elizabeth, gave up his driver's license, according to a statement released on behalf of the royal family on Saturday, a month after a collision on a rural road north of London raised questions about his abilities behind the wheel.

"After careful consideration, the Duke of Edinburgh has taken the decision to voluntarily surrender his driving license," said a spokeswoman for Buckingham Palace, referring to Prince Philip by his official royal title.

The Prince was involved in a crash on January 17 near the royal family's Sandringham estate in Norfolk, about 160 km north

of London. His Land Rover SUV overturned after colliding with another vehicle. The driver and a passenger of the other car suffered minor injuries; the Prince and a nine-month-old boy in the other vehicle were unharmed.

No one was charged at the time, though police in Norfolk said on Saturday that the results of their investigation were pending. "The investigation file for

the collision has been passed to the Crown

IN BRIEF

**'Govt. move to boost ONGC, OIL gas output'**

GREATER NOIDA (U.P.)
The government's plan to offer PSUs special incentives for natural gas discoveries in difficult and unviable areas will help raise India's natural gas production as it will unlock output in a dozen fields of State-owned ONGC and OIL, officials said. India currently produces about 90 million metric standard cubic meter per day (mmscmd) of natural gas and has ambitious plans to double the output by 2022 to reduce its reliance on imports. PTI

FPIs invest ₹5,300 crore in six trading sessions

NEW DELHI
Foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) have infused ₹5,300 crore in the Indian equity markets in the last six trading sessions, mainly on the expectations of higher economic growth. This follows a pull-out of ₹5,264 crore by FPIs in January. However, they pulled out ₹2,795 crore from the debt market in February. After turning net sellers in January, FPIs have turned net buyers in February. PTI

₹2.5 lakh crore thermal power units face stress'

NEW DELHI
Investments worth over ₹2.50 lakh crore in thermal power projects are facing stress and immediate remedial measures are needed to ensure that they are revived in a time-bound manner, as per a report. The ASSOCHAM-Grant Thornton joint study noted that the power sector has been one of the highly stressed sectors in recent times, with loans worth approximately ₹1 lakh crore having turned bad or been recast. PTI

Third round of OALP offers 23 oil, gas, coal-bed methane blocks

Centre expects immediate exploration work commitment of about \$600-\$700 mn



Black gold: In OALP-I, 55 blocks, covering an area of 60,000 sq km, were offered in January 2018. ■ REUTERS

metre," he said. The last date for bidding is April 10.

OALP-III will run concurrently with OALP-II, where 14 blocks, covering an area of

close to 30,000 sq km, is on offer for bidding, he said, adding that in OALP-I, 55 blocks, covering an area of 60,000 sq km, were offered

'MSME package will help recast ₹1 lakh crore loans'

Will free up more resources: official

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

MUMBAI
The Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) restructuring package for small businesses announced last month will help recast ₹1 lakh crore of loans for seven lakh micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), a top government official has said.

The estimate from the Department of Financial Services (DFS) Secretary Rajiv Kumar is much higher than domestic ratings agency ICRA's assessment of ₹10,000 crore.

It comes even as some banks have seen reluctance among the target MSMEs to take advantage of the scheme.

Mr. Kumar said seven lakh MSME units need re-

structuring. "They all can be restructured till March 2020 without downgrading the asset. [As much as] ₹1 lakh crore worth loans will get restructured," Mr. Kumar said at a post-Budget meeting with industry captains.

He said the scheme would help free up additional resources which would fuel demand and create further opportunities in the industry.

"In the last few years, RBI has been doing away with various schemes for asset quality forbearance and hence, this is regressive from a credit culture point of view, given the past experiences of the banking sector with restructuring," ICRA's group head Karthik Srinivasan had said.

If the existing demand-supply mismatch is fixed, this segment has the potential to grow into a \$93-billion market," it added.

Co-living can grow into a \$93 bn market in India: report

The realty segment suffers from demand-supply mismatch

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI

The co-living segment, an emerging sector in real estate, has the potential to grow into a \$93-billion market in India, a report by PropTiger said.

The supply by organised players in co-living is currently limited to over one lakh beds. Assuming they earn ₹1.44 lakh per annum per bed, organised players in this segment are currently generating a combined ₹1,440 crore (\$206 million),

the report said.

"If the existing demand-supply mismatch is fixed, this segment has the potential to grow into a \$93-billion market," it added.

Organised players in the segment are now generating a combined revenue of ₹1,440 crore

Most of the projected demand comes from students studying in different colleges and single working professionals across the country.

In India, there are about 50,000 colleges where over 31 million students study.

Out of this, over 12.3 million students are migrants.

As per a survey by PropTiger.com, total occupancy recorded in hostels within college campuses across India was only 3.4 million students, leading to a demand-supply mismatch of 8.9 mil-

lion students. "This deficit for co-living spaces is currently being met by the unorganised sector, which includes PG accommodation and rental houses," the report said.

"In total, India had 37.4 million migrant professionals earning up to ₹10 lakh in 2018 who have completed their higher education between FY12 and FY16.

"A major part of this population is still served by unorganised rental options," the report said.

"The co-living sector has total untapped demand of approximately 46.3 million beds, out of which 8.9 million is from student housing," it added.

Voltas to invest ₹500 crore

New facility to churn out air-conditioners, cooling products

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**

MUMBAI

Voltas Limited, a market leader in residential air-conditioners in India, plans to set up a new manufacturing facility, spread over 65 acres, at Tirupati in Andhra Pradesh, at a cost of ₹500 crore.

This facility would initially manufacture and assemble air-conditioners and related cooling products with a total capacity of more than one million units and is expected to start rolling out products from the second half of 2020, said the company in a statement adding that the OEM base facility for home appliances will provide employment opportunities for locals.

"Our effort is to accelerate exploration of all sedimentary basins of the country," he said.

The third round is expected to "generate immediate exploration work commitment of around \$600-\$700 million," a statement said.

The new facility would be one of the first cooling appliances units in the State of

effective connectivity via road and port, according to the statement.

Voltas would cater to the south, west and eastern markets through this unit.

Pradeep Bakshi, MD & CEO, Voltas Limited, said, "We are delighted to have laid the ground for the Voltas manufacturing plant here in Tirupati. We are thankful to the Government of Andhra Pradesh and API-IC officials for all the support extended."

"This facility will help us expand our manufacturing capabilities while increasing our reach in the southern market. As a Tata Group company, we have always focused on creating delightful experiences for our customers and shall continue to serve them even better through this plant."

SBI, OBC put stressed accounts on sale

Aim to recover dues of ₹5,740 crore

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI

State-owned State Bank of India (SBI) and Oriental Bank of Commerce (OBC) have put on sale various financial accounts to recover dues of about ₹5,740 crore.

SBI has invited bids from asset reconstruction companies (ARCs) and financial institutions (FIs) to recover an outstanding of ₹4,975 crore.

SBI will also sell three accounts – Dennis Steels Pvt. Ltd. with outstanding of ₹258.73 crore, Shiva Speciality Yarns (₹37.90 crore) and Bansidhar Spinning & Weaving Mills Ltd. (₹11.73 crore).

Among the major loan accounts invited for sale by OBC are Mittal Corp Ltd. (₹207.17 crore), Jayawal Neco Industries Ltd. (₹157.03 crore) and NCS Sugars Ltd. (₹106.60 crore).

+ INTERVIEW | SATISH NADIGER

'As fewer people want to work in farms, tech adoption will happen'

Yield will also increase, says John Deere India MD

LALATENDU MISHRA

John Deere India, the wholly owned subsidiary of American multinational Deere & Company, which manufactures and sells tractors, harvesters and implements in India, is focusing on represen-tation technology to grow its base. The firm's MD Satish Nadiger says the company is poised for faster growth. Excerpts:

Are you satisfied with your performance in India?
■ One can never be satisfied in performance. In the last 3-4 years, we are growing very well. There were times when we did not do well in the early years when the industry went down and when we did not have all the products needed for the market. But now, we have the right product offering starting from 20 HP to 120 HP. Now, we think we can grow faster.

Your next 20-year horizon?
■ We will grow at much faster rate than the past 20 years. We want to make sure that we are offering the right technology for our custom-

We do expect mechanisation to go to the next level, which is beyond tractors

will go for diversification into dairy, vegetables, orchards and this is the way farmers' income can be augmented.

Is there scope for contract farming in India?

■ There are some big contractors in Punjab and other places. In the rest of India, it is yet to pick up at a fast pace. Contract farming is still 10 years away.

There have been discussions on emission norms and their likely impact...

■ It is going to be challenging for the farmers, because the prices will go up for tractors above 50 HP from April 2021. Common rail technology will make products expensive.

What is your expansion plan in India?

■ We already have capacity to produce 1,32,000 tractors. So, in the next couple of years, we will invest as we grow. I will not be able to give any exact numbers now.

What is your investment road map?

■ We are continuously investing in India. We have increased our production from 30,000 tractors to one lakh tractors. Now, we are also investing in our engine capacity to augment tractor production. For exports, we are getting more and more products from our main base which could be manufactured out of India.

It helps us export more out of India and it is also helping us in getting newer technologies to India, which we are continuously doing. Some of the tractors manufactured here are high-end and are exported to Europe where customers are very demanding. If we can be successful in those markets, we can be successful anywhere.

What is the future of farming in India?

■ Technology adoption will happen, because we see labour availability is going down, particularly for farming.

Today, people do not want to do this hard labour in farms. So, we do expect mechanisation to go to the next level which is beyond tractors. And, we will look for more and more technology adoption. The yield will go up.

Farmers

Vodafone Idea plans to invest ₹20,000 crore

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI

Vodafone Idea is planning to invest about ₹20,000 crore in networks over the next 15 months, according to company officials.

"We have given capex of (capital expenditure) ₹270 billion for financial years 2019 and 2020, combined together. Out of that, about ₹70 billion has been spent in first nine months.

"In next 15 months we are looking at capex deployment of ₹200 billion," Vodafone CFO Akshaya Moondra told analysts.

The capex guidance of ₹27,000 crore did not include capacity that would be created by reusing equipment from the synergy of operations between Vodafone and Idea, the company official added.

NACL to raise ₹115 crore via equity issue

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

HYDERABAD

NACL Industries Ltd. (formerly known as Nagarjuna Agrichem Ltd.) will raise about ₹115 crore through issue of equity and equity warrants. The funds will be used to finance growth plans in the domestic and export markets.

Krishna Rasayan Group, the incoming investor, will hold around 16% of the equity of NACL upon completion of infusion of funds. The promoters are also investing ₹15 crore through equity warrants. Post the issue, the promoters will continue to have controlling interest by holding around 63% of the equity. There will be no change in the management of NACL that would continue to be run by professional managers.

FRONTLINE

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In the business zone

The bulk of the 231 operational Special Economic Zones (SEZs) are concentrated in south and west India. Key performance indicators such as exports from SEZs are on the rise in the recent years.

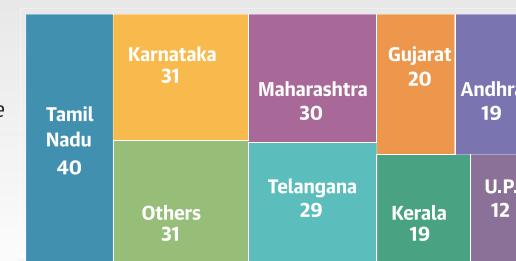
By Varun B. Krishnan

~20 lakh

No. of people employed in SEZs (As on September 30, 2018)

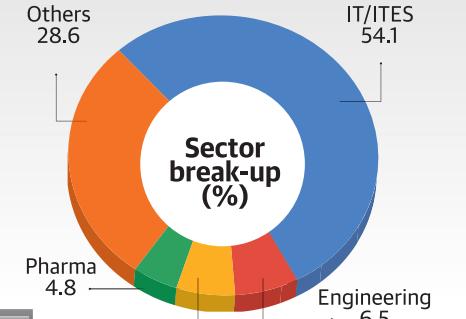
MORE SOUTH SEZs

Tamil Nadu has the highest number of SEZs in the country, followed by Karnataka. Southern States account for 60% of operational SEZs. Graph shows the State-wise number



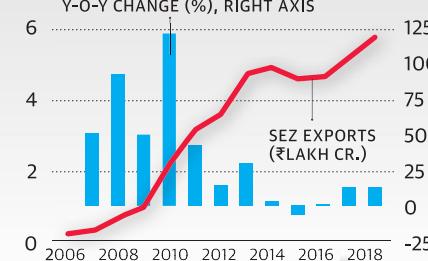
PREDOMINANT SERVICES

Most SEZs facilitated delivery of more than one product. However, in 54% of them, IT products and services firms dominated the share of deliverables



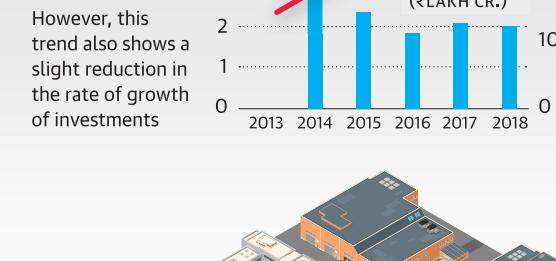
EXPORTS HUB

The value of exports SEZs generate has been rising. Their rate of growth dipped in 2014-15, but has been picking up since



RAKING IN THE MONEY

SEZs have also been bringing in more investment. However, this trend also shows a slight reduction in the rate of growth of investments



Source: Parliament Q&A, Ministry of Commerce

Where 'angels' are bedevilled

Targeting share valuation causes pain for start-ups. Restraining shell firms needs a different approach

P W C DAVIDAR

For the past few months, 'angel tax' issues have taken centre stage. Circulars have been issued with the hope that the matter would be resolved to everyone's satisfaction. The Department of Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) is attempting to move a fresh set of solutions to pour water on this raging issue.

From the face of it, a public policy meant to curb shell companies has turned into an attack on genuine investments; and, the solution itself has become a problem. Does the Department need to take a fresh look at Section 56 (2) in light of the visible outcomes of a public policy gone wrong? We will wait and watch. Till then, let us revisit the issue itself.

The focus was on promoting private sector investment in the country. This being the base, all other processes and rules should run consistent with this foundation. But, it is this premise which is taking a beating and hence the need to address it.

Every investor has a view as to whether a venture is worth investing in, by calculating likely returns. The entrepreneur seeking investment has also determined the extent of control and ownership to be surrendered in return for funds.

Both balance their interests to secure the maximum possible returns. To protect their respective long-term interests, both would be un-



In a nutshell: The Centre must first define a 'shell' firm. It can then penalise such companies. ■ GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

willing to compromise on their view. In case of doubt, the investor has recourse to the business plan to convince himself that his assumptions are accurate.

Now, into what should be entirely the domain of the 'private' sector, we have brought 'governmental control', to the extent that whatever deal may be struck between the investor and the entrepreneur, they are plagued with having to satisfy a clause which can be a threat to the entire venture on account of an unfactored tax burden.

Section 56 (2) (vii)(b) of the Income Tax Act provides for 'where a closely held company issues its shares at a price more than its fair market value, the amount received in excess of the fair

value will be taxed as income from other sources'. The determination of fair market value becomes the bone of contention. It now comes under the domain of the 'Assessor' – meaning the Income tax department. The department takes a look at the business plan and begins to check whether the turnover and business returns envisaged were achieved.

Valuation stalemate

If they weren't, the department faults the business plan and concludes that the valuation was much higher than what it should have been. Most businesses in our country are subject to flux on account of laws that are constantly being moved around. Then there is the market situation which is not guaran-

teed, either. Even if the investor is willing to wait for returns, the tax department is not. Due to volatile markets, coupled with tax issues, most financial advisers do not recommend formation of private limited companies. Strangely, it is common to find in recent times businesses – that could have easily benefited from the private limited tag and then becoming public limited companies – still remaining as partnerships or worse, sole proprietorships.

Our ecosystem is not conducive for real growth in the private sector unless you have learnt to 'handle the system'.

If the government is concerned about 'shell companies', it would need to attack the issue head-on and define a shell company. What would qualify a company to be one? Once the identity of a shell company has been determined, the penalty for the same can then be decided.

This would be better than targeting share valuation in a company, which is crucial to attracting investment.

Currently, there is no distinction between a company functioning with genuine transactions and one that isn't.

Some food for thought: isn't it sufficient that the share premium and the stake offered satisfy promoters and investors? Is there a need to lay boundaries to this aspect of free market enterprise? Is fair market value constant and consistent,

year-on-year; and are extraneous influences the same all around?

Laws inadequate?

If money in excess 'appears' to be pumped into a private limited company and the source of such funds doubtful, aren't existing laws (Section 68 or 69 of the Income Tax Act, 1961) sufficient for the authorities to determine and tax accordingly without having to enter into the share valuation sphere?

Is Section 56 (2)(vii)(b) of the Income Tax Act, 1961 deterring the flow of investments into private limited companies? If it is non-negotiable and will continue to remain so even for the most straight-forward transactions, how can genuine private limited companies that seek capital infusion for expansion/consolidation be protected from interpretations that could lead to layers of litigation with huge tax levels to be fought at different levels up to the apex court?

Currently, consultants often discourage entrepreneurs from forming private limited companies due to factors that influence ease of investment and functioning.

Public policies in this area directly impact the ecosystem affecting the growth of private limited companies. Perhaps, 'angel' tax has got to go if private limited firms are to flourish in India.

(The writer is Retired Additional Chief Secretary, Govt. of Tamil Nadu)

As the farmers had no access to tea factories, they were forced to sell their produce to the bought leaf agents or the middlemen as per the price fixed by them.

Five years ago, members of the Small Tea Growers Society at Karadippura and the Karkhaka Jyothi Small Tea Growers Society at Vattachola in the district constituted Wayanad Green Tea Producer Company, a farmer-producer organisation, with the support of NABARD to overcome exploitation by the middlemen.

Finally, they set up a factory exclusively for green tea processing at Karadippura to tap the vast potential of organic green tea.

"We could not utilise the full potential of the factory owing to the dearth of green

Small growers enjoy a place in the sun via organic tea

Farmer-producer firm sets flavour for profitable cultivation

E.M. MANOJ
KALPETA

The Wayanad Green Tea Producer Company has become a kind of role model for small tea growers in the country by ensuring sustainable income through organic tea cultivation.

'According to the data with the Tea Board, as many as 3,500 registered small-scale farmers in the district depend on the tea sector for their livelihood. But most of them are left to the mercy of bought leaf agents and bought leaf factories in the absence of any processing facilities in the small-scale tea sector of the district,' said Jose Sebastian, CEO of the company.

As the farmers had no access to tea factories, they were forced to sell their produce to the bought leaf agents or the middlemen as per the price fixed by them.

Five years ago, members of the Small Tea Growers Society at Karadippura and the Karkhaka Jyothi Small Tea Growers Society at Vattachola in the district constituted Wayanad Green Tea Producer Company, a farmer-producer organisation, with the support of NABARD to overcome exploitation by the middlemen.

Finally, they set up a factory exclusively for green tea processing at Karadippura to tap the vast potential of organic green tea.

"We could not utilise the full potential of the factory owing to the dearth of green



Brimming cuppa: Tea leaves now fetch ₹40 a kg. Two years ago, farmers had to sell them at ₹5-₹9 a kg to agents.

leaves during summer," Mr. Jose said, adding that the company was planning to operate two shifts from the next season.

Better prices

'We are getting ₹40 a kg for our tea leaves now but, two years ago, we were forced to sell it at ₹5 to ₹9 a kg to bought leaf agents,' says K.K. Padmanabhan Nambiar, a farmer and a director of the company. Moreover, production cost is also very low compared with traditional tea cultivation as we are following an organic way of cultivation here, he said.

With a capacity to process 3,600 kg of green tea leaf in three shifts a day, the factory started functioning from May 7, 2018. They had sold 1,136 kg green tea and 322 kg orthodox tea till December at a farm gate price of ₹500 a kg of green tea and ₹200 a kg of orthodox tea.

"The company has become a model in organic tea cultivation for small-scale farmers in the country and the Tea Board is providing incentives and subsidies to promote organic tea cultivation, K. Karthikeyan, development officer, Tea Board, Wayanad said.

With sector in trouble, solar players' hopes singed in Budget

But sops for EV technology have charged the industry up



No respite: The Centre has not addressed the financing issues in the solar sector, says Gagan Vermaani of MYSUN. ■ REUTERS

Wind energy, however, saw allocation fall to ₹720 crore from ₹950 crore over the same period. Notably, although there is a budgetary sub-heading for energy storage, no allocations have been made in that category in the last three years.

"India aims to achieve 227 GW of energy from renewable sources and nearly 113 GW through solar power," Sidhartha Vermaani, senior director, Smart Power India, said. "However, achieving this goal is not possible yet. While the government can increase funds to promote renewable energy, such allocations will always be very limited and short of investment targets."

Rebates on solar loans
"For the second year in a row, solar was a no-show at the 2019 Interim Union Budget, apart from a sole mention about the installed solar generation capacity addition in the past five years," Gagan Vermaani, CEO & Founder, MYSUN, said. He also highlighted the policy prescription set by the Budget towards increasing hydrocarbon production and promote biofuels.

The government has allotted ₹2,479.9 crore for grid-connected solar power in 2019-20, up from the ₹2,157.24 crore in the revised estimates of 2018-19.

Mysun said. "While prices for solar have continued to drop over the last year, it's the lack of financing for solar projects that have hit the industry hard. And this year's Budget has missed addressing that yet again. We have been demanding solar loans to be treated like home loans, as an instrument for individuals to claim a tax rebate," he added. "But it seems like the industry will have to wait for that."

While the electric vehicles sector found mention in the Budget speech in terms of intent, it stood distinct in that customs duties for imported parts were slashed two days before the Budget.

"Announcements of tax rebates on import of electric vehicles technology, including batteries and motors ranging from 10-25%, and incentives for local battery manufacturing will speed up the EV revolution," said Rahul Walawalkar, president, India Energy Storage Alliance.

INTERVIEW | DEEP KALRA

'Suddenness of FDI norm change surprises us'

Give enough time before changing goalposts, says the founder-CEO of MakeMyTrip.com

YUTHIKA BHARGAVA

Now is the greatest time to be a start-up in India, says Deep Kalra, founder and group CEO, MakeMyTrip.com, one of the earliest Internet start-ups in the country. Excerpts from an interview:

What happened during the recent stand-off between MakeMyTrip, Goibibo and hotels?

■ The issue has now been resolved. However, it is good to introspect. So, we take a commission from the hotel, and let's say that commission is 25%... in most cases it never went beyond 30%. We invest a lot of that in the promotions we run, including cashbacks. Optically, it seemed like a lot. So, we said no problem, let's bring this down to 20% but if you don't invest in promotion, your business will come down. So, some groups got together, but group negotiation makes no sense.

Our contracts are with individual hotels or with chains. So, we can negotiate with individuals but how can we do it within an association which has no ownership or no right. That was our only point. You have to understand, we are providing a platform and there is a cost of running business.

Competition in the travel segment is intensifying...

■ I think if you're in a vibrant and a robust industry, you have competition. It's the nature of the beast, which is a good thing. If there's no competition, it means there's not

enough market. If you don't want to have it, you would stop innovating.

But what about too much competition?

■ Normally, what tends to happen is that weaker players lose share with more competition. So, whenever we find a new competitor coming in with a discounting strategy etc., we've not have seen much impact on our brands. I think that fight, that churn happens between number four, five and six, and not so much between number one and two. In most of the areas, our brands are either number one or two.

Are cashbacks and discounts still driving the industry?

■ There is a certain level of froth, there is no denying that. Whether that is 10%, 20%, or 30% is anyone's guess. We try and keep weaning people off. If you see our last quarter results, we have grown 30% but have also brought down losses.

I think there is no greater time to be a start-up than now in India

■ I think there is no greater time to be a start-up than now in India. And, I am not talking just about Internet firms... consumerism is booming. If you take the whole world map, and if I have to point one place today, it would be India. I ask my friends, who are investors sitting in the U.S., where would you invest and the answer is India. China is now slowing down.

There are some little pockets such as Brazil but you never know what will happen, it just became okay because of re-elections. There is Turkey... the other big market is Indonesia but India is number one for everyone.

We are getting closer to that proverbial tipping inflection point of \$6,000 per capita income. We are still at \$2,000-odd, but in the next 3-4 years, you will see it explode... what's happening is just economics. The middle class has disposable income for things beyond just roti, kapda and makan. They are buying new phones, new clothes and want to travel.

So, fundamentally, if you're bright, are willing to work hard and you have a good idea, I think there is opportunity here

India falls agonisingly short in a thriller

The Kiwis claim the T20I series 2-1 to deny India a perfect finish to the twin tour



Punishing blade: Colin Munro's blazing effort took New Zealand to a big total. • AFP

INDIA IN NZ

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
HAMILTON

New Zealand denied India a perfect finish to a highly successful tour down under by clinching the T20I series 2-1 with a narrow four-run win in the third T20I on Sunday.

Imposing total

Exploiting batting-friendly conditions at the small Seddon Park ground, New Zealand cut the Indian attack to shreds to post an imposing 212 for four. Opener Colin Munro produced a 40-ball 72 and shared an 80-run stand with fellow-opener Tim Seifert (43) to lay the foundation for a big score.

India captain Rohit Sharma made an uncharacteristic 32-ball 38, hurting India's chances. Vijay Shankar (43 off 28) played a useful knock

at No. 3 after Shikhar Dhawan (5) fell early.

Infusing life

Rishabh Pant (28 off 12) and Hardik Pandya (21, 1lb) infused some life into India's chase with some brutal hitting but perished while trying

to keep up with a steep asking rate. M.S. Dhoni (2) fell cheaply.

India needed 16 off the final over and Dinesh Karthik (33 n.o., 16b), after taking two off the first ball, stunned the crowd and his teammates by refusing to run a

sing off the third ball. Krushna (26 n.o., 13b) had reached the striker's end but Karthik sent him back.

Karthik could only manage a single off the next ball and though he smashed a six off the final delivery, it was too little too late.

SCOREBOARD NEW ZEALAND VS INDIA, THIRD T20I

NEW ZEALAND

Tim Seifert st. Dhoni b Kuldeep 43 (25b, 3x4, 3x6), Colin Munro c Hardik b Kuldeep 72 (40b, 5x4, 5x6), Kane Williamson c Dhoni b Bhuvneshwar 30 (16b, 3x4, 1x6), Daryl Mitchell (not out) 19 (11b, 3x4), Ross Taylor (not out) 14 (7b, 1x4, 1x6); Extras (lb-4, w-3); Total (for four wkts. in 20 overs): 212.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-80 (Seifert, 7.4 overs), 2-135 (Munro, 13.2), 3-150 (Williamson, 14.4), 4-193 (de Grandhomme, 18.2).

INDIA BOWLING

Bhuvneshwar 4-0-37-1, Kuldeep 4-0-47-1, Hardik 4-0-44-0, Krushna 4-0-54-0, Kuldeep 4-0-26-2.

INDIA

Shikhar Dhawan c Mitchell b Santner 5 (4b, 1x4), Rohit Sharma c Seifert b Mitchell 38 (32b, 3x4), Vijay Shankar c de Grandhomme b Santner 43 (28b, 5x4, 2x6), Rishabh Pant c Williamson b Tickner 28 (12b, 1x4, 3x6), Hardik Pandya c Williamson b Kuggeleijn 21 (11b, 1x4, 2x6), M.S. Dhoni c Southee b Mitchell 2 (4b), Dinesh Karthik (not out) 33 (16b, 4x6), Krushna (not out) 26.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-6 (Dhawan, 5.0), 2-81 (Vijay Shankar, 8.3), 3-121 (Pant, 12.2), 4-141 (Rohit, 13.6), 5-145 (Hardik, 14.5), 6-145 (Krushna, 15.2).

NEW ZEALAND BOWLING

Santner 3-0-32-2, Southee 4-0-47-0, Kuggeleijn 4-0-37-1, Tickner 4-0-34-1, Sodhi 2-0-30-0, Mitchell 3-0-27-2.

Toss: India.

Man-of-the-Match: Munro.

Man-of-the-series: Seifert.

New Zealand won by four runs to clinch series 2-1.

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Man-of-the-Match: Munro.

Man-of-the-series:

City hits Chelsea for a six!

Sanchez's strike and Lloris' save, the talking points in Spurs' win



Fantastic finish: Davinson Sanchez's maiden goal for Tottenham was simply sensational. ■ REUTERS

EURO LEAGUES

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
LONDON

Sergio Aguero grabbed a hat-trick as Manchester City scored four times inside 25 minutes to thrash Chelsea 6-0 and leapfrog Liverpool to the top spot in the Premier League on goal difference on Sunday.

Aguero should have had even more than three as the Argentine missed a glorious early chance and hit the bar in the second-half in what was a humiliating afternoon for Maurizio Sarri's men.

Raheem Sterling started and ended the scoring and Ilkay Gundogan also netted in the first quarter of the game as City ended what could have been a testing week with a trip to Everton in between the visits of Arsenal and Chelsea with maximum points.

A 4-0 defeat to Bournemouth in its last away game was Chelsea's heaviest league defeat since 1996. And this was its worst loss in any competition since 1991 after failing to recover from Sterling's fourth-minute opener.

Tottenham kept alive its

title bid as Davinson Sanchez's first goal for the club and Hugo Lloris' penalty save inspired a 3-1 win over Leicester.

Tottenham was rewarded with a well-worked 33rd minute opener. Trippier's short corner found the unmarked Christian Eriksen and he whipped a pin-point cross towards Sanchez six yards from goal. Leicester called for off-side, but its protests were in vain as Sanchez launched himself into a diving header that flashed past Kasper Schmeichel. Replays showed the Colombia defender was just outside as he

scored his first goal for Tottenham since his 2017 move from Ajax.

The results: Sunday: Premier League: Tottenham 3 (Sanchez 33, Eriksen 63, Son 90+1) bt Leicester 1 (Vardy 76); Manchester City 6 (Sterling 4, 80, Aguero 13, 19, 56-pen, Gundogan 25) Chelsea 0.

Serie A: Sampdoria 0 lost to Frosinone 1 (Ciofani 25); Torino 1 (Aina 31) bt Udinese 0.

Saturday: Serie A: Fiorentina 0 drew with Napoli 0; Parma 0 lost to Inter Milan 1 (Martinez 79).

Bundesliga: Bayern Munich 3 (Bruma 12-og, Lewandowski 27, Gnabry 57) bt Schalke 1 (Kutucu 25).

Tetra Rama in shape for a repeat

HYDERABAD: Tetra Rama, who maintains form, may score an encore in the Godolphin Barb Millions (1,400m), the chief event of the races to be held here on Monday (Feb. 11).

1 BAILI LALITH PERSHAD MEMORIAL PLATE (1,100m), (Cat. II), 3-y-o (Terms), 12.55 p.m.: 1. Blazing Jupiter (6) Rohit Kumar 51.5, 2. Dillon (4) Naren 51.5, 3. Friday Fury (9) Nakhat Singh 51.5, 4. Troubadour (8) Ashhad Asbar 51.5, 5. Ashwa Calvari (7) Md. Ismail 50, 6. Celertitas (2) Akshay Kumar 50, 7. Her Legacy (5) Kunal Bunde 50, 8. Kionia (3) Kuldeep Singh 50, 9. Safra (10) N. Rawal 50 and 10. Southern Lady (1) Tanwar 50.

1. KIONIA, 2. CELERITAS, 3. SAFRA

2 ETURNAGARAM PLATE (DIV. 2), (1,100m), 4-y-o & over (winner of not more than two races), rated 26 to 46 (Cat. III), 1-25.1. Heaven Can Wait (5) Deepak Singh 60, 2. Baywatch Babe (8) Kunal Bunde 58.5, 3. Promiseforhappiness (2) Akshay Kumar 56, 4. Farmville (7) Tanwar 55.5, 5. Stormy (4) Afroz Khan 55, 6. Super Act (3) A.A. Vikrant 57, 7. Yogiastha (6) P. Ajeeth Kumar 54.5, 8. Brush The Sky (9) Md. Ismail 54 and 9. Dance All Night (1) Kuldeep Singh 54.

1. PROMISEOFHAPPINESS, 2. BRUSH THE SKY, 3. DANCE ALL NIGHT

3 SIR BRUCE PLATE (DIV. II), (1,100m), 4-y-o & over, rated upto 39 (Cat. III), 1-55: 1. Asgard (7) N. Rawal 62, 2. Moka (1) Jitendra Singh 62, 3. Shivalik Sand (II) Rohit Kumar 62, 4. Bombastic (12) Akshay Kumar 61, 5. Loch Stella (10) C.P. Bopanna 61, 6. Golden Caballo (8) Kunal Bunde 60.5, 7. Top Singer (4) Md. Ismail 60, 8. Smarty (3) Ashhad Asbar

58.5, 9. Escalating Striker (2) Gaurav Singh 57.5, 10. Victoria (5) Deepak Singh 55.5, 11. New Hope (6) Kiran Naidu 54.5 and 12. Delmonico (9) P. Ajeeth Kumar 56.

1. BOMBASTIC, 2. SHIVALIK SAND, 3. LOCH STELLA

4 ETURNAGARAM PLATE (DIV. I), (1,100m), 4-y-o & over (winner of not more than two races), rated 26 to 46 (Cat. III), 2-30: 1. Cymbal (7) Aneel 60, 2. Shimmer (8) Dhebe 59, 3. Man Apart (6) P.S. Chouhan 56.5, 4. Yogya (9) Deepak Singh 55, 5. City Of Ay-aansh (2) G. Naresh 56, 6. Ursula (4) Kiran Naidu 54, 7. Air Salute (3) Jitendra Singh 53.5, 8. Marvel Princess (1) Akshay Kumar 53.5, 9. Limousine (-) (-) 52.5 and 10. Red Bullet (5) Abhay Singh 50.5.

1. MARVEL PRINCESS, 2. CYMBAL, 3. MAN APART

5 BUSINESS TYCOON CUP (1,100m), 4-y-o & over, rated 42 to 62 (Cat. II), 3-05: 1. Platinum (6) Jitendra Singh 60, 2. Without Makeup (11) Gaurav Singh 60, 3. Riddar (7) Koushil 59.5, 4. Arc Of History (4) Surya Prakash 57.5, 5. La Mer (5) Md. Ismail 57.5, 6. Royal Green (2) I. Chisty 56.5, 7. Run Runner (4) Deepak Singh 60, 8. Country's Gift (11) Sai Kumar 59, 9. Royal Faith (1) Uday Kiran 58, 10. Adamant And Rising (3) G. Naresh 56, 11. Southern Belle (9) Kunal Bunde 56, 12. Diesis Dream (5) I. Chisty 54.5 and 13. Negress Dolly (8) Afroz Khan 53.5.

1. TETRA RAMA, 2. RIDDARI, 3. ROYAL GREEN

6 H.P. MISTRY MEMORIAL CUP (1,200m), 4-y-o & over, rated 74 & above (Cat. 3): 1. Prospero (7) Gayatri Singh 63, 2. Exclusive Wind (3) Kunal Bunde 62.5, 3. That's My Class (12) Md. Ismail 58, 4. Chase Your Dreams

(1) Tanwar 56.5, 5. Preciosa (10) Gaurav Singh 57.5, 10. Victoria (5) Deepak Singh 55.5, 11. New Hope (6) Kiran Naidu 54.5 and 12. Delmonico (9) P. Ajeeth Kumar 56.

1. BOMBASTIC, 2. SHIVALIK SAND, 3. LOCH STELLA

7 (1,400m), 3-y-o only (Terms), 4-15.1, 2. Dillon (4) Naren 51.5, 3. Friday Fury (9) Nakhat Singh 51.5, 4. Troubadour (8) Ashhad Asbar 51.5, 5. Ashwa Calvari (7) Md. Ismail 50, 6. Celertitas (2) Akshay Kumar 50, 7. Her Legacy (5) Kunal Bunde 50, 8. Kionia (3) Kuldeep Singh 50, 9. Safra (10) N. Rawal 50 and 10. Southern Lady (1) Tanwar 50.

1. KIONIA, 2. CELERITAS, 3. SAFRA

2 ETURNAGARAM PLATE (DIV. 1), (1,100m), 4-y-o & over, rated upto 30 (Cat. III), 4-50: 1. Aflatun (6) R.Kumar 62, 2. Jaz It Up (7) Jitendra Singh 62, 3. Pushdeep (2) Rafique Sk. 62, 4. Delphina (13) Akshay Kumar 60.5, 5. Lady On Turf (12) N. Rawal 60.5, 6. Magic Street (10) Kuldeep Singh 60, 7. Run Runner (4) Deepak Singh 60, 8. Country's Gift (11) Sai Kumar 59, 9. Royal Faith (1) Uday Kiran 58, 10. Adamant And Rising (3) G. Naresh 56, 11. Southern Belle (9) Kunal Bunde 56, 12. Diesis Dream (5) I. Chisty 54.5 and 13. Negress Dolly (8) Afroz Khan 53.5.

1. MAGIC STREET, 2. DELPHINA, 3. DIESIS DREAM

8 SIR BRUCE PLATE (DIV. I), (1,100m), 4-y-o & over, rated upto 30 (Cat. III), 4-50: 1. Platinum (6) Jitendra Singh 60, 2. Without Makeup (11) Gaurav Singh 60, 3. Riddar (7) Koushil 59.5, 4. Arc Of History (4) Surya Prakash 57.5, 5. La Mer (5) Md. Ismail 57.5, 6. Royal Green (2) I. Chisty 56.5, 7. Run Runner (4) Deepak Singh 60, 8. Country's Gift (11) Sai Kumar 59, 9. Royal Faith (1) Uday Kiran 58, 10. Adamant And Rising (3) G. Naresh 56, 11. Southern Belle (9) Kunal Bunde 56, 12. Diesis Dream (5) I. Chisty 54.5 and 13. Negress Dolly (8) Afroz Khan 53.5.

1. TRUMP GIRL, 2. RIDDARI, 3. ROYAL GREEN

9 H.P. MISTRY MEMORIAL CUP (1,200m), 4-y-o & over, rated 74 & above (Cat. 3): 1. Prospero (7) Gayatri Singh 63, 2. Exclusive Wind (3) Kunal Bunde 62.5, 3. That's My Class (12) Md. Ismail 58, 4. Chase Your Dreams

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THE HINDU DELHI
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2019

TV PICKS

I-League: Star Sports 3, 1.40 p.m.
NBA: Sony Ten 2 (SD & HD), 7 a.m.
PVL: Sony Ten 3 & SIX (SD & HD), 6.45 p.m.
West Indies v England: Sony ESPN (SD & HD), 7.30 p.m.

IN BRIEF



Record-equalling Westbrook delights

LOS ANGELES Russell Westbrook matched Wilt Chamberlain's 1968 NBA record, with a ninth straight triple-double (21 points, 11 assists and 12 rebounds), as Oklahoma City Thunder beat the Houston Rockets 117-112. **Other results:** Milwaukee 83 lost to Orlando 103; Boston 112 lost to LA Clippers 123; Houston 112 lost to Oklahoma City 117; Atlanta 120 lost to Charlotte 129; New York 99 lost to Toronto 104; Chicago 125 lost to Washington 134; Memphis 99 bt New Orleans 90; Indiana 105 bt Cleveland 90; Utah 125 bt San Antonio 105.

Indian Arena Polo League in September

NEW DELHI: The Indian Arena Polo League, featuring Indian and foreign players, will be played in September. The Indian Polo Association (IPA) and Pro Sportify Ventures made the announcement during the final of the Cavalry Gold Cup polo tournament here on Sunday.

The Chief of Army Staff and the president of IPA, General Bipin Rawat, handed over a ceremonial polo ball to the founder of Pro Sportify Kartikeya Sharma to announce the deal.

The Arena Polo is a shorter form of the sport played in a small ground, with coloured clothing and bigger-sized balls.

"We have been working closely with Pro Sportify Ventures, as they have been doing a stellar job of promoting professional sports in India," said the IPA secretary Ravi Rathore. "Polo in India has been synonymous with royalty. Polo patrons across the globe will have a chance to own teams in the India Polo League and be a part of a new emerging sports and lifestyle business," said Kartikeya Sharma.



Warne named Royals' brand ambassador

MUMBAI Rajasthan Royals on Sunday named Shane Warne as its brand ambassador for the IPL. "I am very happy to be back with the Royals and I am grateful to the team and the fans for their constant support. It was important for us to retain our established values but at the same time develop a new and modern identity. I am already in love with the new look of the team and hope the fans will like it too," Warne said.

Rajnigandha Achievers triumphs

NEW DELHI: Matthew Philip Perry smashed six goals to guide Rajnigandha Achievers to a 7-goals to 5-1/2 victory over Garcha Group-Araval Polo in the final of the Cavalry Gold Cup 10-goal polo tournament at the Jaipur Polo ground on Sunday. Meanwhile, in the inaugural Brig. V.P. Singh memorial COA Polo Cup, Cavaliers beat Lancers 4-3 to lift the trophy. Chief of Army Staff and the president of IPA, Gen. Bipin Rawat, presented the prizes. **The results:** Cavalry Gold Cup: Rajnigandha Achievers 7 (Matthew Philip Perry 6, Hurr Ali) bt Garcha Group-Araval Polo 5-1/2 (Manuel Llorente 3, Satinder Garcha 2, handicap 1/2). **COA Polo Cup:** Cavaliers 4 (Dhruv Godara 2, Ravi Rathore, Vishal Chauhan) bt Lancers 3 (Basheer Ali 3).

Jamie Chadwick makes history

Becomes the first woman to claim the championship in seven seasons

MRF CHALLENGE

SPORTS BUREAU
CHENNAI

England's Jamie Chadwick scripted history in the MRF Challenge, becoming the first female driver to claim the championship in seven seasons, as she finished the third and final round of the International series with a triple crown, including two back-to-back wins, at the MMRT here on Sunday.

The 20-year-old, who had won three of the five races in the previous round in Bahrain, survived a long day and 58 laps by winning two races while Finland's Patrick Pasma took the honours in the other as MRF Challenge 2018-19 drew to a close.

Defourny second

While Chadwick ended the championship with 280 points, including two bonus points for the fastest lap in the last race, Belgium's Max Defourny, who came into the final round with an 18-point advantage, failed to consolidate and ended up with 243 points. Pasma took the third spot with 186 points, ahead of German Andreas Estner (181).

"It (winning the championship) hasn't sunk in yet. I would like to thank my team and am happy that everything came together this weekend. In the last race, I made some mistakes, which cost me the lead for a bit, but I quickly composed myself and made sure I won," said an elated Chadwick.

"I came into the MRF Challenge for some experience and exposure and not to win. But after winning three races in Bahrain, I realised I was in with a chance and went for it this weekend."

The results: MRF Challenge (F2000): Race 3 (20 laps): 1.



In the fast lane: Jamie Chadwick speeding around the MMRT track on Sunday.

• SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Patrick Pasma (Fin) 35:35.212s; 2. Michelangelo Amendola (Bel) 35:35.569; 3. Linus Lindqvist (Swe) 35:36.281; **Race 4 (18 laps):** 1. Jamie Chadwick (UK) 27:39.087; 2. Amendola 27:40.106; 3. Jack Doohan (Aus) 27:46.896; **Race 5 (20 laps):** 1. Chadwick 30:46.505; 2. Pasma 30:47.574; 3. Amendola (30:48.164).

MRF MMSC FMSCI Indian National racing championship: Formula LGB 1300 (Race 3, 10 laps): 1. Chirag Ghorpade (Momentum Motor Sports) 15:35.070; 2. Tijil Rao (Momentum Motor Sports) 15:35.528; 3. K. Suriya Varathan (M Sport) 15:36.030.

Saloon Cars (Super stock, Race 2, 10 laps): 1. P. Raja Rajan (Performance Racing) 20:26.602; 2. Rithvik Thomas (Race Concepts) 20:34.767; 3. Joel Joseph (Race Concepts) 20:41.701.

Support Race: MRF F1600 (Race 2, 10 laps): 1. Lee Deegan (UK) 16:54.757; 2. A. Bala Prasath (Coimbatore) 16:55.452; 3. Sohil Shah (Bengaluru) 16:55.654; **Race 3 (10 laps):** 1. Nayan Chatterjee (Mumbai) 16:40.939; 2. Bala Prasath 16:49.098; 3. Sohil Shah 17:00.516.

Chennai City FC will look to continue the good form

Will hope for full points when it meets Neroca

I-LEAGUE

AMITABHA DAS SHARMA
IMPHAL

Having started its eastern India sojourn with a confident win over Indian Arrows at Bhubaneswar, Chennai City FC will be looking to sustain the momentum when it meets Neroca FC at the Khaman Lampak Stadium on Monday. The visitors are perched on top of the league standings with 33 points from 15 matches, and a win here will boost their chances.

"We have to greatly improve our game compared to what we did against Indian Arrows. We were not creating enough chances in our previous match and we cannot afford that against a side like Neroca which is very fast in attack," he said.

Spaniards' influence It remains crucial for the Spaniards – Roberto Eslava, Sandro Rodriguez, Nestor Gordillo and Pedro Manzi –

so wanted the side to be more creative and not lose shape in its push for victory.

"I cannot tell my players that you must go out and win the title. It is important that they play the way we want them to play and move towards the ultimate goal, game by game," said Nawas on the eve of the clash.

"We have to greatly improve our game compared to what we did against Indian Arrows. We were not creating enough chances in our previous match and we cannot afford that against a side like Neroca which is very fast in attack," he said.

Match starts at 2 p.m.

With at least three sides battling it out in the title race, Chennai City can ill afford to rest on its oars with just four rounds remaining. Head coach Akbar Nawas insisted on the need for full points against Neroca and al-

who form the spine of the team to inspire their Indian colleagues like Gaurav Bora, Edwin Vanspaul and Alexander Romario.

The Neroca camp is upbeat, thanks to the arrival of Bhutanese striker Chencho Gyaltsen on loan from Bengaluru FC. The host spoke of regaining composure and confidence which it had lost after suffering reverses in three of the last four matches.

"We face a very big opponent in Chennai City but we will try to make the most of the home advantage and pick up three points," head coach Manuel Retamero said. Chencho scored on his debut for Neroca and Retamero hoped the team will regroup and get back on track.

Match starts at 2 p.m.

Clinical Moutet clinches title

Comes up with a thorough gameplan against Harris

CHALLENGER

S. DIPAK RAGAV
CHENNAI

The 19-year-old Corentin Moutet came into the tournament as the second seed and, on Sunday, he showed why Roger Federer invited the Frenchman to come and hit with him in Dubai in December last year, with a clinical 6-3, 6-3 win over Andrew Harris to clinch the ATP Chennai Open Challenger here at the SDAT Tennis Stadium.

The left-hander systematically deconstructed Harris' game and from very early on it was evident the Frenchman had his gameplan worked out.

In the first set, both players held their serves till 3-3 before Moutet got the break in the seventh game. It did not help at this point, Harris was struggling with his first serve.

Forehand errors

In that game, he started with a doublefault before he tried to overcompensate, committing a couple of forehand errors before Moutet produced a winner to take the break.

The Frenchman then broke again to take the set 6-3, targeting the one-handed backhand of Harris, imparting spin and high-bounce-



On the ball: Corentin Moutet faced little resistance in the summit clash. • R. RAGAV

ing strokes to induce errors.

This and the sturdy defence displayed by Moutet prompted the Indian tennis legend and TATA president Vijay Amritraj to quip that the Frenchman reminded him of a young Rafael Nadal.

One of the best points of the match came at deuce early in the second set on the Harris serve with Moutet pushing the Australian on the backhand flank before sending in a deep return to which Harris had no answer.

In the fourth game of the set, Moutet took the strategy to the next level as Harris committed three errors off his backhand, going down 0-4 in no time.

Harris then won the next two games but the teenager

quickly found his bearings back and held his next two service games easily to claim his third challenger title.

Tactically outplayed

Speaking after the match Harris conceded he was outplayed tactically saying, "He knew what he had to do from the start and he executed it well."

"I could have used my slice backhand a bit more, but it wasn't to be."

"My game plan for winning the match was not to out-rally him because that would be playing into his strengths."

"I had to play aggressively," he added when asked if he had to take a lot more risks with his forehands.

Ninth National snooker title for Pankaj Advani

CUE SPORTS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
INDORE

Pankaj Advani claimed his ninth senior National snooker title, with a 70-36, 91-22, 66-06, 65-51, 77-49, 59-18 win over Laxman Rawat in a one-sided final, here on Sunday.

Advani, who won 11 junior National titles, has nine billiards and three six-red snooker crowns as a senior.

He also has 21 World titles in cue sport.

The match was defined by the champion's experience as he brought on a lethal combination of scoring and safety of the highest quality.

The only really close frame was the fourth which could have ended with the scoreline reading 3-1, giving Rawat an outside chance of a comeback.

But once Advani clinched that too with a fine clearance, it was curtains for Rawat.



Pankaj Advani. • V. GANESAN

■ Advani has won 11 junior National titles and nine billiards and three six-red snooker crowns as a senior.

■ He also has 21 World titles in cue sport

Bopanna-Divij pair loses

SPORTS BUREAU
SOFIA

Rohan Bopanna and Divij Sharan lost 7-6(3), 6-3 to Cheng-Peng Hsieh (Tpe) & Christopher Rungkat of Indonesia in the semifinals of the €596,140 ATP tournament.

€596,140 ATP, Sofia, Bulgaria: Doubles (semifinals): Cheng-Peng Hsieh (Tpe) & Christopher Rungkat (Ind) bt Rohan Bopanna & Divij Sharan 7-6(3), 6-3.

\$135,400 Challenger, Dallas, US: Doubles (quarterfinals): Marcos Giron & Dennis Novikov (US) bt Hans Hach Verdugo (Mex) & Sriram Balaji 6-4, 7-6(3).

RSPB triumphs

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
GWAHLIOR

Railway Sports Promotion Board (RSPB) stunned defending champion Punjab 3-2 to win the ninth senior men's hockey title here on Sunday. Harsahib Singh (35th and 45th minutes) scored a brace while Dilpreet Singh (57th) completed the tally. Punjab's goals came from Rupinder Pal Singh (23rd) and Rama-deep Singh (60th). **The results:**

Final: RSPB bt Punjab 3-2; **Third place:** PSPB bt PSB 4-1.

Karnataka posts win

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
HISAR (HARYANA)

Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh Hockey Academy, Maharashtra and Punjab registered wins in their respective pool matches of the ninth senior women's National Championship (Division A) here on Sunday.

Karnataka beat Hockey Coorg 3-0.

MMPA secured a 3-1 win over Hockey Bhopal while Maharashtra secured a 6-0 win over CRPF.



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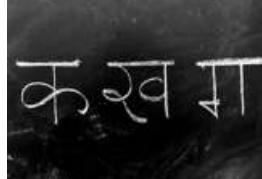
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IN BRIEF



Abu Dhabi adds Hindi as third language in courts

ABU DHABI

The Abu Dhabi Judicial Department has added Hindi as the third official language of the city's courts, alongside Arabic and English. According to ADJD, the step is aimed at helping foreigners to learn about litigation procedures, their rights and duties without a language barrier, in addition to facilitating registration procedures via unified forms. IANS



Scientists develop an all-weather fabric

WASHINGTON

Scientists have created a fabric that can automatically regulate the amount of heat that passes through it, helping a person stay cool or warm depending on the weather conditions. When conditions are warm, the fabric allows heat to pass through. When conditions become cooler and drier, it reduces heat escape. PTI



Louvre Abu Dhabi introduces Rembrandt

ABU DHABI

The Louvre Abu Dhabi, the first museum to carry the famed name outside of France, announced on Sunday it will roll out works by Dutch masters Rembrandt and Vermeer this month. Works by the two artists are part of the gallery's first exhibition this year. AFP

+ No takers for Hitler paintings at auction



A wicker armchair bearing a swastika symbol, which is presumed to have belonged to Adolf Hitler. AFP

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
BERLIN

Five paintings attributed to Adolf Hitler failed to find buyers at an auction held in Nuremberg.

High starting prices of between \$21,000 and \$50,000 and lingering suspicions about the authenticity of the artworks were thought to have scared off potential buyers.

The Weidler auction house did not comment on the reasons for the failure

Gully Boy opens to thunderous response at Berlinale 2019

The film, featuring Ranveer Singh and Alia Bhatt, had a packed house premiere

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
BERLIN

Zoya Akhtar's much-awaited film *Gully Boy*, featuring Ranveer Singh and Alia Bhatt in lead, had a packed house premiere at the ongoing Berlin International Film Festival.

Cameron Bailey, Artistic Director, Toronto International Film Festival shared on Twitter that the film was well-received and he has never seen such a response for any movie at Berlinale in past two decades.

"Watched the *GULLY BOY* world premiere tonight in a packed house with @RanveerOfficial, @alialaa08 & @ZoyaAkhtarOff present. Biggest cheers I've heard in 20+ years at the Berlinale," he wrote alongside a picture



Ranveer Singh and Alia Bhatt in Berlin. GETTY IMAGES

of Ranveer meeting the audience post the premiere.

The festival's official Twitter handle thanked Ranveer for his energetic rap performance on film's track *Apna Time Aayega*.

"Thank you @RanveerOfficial, we had a blast last night, you were absolutely

amazing," the tweet read.

"It was a truly memorable night! Thank you so much for having us," he tweeted in response to the festival's post.

Social commentary
Ranveer Singh and Alia Bhatt threw their sizeable industry

clout behind the tale of a couple yearning to break out of their Mumbai slum and traditional Muslim families to realise their dreams.

"It's got commentary on the class divide, it's got commentary on choices young people make – whether they want to be stuck in something that gives them no fulfillment versus pursuing their passion," said Ranveer, whose character Murad has a meteoric rise after posting his first rap video online.

"I think it's got a whole variety of stuff embedded between the lines that may just have a positive social impact."

The film, featuring Kalki Koechlin, Siddhant Chaturvedi and Vijay Raaz, will release on February 14.

Wall of wisdom



A short prayer: A girl scribbles on the wall of a Saraswati temple in the hope that the goddess would bless her with wisdom, on the occasion of Basant Panchami, in Kathmandu. REUTERS

A fungus that cripples immune system

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
BERLIN

Scientists have found how a common fungus – found virtually everywhere on the Earth – can knock out our body's defence system, enabling a potentially fatal infection to develop.

The fungus *Aspergillus fumigatus* can be found on damp walls or in spores that blow through the air and cling to on wallpaper, mattresses and floors. The immune system of healthy people can put spores out of action.

However, the fungus can threaten the lives of people with a compromised immune system, such as AIDS patients.

Comprehensive protocol
The study, initiated by Centre for Dental Education and Research (CDER) at All India Institute of Medical Sciences since 2010, was conducted in three phases: pre-pilot, pilot and

'Smoking during pregnancy raises risk of cleft lip in babies'

AIIMS study says alcohol consumption is also detrimental

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Smoking, alcohol consumption, exposure to *chulha* smoke or passive smoking, over-medication and radiation exposure during the first few weeks of pregnancy along with nutritional deficiencies may lead to congenital deformities of the face such as cleft lip and palate anomaly, according to a study by AIIMS.

Cleft lip or cleft palate is a condition when the two sides of the lip, developing in an unborn baby, do not completely fuse together. It affects speech and chewing habit of a child and leads to abnormal arrangement of teeth, poor jaw relations and facial aesthetics.

Cleft lip and palate anomaly constitute nearly one-third of all congenital malformations of the craniofacial region with an average worldwide incidence of 1 in 700.

Its incidence in Asian population is reported to be around 1.7 per 1,000 live births or higher.

In India, even though a national epidemiological data is not available, many studies from different parts of the country have reported a variation in the incidence of cleft anomaly.

During the pilot phase (2012-2014), data of 164 cases with cleft lip and palate anomaly were recorded from three high-volume cleft care centres in Delhi and National Capital Region, involving two public funded hospitals – AIIMS and Safdarjung – and one private hospital – Medanta-The Medicity in Gurgaon.

"It revealed that patients suffering from this deformity had high treatment need with an immediate need to devise strategies to improve the delivery of quality care," Mr. Kharbanda said.

Currently, the multi-centric phase is under way in



Risk factors: A web-based tool, IndiCleft, will soon record patterns of congenital birth defects. GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

multi-centric.

The pre-pilot phase was conducted between 2010 and 2012. It aimed at developing comprehensive protocols for recording the history, investigations on dental anomalies, hearing defects and evaluation of speech-related problems in patients with cleft palate.

"The idea was to have a uniformity in the procedure of collecting the patients' records," said O.P. Kharbanda, chief of CDER and principal investigator of the project.

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"It revealed that patients suffering from this deformity had high treatment need with an immediate need to devise strategies to improve the delivery of quality care," Mr. Kharbanda said.

Currently, the multi-centric phase is under way in

New Delhi, Hyderabad, Lucknow and Guwahati.

Multiple factors

"In our study, we also evaluated a few risk factors including maternal smoking and alcohol consumption, intake of drugs during the first trimester of pregnancy and exposure to smoke during the same time by the use of *chulha* at home or due to passive smoking.

"We also took into account the history in drug intake and radiation exposure in the first trimester of pregnancy and it was concluded that all these risk factors may be related to increased incidence of cleft in the progeny," Mr. Kharbanda said.

The government's Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karyakram has identified cleft lip and palate as one of the visible deformities which are recorded under the programme.

A web-based recording system, "IndiCleft" tool, has been developed with the help of The National Informatics Centre, Balram Bhargava, director general of ICMR, will launch the "IndiCleft" tool on February 14.

Wrestling for glory at Vietnam's festival

The main draw is Vat Cau, a sport that started as a training exercise for soldiers



Ball game: People watching as men wrestle for the prized ball made of jackfruit wood during 'Vat Cau' in Hanoi. AFP

**AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
HANOI**
Bare-chested men in brightly coloured belts grapple for possession of a giant wooden ball at a Vietnamese festival, tumbling from corner to corner as hundreds of excited spectators cheer them on.

They are playing Vat Cau – a centuries-old sport which began as a training exercise for soldiers and contains elements of wrestling and rugby.

Vat Cau is the main draw of a three-day annual festival held in Thuy Linh village during Vietnam's Tet Lunar New Year, just 10 km from Hanoi.

A single match has four separate teams of eight men wearing waist straps of different colours. They tussle over a 17-kg ball made from the wood of a jackfruit tree, laboriously inching it towards one of the holes dug in each team's corner.

"This game is the tradi-

tion and the pride of the Thuy Linh people," Le Duc Duong, an athlete with 15 years of experience playing Vat Cau, said.

In tip-top shape
Before the annual showdown at Thuy Linh's communal temple, each sportsman must train in sports like swimming, running and bodybuilding to get in tip-top shape, he added.

The audience at Saturday's competition were in high spirits, laughing and cheering as a match announcer commented on the athletes pouncing on each other in the field.

"Some of our athletes have a six-pack body, and some have a six-pack-in-one," he said wryly.

At the end of the three-day tournament, the squad with the most points advanc-

es to the next round, and the champions in the final stage will receive a cash prize of \$260 to share between them – a small reward that gifts bragging rights to one team among the 16 competing.

Dating back to the 11th century, the game was invented by a revered general to teach his recruits about the importance of teamwork, intelligence and strength when fighting against foreign invaders, festival organiser Le Minh Xuong said.

"(This game) inherits the tradition of our forefathers, which is to train the men in the village to have health and fitness for the ultimate purpose of protecting our homeland," he said.

But for the players today, the stakes are not so high.

"We play this game for fun actually. The prize is not important for us," 20-year-old player Nguyen The Hien, a kickboxing trainer, said.

"Each year we play it and it brings joy to us."

Fury at HIV data leak in conservative Singapore

Names, addresses of 14,200 leaked

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
SINGAPORE

Rico has lived with HIV for almost a decade, confiding in only a small number of people in socially conservative Singapore, fearful of the reaction.

Last month, he got a phone call saying information about his condition had been published online.

Mr. Rico was one of 14,200 people whose HIV status, name and address were dumped on the internet by an American man who is believed to have obtained the confidential data from his partner – a senior Singaporean doctor.

The LGBT community is angry and frustrated with the entire ordeal," said Mr. Rico, who did not want to be identified by his full name.

The 31-year-old said he was frightened that "the leaked information may change people's perception of me", adding that he had not told all his friends he was HIV-positive.

"Society may be tolerant to the LGBT community but I do not think they are ready to accept a gay and HIV-positive individual. Not in my lifetime," he said.

Regressive attitudes

While Singapore is modern in many ways, observers say social attitudes have not progressed at the same pace as economic development and are often conservative.

Those in Singapore with HIV – the virus that causes AIDS – have long complained of prejudice and campaigners say the negative reaction to the data breach has highlighted the stigma.

A human resources manager working in the hospitality industry was quoted in local paper the *Straits Times* as saying she would sack any of her staff if their names were among those published.

The affluent city-state of 5.6 million people is home to many overseas workers, from wealthy bankers to labourers at construction sites.

The leak, which involved the data of 5,400 Singaporeans and 8,800 foreigners, has caused widespread consternation. Sumita Banerjee, executive director of NGO Action for AIDS (AFA), said people with the virus had been calling up her group in tears.

"One of the main concerns is that employers, friends and family who were not aware might react badly," she said, adding some were afraid of losing their jobs.

But according to guidelines from health authorities, there are generally no valid grounds for terminating the services of an HIV-positive employee simply due to their condition.

Singapore authorities say they have rushed to block access to the information that was dumped online, allegedly by Mikhy Farrera Brochez, although they have warned he still has it and could release it again.

Since the leak, local media has reported Brochez was arrested in the United States for allegedly trespassing in his mother's home, although the case appears unconnected to the data breach.

'Beer wars': big brewers target Nigerian drinkers

Companies are hosting concerts, fashion weeks and boat parties to win over millennial customers



A worker monitors newly bottled beers on the production line, at the InBev beer factory, outside Lagos, in Ogun State. AFP

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
LAGOS

Gigantic billboards advertising beer now dominate the skyline of Nigeria's megacity, Lagos, signalling the escalating battle between multinational brewers for drinkers in Africa's most populous country.

So far it's a largely untapped market, with Nigerians consuming on average just nine litres of beer a year, well below South Africans' 57 litres, according to market research firm Euromonitor.

But with more than half of Nigeria's 190 million people aged under 30 – and the population expected to grow to 410 million by 2050 – the world's biggest beer compa-

nies are looking to elbow in.

For years, Nigerian Breweries has dominated the sector with brands including Gulder, Star and top-of-the-range Heineken. However its iron grip on

the market is under threat from mega-brewer Anheuser-Busch InBev.

It recently opened a new factory outside Lagos and launched Budweiser to face off against Heineken, in a

fierce contest for millennial drinkers being played out across Africa.

Promotions have become an arms race among the beer companies as they host concerts, fashion weeks and boat parties to win over customers.

Regulatory onslaught
Restaurant and club owners say they are being courted by the beer companies with unprecedented amounts of cash.

"The big guys started noticing there was a new sheriff in town,"