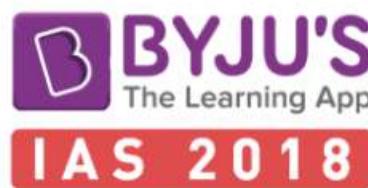


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### NEARBY



JD(U) to vote against triple talaq Bill in RS

PATNA  
The BJP's ally, the Janata Dal (United), on Thursday said it would vote against the Centre if a Bill on triple talaq comes up in the Rajya Sabha for passage. Slapping the BJP, the JD(U) said that the Bill was unnecessarily "hurried and rushed up".

NEWS ▶ PAGE 11

Celebratory firing: victim dies, 2 more held

NEW DELHI  
The police on Thursday arrested Renu Singh, wife of former Bihar MLA Raju Singh, and their house help Ramender Singh, in addition to formally arresting the MLA and his driver Hari Singh, in the case of celebratory firing on New Year's Eve that claimed a woman's life.

DELHI METRO ▶ PAGE 1

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FRIDAY REVIEW ▶ 12 PAGES  
(TABLOID)  
DELHI METRO ▶ 6 PAGES

Every second means life and death for miners: SC

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL  
NEW DELHI

"Every second means life and death for those 15 trapped miners," Justice A. K. Sikri said, even as the Supreme Court expressed its dissatisfaction with the ongoing operations to rescue men from the flooded rat-hole mine in Meghalaya.

A Bench of Justices A.K. Sikri and S. Abdul Nazeer said the rescue efforts seemed uncoordinated. The court asked the Centre what it had done so far. "You had wanted to send high-powered pumps to Thailand [to rescue Thai boys and their teacher trapped in a cave]... Why have you not done it here?" Justice Sikri asked Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta.

"We are not satisfied. There should be one central coordinated rescue effort and it is the Union of India which should do something," Justice Sikri observed. Mr. Mehta responded that the Coal Minister, along with the Meghalaya Chief Minister and senior officials, was monitoring the rescue, and would appoint a nodal officer for the effort.

The court asked why the government had previously refused the Army's offer of help. "Army offered to help, but the government did not want it. Why?" Justice Sikri asked Mr. Mehta. "Instead of the Army, we have the NDRF [the National Disaster Response Force]," Mr. Mehta responded. "But there are already 72 NDRF personnel there, with no result," Justice Sikri persisted. "Instead of the Army, we decided to send the Navy... Navy divers..." Mr. Mehta continued.

## Street protests mark Kerala hartal

■ 20 offices of CPI(M) and its allies attacked

■ Clashing BJP, CPI(M) workers lathicharged

■ 79 KSRTC buses damaged in the State

■ Another woman enters Sabarimala temple



Security wall: The police form a protective barrier in front of the venue of the BJP's protest near the Secretariat in Thiruvananthapuram on Thursday. ■ C. RATHEESH KUMAR

least 31 personnel injured.

The streets were deserted in many places as people kept indoors. However, in places like Edappal in Malappuram district, traders offered stiff resistance against attempts to shut shops.

The hartal left long-distance commuters stranded at bus stations and railway terminals. The Kerala State Road Transport Corporation

— 79 buses of whose buses were damaged — scaled down operations.

### Curfew in Palakkad

The police said Palakkad, Kozhikode, Thiruvananthapuram and Thrissur bore the brunt of the violence. Police lobbed teargas shells and resorted to lathicharge to disperse clashing BJP and CPI (M) workers in Palakkad. La-

ter, curfew was imposed in Palakkad town and Chettukundu in Kasaragod district.

In Thrissur, alleged Social Democratic Party of India workers stabbed three BJP activists who attempted to close a hotel run by a minority community member.

(With PTI inputs)

PITCHED BATTLES ▶ PAGE 5

BREAKING BARRIERS ▶ EDITORIAL

## No urgent hearing: SC

The Supreme Court has declined a request for an urgent hearing of a plea for contempt of court action against the Sabarimala priest who closed the sanctum sanctorum to conduct "purification rites" immediately after two women entered the temple. Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi rejected the petition and said the court had already scheduled a hearing of the Sabarimala matters for January 22. ▶ PAGES 5

## Pinarayi hits out at Tantri

Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan said Sabarimala chief priest Kandararu Rajeevaru should have quit had he not been ready to accept the Supreme Court's verdict. He said the Tantri and the Travancore

Devaswom Board were parties to the case and were bound to abide by the ruling. The Tantri was free to profess his opinion on the verdict, but he was bound to implement it. ▶ PAGE 5

I could give you an example where I get along very well with India and Prime Minister Modi. But he is constantly telling me, he built a library in Afghanistan. Library! That's like five hours of what we spend [in Afghanistan].  
DONALD TRUMP, U.S. President

Stop mocking India's PM. India doesn't need sermons from the U.S. on Afghanistan. Under Dr. Manmohan Singh, India helped build Afghan National Assembly... We are one with Afghan brothers and sisters.  
RANDEEP SINGH SURJEWALA, Congress leader

## Trump's remarks rejected by India

Defends its work in Afghanistan

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

India on Thursday reiterated that it does not send soldiers abroad but for UN-supported peacekeeping operations.

Mr. Trump had referred to his conversation with Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

I could give you an example where I get along very well with India and Prime Minister Modi. But he is constantly telling me, he built a library in Afghanistan. Library! That's like five hours of what we spend [in Afghanistan].

Specific mandate  
"India firmly believes in the critical role that developmental assistance can play in transforming human lives. India does not send its

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 10

6 killed in Moti Nagar factory collapse

Some workers are still feared trapped under the debris of the building

HEMAMI BHANDARI  
NEW DELHI

At least six workers were killed and several injured when a factory building collapsed in west Delhi's Moti Nagar on Thursday evening following a compressor blast.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (West) Monika Bhadrav confirmed the death of six workers while the number of injured was unclear as rescue operations were under way till late at night. Some workers are feared trapped under the debris.

Area residents told *The Hindu* that the factory,



Rescue work in progress in Moti Nagar where a factory collapsed on Thursday. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

where ceiling fans were painted on the first floor, went up in flames after the compressor blast. The wall

of the first floor collapsed and debris fell onto an adjacent scrap godown where women and children were

residing.

Locals claimed that at least 15 people, including the owner, were present in the factory when the incident happened around 8.45 p.m.

Personnel of the Delhi Disaster Management Authority, National Disaster Response Force, fire department and local police rescued over a dozen people, a police officer at the spot said. All the injured were rushed to Archarya Bhikshunath Hospital from where several were referred to Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Hospital.

SEE ALSO ▶ DELHI METRO PAGE 1

two persons, including a police officer, were killed, the police said on Thursday.

He was arrested on Wednesday near the Brahma-nand College, a police officer said.

Raj, district convener of the Bajrang Dal, is being questioned, said Bulandshahr SSP Prabhakar Chaudhary.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 10

## China's probe lands on far side of moon, sends images

Feat opens new chapter in lunar exploration: space agency

REUTERS  
BEIJING

A Chinese space probe touched down on the far side of the moon on Thursday, China's space agency said, hailing the event as a historic first and a major achievement for the country's space programme.

The Chang'e-4 lunar probe, launched in December, made the "soft landing" at 02.26 GMT and transmitted the first-ever "close range" image of the far side of the moon, the China National Space Administration said.

The moon is tidally locked to Earth, rotating at the same rate as it orbits our planet, so most of the far side — or "dark side" — is never visible to us. Previous spacecraft have seen the far side, but none has landed on it.

The landing "lifted the mysterious veil" of the far



The first portrait: This photo shows the first image of the far side of the moon. ■ NEW YORK TIMES

side of the moon and "opened a new chapter in human lunar exploration," the agency said in a statement on its website, which included a wide-angle colour picture of a crater from the moon's surface.

The probe, which has a lander and a rover, touched down at a targeted area near the moon's south pole in the Von Karman Crater, after entering its orbit in mid-December.

DARK SIDE OF THE MOON

► EDITORIAL

'Varsities in States must do research'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
JALANDHAR

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Thursday that it was time for research to expand beyond the Central institutes of national importance — such as the IITs and the IISERs — and branch out into the numerous State universities.

Observing that "95% of our students go to State universities and colleges," The Prime Minister said: "We must have a strong research ecosystem in these places."

Mr. Modi, who was addressing an audience of students, researchers and Nobel laureates at the 106th edition of the Indian Science Congress here, called on the Prime Minister's Science, Technology and Innovation Advisory Council to formulate a plan to implement such a scheme.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 10

## Bulandshahr violence: key accused held

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
LUCKNOW

Bajrang Dal activist Yogesh Raj, the main accused in the mob violence in Bulandshahr, was arrested a month after the incident in which

one person, including a police officer, were killed, the police said on Thursday.

He was arrested on Wednesday near the Brahma-nand College, a police officer said.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 10

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## SC to hear petition on BJP's Bengal yatra on January 8

### LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI  
The Supreme Court on Thursday agreed to hear on January 8 a petition filed by the West Bengal unit of the BJP against a Calcutta High

Court Division Bench decision to deny the party permission to hold a yatra across the State.

Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi, before whom the petition was mentioned for

early hearing, agreed to list the case on that day.

The appeal filed by the BJP said holding a "peaceful yatra" to make voters aware of their rights is a "fundamental right" of the party, and so-

mething which cannot be stopped on the basis of "conjectures and surmises".

It said the 'Ganatantra Bachao Yatra' proposed to cover 42 Lok Sabha seats of West Bengal and expected a galaxy

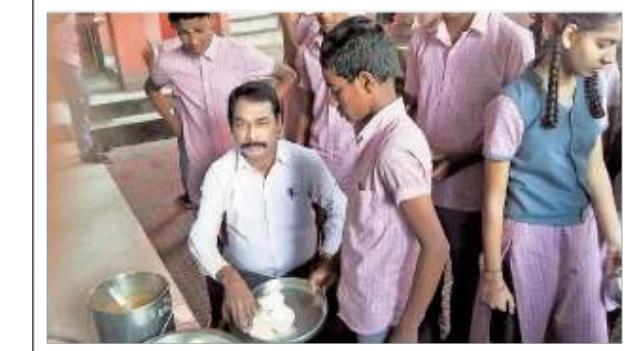
of party leaders to participate. The yatra has been rescheduled thrice, the latest date being December 26.

The Division Bench of the High Court had refused permission on December 21.

Brand connect initiative

### Spreading importance of breakfast to young minds

**B**reakfast is an essential part of a child's daily routine, yet children tend to skip this meal due to various reasons. P K Ilamaran, a Tamil teacher at the Chennai High School, Kodungaiyur and the State President of Tamil Nadu



Teachers Association tries to ensure that children who walk into the school without having breakfast get to eat before their classes.

He observed that over a 120 children at the school either complained of stomach ache or fainted during the morning assembly session. Ilamaran, with the support from the school headmaster, identified the root cause to be an empty stomach. The students attending this school are from very poor background and therefore were not able to afford to eat in the morning.

He ensures that every class teacher in the school checks with the children before starting class each day. Since July 2018, breakfast is now being served for the entire school before classes begin.

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**KIIT student crowned: Shubhangi Dwivedi bagged the KIIT Nanhipari-Little Miss India 2018 Title. Yashika Singh of Delhi and Mira Singh of Amritsar were crowned first and 2nd runners up respectively. The top three also received a cash award of Rs. 3 lakh, Rs. 1 lakh and Rs. 50000 respectively, along with a crown, trophy and certificate.**

### COMMENCEMENT OF DREDGING AT MAHANADI RIVER MOUTH BY PPT

**C**hairman, PPT Shri Rinkesh Roy announced the commencement of dredging operations at Mahanadi River Mouth on their Foundation Day. This work will be carried out at an estimated cost of Rs. 15 Crores. The local fishing community has been facing difficulties as the river mouth has been silted up over the years. The Mahanadi River Mouth was last dredged almost 20 years back. It is hoped that the woes of local fishing community over a period of almost two decades will finally see the light of the day due to this initiative by PPT.

### SIGNALS TO BE INTER-LINKED TO ALL LEVEL CROSSINGS

**E**.Co.Rly has initiated interlocking of mid-section Level Crossing Gates in its jurisdiction to enhance safety. Generally, at the Level Crossing Gates, the gatekeeper closes the gate when the train reaches the previous station. Unless the LC Gates are close to the station, the vehicles have to wait for quite some time on the road at the gates till the train passes. With interlocking, the Level Crossing Gates will get automatically closed when the train reaches a specific point, reducing the waiting time for vehicles on the road. As an added safety feature, the signal will not allow the train to move if the Level Crossing Gate is not closed.

### NALCO ADDS ESR TO CSR IN THE NEW YEAR

**N**ALCO kickstarted the New Year by launching an innovative Employee Social Responsibility (ESR) program that offers employees a satisfying way to meaningfully contribute towards social causes. Immediately after unveiling this unique scheme, hundreds of employees came forward to support this initiative by way of contributing Rs 3000 each towards the education of the girl child. The Company will match the contributions with an equal grant for the same. This program will enable the company to augment the existing Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) program with ESR through direct participation of employees. Dr. Tapan Kumar Chand, CMD, NALCO, said, "Nalconians are known for being ordinary citizens, with extraordinary attitude."

HP/3863/18-19

mething which cannot be stopped on the basis of "conjectures and surmises".

It said the 'Ganatantra Bachao Yatra' proposed to cover 42 Lok Sabha seats of West Bengal and expected a galaxy

of party leaders to participate. The yatra has been rescheduled thrice, the latest date being December 26.

The Division Bench of the High Court had refused permission on December 21.

## Naveen rebuts PM's claims on State's agri 'failure'

Gives details of projects in letter to Modi

### SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

BHUABENESWAR

Ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's scheduled visit to Baripada on January 5, Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik on Thursday countered his allegations about the BJD government's failure in achieving promised irrigation targets in the State.



Odisha CM Naveen Patnaik

spent in irrigation and water sector with contribution of ₹1,211 crore that is 4.5% from the government of India contribution through PMKSY (AIPB). In fact, in the current year, a record amount of ₹10,196 crore has been provided by the State."

The Chief Minister further pointed out that with its own programme 46 mega lift irrigation projects with ayacut 54,472 hectares, 53,576 deep bore wells with ayacut 2,67,880 hectares, 5837 community lift points with ayacut 1,29,764 hectares and 8335 check dams with ayacut 97,694 hectares have been created.

"I am happy to share that since 2014, Odisha has created an additional irrigation potential of 7.8 lakh hectares and we are on course to surpass the 10 lakh hectares target that my government has set for itself," Mr. Patnaik said in a letter to Mr. Modi.

### Irrigation potential

Stating that Odisha is among the top States in the country in investment in irrigation and creation of irrigation potential, Mr. Patnaik said: "From 2014, an amount of ₹26,889 crore has been

## Modi to launch projects during visit to Manipur

### IBOYAIMA LAITHANGBAM

IMPHAL

Manipur Chief Minister N. Biren Singh on Thursday said all preparations have been made to give a rousing reception to Prime Minister Narendra Modi who will arrive here on Friday.

"Mr. Modi will stay for about one hour before going to Tripura," he said. The Chief Minister is personally supervising the preparations at Hafta Kangjeibung ground in the heart of Imphal where Mr. Modi is scheduled to address a public meeting.

Mr. Singh said that the Prime Minister would inaugurate eight projects and lay foundation stones for four others. "Since some armed groups have called a boycott of the visit of the Prime Minister, we are leaving nothing to chance," he added.

He also appealed to the people to occupy their seats by 11 a.m. to witness the launching of several developmental projects.

Among the important projects to be inaugurated by Mr. Modi are Integrated Check Post at Moreh and the Dolaithabi barrage.

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RISE 06:26	SET 17:08	
SUNDAY, JAN. 06		
RISE 07:15	SET 17:39	
RISE 07:17	SET 17:58	

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**IN BRIEF**

'Set up growth centres in a time-bound manner'

DEHRADUN  
Uttarakhand Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat on Thursday said the State government will brook no delay in setting up growth centres and asked officials to fully implement the scheme in a time-bound manner. PTI**Man arrested for rape in J&K's Udhampur**JAMMU  
A man was arrested on Thursday for allegedly raping a woman in Udhampur district, police said. The accused allegedly dragged the victim to a nearby forest and raped her while she was returning home. PTI**Man arrested for dowding family**SRINAGAR  
A man was arrested for allegedly taking money from the family of an accused in Pulwama district of Jammu and Kashmir on the pretext of getting him released from the police custody, police said on Thursday. PTI

# Vande Mataram to be a wider exercise

Will involve people, police band participation in M.P.

**ANUP DUTTA**  
Bhopal

The Congress government in Madhya Pradesh led by Chief Minister Kamal Nath is bringing back the singing of Vande Mataram at the State Secretariat in a new form. Its non-recital on the first working day of the month at Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Park near Mantralaya earlier this week had snowballed into a political controversy in the State with the main Opposition party, the BJP, targeting the government over it.

The government's General Administration Department used to organise the programme for government employees on the first working day of every month.

Under the new system, the singing of Vande Mataram will be a wider exercise involving the active participation of the general public and a police band playing the tune, said an official here on Thursday.

The national anthem will



The Congress government led by Chief Minister Kamal Nath is bringing it back in a new form. ■ FILE PHOTO PTI

also be sung apart from the national song.

**Showpiece event**

The police band will start at 10.45 a.m. from the Shaurya Smarak to Vallabh Bhavan playing different patriotic songs, with people in tow. Once they reach Vallabh Bhavan (Secretariat), the national anthem and national song will be sung, the official said. The aim is to make the programme one of Bhopal's showpiece events, the official said.

The new programme will be organised on first working day of every month at the Secretariat and at the divisional headquarters across the State. Members of the State Council of Ministers will take part in it turn-wise.

The group recitation of Vande Matram for the government employees was introduced by the BJP government led by the then Chief Minister Babulal Gaur in 2005. His successor, Shivraj Singh Chouhan, had continued the practice.

The new programme will be organised on first working day of every month at the Secretariat and at the divisional headquarters across the State. Members of the State Council of Ministers will take part in it turn-wise.

## U.P. BJP leader says Hanuman a Vaishya

CM Yogi had declared him a Dalit

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**  
MEERUT

Uttar Pradesh BJP leader Vineet Agarwal Sharda has said Lord Hanuman belonged to the Vaishya community, weeks after Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath termed the Hindu deity a Dalit.

Mr. Sharda claimed on Thursday that the Vaishya community and Lord Ram come from the same lineage and Lord Hanuman is the adopted son of Lord Ram.

**VINEET AGARWAL SHARDA**  
BJP leader

privé. Bajrang Bali worked to connect all Indian communities together, from north to south and east to west. This was his resolve as it was Lord Ram's wish. Just like him, we should also not rest till we fulfil that wish," Mr. Adityanath had said.

**Temple construction**

On the construction of a Ram temple in Ayodhya, Mr. Sharda said the work was on and would be completed soon.

## 5 students hurt as bus overturns

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**  
SHIMLA

Seven persons, including five students, were injured after a private school bus overturned in Himachal Pradesh's Kangra district on Thursday, police said.

The 36-seater bus of Rose Public School was carrying 32 students when it overturned on the Suliali-Kuther road, Nurpur Sub Divisional Police Officer Deputy Superintendent of Police Sahil Arora said.

The injured students were identified as Nandini, Parth, his sister Muskan, Payal and her brother Akshay. The other injured included bus driver Chandan Kumar and attendant Varyam Singh, he said.

The DSP said the injured were later discharged from a hospital. The exact cause of the accident is not yet clear, he said.

# Yogi's fresh fiat to District Magistrates on stray cattle

'Send them to shelters under any condition by January 10'

**OMAR RASHID**

LUCKNOW

Under pressure to tackle the menace of stray cattle, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has instructed all District Magistrates in the State to ensure that stray cattle and destitute cows are sent to shelter homes "under any condition" by January 10, a week's time.



CM at a gaushala in Lucknow. ■ FILE PHOTO

to draw the government's attention. In urban areas, many road accidents have been blamed on stray cattle.

However, Mr. Adityanath has directed officials to take tough action against those who have abandoned their cattle or tie their animals in government buildings or schools. According to a government spokesperson, Mr. Adityanath said "anti-social elements" try to tip up stray cattle in government buildings and schools with the intention of creating a "tense situation", often leading to a law and order problem.

**Fine for release**

"If a person comes to free their animal from the Gau Sanrakshan Kendra, a fine will be imposed on them," a government spokesperson said, quoting Mr. Adityanath.

The CM has instructed all DMs to take interest on cow conservation and work on a campaign level," said the spokesperson.

**Phoolka resigns from AAP**STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

Senior advocate H.S. Phoolka on Thursday announced his resignation from the Aam Aadmi Party, saying that he had submitted his resignation to AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal though he had asked him not to.

Mr. Phoolka, the AAP MLA from Dakha in Punjab, had resigned as the Leader of Opposition in the Punjab Assembly in June 2017 citing his work in fighting 1984 anti-Sikh riots cases in Delhi. Then, in October 2018, he had submitted his resignation as an MLA to the Punjab Assembly Speaker, though it is yet to be accepted.

In a tweet on Thursday, Mr. Phoolka said: "I have resigned from AAP & handed over resignation to Kejriwal ji today. Though he asked me not to resign but I insisted. Will be briefing media tomorrow at 4pm at Press Club, Raisina Rd, New Delhi to explain the Reason of leaving AAP & my further plans. (sic.)"

## Celebration time



Traditional dance: Women dressed in traditional attire perform 'Kullu Nat', a traditional dance, on the second day of the winter carnival in Manali on Thursday. ■ PTI

## Kilns for baking clay griddles set for upgrade in Rajasthan

Heavy demand for the earthenware in U.P. and Haryana

**MOHAMMED IQBAL**

JAIPUR  
The nondescript Punchari village in Rajasthan's Bharatpur district, which is generating an annual turnover of ₹70 lakh with the production of clay griddles, expects to scale up its work with the technical upgradation of kilns in which the earthenwares are baked before they are supplied to big towns. These griddles are in a heavy demand in the neighbouring Haryana and Uttar Pradesh as well.

IIT Delhi's Rural Technology Action Group (RuTAG) will join hands with a Bharatpur-based foundation to provide technical assistance to the members of the Kumhar community, comprising traditional potters, for upgrading their kilns to bake more griddles with lesser quantity of mustard stubble used as fuel.

About 35 households of



Women preparing clay griddles in Bharatpur. ■

conscious" people residing in cities, who believed that the chapati's nutrients were protected when cooked on an earthen plate. The clay griddles are supplied as far as Agra and Mathura in Uttar Pradesh and Faridabad and Gurugram in Haryana.

**Modified design**  
Mr. Prajapati said the clay pottery was taken up in the village both as a traditional occupation and the only livelihood option before the community. "Over a period of two decades, we have understood the demand in the market. We have modified the design and thickness of griddles to suit the requirement of gas stove and heater in the cities," he said.

About 25% of the clay griddles break during baking in furnaces. Bharatpur-based Lupin Foundation is working with RuTAG to find solution to the issue.

## Midday meals to be tested for quality

Following complaints of poor quality

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**

JAIPUR

The midday meals supplied to the government schools in Rajasthan will be tested for quality following the complaints alleging poor quality of food material received from several places. Minister of State for Women and Child Development Mamta Bhupesh has appointed a three-member committee for the purpose.

Ms. Bhupesh said here that the committee would submit its report within 15 days.

**Action against guilty**

Action would be taken against the guilty if the complaints were found valid, she said, adding that the Anganwadi centres functioning across the State would also be refurbished for improvement in their services.

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JANAKPURI B-1/2, Main Najafgarh Road, Opp. Metro Pillar 543. Adj. Umang Palace,

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## IN BRIEF



**Pawan rejects Naidu's overtures for alliance**

VIJAYAWADA  
Close on the heels of Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu offering a rapprochement with the Jana Sena Party, its president Pawan Kalyan ruled out the possibility of forging an alliance with either the TDP or the YSR Congress Party while not saying an emphatic 'yes' to going to the polls with the Left parties. He declared his intention to contest in all the 175 Assembly constituencies in the 2019 election.

**Two die of monkey fever in Karnataka**

SHIVAMOGGA  
Two persons from Aralagodu gram panchayat limits in Sagar taluk, who were suspected to be suffering from the Kyasanur Forest Disease (KFD), also known as monkey fever, have died in two days. With this, the total number of persons who have died owing to fever and joint pain in the gram panchayat limits since December has gone up to four. Meanwhile, a 20-year-old woman from Aralagodu tested positive for the KFD on Thursday.

**TTD mulls MoU with postal dept. to sell diaries**

TIRUMALA  
The Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) is working out modalities for an understanding with the postal department to boost its online sale of diaries and calendars. Though the total counter sales of the diaries and calendars have crossed the 40-lakh mark, online sales have remained sluggish with about only 65,000 sold in 2018. TTD Executive Officer Anil Kumar Singhal sees a huge potential for online sales, provided certain logistics are worked out with the postal department.

# 'Women will get protection at Sabarimala'

CM blames Sangh Parivar for the violent protests

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM



**Troubled zone:** BJP workers hurl stones at the CPI office during the protest against the entry of two young women into the Sabarimala temple, in Palakkad on Thursday. • PTI

Court verdict on Sabarimala. Neither he nor the government was aware of the women's plan to enter Sabarimala. He came to know about it through news reports.

There were no protests and devotees present at the temple were only helpful. The women were not airlifted

ed, they went up the trekking path with other pilgrims. The Sangh Parivar was resorting to violence with political intent, he said.

Mr. Vijayan said Sabarimala head priest ('tantri') Kandararu Rajeevaru should have quit if he was not ready to accept the Supreme Court verdict that allowed entry of

women of all age groups into the Ayyappa temple.

**'Don't threaten tantri'** However, Leader of the Opposition Ramesh Chennithala threw in his lot with the 'tantri'. He told reporters that the Chief Minister had no business to interfere in matters of faith. The 'tantri'

was the final arbitrator in religious rituals at Sabarimala.

"Mr. Vijayan should not threaten the 'tantri' like he intimidates IAS and IPS officers," he said.

"Crores of devotees have backed the decision of the 'tantri' to close the temple after 16 selected policemen from Kannur district escort-

**Miscreants set CPI office on fire in Karnataka**

MANGALURU  
Miscreants set on fire an office of the CPI at Tumbay, near Bantwal Bypass, on Thursday. It is alleged they were protesting against the entry of two women into the Ayyappa temple at Sabarimala. Files, receipts, registers, and other documents of workmen were burnt.



Actor Sudeep arriving at his residence during the search. • G.P. SAMPATH KUMAR

## I-T searches on Kannada film industry

STAFF REPORTER  
BENGALURU

In an unprecedented swoop on big names in the Kannada film industry, the Income Tax (I-T) Department on Thursday began search and seizure operations against eight of its fraternity – four leading actors, three producers of big budget films, and a key distributor.

The targets of Thursday's operations were: Puneeth Rajkumar and Shivarajkumar, sons of the late thespian Dr. Rajkumar; two other leading stars of Kannada cinema Sudeep and Yash; Vijay Kirangandur, producer of the latest hit *KGF*; Rockline Venkatesh and C.R. Manohar, who recently helmed mega-budget films; and key distributor Jayanna.

Though people from the Kannada film industry have come under the I-T scanner earlier, Thursday's was the biggest such operation; most of the big-name actors were facing the I-T heat for the first time. Search operations were targeted at recent mega-budget films, sources said.

The search continued till late into the night on a total of 28 premises linked to the eight individuals, all in Bengaluru. I-T sleuths said gold jewellery and several property documents had been recovered, but refused to give specifics.

## Is 'tantri' supreme? Temple board does not think so

RADHAKRISHNAN KUTTOOR  
PATHANAMTHITTA

The 'Temples of Kerala,' a Government of India publication on the history of temples written by historian S. Jayashankar, says the 'tantri' is the high priest who gives life to the deity ('jeeva-aavaahanam') during the idol installation ceremony (prana-pratishtishta).

The 'jeeva-aavaahanam' to the idol at the time of idol installation is supreme, the book says.

**Deity's representative** The 'tantri' has to perform special rites and for this, the temple custodian is required to offer him 'dakshina.' This cannot be treated as salary or remuneration.

The 'tantri' is selected by the temple authority to perform the idol installation and he becomes the authority on ritualistic matters,

once the idol installation process is completed.

The 'tantri' is thus treated as the representative of the deity.

There is yet another rite of taking oath to fix various procedures ('niyamom-nischayikal') for the day-to-day functioning of the temple. "Once it is decided, it is the bounden duty of all to strictly adhere to it," it says.

Devaswom Commissioner N. Vasu says the TDB, being the owner and custodian of the Ayyappa temple, has every right to remove the 'tantri'.

TDB member K.P. Sankaradas says the board has decided to seek explanation from the 'tantri' for closing the sanctum sanctorum for performing purification rituals without obtaining the TDB's permission.

## Pitched battles seen near capital

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

## No urgent hearing of plea against priest

Will hear all matters on Jan. 22: SC

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court has declined to urgently hear a plea seeking contempt of court action against the Sabarimala temple priest, who closed the sanctum sanctorum to conduct "purification rites" immediately after two women entered the premises on Wednesday.

In an oral mentioning before Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi on Thursday, advocate P.V. Dinesh submitted that the priest, Kandararu Rajeevaru, had been acting in "continuous contempt" ever since the Constitution Bench struck down as unconstitutional the tradition barring entry of women aged between 10 and 50 years into the temple.

Mr. Dinesh said the priest's action was despite an earlier contempt petition moved against him in the Supreme Court in November last year.

A woman too had sought the permission of the Attorney General to file a contempt case against Kandararu Rajeevaru.

The AG's consent is required under the Rules to Regulate Proceedings for Contempt of the Supreme Court, 1975.

But the Chief Justice refused to accede to Mr. Dinesh's request. He said the court had already fixed January 22 for hearing Sabarimala matters.

"We have arranged our schedules accordingly. It is not possible to re-schedule the hearing like this," the Chief Justice told the lawyer.

**आईए अब सिर्फ बेहतर कल की बात करें**  
**प्रगति पथ पर हिमाचल सरकार के साथ चलें**

**इमानदार प्रयास का 1 विकास का**

**गुणात्मक शिक्षा के लिए अधोसंरचना का विस्तार**

**अटल आदर्श आवासीय विद्यालय, उन सभी विधानसभा क्षेत्रों में स्थापित होंगे, जिनमें नवोदय अथवा एकलव्य विद्यालय नहीं हैं। इनमें से 5 विद्यालय केवल छात्राओं के लिए खोले जाएंगे**

**अटल वर्दी योजना के अंतर्गत पहली, तीसरी, छठी और नौवीं कक्षाओं के विद्यार्थियों को वर्दी के साथ-साथ बस्ते भी देने का निर्णय**

**मेधा प्रोत्साहन योजना के अंतर्गत विद्यार्थियों को राज्य अथवा राज्य के बाहर प्रतियोगी परीक्षाओं के प्रशिक्षण के लिए अधिकतम एक लाख रुपये की वित्तीय सहायता प्रदान की जाएगी**

**पुराने छात्रों को स्कूलों से जोड़कर बच्चों को प्रेरित करने के लिये अखण्ड शिक्षा ज्योति-मेरे स्कूल सेनिकले मोती योजना आरम्भ**

**प्रदेश के चयनित 3391 स्कूलों में नरसरी व के.जी. कक्षाएं आरम्भ**

## IN BRIEF



Das: panel to look into demands of para-teachers

RANCHI  
Jharkhand Chief Minister Raghbir Das on Thursday set up a high-level committee headed by Education Minister Neera Yadav to consider the demands of para-teachers, who are on strike for last three months in support of their various demands. PTI

## Two smugglers arrested with heroin in Udhampur

JAMMU  
Two narcotic smugglers were arrested in Jammu and Kashmir's Udhampur district on Thursday, the police said. Based on a tip-off, a police party intercepted a car at main market in Udhampur city and during its search, 60 gm of heroin was recovered, they said. PTI

## Police team attacked in Ballia, six injured

BALLIA (U.P.)  
Six officers were injured when a group of locals attacked a police team which went to a village in Uttar Pradesh's Ballia district to recover illegal arms, the police said on Thursday. PTI

## Leh, Kargil districts to have solar power projects

JAMMU  
Leh and Kargil districts of the Ladakh region will soon have solar power projects under the State-run Solar Energy Corporation of India, officials said on Thursday. PTI

## 21 IAS, 16 IPS officers shifted in Rajasthan

JAIPUR  
In a bureaucratic reshuffle, the Rajasthan government has transferred and redesignated 21 IAS and 16 IPS officers, according to a release by the Department of Personnel. PTI

# Many Swachh Bharat toilets defunct, unusable: MPs' panel

'Govt. failed to conduct survey to find out scope of problem, tainting ODF data and claims'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Many toilets constructed under the Swachh Bharat Mission have already become defunct and unusable, according to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Rural Development. It slammed the Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation for not bothering to find out the scope of the problem, despite an earlier recommendation to conduct a survey.

"Till the time the problem of toilets becoming dysfunctional is not tackled seriously by the Ministry, the objective of full household sanitation coverage in the entire rural areas of the country by October 2, 2019, would remain a distant dream," said the committee in its report on the action taken by the government on earlier recommendations, which was presented to Parliament earlier this week.

**Ministry claim**  
In its reply, the Ministry claimed that only toilets built under previous



The toilets needs to be safe and sustainable, says the parliamentary panel in its report. ■ FILE PHOTO

schemes were defunct. "Dysfunctional toilets are those which were constructed under earlier rural sanitation programme, especially during Total Sanitation Campaign, with incentive of ₹5000 to ₹3,200," said the Ministry. Funds from the Finance Ministry's Swachh Bharat Kosh, which channels private and corporate money to the mission, were being used to retrofit these defunct toilets constructed under earlier schemes, it said.

However, the parliamentary panel made it clear that Swachh Bharat toilets were

also dysfunctional.

"To the utter dismay of the committee, it has been observed that many toilets already constructed under SBM have become defunct and non-functional due to various reasons pertaining to the quality of construction and scarcity of water. The committee was disturbed while taking cognisance of this situation and feel that for the success of this vision, the constructed toilets need to be safe and sustainable so that they can be utilised for a long period of time," the report said.

The panel had recom-

mended that the Ministry do an assessment to find out the number of such defunct toilets, and criticised the Ministry for not following the recommendation. "The Ministry reply is silent as to what action has been initiated to conduct the recommended survey for assessment of such toilets which have already become redundant and unusable," it said.

It had warned that the Swachh Bharat Mission's data on open defecation was suspect as defunct toilets are being counted as functional. "The data on the SBM portal which indicates that the beneficiaries has already been provided with a toilet creates a situation wherein, if the toilets so constructed were not of good quality and become defunct within a short span of time and as such are not being used, are still counted as functional toilets," said the report.

"The beneficiaries are in no position to avail the reallocation of construction of toilets and still go in the open."

## 10 die in boat tragedy in Odisha

STAFF REPORTER  
BHUBANESWAR

Ten persons, including eight children, died when the fishing boat they had boarded capsized near Nipania village in Kendrapara district on Wednesday evening.

Nine bodies have been recovered from waters of the Bay of Bengal while body of a six-year-old girl, who is believed to be dead, has not been retrieved.

As many as 55 villagers, mostly women and children, from Hasina village in neighbouring Jagatsinghpur district had gone to Hukitala, an unmanned island in Bay of Bengal and a popular heritage site, by a fishing boat for a New Year picnic on Wednesday.

While returning, the boat capsized near Nipania village. Hearing the shrieks of passengers, villagers rushed to the spot and rescued the passengers.

They also retrieved the bodies of the dead passengers.

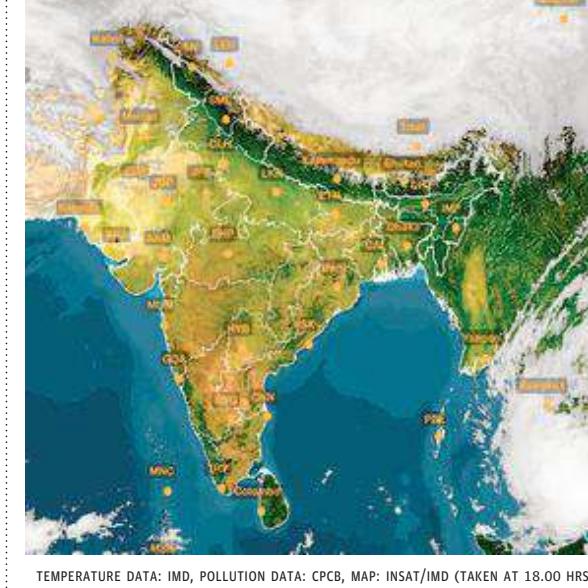
### Rescue operation

"The forest department, the Odisha Disaster Rapid Action Force, the police and local people carried out the rescue operation and managed to fish out nine bodies. We are yet to find the body of missing girl. We apprehend she is dead," Kendrapara District Magistrate Dasarathi Satpathy said on Thursday.

Expressing his grief over the boat tragedy, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik on Thursday morning announced ex gratia of ₹4 lakh to the next of kin of the deceased and free treatment to the injured.

## 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 Friday:** Heavy snowfall is likely at isolated places over Jammu & Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh. Hailstorm likely at isolated places over Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand. Dense fog likely at isolated places over Assam and Meghalaya.

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	—	27.4	9.8	Kozhikode	—	34.2	20.2
Ahmedabad	—	29.6	10.8	Kurnool	—	33.1	15.3
Aizawl	—	25.2	11.4	Lucknow	—	22.9	7.0
Allahabad	—	24.8	7.4	Madurai	—	31.2	17.2
Bengaluru	—	28.5	13.1	Mangaluru	—	34.8	17.0
Bhopal	—	26.4	9.2	Mumbai	—	31.3	14.7
Bhubaneswar	—	29.9	11.2	Mysoor	—	27.8	13.3
Chandigarh	—	21.0	5.5	New Delhi	—	20.5	6.7
Chennai	—	29.1	20.1	Patna	—	22.6	6.6
Coimbatore	—	30.9	16.6	Po Blair	—	30.7	25.8
Dehradun	—	21.3	5.1	Puducherry	—	30.4	16.4
Gangtok	—	12.0	4.5	Pune	—	32.0	8.4
Goa	—	34.5	18.2	Raipur	—	28.8	12.4
Guwahati	—	25.0	10.7	Ranchi	—	24.0	7.0
HUBLI	—	29.0	16.0	Shillong	—	13.9	5.2
Hyderabad	—	30.8	11.9	Shimla	—	11.1	1.8
Imphal	—	22.2	3.7	Srinagar	—	8.6	—
Jaipur	—	24.3	7.6	Trivandrum	—	33.5	20.3
Kochi	—	31.6	21.2	Tiruchi	—	30.3	18.4
Kohima	—	16.8	3.2	Vijayawada	—	29.5	16.8
Kolkata	—	26.1	12.6	Visakhapatnam	—	28.2	18.0

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)  
Pollutants in the air you are breathing Yesterday

CITIES	SO <sub>2</sub>	NO <sub>x</sub>	CO	PM <sub>2.5</sub>	PM <sub>10</sub>	CODE
Ahmedabad	63	.92	.26	.253	....	■
Bengaluru	5	.36	.92	.107	.118	■
Chennai	20	.16	.59	.319	....	■
Delhi	31	.81	.89	.480	.459	■
Hyderabad	.4	113	.48	.164	.150	■
Kolkata	30	161	.12	.409	.364	■
Lucknow	.9	.71	.27	.401	....	—
Mumbai	32	.71	.103	.232	.264	■
Pune	.9	.18	.65	.166	.132	■
Visakhapatnam	35	121	.41	.299	.257	■

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Patna, Bihar recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 466 indicating a very high level of pollution. In contrast, Chikballapur, Karnataka recorded a healthy AQI score of 75

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

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

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

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

**PM<sub>2.5</sub> & PM<sub>10</sub>:** Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

## No arrest yet in Bihar lynching case

AMARNATH TEWARI  
PATNA

Even five days after a 55-year-old man was lynched by a mob in Bihar's Araria district allegedly for cattle theft, no arrest has yet been made in the case. However, the police on Thursday arrested five persons in another case in which two persons, including a minor, were lynched in the State's Nalanda district on Wednesday.

According to the villagers, the incident took place in the early hours of December 30 when a mob of over 300 peo-

ple allegedly caught 55-year-old Ansari stealing cattle from Simarbani village. The mob beat him to death even as he kept pleading his innocence. Ansari was from the neighbouring Ranikatta village.

**Criminal past**  
The police said he had a criminal past as over a dozen cases are pending against him at different police stations in Araria and Kishanganj dis-

tricts. A month ago, a gun and nine cartridges were also seized from his residence.

"He had a criminal past, but we are investigating," Sikki police station in-charge Rakesh Kumar told journalists on Wednesday. It was alleged that Ansari was into cattle smuggling from across the border of neighbouring Nepal. He was beaten to death by people of the same community.

## DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF HEALTH SERVICES, GNCTD

F-17, KARKARDOOMA, SHAHDARA, DELHI- 110032

### Notice for empanelment of Doctors for Aam Aadmi Mohalla Clinic

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## IN BRIEF



## Frost in Ooty excites tourists, worries farmers

UDHAGAMANDALAM  
With night-time temperature hovering between 4-6 degrees Celsius, parts of Udhagamandalam, and even Coonoor, are covered with frost. The holiday destination is attracting tourists in hordes but farmers here are worried it may affect their crops.

## Bengal to clear DA dues of State govt. employees

KOLKATA  
West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee on Thursday announced that her government will clear all pending Dearness Allowance for State employees from January. "We don't have money but still we shall release the DA dues by January," she said.

## 3 militants killed in Pulwama gunfight

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

SRINAGAR  
Three militants were killed in an operation in Pulwama's Tral area on Thursday. Three soldiers also sustained injuries in the gunfight, while over 10 protesters were injured in clashes that followed the encounter.

A search party encircled a group of militants in higher reaches of Tral in the morning. The militants opened fire, which was retaliated. Three militants were neutralised and the bodies were recovered," said a police officer. The slain militants were identified as Zubair Ahmad Bhat alias Abu Huraira, Shakoor Ahmad Paray alias Jaffar and Tawseef Ahmad Thoker alias Abu Talha, all residents of Pulwama district.

The suit was filed under Section 12(1)(d) of the Consumer Protection Act, 1986. This provision allows the Centre or a State, either in its individual capacity or as a representative of the interests of the consumers, to file a complaint in the consumer forum.

The department claimed that Nestle was liable to pay ₹284.55 crore along with punitive damages of ₹355.4 crore for "gross negligence, apathy and callousness" on its part. Thus, the government demanded a total of ₹639.96 crore.

On Thursday, a Bench led by Justice D.Y Chandrachud revived the suit in the NCDRC, which would hear it on the basis of a report filed by the Mysuru-based Central Food Technological Research Institute in 2016.

The suit was filed under

development (MoWCD).

Some of the findings of this exercise were shared last year before the Supreme Court, which took suo moto cognisance of rampant child abuse at a shelter in Muzaffarpur in Bihar. The detailed report shows that only 46.7% of the total homes had adequate number of caregivers per child and only 28.7% centres were able to tend to inmates showing signs of hunger or illness and 65.9% of homes were able to actively supervise children under trauma, according to the report titled 'Mapping and Review Exercise of Child Care Institutions'.

The report also says that the lack of infrastructure facilities is "glaring" and finds that more than 1,000 homes did not have a dormitory for

children, raising questions about sleeping arrangements made for them.

The report finds that even though there are several mechanisms for monitoring, regular inspections of these shelters were not being carried out.

In a letter to Indian cricket captain Virat Kohli and the Board of Control for Cricket in India written on the eve of the Sydney Test match, the principal scientist of Jhabua's Krishivigyan Kendra, or agriculture knowledge centre, has suggested that the Kadaknath or Kali Masi chicken could be a healthy addition to the team's diet.

"I read on the internet that Virat Kohli used to enjoy grilled chicken, but had given it up because of the high fat and cholesterol content, and so the team has adopted a vegan diet,"

PRISCILLA JEVARAJ  
NEW DELHI

The Indian cricket team does not have to adopt a vegan diet to avoid fat and cholesterol if it eats the meat of the famous Kadaknath chickens of Madhya Pradesh.

In a letter to Indian cricket captain Virat Kohli and the Board of Control for Cricket in India written on the eve of the Sydney Test match, the principal scientist of Jhabua's Krishivigyan Kendra, or agriculture knowledge centre, has suggested that the Kadaknath or Kali Masi chicken could be a healthy addition to the team's diet.

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enjoy grilled chicken, but had given it up because of the high fat and cholesterol content, and so the team has adopted a vegan diet,"

KVK head I.S. Tomar told *The Hindu*. "So I decided to write him a letter about the unique qualities of our black chickens."

**High in protein**

The Kali Masi is a local breed of chicken which is completely black in colour, feathers, flesh and even bones. The chicken, traditionally reared by

Jhabua's adivasis

communities, was granted a Geographical Indication (GI) tag by the government registry last year.

Breeders claim that its cholesterol content is just 0.73-1.05%, in comparison with the 13-25% level in regular white chickens. "Not only is the cholesterol and fat low, but it has very high levels of protein, iron and amino acids," said Dr.

Tomar, who has been working on the breed for the last 15 years.

**Pricey option**

Dr. Tomar admitted that switching to Kadaknath may hike the cricket team's food bill. "We sell the male for ₹800 and the female for ₹700, but those are the nominal rates. Private sellers retail the chicken for ₹1,200 to ₹1,500 each," he said. Despite the cost, the breed's demand is high.

**Cricketers won't have to go vegan to avoid fat, cholesterol**

PRISCILLA JEVARAJ  
NEW DELHI

The Indian cricket team does not have to adopt a vegan diet to avoid fat and cholesterol if it eats the meat of the famous Kadaknath chickens of Madhya Pradesh.

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In a letter



## Breaking barriers

The key is to allow women to pray at Sabarimala in an orderly way

In facilitating the entry of two women, albeit in stealth and under the cover of darkness, the Kerala government has displayed some resolve in breaking the illegal blockade imposed by some devotees on permitting females in the 10-50 age group into the Sabarimala temple. This is the first time women of menstruating age have made their way into the shrine after a Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court in September 2018 threw the temple open to women of all ages. Under some pressure to demonstrate that it had not gone soft as a result of the upsurge of protests against the Supreme Court's order and was keen on signalling that it was in favour of upholding the law, the government appears to have drawn up an elaborate and closely scripted plan, with assistance from the State police and civil administration, to help Bindu and Kanakadurga make their way unnoticed to the temple from the foothills at Pampa. Unfortunately, but not entirely unpredictably, news of their visit has resulted in a cycle of violent and politically orchestrated protests, clashes, and mass arrests. Tragically, one life was lost.

In the face of an illegal blockade to prevent menstruating-age women from visiting the temple, the Kerala government will regard this operation as a victory. But clearly, even it must be aware that covert ops such as this one are not a sustainable solution to the Sabarimala problem. The State government's dilemma – and also its responsibility – is to find a way of ensuring safe passage for all women who want to visit the temple while keeping the peace at the same time. Given the passions at play, and the cynical attempts to politically exploit them, this is anything but an easy task. In the short term, though – and this may well have been its intent – the Left Front government has managed to alter the narrative in the Sabarimala controversy. The decision of the temple authorities to close the *sanctum sanctorum* and perform purification rituals has invoked old and regressive notions of purity and pollution, of defilement and desecration. They have focussed attention on the role of the chief priest (or Tantri) of Sabarimala, leaving him open to the charge levelled by Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan that his actions violated both the Supreme Court order and the Devaswom Manual. At a larger level, the entry of the two women has, perhaps inevitably, recalled Justice D.Y. Chandrachud's words in the majority judgment in the Sabarimala case. In his judgment, he had argued that the ban on women's entry was a "form of untouchability", and their exclusion was a "violation of the right to liberty, dignity and equality". Meanwhile, as passions continue to escalate, it is important for the State government, the Travancore Devaswom Board and also those representing the devotees to initiate a conversation and prevent the State from being consumed in a further cycle of violence and conflict over this issue.

## Dark side of the moon

China's successful mission will greatly advance knowledge of earth's satellite

China joined a select group of countries with successful missions to the moon, when its space-craft, Chang'e-4, successfully made a landing at 10.26 on January 3, according to the China National Space Administration. It landed at a spot on the moon's far side, the Von Kármán crater, which is untouched by earlier missions from earth. After landing, Chang'e-4, named after the Chinese moon goddess, relayed a close-up image of the 'far' side of the moon through the communication relay satellite Queqiao. The Queqiao satellite was launched last May by China for the very purpose of helping Chang'e-4 communicate with earth, as a direct communication with it is not possible from the moon's far side, which never faces earth. The Chang'e-4 mission carries payloads, of which two are in collaboration with Germany and Sweden, respectively. The instruments include cameras, low-frequency radio spectrum analyser, lunar neutron and radiation dose detectors, and many more. Among other things, the mission could pave the way to setting up a radio telescope on the far side of the moon.

Considering that earth is right next door to the moon, we know precious little about it. Its formation and early evolution present mysteries which, if understood, could guide us in planetary studies, and help in understanding exoplanets. The near side, which faces earth, has dark patterns; the far side, turned away, is marked with circular spots that are craters formed by meteorite collisions. The moon's near side is believed to have a thinner shell, so that when meteorites bombarded it they cracked its shell, releasing lava which gushed out and covered traces of the impact and left dark patches. Being thicker, the far side did not face such an erasure and bears the marks of the crater impacts. This mission could verify these theories and discover the reason behind these dichotomies. The moon's far side also differs from the near side in that it is shielded from all the radio waves emanating from earth. Communication devices and satellites have made it too noisy for radio astronomers to easily and accurately interpret signals. The near side of the moon also suffers from this problem of noise. On the other hand, the far side is a quiet place and a haven for earthly aspirations to set up a radio telescope that could reveal astronomical mysteries, such as the structure of the universe shortly after the Big Bang. China has now joined the U.S. and the former USSR as the only countries to have made a "soft landing" on the moon. But beyond underlining China's technological advances, Chang'e-4 could herald a new chapter in lunar exploration.

# Hope with concerns in 2019

Five issues need to be addressed comprehensively if India is to achieve sustained high growth



C. RANGARAJAN

**T**he New Year is always looked forward to with hope, whatever the conditions might have been the previous year; 2018 has been a mixed bag, both globally and domestically.

Globally, the growth rate in 2018 was high, particularly in the United States. But strong signs of a trade war emerged, dimming hopes of faster international trade. Britain is passing through the pangs of separation from the European Union. Domestically, the first quarter growth rate was high. But signs are not good for the balance of the year. The rupee underwent a severe shock as crude oil prices rose, and abated after a fall in oil prices. While prices fell, agrarian distress accentuated.

India's growth rate in 2018-19 is forecast at 7.4% by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). But it looks to be a touch-and-go situation. More likely, it will be slightly lower. Looking ahead, 2019 may not show any substantial rise in the growth rate. Even though the Goods and Services Tax (GST) has stabilised, much will depend on the pickup in the investment rate.

The international environment is not that conducive for growth in our foreign trade; this will have an impact on our exports and, therefore, growth. Perhaps the growth rate will be between 7.2% and 7.5%. Though this may be the highest growth rate of any country, it falls short of our requirements.

Going ahead, what are our major concerns?

### Investment ratio

In the final analysis, the growth rate depends on the investment rate and the productivity of capital or its inverse incremental capital-output ratio.

The incremental capital output ratio is a catch-all expression. It depends upon a multiple number of factors such as quality of labour, which again depends on education and skill development levels, and technology, which is constantly changing. For ensuring a sustained high growth, we need to raise the investment ratio and keep the incremental capital-output ratio at 4. The Gross Fixed Capital Formation ratio has fallen from 35.8% in 2007-08 to 28.5% in 2017-18. The journey to raise the investment ratio is not going to be easy. Animal spirits' must be revived. A tranquil political and economic environment needs to be nurtured.

### Banking system

An important factor affecting economic growth is the condition of our banking system. Non-performing assets (NPAs), including stressed assets, as a proportion of loans of public sector banks stood at 16.7% as of March 2018. As many as 11 public sector banks are under Prompt Corrective Action (PCA). This restricts the lending abilities of these banks. Added to this, the non banking financial company (NBFC) system is also under stress. This is partly a reflection of the stress in the banking system since most NBFCs borrow from banks. Recapitalisation of public sector banks will partly solve the problem. It is not clear at this point how much it will help in adding to lending capacity.

Some have advocated providing more capital to banks outside the PCA framework as that will increase their lending capacity immediately.

Today, banks are responsible both for short-term and long-term lending. Their inability to lend affects the availability of working capital as well as capital expenditures.

The decision to pump in more capital to public sector banks must be completed soon. The growth rate in the industrial sector will de-



pend on how quickly the banking system comes back to normalcy.

### Employment growth

There is a great concern about the inadequate growth of employment. Honestly, we do not have satisfactory employment numbers. The employment data in the organised sector are reliable. But the employment in the informal sector is much larger. One question that is asked is that if growth is around 7%, why is there no corresponding growth in employment? We need to keep two factors in mind. Growth can occur either as a result of increase in investment or because of better utilisation of existing capacity. It is growth which is led by new investment that leads to a significant increase in employment. But growth caused by improved efficiency of utilisation of existing capital can lead only to a marginal increase in employment. Much of the growth seen in the last few years is of the latter variety.

Second, the increase in employment seen in the period between 2004-05 and 2009-10 was because of the rapid growth of the information technology (IT) and financial sectors. The IT sector has slowed down. The financial sector is under stress. Employment in these sectors was visible and educated entrants into the labour market found ample opportunities. The IT sector growth rate is not likely to pick up significantly as this industry is undergoing many structural

changes. The revival of the banking system depends on a number of factors. Thus, even from the point of view of employment, the key factor is the pickup in investment.

India's external sector has grown and is well integrated with the rest of the world. India's trade in goods and services as a percentage of GDP has grown to 42% of GDP. Therefore, what happens in the rest of the world affects India's growth very much. India's balance of payment situation has been comfortable since liberalisation. However, there are vulnerabilities as seen in September-October 2018, when the value of the rupee suddenly plummeted when crude oil prices rose and there were simultaneous capital outflows. RBI intervention and the subsequent fall in crude prices have restored the value of the rupee. In April-November 2018, India's exports of goods grew by 11.6%. However, we need to note that exports growth was 5.2% (2016-17) and 9.8% (2017-18). Strong growth in exports is a must if we have to keep the current account deficit (CAD) at a manageable level.

The forecast for world trade and output is not encouraging. There are too many uncertainties which include an intensification in the trade war. Along with export promotion, we also need to contain some of our large imports. A watch on India's CAD is critically important if we have to achieve growth with stability.

### Agrarian distress

The future growth also depends on the performance of agriculture. Agrarian distress is widespread. Strangely, the fall in prices of agricultural products is in one sense a reflection of our success in raising output. Some years ago, the concern was a rise in the price of pulses to abnormally high levels. But today the picture is reversed. Thanks to increase in production, prices have fallen. Similar is the case with respect to vegetables,

particularly onion. The need of agriculturists is income in current prices. The solution to the fall in prices lies in government intervening in the market and buying off the surplus over normal levels. The market will then automatically take prices to the normal level. The important requirement in this context is not only the financial capacity of the government to procure but also adequate physical arrangements to procure and store. The procured agricultural products can be sold by the government in later years when output is low or utilised in any safety net programme.

Loan waivers are at best short-term solutions. The fundamental problem is one of increasing productivity and enabling farmers to achieve increased output and better prices. There is also a basic weakness that we have to address. The average size of landholding is so small that any amount of increase in productivity will not give adequate income. Farmers have to think in terms of consolidation of landholdings so that they can get the benefits of larger size. Small farmers will also have to think in terms of higher value-added products like vegetables. A combined attack to increase productivity, consolidate landholdings and improve marketing is needed to assure farmers of better income.

Thus there are five concerns as we stand at the beginning of 2019. These are: raising the investment ratio; putting the banking system back on the rails; employment generation through better growth; enhancing export growth to contain the CAD; and removing agrarian distress by increasing productivity and consolidation of small landholdings. These issues need to be addressed comprehensively, if we have to achieve sustained high growth.

C. Rangarajan is Former Chairman of the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister and Former Governor, Reserve Bank of India

## A case of unprincipled criminalisation

The triple talaq Bill is a classic case of an unfair legislative move with a populist agenda



KALEESWARAM RAJ

In an essay published in the *Washington University Law Review* (1979), Martin R. Gardner posed a significant question whether an "illicit legislative motivation" could be a "sufficient condition for unconstitutionality". He explored this "muddled area" in the context of religious motivation under the establishment clause of the U.S. Constitution and said that "the claim that religious motivation justifies invalidation is controversial and largely conjectured". He, however, identified "significant sectarian motivation" without a "secular purpose" as a ground for invalidation of the law.

The content of the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Bill, 2018 (Triple Talaq Bill) clearly reflects a sectarian over-

tone that even attempted to mislead the public by distorting the Supreme Court judgment in *Shayara Bano*'s case (2017). In the 'statement of objects and reasons' attached to the Bill, Union Law Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad said that in spite of the Supreme Court setting aside the practice of talaq-e-biddat in *Shayara Bano*, there have been reports of divorce by way of such means. He described the Bill as an instance of "state action to give effect to the order of the Supreme Court and to redress the grievances of victims of illegal divorce". He also lamented that the Supreme Court verdict "has not worked as any deterrent in bringing down the number of divorces by this practice among certain Muslims".

### Disproportionate punishment

The Bill is a classic case of an unfair and deceptive legislative move with a populist agenda, which in a country like India should call for a novel and effective judicial scrutiny. First of all, in the emblematic judgment in *Shayara Bano* the ma-

principled criminalisation. Paradoxically, it was in 2018 that the top court has ostensibly developed this concept by way of the verdicts on homosexuality (*Navtej Singh Johar v Union of India*) and adultery (*Joseph Shine v. Union of India*).

Second, the majority verdict in *Shayara Bano* did not direct the government or Parliament to criminalise triple talaq or "to give effect to the order", as implied in the Bill. There was no need to do so either, as the judgment got effectuated on its own. The judgment had no intention to create any deterrent, since the very act of triple talaq is void *ab initio*, according to the Supreme Court. The Bill thus tries to distort the intent and content of what the court said in *Shayara Bano*. An analogy between criminalisation of dowry and triple talaq does not make sense. In the case of dowry, transaction is a reality, whereas in triple talaq, after the top court holding that it is a nullity, there is no act at all in the legal sense to constitute an offence. The Bill thus as-

sumes validity for an action which the court invalidated, and as such the very thematic premise for the Bill is artificial, erroneous and even contemptuous. The settled legal principle in India that no ill motive could be attributed to legislation would require a revisit, when politics outweighs constitutionalism.

Third, criminalisation of triple talaq, can only motivate a "clever" husband to resort to other methods of divorce which do not fall within the ambit of the Bill or to simply desert his wife. Thus the Bill does not serve the Muslim woman's interest.

### Blow against tenets

By trying to segregate a particular mode of divorce in a particular community and to punish the men of that community alone, the Centre is trying to shatter two fundamental tenets of the Indian Constitution – equality in the eye of the law and secularism.

Kaleeswaram Raj is a lawyer in the Supreme Court of India

## 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.

### Sabarimala entry

One fails to understand the hue and cry over the entry of two women into the sanctum sanctorum of the Sabarimala Ayyappa temple in Kerala when the Supreme Court has already ruled women's entry as fair (Page 1, "Two women make it to Sabarimala", January 3). Gender equality or justice always trumps age-old traditions. If some form of tradition comes in the way of promoting gender equality, we must do away with it. Does god consider a female devotee to be less of a devotee than her male counterpart? If god treats everyone equally, who are these priests and tantris to impose restrictions on the entry of women? Those resorting to violence seem to be obeying neither god nor the Supreme Court.

N. VENKATA SAI PRAVEEN,  
Singapore

■ It is a purification of the mind that is required rather than the purification of the temple. It must be

acknowledged that every change requires a certain time for acceptance. Who knows? There may come a time, years later, when there could be a woman priest who might use her discretionary powers to take a call on any issue.

M.V.R. NAGALAKSHMI,  
Hyderabad

■ Like men, women too have a fundamental right to enter any temple. Let us not forget that god, who is latent in every bit of the universe, lives in the heart of every woman too. Those who are impure from within are the truly impure ones. The 'first step' by the two women might be historic, but the real battle has just begun.

R. SIVAKUMAR,  
Chennai

■ What does the entry of the two young women prove? It only projects a manipulative "win" by those who, aided by the political system, are attention-seeking, deceptive, stubborn, selfish and disrespectful towards faith.

MANICKAM RAVINDRAN,  
Nagercoil, Tamil Nadu

■ The entire exercise, a sham, a well-planned one, with the full support of law enforcement agencies, was

Any person who is sensitive towards beliefs in faith will never try to hurt another's belief or sentiment, especially using "crutches".

KIRAN GOSWAMI,  
New Delhi

■ That the two women could enter the temple in the early hours of Wednesday, with the tacit aid of the Kerala Police, clearly shows the Kerala government's scant regard for the sentiments of countless devotees as well as its complicity in the whole drama. The Left government is sure to pay a heavy political price as the development has ruffled many feathers. The government should have taken a neutral stance in the matter but in its greed to reap political capital, it has lost the goodwill of the majority.

MANICKAM RAVINDRAN,  
Nagercoil, Tamil Nadu

■ The entire exercise, a sham, a well-planned one, with the full support of law enforcement agencies, was

by 'activists' in the garb of believers, and with scant respect and regard for rituals. They were out only to prove a point rather than undertaking a pilgrimage out of a sense of genuine piety and true faith, which runs antithetical to the essence of the court verdict. At a time when the review petitions are yet to attain finality, the Kerala government ought to have adopted a wait-and-watch approach. This development has affected genuine efforts to resolve the issue and has only antagonised vast sections.

This is no act of courage but an act of cowardice.

B. SURESH KUMAR,  
Coimbatore

■ This is no act of courage but an act of cowardice. The 'first step' by the two women might be historic, but the real battle has just begun.

D. SETHURAMAN,  
Chennai

■ The great land of the literate is crumbling under the political melodrama. While the major political parties appear to be washing their hands of the issue, true devotees – those who observe and undertake the

temple's special nature should not be dismantled.

K. RAJENDRAN,  
Chennai

■ The women may have the legal right to enter the temple, but the manner in which they went about it is disgusting. Did they go to Sabarimala out of religious faith? No. They took it up as a challenge to enter the temple at any cost given their failed bid earlier.

YES, NO, IT'S COMPLICATED

# Is the Modi charisma fading?

YES



NILANJAN MUKHOPADHYAY  
is a journalist and has written a book on Narendra Modi

Leaders like Narendra Modi run the danger of becoming their own nemesis

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's charisma has been visibly declining since mid-2017. The point that is open for debate is whether or not he can reverse the slide by playing the several cards he is adept at playing. Paradoxically, the onset of the fade-out of Mr. Modi's charisma coincided with the beginning of the makeover of Rahul Gandhi. The scion is no longer a presumptive leader; he has emerged as Mr. Modi's prime challenger.

Regardless of how the political narrative concludes this year, Mr. Modi will surely rue his role in the emergence of the Congress presi-

dent as a credible politician. Mr. Gandhi need not be formally named as the prime ministerial face of the Opposition because in its hurry to convert the electoral battle into a Modi versus Gandhi contest, the BJP willy-nilly elevated Mr. Gandhi's political stock by unceasingly ridiculing him. Mr. Modi repeated the Congress leadership's error of ceaselessly targeting him when he was Gujarat Chief Minister and elevating him from a regional leader to a national one.

Leaders like Mr. Modi run the danger of becoming their own nemesis. To assess his current stand-

ing, we need to weigh him against his own past. In 2013-14, there was certainty about the BJP's victory; only the final tally was the subject of speculation. Back then, Mr. Modi was the alternative.

In contrast, only a dramatic alteration in the current political narrative can ensure that the BJP gets anywhere close to its 2014 tally of 282 seats in the Lok Sabha. The party's hopes of preventing a major decline in its tally is now significantly dependent on the TINA (There Is No Alternative) factor.

**Evidence of decline**  
The decline in Mr. Modi's charisma is evident through both anecdotal



and empirical evidence. The first signs of decline were seen in Gujarat in 2017 when people began walking out of his election meetings. From the scenario in 2014, when venues of his meetings

reverberated with chants of "Modi, Modi", visuals of people tossing Modi masks while leaving were ominous. Yet, the escape by the skin of his teeth was proof that much of the sheen had worn off. Throughout 2018, empirical proof was added to what was already discernible. The BJP lost many by-elections, and the final confirmation came with the Assembly elections at the end of the year. For a party that won every election in the name

of Mr. Modi, even when it nominated chief ministerial candidates, the Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan defeats demonstrated that much of the hype around Brand Modi has eroded in the Hindi heartland. This was where the BJP won almost 200 Lok Sabha seats in 2014.

A deduction can be made of the erosion of Mr. Modi's charisma by deconstructing the magnetism which drew people towards him in 2014. First, it was grounded in massive anti-incumbency against the Manmohan Singh government. Over this edifice, myths surrounding Mr. Modi were woven. This included the publicised concept of the Gujarat model, euphemism for single-window administration, which

caught the imagination of the people because Mr. Singh spoke of the compulsions of coalition politics. The situation was tailor-made for the emergence of a powerful orator with the image of a decisive leader to raise hopes, and Mr. Modi possessed these skills amply.

## An uphill task

The advantage of being an outsider is no longer there. The incumbent cannot blame anyone else any more. Young voters are dependent on hearsay, for they have little direct memory of the perils of coalitions. The resurrection of Mr. Modi's charisma is therefore an uphill task and explains the decision to bank on Hindutva, ultranationalism and doles.

NO



SHIV SHAKTI NATH BAKSHI  
is the executive editor of Kamal Sandesh, the BJP's official journal

Mr. Modi seems to emerge stronger from bold gambles such as demonetisation and GST

Sceptics may draw momentary solace from an imaginary fading of Narendra Modi's charisma in the wake of the recent Assembly election results. Every time such scepticism is built on some unfounded grounds, the consequences prove disastrous for those raising doubts. In Uttar Pradesh, those who felt that the BJP had reached its peak in the 2014 Lok Sabha elections and assumed that it would not be able to repeat such a feat were proved wrong when the Assembly election

results came out. Mr. Modi has proven his critics wrong time and again since the days he was Chief Minister of Gujarat. His charisma has never waned; in fact, it has been growing overwhelmingly with every passing day. Mr. Modi's charisma is built on hard work, consistency, commitment and perseverance. He has a strong political will and vision.

### The Modi phenomenon

Mr. Modi has emerged as a phenomenon in Indian politics. When

scams dominated the headlines, when terms like 'policy paralysis' came into vogue, and when everything seemed to be plunged in negativity, Mr. Modi emerged as a ray of hope. Few had predicted such a massive mandate for the BJP in 2014. It was the Modi phenomenon that unfolded in electoral performances and redrew the political landscape of the majority of the States. Mr. Modi not only seems to come out unscathed from bold gambles like demonetisation and imposition of the Goods and Services Tax, but seems to become stronger after them.



es Tax, but seems to become stronger after them. He is a man of vision who turns adversities into opportunities. He is the daring leader who can match China in Doklam and who has the grit to carry out surgical strikes against Pakistan.

### Bringing about change

Living up to his promise of providing a corruption-free government, Mr. Modi has made corruption in high places a thing of the past. His government puts emphasis on changing the lives of the poorest of the poor. A large number of innova-

tive schemes like the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, Direct Benefit Transfer, Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, Jan Dhan scheme, and Mudra have brought massive change across India. The rural sector has received more budgetary support and attention. The government's target is to double farmers' income by 2022. Health and wellness programmes like Ayushman Bharat, Mission Indradhanush and Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana are addressing the basic health needs of the people.

Even Mr. Modi's detractors acknowledge his charisma and mag-

netic appeal among the masses. He has raised the bar for himself. He charms the masses by raising their aspirations and by meeting his targets before deadlines.

As Chief Minister, he led the rise of Gujarat and it slowly became the shining example for other States to emulate. As Prime Minister, he is leaving his mark everywhere, from policymaking to governance, with a result-oriented approach.

As he dominates the political horizon of the country, Mr. Modi's charisma continues to leave his opponents flummoxed. The more he is doubted, the more Mr. Modi grows.

IT'S COMPLICATED



SANJAY KUMAR  
is Director, Centre for the Study of Developing Societies. Views are personal

There is a decline in Mr. Modi's popularity, but it is not even across States

Let us make no mistake: there is certainly a decline in the popularity of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, but this is not widespread. The degree of his popularity changes from place to place, from State to State. Several surveys conducted in May 2018, including those conducted by us, indicate that Mr. Modi's popularity not only declined over the last one year, but hit an all-time low of 33%, which is three percentage points lower than his popularity in 2014 when he became Prime Minister. The defeat of the BJP in three

States – Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan – in the recent Assembly polls only suggests that there is a further decline in his popularity.

Those who voted for Mr. Modi expected him to bring about positive change and take the country on the path of development. People expected more jobs to be created, resulting in a faster economic growth for India. In the two years following the BJP's victory, Mr. Modi's popularity increased. This was a clear indication of people's growing faith in

him. But things seem to have changed in the last one year. Let's examine this across regions and States.

### Popularity is high

The northeastern States have not witnessed a significant decline in Mr. Modi's popularity – partly because the Congress ruled many of these States for decades and there is a desire for change and partly because Mr. Modi is relatively new in these areas. In Assam, Mr. Modi witnessed a peak in popularity in the beginning of 2018; this has dipped now. In Odisha, his popularity has increased rapidly since



2014. In West Bengal, Mr. Modi's popularity has not only increased, he has emerged as the main challenger to the Trinamool Congress led by Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee. The Congress there has been relegated to a distant third position. In Bihar, Mr. Modi's popularity is on the rise, from 46% in 2014 to 56% in May 2018, when the surveys were conducted.

### Popularity has been constant

In Rajasthan (where the BJP lost in the recent Assembly election), Delhi, Haryana, and Gujarat, Mr. Mo-

di's popularity has not only remained reasonably high, it has also been constant in the last four and a half years. In Haryana, the State government is perhaps not as popular as other BJP State governments, and the Opposition is weak. But Modi's national leadership is not in doubt.

### Popularity is low

The picture is less rosy in other States. In Uttar Pradesh, surveys have indicated a steep decline in his popularity: from 56% in April 2017 to 35%. It is important to note that this is lower than his popularity rating in April-May 2014 before the Lok Sabha elections. There is a si-

milar decline in his popularity in Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, and Punjab. The most alarming decline is in Andhra Pradesh, where Mr. Modi was considered the most suitable prime ministerial candidate by 56% voters in 2014; now this has come down to 20%. Telangana has also witnessed a significant decline in his popularity: from 33% in 2014 to 17% in May 2018. In Tamil Nadu, the picture is no different. Karnataka is the only exception in the south where Mr. Modi's popularity remains intact.

The Prime Minister's popularity has gone down but it is not even across States. The story is not as simple as we think.

SINGLE FILE

## Voting for change

Post-poll surveys suggest that Muslims in Madhya Pradesh preferred Shivraj Singh Chouhan but not the BJP

MOHAMMAD OSAMA



"The country's system can run with disbelief (kufir) but not with oppression (zulm)," said Mufti Mohammad Aminuddin Qasmi, the Imam of a small mosque located on Chiklod road in Bhopal. "God will never allow this; he has always punished oppression."

At this juncture, when the Ram Mandir issue is very much alive and Muslims are subjected to everyday violence, these words reflect the mood of the Muslim voters of Madhya Pradesh. In the State that went to polls last month, Muslims voted mostly for the Congress, as was revealed in surveys by the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies-Lokniti (CSDS-Lokniti), and in my own fieldwork.

The Congress has formed the government in Madhya Pradesh with the help of the Samajwadi Party and the Bahujan Samaj Party. In the new Assembly, there are only two Muslim MLAs, both from the Congress. From 1952 to 2018, on average, only 1% and 2.3% of Muslims were elected and nominated in the Assembly, respectively. In a State where Muslims are 6.6% of the population, this is a dismal number.

According to Madhya Pradesh's post-poll survey data on Muslim voters' opinions (Lokniti-CSDS 2018), around 51% of Muslims voted for the Congress, and 15% for the BJP. Even though the BJP lost the election, 32% of Muslims said they preferred Shivraj Singh Chouhan as Chief Minister, while 36% said they preferred Jyotiraditya Scindia and 19% said they preferred Kamal Nath. The preference of Muslims for Mr. Chouhan was always higher than for his party, current and past surveys of CSDS-Lokniti suggest.

It is noticeable that 35% Muslims "fully dislike" Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Around 54% of Muslim voters said that the "Ayodhya temple/mosque dispute" is a "very important" electoral issue, and around 51% of Muslims based their opinions on the Supreme Court's views on the case.

My fieldwork on the Muslims of Bhopal, who represent an important segment of the State's overall voting Muslim population, suggests that Muslims this time wanted change and hence voted for the Congress. Most Muslims I met were in favour of the Congress, and while they liked Mr. Chouhan, they disliked the idea of another BJP government. In the CSDS-Lokniti survey too, 31% and 35% of Muslims were found to be "fully dissatisfied" with the BJP government in Madhya Pradesh and the Centre, respectively. Almost every Muslim criticised the 2016 demonetisation policy; in the post-poll survey too, around 51% of the Muslims said demonetisation was a "wrong decision".

The greater the extent to which voters express similar voting preferences in Assembly and Lok Sabha elections, the more likely it is that the post-poll survey finding of CSDS-Lokniti, that around 64% of Muslims of Madhya Pradesh will vote again for the Congress in this year's Lok Sabha elections, is an accurate prediction of the outcome.

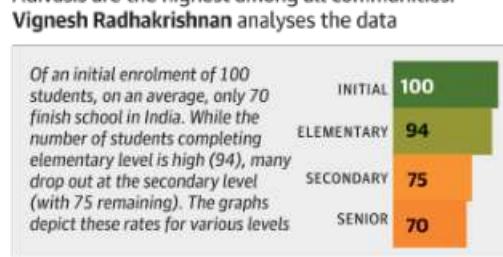
The writer is a PhD candidate in the Department of Political Science, Jamia Millia Islamia



### DATA POINT

#### Dropping out

With its high tribal population, Jharkhand has the highest dropout rate for schoolchildren in India (only 30 out of 100 finish school). Dropout rates among Adivasis are the highest among all communities. Vignesh Radhakrishnan analyses the data



**Worst off** | 61 of 100 ST students finish senior secondary school, the lowest among all communities

	Initial	Elementary	Secondary	Senior
Boys	100	94	75	70
Girls	100	94	75	70

\*Dropout rate is calculated by subtracting the sum of promotion and repetition rate from 100 in a year.  
Data for A.P. and Karnataka are not available.  
Elementary: Grades 1 to 8; Secondary: Grades 9, 10;  
Senior: Grades 11, 12. Data sourced from udise.in

#### State of affairs | Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Himachal Pradesh and Maharashtra have the lowest dropout rates

State	Initial	Elementary	Secondary	Senior
Jharkhand	100	83	53	30
Arunachal	100	80	56	38
Nagaland	100	80	55	44
Bihar	100	89	54	46
Meghalaya	100	82	59	48
Mizoram	100	86	60	54.8
Telangana	100	93	72	54.8
West Bengal	100	92	67	55.1
Sikkim	100	94	71	56
J&K	100	87	66	56.6
Manipur	100	84	67	57.2
Tripura	100	95	67	58
Assam	100	95	69	60
Odisha	100	95	68	67.9
Gujarat	100	97	74	68.3
Chhattisgarh	100	96	72.5	71
M.P.	100	94	71	

## FROM PAGE ONE

## Trump's remarks rejected by India

He urged Russia, India and Pakistan to send troops to fight the Taliban. However, the official source categorically ruled out sending troops, saying that Indian assistance to Afghanistan is part of a bilateral arrangement with the Government of President Ashraf Ghani.

"This partnership is built on the specific needs and requirements worked out with the Government of Afghanistan. It is aimed at the welfare of the people of Afghanistan and for a tangible improvement in the lives of its people," said the source, reminding the U.S. President that India is the largest regional donor to Afghanistan.

Indian cooperation is centred on five key pillars like capacity building, in-

frasstructure projects, humanitarian assistance, economic development and connectivity. Under all these segments, India has executed major landmark projects over the past 17 years. Among the key ongoing projects are the Zarjan-Delaram road that will connect the major cities of Afghanistan with the Iranian market. The official Indian response also drew support from the political opposition.

"Stop mocking India's PM. India doesn't need sermons from the US on Afghanistan. Humanitarian needs to strategic economic partnership, we are one with our Afghan brothers and sisters," Congress' Randeep Singh Surjewala said in a social media post.

## Every second matters for miners, says SC

To which Justice Sikri told Mr. Mehta, "This is a question of life and death for the miners... Something has to be done immediately." The court asked Mr. Mehta to get instructions and return the next day.

"The court is of the opinion that still more of a prompt, coordinated and immediate operation is required to rescue the miners," Justice Sikri observed.

The hearing started with Meghalaya counsel submitting that multi-agency rescue efforts are on since December 14. He was responding to a PIL plea filed by lawyer Aditya N. Prasad.

"We pray to God that they [the miners] are all alive. But whether they are all dead, all alive, some alive or few dead, they have to be brought out of the mine," Justice Sikri addressed the counsel. Mr. Prasad's lawyer and senior advocate Anand Grover said there are no results so far because everybody at the rescue site was

## Water level rises again

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
GUWAHATI

Despite operating a high-power pump for the last 48 hours in the flooded old shaft believed to be connected with the one nearby where the miners are trapped, the Odisha Fire Service personnel found the water level risen again on Thursday. "Hence, two more pumps have been installed," a district administration official said, adding that a Kirloskar team was at the site.

"doing different things and there is no coordination." He said the pumps used to suck the flooded mine were not powerful enough. The mine is flooding with water flowing in from the nearby Lytein river. The miners have been trapped in the mine since December 13.

## Bulandshahr violence: key accused arrested

Non-bailable warrants had been issued against Raj and several other accused who were on the run. A notice to attach their property if they did not surrender soon had also been pasted. While on the run, Raj had even released a video claiming he was innocent.

Atul Srivastava, SP, City said two other accused, Virendra and Satish, also surrendered to the police, taking the total arrested to 33.

More than 70 persons, with some of them allegedly having links to the VHP and its youth wing Bajrang Dal, were booked on charges of murder, attempt to murder, rioting, sedition, damage to public property and dacoity, among others for the

mob violence, which took place after allegations of cow slaughter at a village in Bulandshahr.

Raj was among the 27 named; he was allegedly the main instigator and named in the FIR as accused number 1. As per the FIR lodged in Syana, Raj and others were leading the mob and 'instigating them' for violence despite assurances by the police that an FIR would be filed in the cow slaughter case. Raj was also the person on whose complaint the initial FIR on the alleged cow slaughter was registered. However, all the persons named by him were proven to be falsely implicated and cleared by the SIT probing the case.

Replies to a discussion related to a statutory resolution on the President's proclamation under Article 356 with respect to J&K, which was approved by the House after a debate, Mr. Singh said holding polls was the EC's mandate and that the Centre

would provide the necessary security forces for enabling the same.

Countering the Opposition's charge that the Congress, the National Conference and the PDP were not allowed to form government after the PDP-BJP government fell, Mr. Singh asserted that there had been no such conspiracy. He added that it was not the first time that Governor's rule had been imposed in the State, stating that on one occasion it had remained in force continuously for six years.

Responding to the Leader of the Opposition Ghulam

Nabi Azad's observation that the J&K Governor, who held both legislative and executive powers, had introduced 55 amendments to various laws, the Home Minister said changes were brought in the Panchayati Raj Act to increase the financial power of panchayats and give them the additional responsibilities of primary education and health centres.

On the allegations of alienating the people of J&K, he said it was wrong to hold the BJP and its government responsible, as the sense of alienation had prevailed even before Independence. He said the BJP-led government had taken initiatives to lessen the alienation, and had been ready even for unconditional talks with the Hurriyat.

Mr. Singh said by taking the risk of holding elections to panchayats and urban bodies, the Centre had strengthened the grass-roots democratic set-up.

**Fewer incidents'**  
Asserting that the situation in J&K had improved tremendously, the Minister said that in 1995 as many as 5,938 terrorist incidents were reported, while in 2017 there were only 342 incidents.

Earlier, initiating the discussion, Mr. Azad asked why elections were not held after the BJP pulled out of the State government. Mr. Azad, who supported the resolution, held the BJP responsible for "100%" alienation, alleging that its government had introduced a culture of religion-based identification of officials in the State.

Mr. Azad said the past four years had seen the maximum number of ceasefire violations and a large number of people living along the International Border were affected. Terming the previous Congress-led regime a golden period for the State, he said it was a Kashmir known for communal harmony and development when the BJP took over.

## State universities must focus on research: PM

The Prime Minister, whose arrival was delayed by two hours owing to fog, urged scientists to work on ways to boost productivity for small farmers, most of whom had inadequate-sized landholdings. "The majority of farmers possess less than 2 hectares of land. We need more technology to improve their productivity," he added.

The Prime Minister said 2018 had been a "good year" for science in India. "We are among the top 5 countries in terms of research publications, according to SCOPUS [an international database of research papers]," he said.

"Building on Lal Bahadur Shastri's motto of 'Jai Jawan, Jai Kisan' the late PM A.B. Vajpayee added 'Jai Vigyan.' Today, we can add 'Jai Anusandhan' [research]," Mr.

Modi remarked.

India must also focus on innovation and start-ups, the Prime Minister said. Noting that the government had introduced the Atal Innovation Mission to promote innovation among the country's scientists, he asserted that more technology business incubators had been established in the last four years than in the preceding 40 years.

The key achievements of Indian science this year, he said, were: the production of aviation grade biofuel; Divya Nayan – a reading machine for the visually impaired; devices for the diagnosis of cervical cancer, TB and dengue; and a real-time landslide warning system in the Sikkim-Darjeeling region.

Advocate M.L. Sharma sought an early hearing of his PIL petition challenging the December 20 notification issued by the government, as a violation of the fundamental right to privacy.

Chief Justice Gogoi first asked Mr. Sharma whether he had filed the PIL, and if so, to pass over the case number. The CJI said the case would be listed in due course if filed.

The CJI then enquired of Mr. Sharma whether he had paid a fine of ₹50,000 which

the court had previously levied on him for filing a frivolous PIL in a separate case.

Mr. Sharma said he had paid the fine the very day the order was issued. He said his intentions in the case were genuine and in public interest.

### Privacy verdict

A nine-judge Constitution Bench judgment of the Supreme Court in 2017 had di-

rected the government to protect informational privacy of every individual. It had directed the government to carefully and sensitively balance individual privacy and the legitimate concerns of the state, even if national security was at stake.

The December 20 order allows 10 Central agencies, from the Intelligence Bureau to the Central Board of Direct Taxes to the Cabinet Secretariat (RAW) to the Commissioner of Delhi Police, to intercept, monitor and decrypt "any information" generated, transmitted, received or stored in "any computer resource".

The government order is based on Section 69 (I) of the Information Technology Act of 2000 and Rule 4 of the Information Technology (Procedure and Safeguards for Interception, Monitoring and Decryption of Information) Rules, 2009.

The Supreme Court on Thursday asked Congress MP Ahmed Patel to face trial in an election petition filed by rival BJP candidate Balwantsinh Rajput in connection with the 2017 Rajya Sabha election.

A Bench, led by Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi, refused to intervene, for the time being, with the October 26, 2018 order of the Gujarat High Court. Mr. Rajput had earlier filed a petition in the High Court challenging the Election Commission's decision to invalidate the votes of two rebel MLAs. He had argued that had these votes been counted, he would have defeated Mr. Patel. The High Court concluded that Mr. Rajput's allegations required a trial. Mr. Patel then challenged the order in the Supreme Court.

The Supreme Court ordered that the case be listed for February.

Says phones of senior officials also being monitored

**LEGAL CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI



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who was killed last November in an encounter, has been detained by the security forces "for over a month". "I request Governor Satya Pal Malik to issue clear directions to stop such harassment," said Ms. Mufti.

NC vice-president Omar Abdullah accused Ms. Mufti of using "dead militants to appease the voter".

This is dirty politics. If she is really concerned, she should have visited the families of soldiers who laid down their lives," State BJP chief Ravinder Raina said.

**APPEAL**  
Dhanush (7 months) suffering from severe heart ailment is advised to undergo a complex infant Open Heart Surgery at Madras Medical Mission. His family condition is very poor and cannot afford his Hospitalisation & Surgery Cost of Rs. 2,25,000/-.

WOMEN'S WELFARE SYNDICATE are entitled for exemption under 80G IT. Please give us your E-mail: ID: Dhanush@madrasmedicalmission.org

All Correspondence is done through WWS, Regd. Public Charitable Trust, Flat No. GF 1, Cordele Apartments, O.N.O. 13, N.O. 29, Pyrocks Garden Lane, Chennai-600006. Ph: 044-42137401 / 28235324. E-mail ID: womenswelfaresyndicate@gmail.com Website: www.womenswelfaresyndicate.org

## PM fled to skip 'Rafale exam': Rahul

Congress criticises Modi for evading Parliament and leaving for Jalandhar to 'lecture students'

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI

### Seeking answers

Congress president Rahul Gandhi shot four queries at Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Twitter

- Q1. Why 36 aircraft, instead of the 126 the IAF needed?
- Q2. Why 1,600 Cr instead of 560 Cr per aircraft?
- Q3. Modi Ji, please tell us why Parrikar Ji keeps a Rafale file in his bedroom & what's in it?
- Q4. Why AA instead of HAL? Will he show up? Or send a proxy?



nance Minister Arun Jaitley, the Congress chief had repeated his four questions on the Rafale deal on Wednesday night.

"Here are the exam questions in advance: Q1. Why 36 aircraft, instead of the 126 the IAF needed? Q2. Why 1,600 Cr instead of 560 Cr per aircraft? Q3. Modi Ji, please tell us why Parrikar Ji keeps a Rafale file in his bedroom & what's in it? Q4. Why AA instead of HAL? Will he show up? Or send a proxy?"

### Parrikar link

In the third question, which the Congress chief referred to as Missing Q3, he asked the Prime Minister to disclose why former Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar "keeps a Rafale file in his bedroom and what's in it?".

Picking up from where the

party president left off, the Congress party also attacked Mr. Modi for not speaking in the Rafale debate in Parliament.

"The Prime Minister refuses to take the Rafale exam and he is the same Prime Minister who gives us advice on how to take an exam and has authored *Exam Warriors*," noted Congress spokesperson Abhishek Manu Singhvi at the party's official briefing.

"And since the Finance Minister has become a defensive minister for the government and the Prime Minister... no wonder the RBI report states that bank frauds under this government has gone up by 72 per cent," said Mr. Singhvi.



## 'SC verdict has settled Rafale issue'

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court verdict has settled all questions on the Rafale deal, External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj told the Rajya Sabha, leading to a walkout by Congress members on Thursday.

Ms. Swaraj was answering a question from Shiv Sena MP Sanjay Raut who asked her about the recent visit of French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian and whether the two sides discussed the Rafale deal.

She said Mr. Drian's visit incidentally came on a day when the Supreme Court delivered its verdict on Rafale.

Deputy Leader of Opposition and Congress leader Anand Sharma asked:

"Will the government make public the minutes of the meeting... that would settle it once and for all."

Ms. Swaraj said there was no controversy on Rafale. "The controversy is only in your heads. And I would like to say that all the controversial issues that you raised have all been answered by the Supreme Court, which is the highest court of the country," Ms. Swaraj said.

At this, the Congress members protested and walked out.

## RS conducts some business at last

Protesting AIADMK MPs walk out

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI

The Rajya Sabha functioned for the first time since the winter session commenced on December 11 on Thursday, after the All India Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam members staged a walkout

after they were disallowed by Chairman Venkaiah Naidu to speak on the Mekedatu dam issue.

For 14 days, the Rajya Sabha did not transact any significant business with AIADMK members carrying placards storming the well of the House shouting slogans.

On Thursday, Mr. Naidu appealed to all sections of the House saying that only three working days are left and many important legislations are pending.

Soon after his appeal, AIADMK floor leader A. Na-

vaneethakrishnan stood up to protest against the suspension of 24 of his colleagues in the Lok Sabha for five days.

Demanding that the Central government withdraw the permission given for a detailed feasibility report (DFR) for Karnataka's Mekedatu dam project on the Cauvery, he said the people of Tamil Nadu would be adversely affected. Referring to his party MPs being suspended from the Lok Sabha, he said, "Our people are suffering."

To this, Mr. Naidu said, "People of the country are suffering" because of disruptions his party had caused in the Raj

## IN BRIEF



Vote on account likely instead of Budget: Naidu

NEW DELHI  
Rajya Sabha Chairman Venkaiah Naidu on Thursday hinted that the government may opt for a vote on account instead of a full-fledged Budget in February. "As we are all aware that before the election the government normally just goes for vote on account – only for few days. That will also be for only a few days. So, it will be a continuous session as per the present arrangement," Mr. Naidu said in the Rajya Sabha.

## 'Chandrayaan-2 among 32 missions planned for 2019'

BENGALURU  
India has planned 32 missions, including the "most complex" Chandrayaan-2 during 2019, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has said. India's maiden human spaceflight programme 'Gaganyaan' would go full steam ahead to accomplish the various development and qualification milestones during the year, the space agency said. PTI

## ECI to conduct mock polls in all Odisha villages

Bhubaneswar  
The Election Commission of India will hold mock polls in all villages in Odisha for extensive demonstration of electronic voting machines and Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail from January 7. "Though VVPAT was used during Bijepur by-elections, the ECI has decided to use it in all the 147 Assembly constituencies for the first time to maintain transparency in the forthcoming elections," said Surendra Kumar, Chief Electoral Officer of Odisha.

## SC to hear Ram Janmabhoomi case today

NEW DELHI  
The Supreme Court is scheduled to take up on Friday a batch of petitions for hearing in the Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid title dispute case. It is likely to constitute a three-judge Bench for hearing as many as 14 appeals filed against the 2010 Allahabad High Court judgment that the 2.77-acre land be partitioned equally among the three parties – the Sunni Waqf Board, the Nirmohi Akhara and Ram Lalla. PTI

## Modi hits out at Cong. on loan waiver, 1984 riots

'Earlier, the party had fooled people in the name of Garibi Hatao and now it is deceiving farmers'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
CHANDIGARH  
Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday hit out at the Congress, accusing it of betraying farmers on the issue of loan waiver, besides alleging the party was not only shielding but also promoting those involved in the 1984 anti-Sikh riots.

"Earlier the Congress had fooled people in the name of Garibi Hatao and now it was deceiving the farming community in the name of waiving loans. They have failed to keep their promises," said Mr. Modi, addressing a BJP-Shiromani Akali Dal rally at

## Judges' retirement age won't go up

Law Ministry responds to a proposal from the parliamentary panel

**SOIBAM ROCKY SINGH**  
NEW DELHI  
The Law Ministry on Thursday said there was no proposal as of now to increase the retirement age of Supreme Court judges from 65 to 67 and of High Court judges from 62 to 65.

The Ministry was responding to the recommendation of a Parliamentary Standing Committee that raising the retirement age of judges would help retain the existing judges, which in turn would help in reducing both vacancy and pendency of cases in short run.

In August 2010, then Union Law Minister M. Veerappa Moily introduced the Constitution (114th Amendment) Bill, 2010 in the Lok Sabha.

The Bill, which sought to increase the retirement age of High Court judges to 65, could not be taken up for consideration in Parliament and lapsed with the dissolution of the 15th Lok Sabha.

**Panel's concern**  
The committee, in its report tabled in Parliament on Thursday, raised concern over the large number of vacancies of judges in High Courts.

The Ministry countered that the appointment of judges in the Supreme Court and High Courts is a continuous and collaborative pro-

cess of the Judiciary and Executive.

"While every effort is made to fill vacancies expeditiously, vacancies keep on arising on account of retirement, resignation or elevation of judges and increase in judge strength," the Ministry said.

It further stated that the time line for initiation of the proposals for filling up of vacancies is rarely adhered to by the High Courts.

As of now, out of a total approved strength of 1,079 judges in 24 High Courts across the country, only 695 posts are filled.

The committee headed by BJP lawmaker Bhupender Yadav was of the view that to reduce pendency of cases, the existing vacancy positions of judges need to be filled up immediately.

As per the existing memorandum of procedure (MoP), the judge appointment proposal has to be initiated by the Chief Justice of the High Court six months before the occurrence of vacancy. Within six weeks, the Chief Minister/Governor has to recommend on the proposal received from the Chief Justice.

And within four weeks, the Chief Justice of India/SC Collegium has to recommend the proposal to the Law Ministry.

**Widening gap** A Parliamentary Standing Committee has raised concerns over the large number of judicial vacancies in High Courts across the country



## 'Quota for women judges not under consideration'

Constitution does not allow it, says Law Ministry

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI

The Law Ministry on Thursday said there was no proposal to introduce reservation for women in the appointment of judges in the higher judiciary. The Ministry's response came on an observation of a Parliamentary Standing Committee that only six women judges should be around 50% of the total strength of judges.

The Ministry said judges were appointed in the Supreme Court and High Courts as per Articles 125 and 217 of the Constitution, which did not provide for reservation for any caste, class or gender.

In the report tabled in

Parliament, the Committee recommended that the Ministry should make suitable measures to include more women judges in both higher and subordinate judiciary. The Committee reiterated its recommendation in its 'Eighty-fourth Report on Demand for Grants' that the strength of women judges should be around 50% of the total strength of judges.

The government has, however, been requesting the Chief Justices of the High Courts that while sending proposals for the appointment of judges, due consideration be given to suitable candidates belonging to the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Other Backward Classes, minorities and women," the Ministry said. While such requests have been made to ensure a fair representation for different sections of society in the higher judiciary, the Ministry said: "There is no proposal for amendment to Articles 124 and 217 of the Constitution".

"The government has, however, been requesting the Chief Justices of the High Courts that while sending proposals for the appointment of judges, due consideration be given to suitable candidates belonging to the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Other Backward Classes, minorities and women," the Ministry said. While such requests have been made to ensure a fair representation for different sections of society in the higher judiciary, the Ministry said: "There is no proposal for amendment to Articles 124 and 217 of the Constitution".

PM interview was a 'set-up', says Yechury

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI

Calling Prime Minister Narendra Modi's interview to news agency Asian News International a "post-truth propaganda" exercise, CPI (M) general secretary Sitaram Yechury, in an edit in the party's mouthpiece *People's Democracy*, said he did not refer to a single promise made by the BJP in 2014.

This is the second such deportation after seven Rohingyas, lodged in southern Assam's Silchar jail, were sent back in October last.

An Assam Home Department official said 20 Rohingyas are still lodged in the Goalpara, Tezpur and Silchar detention centres.

## Dissent note on Citizenship Bill

Against basic fibre of Indian society'

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI

Members of four Opposition parties – the Congress, the Trinamool Congress, the Samajwadi Party and the Communist Party of India (Marxist) – have moved a dissent note against the report of the joint committee on Citizenship Amendment Bill 2016.

The Bill proposes to give citizenship to six persecuted minorities – Hindus, Jains, Sikhs, Parsis, Christians and Buddhists – from Pakistan.

The Opposition members have been demanding that the Bill should be made "religion and country neutral." The members from Assam have also been opposing it because it would pave the way for giving citizenship, mostly to illegal Hindu migrants from Bangladesh in Assam who came after March 1971, in violation of the agreement of the Assam Accord, 1985.

In a stormy meeting on Thursday, the Opposition members demanded more time for deliberations but chairman and BJP MP Rajendra Agarwal rejected the demands. The committee has cleared the Bill, according



to sources, without any major cuts in its original structure.

The Bill, Congress leader Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury said, is against the very basic fibre of the Indian society. "We stand for secularism and the Bill is just against the most basic value of our society," he said. Three dissent notes are expected from Congress alone.

Samajwadi Party MP Javed Ali also gave in his dissent note. Speaking to *The Hindu* he said, "The Bill is ill-intentioned. It has been brought about by the BJP to showcase that India is a Hindu Rashtra."

The committee chairman said that notwithstanding the dissent notes, the report will be tabled on January 7.

## Committee on Assam Accord a poll gimmick'

Assam and has now come up with a new set of promises. But the people will not fall for its election stunt," Gaurav Gogoi, Congress MP and spokesperson, said.

The All Assam Students' Union, which had ended a six-year agitation against illegal influx by signing the Assam Accord with the Centre in 1985, had a similar view. "This is an attempt to placate the Assamese people angered by the BJP's bid to pass the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2016," AASU advisor Samujal Bhattacharya said.

"Deciding to form a committee now to assess the implementation of the Assam Accord signed 33 years ago is ridiculous," Krishak Mukti Sangram Samiti leader Akhil Gogoi said.

## 5 Rohingya deported to Myanmar

They entered Assam illegally five years ago to escape ethnic violence



**Back home:** The five Rohingya, who entered Assam illegally, were deported to Myanmar on Thursday. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

said that the Myanmar nationals had been lodged in a detention centre for foreigners at Tezpur in northcentral Assam's Sonitpur district.

Assam's Sonitpur district.

The officer said that the Border Police – a unit that deals with illegal migrants – had

liaised with officials in Manipur for verifying the addresses of the five with the Myanmar authorities.

## Willing to go back

"The deportation process was taken up after the five said they would like to go back home," the officer said.

This is the second such deportation after seven Rohingyas, lodged in southern Assam's Silchar jail, were sent back in October last.

An Assam Home Department official said 20 Rohingyas are still lodged in the Goalpara, Tezpur and Silchar detention centres.

**NATIONAL LAW UNIVERSITY DELHI**  
(A University of Law Established by Act No. 1 of 2008 of NCT of Delhi)  
Sector-14, Dwarka, New Delhi-110078

## ADMISSION ANNOUNCEMENT: 2019-20

LAST DATE FOR SUBMISSION OF APPLICATIONS : April 8, 2019  
DATE FOR ALL INDIA LAW ENTRANCE TEST (AILET) : MAY 5, 2019 (3:00 PM to 4:30 PM)

The NATIONAL LAW UNIVERSITY, DELHI established in 2008 by Act No. 1 of 2008 is premier Law University established in the capital city of India. The University invites applications for admission to B.A.LL.B. (Hons.), LL.M. and Ph.D. Programmes for the Academic Year 2019–20 commencing from August, 2019. Eligibility, total seats and other details for these Programmes are as under:

## B.A.LL.B. (Hons.)-Five-Year Programme

**Eligibility:** Senior Secondary School Examination (10+2 System) or Equivalent Examination with 50% marks. The candidates appearing in the 12<sup>th</sup> standard examination in March/April, 2019 can also apply.

**Total Seats:** 80 [70 Seats on merit through All India Law Entrance Test (AILET) and 10 Seats for direct admission to Foreign Nationals on merit (5 seats for Foreign Nationals & 5 seats for OCI/PIO). Foreign Nationals are exempted from AILET. Foreign Nationals to be eligible should have obtained 65% marks in the qualifying examination.

**Reservation:** 15% for SC candidates, 7.5% for ST candidates and 5% for Persons with Disabilities.

**Note:** One additional supernumerary seat for Kashmiri Migrants. Two additional supernumerary seats for Residents of Jammu & Kashmir.

## LL.M.-One-Year Programme

**Eligibility:** LL.B. or an Equivalent Law Degree with 55% marks (50% in case of SC/ST/ Persons with Disabilities). The candidates appearing in final year LL.B. Examination in April/May, 2019 can also apply.

**Total Seats:** 80 [70 Seats on merit through All India Law Entrance Test (AILET) and 10 Seats for direct admission to Foreign Nationals on merit (5 seats for Foreign Nationals & 5 seats for OCI/PIO). Foreign Nationals are exempted from AILET. (No. of seats may vary)

**Reservation:** 15% for SC candidates, 7.5% for ST candidates, 5% for Persons with Disabilities.

**Note:** One additional supernumerary seat for Kashmiri Migrants.

## Ph.D.-Programme

**Eligibility:** LL.M. Degree with 55% Marks or its Equivalent (50% in case of SC/ST/ Persons with Disabilities). For detailed eligibility conditions visit University website [www.nludelhi.ac.in](http://www.nludelhi.ac.in)

**Number of Seats:** 08. (No. of seats may vary)

Admission to B.A.LL.B. (Hons.), LL.M. and Ph.D. Programmes will be through AILET to be conducted at Bangalore, Bhopal, Chandigarh, Chennai, Cochin, Cuttack, Delhi, Gandhinagar, Guwahati, Hyderabad, Jaipur, Jammu, Jodhpur, Kolkata, Lucknow, Mumbai, Nagpur, Patna, Raipur and Varanasi on May 5, 2019 (Sunday).

Interested candidates should apply only online on payment of ₹ 3,050/- (Rupees Three Thousand Fifty Only) for General Category Candidates, ₹ 1,050/- (Rupees One thousand Fifty Only) in case of SC/ST and Persons with Disabilities (PD) along with copy of requisite Caste/Persons with Disabilities Certificate. Below Poverty Line (BPL) applicants of SC/ST Category are exempted from application fee. For further details relating to Application Form, Eligibility Criteria, Pattern of Entrance Test etc. visit University website: <http://www.nludelhi.ac.in>

The candidates should apply only online for admission through: <http://nludelhi.admissionhelp.com>, <http://www.nludelhi.ac.in> up to April 8, 2019. The admit cards will be available online w.e.f. April 22, 2019 on the above websites.

**Note:** 1. The reservations for admissions are subject to any decision by the Govt. of NCT of Delhi and NLU Delhi  
2. The National Law University Delhi has not authorized any agent/agency for admission. No payment should be made to any unauthorized person. Any complaint of this kind should be intimated to the University on [info@nludelhi.ac.in](mailto:info@nludelhi.ac.in)

Prof. (Dr.) G. S. BAJPAI  
REGISTRAR

## JD(U) to vote against triple talaq Bill in RS

Says it was unnecessarily hurried

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**

PATNA

The JD(U)'s ally, the Janata Dal (United), on Thursday said it would vote against the Centre if a Bill on triple talaq comes up in the Rajya Sabha for passage.

Slamming the BJP, the JD (U) said that the Bill was unnecessarily "hurried and rushed up."

**Need for consultation**

"The way the Bill was taken up in a hurried manner should have been avoided and more consultation should have taken place on the issue... if it comes up in the Rajya Sabha for passage,

we will oppose the Bill and vote against the government," JD(U) State president Vasishtha Narayan Singh said here.

The JD(U)'s stand has embarrassed its ruling alliance partner in Bihar, and no State BJP leader was willing to react to Mr. Singh's comment.

Political observers said the JD(U) can't afford to support the triple talaq Bill and antagonise Muslims, who make up 17% of Bihar's population.

Earlier, the JD(U) had made it clear that it would not support the BJP's Ram Mandir



## ELSEWHERE

Pope criticises U.S. bishops over scandal

VATICAN CITY

Pope Francis accused U.S. bishops on Thursday of failing to show unity in the face of a sexual abuse crisis, saying internal bickering had to end. In a long and highly unusual letter sent to U.S. bishops, the Pope said the handling of the scandal showed the urgent need for a new approach to management and mindset within the Church. **REUTERS**

## Russia charges U.S. citizen with espionage

MOSCOW

Russian prosecutors have charged an American ex-Marine detained in Moscow last week with espionage, his lawyer said on Thursday, the latest in a series of rifts between Moscow and Washington. Paul Whelan, who has denied the charges, could face up to 20 years in prison if found guilty. **AFP**

## Pak. scraps visa on demand for Afghans

ISLAMABAD

Pakistan on Thursday scrapped the long-standing facility of on-arrival visas for Afghan nationals, authorities said, citing security risks amid a spike in terror attacks. Citizens from 24 countries are now issued 'on-arrival' visas in Pakistan. **PTI**

## 'Yellow vest' leader arrested

Eric Drouet's detention criticised by Macron's opponents

Eric Drouet. **AFP**

One of the leaders of the "yellow vest" anti-government demonstrations was detained by police in Paris late on Wednesday for organising an unauthorised protest, signalling a harder line by the authorities against the movement.

Eric Drouet – who already faces a trial for carrying a weapon at a previous protest – was held while heading for the Champs-Élysées, which has been the scene of violent clashes over the last month.

"It's called respecting the rule of law," Economy Minister Bruno Le Maire said on Thursday, as he defended the arrest which drew criticism from some leftist opponents of the government.

## Russia blast toll rises to 38, with 3 still missing

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

MOSCOW

The number of dead from a New Year's Eve gas explosion in a Russian apartment block jumped to 38 on Thursday as rescuers recovered more bodies from the rubble of the partially collapsed building.

Russian news agencies quoted the Emergencies Ministry as saying a 38th body

had been recovered, leaving three people unaccounted for. Six people, including two children, have been rescued at the site in the city of Magnitogorsk but no survivors have been found since Tuesday when a 10-month-old boy was retrieved.

The explosion tore through the 10-storey building in the early hours of Monday. Michael Kovrig, a former diplomat, and businessman Michael Spavor,

## Lion Air ends search for black box

REUTERS

JAKARTA

Lion Air has ended its search for the cockpit voice recorder (CVR) from its Boeing 737 MAX jet that crashed into the Java Sea in October, killing all 189 people on board. However, Indonesian investigators said that they plan to launch their own probe.

The main wreckage and the CVR, one of two so-called black boxes, were not recovered in an initial search. Lion Air said in December it was funding a 38 billion rupiah (\$2.64 million) search using the offshore supply ship *MPV Everest*. The search using the ship ended on Saturday, Danang Mandala, the spokesman for Lion Air Group, said.

## Detained Canadians violated Chinese law

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

BEIJING

China's top prosecutor said on Thursday that two Canadians detained after Canada arrested Huawei executive Meng Wanzhou had "without a doubt" violated the law. Authorities in Beijing had previously said the two men, Michael Kovrig, a former diplomat, and businessman Michael Spavor,

were suspected of endangering state security.

"Without a doubt, these two Canadian citizens in China violated our country's laws and regulations, and are currently undergoing investigation according to procedure," Zhang Jun, China's prosecutor general, said. He said the investigation process had been handled according to law.

## Bangladesh Opposition renews call for fresh vote

BNP members boycott swearing-in ceremony of MPs

REUTERS

DHAKA

Opposition members of Bangladesh's Parliament boycotted a swearing-in ceremony on Thursday, after rejecting results of an election that they said was rigged to give Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina her third straight term.

While newly elected Members of Parliament from the ruling bloc, including Ms. Hasina, were sworn in, the seven Opposition members stayed away. "Why should we take the oath when we've rejected this election?" Mirza Fakhrul Islam, secretary general of the main Opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party, told reporters. Mr. Islam is one of the seven Opposition mem-

bers who won a seat. The Election Commission has rejected an Opposition call for a new vote, but despite that, the alliance on Thursday submitted a new demand for a re-run of the polls. On Thursday, New York-based Human Rights Watch said the run-up to the vote was characterised by "violence and intimidation against the Opposition ... and the misuse of laws to limit free speech". It called for an independent and impartial investigation of the accusations of electoral abuses.

Activists of Bangladesh's Left alliance demonstrating in Dhaka on Thursday to call for a fresh election. **REUTERS**

## Death sentence sought for 5 in Khashoggi murder case

Saudi has not released names of the defendants; no date set for the next hearing

Trial begins: It is unclear if top aides of Prince Mohammed bin Salman, suspected to be behind the murder, are among those charged. A poster with a picture of Jamal Khashoggi. **REUTERS**

turned-critic was strangled and his body cut into pieces by a team of 15 Saudis sent to Istanbul for the killing, according to Turkish officials. There have been reports that his remains, which have never been found, were disposed in acid.

The defence team on Thursday requested a copy of the chargesheet and a time-frame within which to review the charges. The prosecution agreed to both requests, SPA said. No date has been set for the next hearing.

The Khashoggi murder shocked the world at a time when Saudi Arabia and its *de facto* leader, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, were pushing an aggressive

public relations campaign to re-brand the kingdom as a modern state. The U.S. has slapped sanctions on 17 Saudis in connection with the Khashoggi murder. France and Canada have also imposed sanctions on Saudis.

## CIA's conclusion

The U.S. Central Intelligence Agency has reportedly concluded that Prince Mohammed very likely ordered Khashoggi's murder. A bipartisan resolution approved by the U.S. Senate last month held the Crown Prince responsible for the killing. But in November, the Saudi Attorney-General ruled out any involvement by the young Crown Prince, whose reformist credentials abroad

have been seriously tarnished by the murder.

The UN and human rights groups have called for an independent investigation into the killing.

"Given the possible involvement of Saudi authorities in Khashoggi's murder and the lack of independence of Saudi Arabia's criminal justice system, the impartiality of any investigation and trial would be in question," Sarah Hadid, a West Asia director at Amnesty International, said on Thursday.

"This is why a UN-led and independent investigation is needed into the murder."

It was unclear whether Mr. Qahtani and Ahmad al-Assiri, two senior aides to Prince Mohammed initially implicated in Khashoggi's murder, were among those on trial. Saudi officials said in November that Mr. Qahtani – who has not spoken publicly since then – had been banned from travel pending the investigation but authorities have refused to disclose his whereabouts.

Ankara, which has pledged repeatedly to allow nobody to escape justice in the case, has sought the extradition of the suspects to stand trial in Turkey. But its requests have been repeatedly rebuffed by Riyadh.

## 'N. Korean envoy has gone into hiding, sought asylum'

Seoul says he escaped Italy's diplomatic compound in Nov.

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

SEOUL

North Korea's top diplomat in Italy has sought asylum and gone into hiding, Seoul lawmakers told reporters after a closed-door meeting with South Korean intelligence officials on Thursday.

It would mark the latest high-profile defection by a senior North Korean envoy since the Deputy Ambassador in London abandoned his post in 2016.

"Acting Ambassador Jo Song-gil's term was ending in late November last year and he escaped the diplomatic compound in early November" with his wife, South Korean lawmaker Kim Min-ki told reporters.

Mr. Jo, 48, has been acting Ambassador in Rome since October 2017 after Italy expelled the then Ambassador Mun Jong-nam in protest at a North Korean nuclear test a month earlier in violation of UN resolutions.

Italy is an important diplomatic mission for Pyongyang, as it handles relations with the Rome-headquartered UN Food and Agriculture Organisation and North Korea suffers from chronic food shortages.

Another member of the South Korean Parliament, Lee Eun-jae, told reporters that the country's National

Jo Song-gil, who has reportedly sought asylum in an unidentified country. **AP**

of the diplomat, but did not know Mr. Jo's whereabouts, adding that the replacement had arrived in Rome.

The NIS briefing to lawmakers came after South Korea's *JoongAng Ilbo* daily reported that Mr. Jo had sought asylum in an unidentified Western country with his family.

"He sought asylum early last month," *JoongAng* quoted a diplomatic source in Seoul as saying.

Italian authorities were "agonising" over what to do, the official was cited as saying, but added that they were "protecting him in a safe place". Mr. Jo is "known to be a son or son-in-law of one of the highest-level officials in the North's regime", *JoongAng* cited an unnamed North Korea expert as saying.

Most North Korean diplomats serving overseas are normally required to leave several family members – typically children – behind in Pyongyang to prevent their defection while working abroad.

Mr. Jo however came to Rome in May 2015 with his wife and children, suggesting that he may be from a privileged family, *JoongAng* said, adding the reason for his defection bid was still unclear.

## Ireland to seek EU aid over Brexit

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

DUBLIN

Ireland will seek hundreds of millions of euros in aid from Brussels if Britain crashes out of the EU without a deal, the Agriculture Minister was quoted on Thursday as saying.

"You're looking at hundreds of millions here," Michael Creed told *The Irish Independent*.

The emergency aid would aim to buttress sectors such as beef, dairy and fishing – those most exposed to customs and regulatory changes likely to arise if Britain severs all ties.

Nearly 80% of Irish exporters deliver products to Britain, according to 2016 government figures.

## Trump could meet Kim again soon

We'll set that up in the not-too-distant future, says President on next meeting

Historic handshake: U.S. President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong-un in Singapore in June 2018. **NYT**

Trump said, "We'll set that up, we'll be setting that up in the not-too-distant future."

## On Syria pullout

Further, in a Cabinet meeting on Wednesday, Mr. Trump also said that the U.S. will get out of Syria "over a period of time" and would protect the U.S.-backed Kurdish fighters in the country as Washington draws down troops. He said he had never set a reported four-month timetable for the withdrawal of the 2,000 American troops.

"We're getting out and we're getting out smart," Mr. Trump said. "I never said I'm getting out tomorrow." He declined to be specific about how long troops would remain in Syria.

wants to denuclearise and a lot of good things are happening," Mr. Trump said.

"They really do want to do something. Now, does that mean it's going to be done? Who knows? A deal's a deal,

you never know, but I tell you, we've established a very good relationship with North Korea."

"We'll probably now have another meeting. He'd like to meet, I'd like to meet," Mr.

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Ref No: MSCL/TECH/CR/15/2018-19/704 Date: 01-01-2019

Model Competition for Smart Bus Shelter

As you are aware Mangaluru Smart City Limited is being implemented under Smart Cities Mission of Ministry of Urban Development, Government of India. Smart Bus Shelter and E toilets is one of the project undertaken in Smart City Mission. On their behalf MSCL is organizing a Model Competition of Innovative Smart Bus Shelter design. The contest is open for all citizens including Engineering colleges and Architects.

The proposed model should include Elevation, Plan and 3D Elevations of Bus shelters considering all weather conditions of Mangaluru.

The Winners will be rewarded with a cash prize of

- 1<sup>st</sup> Prize = Rs. 10,000/-
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Prize = Rs. 5,000/-
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Prize = Rs. 3,000/-

## MARKET WATCH

	PRICE	CHANGE
Sensex	35,514	-1.05
US Dollar	70.20	-0.02
Gold	32,835	1.03
Brent oil	54.86	-2.38

## NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	378.10	-3.20
Asian Paints	1388.30	5.00
Axis Bank	607.95	-12.10
Bajaj Auto	2701.35	9.35
Bajaj Finserv	6383.30	-0.70
Bajaj Finance	2586.20	-27.85
Bharti Airtel	313.50	0.85
BPL	352.50	-5.45
Cipla	512.40	-2.15
Coal India	235.00	-1.70
Dr Reddy's Lab	2577.35	-23.70
Eicher Motors	2021.45	-950.85
GAIL (India)	349.95	-0.35
Grafix Ind	799.70	-15.80
HCL Tech	948.35	2.00
HDFC	1936.85	-43.80
HDFC Bank	2111.80	-16.70
Hero MotoCorp	3014.65	-31.90
Hindalco	209.20	-5.35
HPLC	248.30	-8.25
Hind Unilever	1788.40	3.80
Indiabulls HFL	816.65	-25.65
ICICI Bank	363.25	-1.35
IndusInd Bank	1560.10	-16.50
Bharti Infralet	271.60	7.35
Infosys	669.15	0.10
Indian Oil Corp	132.65	-4.60
ITC	278.85	-1.75
JSW Steel	282.65	-6.05
Kotak Bank	1235.25	-5.35
L&T	1395.00	-30.50
M&M	718.30	-23.40
Maurti Suzuki	7203.95	-63.90
NTPC	143.40	-3.60
ONGC	142.40	-4.65
PowerGrid Corp	193.05	-2.20
Reliance Ind	1092.75	-13.65
State Bank	291.10	-2.80
Sun Pharma	436.10	-3.95
Tata Motors	166.05	-2.50
Tata Steel	481.25	-12.40
TCS	1899.95	-23.35
Tech Mahindra	691.25	-20.80
Titan	931.20	-0.95
UltraTech Cement	3900.05	-106.05
UPL	746.65	-5.20
Vedanta	187.95	-5.20
Wipro	325.50	-0.05
YES Bank	184.10	-0.55
Zee Entertainment	461.45	-8.80

# ₹70,000 cr. recovery likely by March from 12 big IBC cases'

Bhushan, Essar cases in advanced stage of resolution, Jaitley writes in blog

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The government expects a recovery of about ₹70,000 crore from the 12 big companies that were identified for bankruptcy proceedings under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, by March 31, 2019, Finance Minister Arun Jaitley wrote in a blog on Thursday.

According to the RBI, these 12 companies are estimated to account for a quarter of the gross non-performing assets in the system, and so were identified for immediate bankruptcy proceedings.

"Some of the big 12 cases such as Bhushan Power and Steel Ltd. and Essar Steel India Ltd. are in advanced stages of resolution and are likely to be resolved in this financial year, in which realisation is expected to be around ₹70,000 crore," Mr. Jaitley wrote to commemorate two years of the IBC.



Game changer: Debtors are now paying dues to avoid being removed from management. • GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

He added that so far, 1,322 cases had been admitted by the National Company Law Tribunal. He said that the NCLT disposed of 4,452 cases at the pre-admission stage and that 66 cases had been resolved after adjudication, from which creditors had recovered about ₹80,000 crore. Another 260 cases had been ordered for liquidation. "As per NCLT database, in 4,452 cases disposed

at pre-admission stage, the amount apparently settled was around ₹2.02 lakh crore," Mr. Jaitley said.

**'Extremely satisfactory'**  
"The early harvest through the IBC process has been extremely satisfactory," the Finance Minister added. "It has changed the debtor-creditor relationship. The creditor no longer chases the debtor. In fact, it is other-

wise. The NCLT has become a trusted forum of high credibility. Those who drive the companies to insolvency, exit it from management."

The selection of new management has been transparent, he said, adding that there had been no political or governmental interference in the cases.

Mr. Jaitley explained that the effectiveness of the IBC process was arising out of three factors. The first was that debtors were beginning to pay their dues in anticipation of a potential default in order to avoid the prospect of them being removed from management.

The second is that once a creditor's petition has been filed with the NCLT, the debtors have been paying at the pre-admission stage to prevent the declaration of insolvency. Thirdly, many major cases of insolvency have already been resolved or are being moved to liquidation.

## Ease capital requirements for banks: House panel

Stringent RBI norms unrealistic, unwarranted, says report

REUTERS  
NEW DELHI

A parliamentary panel on Thursday asked the central bank to ease its rules on capital requirements for banks so that they can increase lending.

"Such stringent norms stipulated by the RBI (Reserve Bank of India) for our banks ... is unrealistic and unwarranted," said a report tabled in parliament by the Parliamentary Committee on Finance.

The report comes after the government and some of the board members of the RBI have put pressure on the central bank to relax capital requirements for banks as they seek to boost credit and economic growth. Former RBI governor Urjit Patel, who quit last month, opposed the government's de-



mand for lowering capital requirements and warned about the need for a cushion to offset unexpected risks.

Indian banks are required to maintain minimum capital to risk weighted asset ratio (CRAR) at 9%, against the global Basel-III requirement of 8%. On top of that, they have to keep a capital conservation buffer that is supposed to climb to 2.5% by March 2019. The rollback of additional capital require-

ments could release about ₹5.34 trillion (\$76 billion) into the economy by releasing capital for lending. On Friday, the RBI, in a report, opposed the call to relax current risk weighting rules used to calculate capital requirements, saying they fortified banks against the risk of failure. However, it did announce its intention to review capital regulations.

**Dilution may harm'**  
The ratings agencies have warned against dilution of capital norms for banks.

Saswata Guha, country director, financial institutions, at Fitch Ratings, said capital ratios for many banks were well below global standards and any relaxation could prove detrimental to banks and their ability to absorb unexpected losses.

## Gold rises for third day, surges to ₹32,835

Turns safe haven as global equities fall

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI

Extending its gains for the third straight session, gold prices on Thursday surged by ₹335 to ₹32,835 per 10 grams at the bullion market in the national capital, amid a weaker rupee against dollar, according to the All India Saraf Association.

Silver, too, followed gold, gaining ₹350 to ₹39,700 per kg due to increased demand from industrial units and coin makers.

On Tuesday and Wednesday, gold prices gained by ₹200 and ₹30, respectively.

Traders said a weaker rupee against the dollar and safe-haven buying contributed to the surge in the prices of the yellow metal.

Besides, a firm trend overseas helped the rise in gold prices.

In Delhi, prices of gold of 99.9% and 99.5% purities

## Apple cuts revenue estimate, shares slide

REUTERS

Apple shares tumbled as much as 10% on Thursday after the iPhone-maker blamed weak China demand for its revenue shortfall in the holiday quarter, a clear sign of the company's struggles in the world's largest smartphone market.

The selection of new management has been transparent, he said, adding that there had been no political or governmental interference in the cases.

Mr. Jaitley explained that the effectiveness of the IBC process was arising out of three factors. The first was that debtors were beginning to pay their dues in anticipation of a potential default in order to avoid the prospect of them being removed from management.

The second is that once a creditor's petition has been filed with the NCLT, the debtors have been paying at the pre-admission stage to prevent the declaration of insolvency. Thirdly, many major cases of insolvency have already been resolved or are being moved to liquidation.

Shares of U.S.-based suppliers and chipmakers, including Cirrus Logic Inc. and Analog Devices, were down in morning trading.

The sell-off in Apple dragged its market capitalisation below that of Alphabet Inc. and set the stock for its biggest intraday percentage fall in almost six years.



Bear hug: Investor sentiment took a hit due to concerns over the fiscal impact of proposed sops for farmers. • PAUL NORONHA

## Global headwinds continue to spook Indian markets

World stocks slump on Apple warning

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
MUMBAI

entity meaningfully," he added.

Interestingly, while equities across the world fell on Wednesday after China reported a fall in its manufacturing activity, Thursday saw the concerns only grow bigger with Apple cutting its revenue expectations for the first time in 16 years on account of the slowdown in China.

The cut in guidance by the iPhone maker led to most Asian and European markets witnessing further selling pressure with the benchmarks of Japan, Hong Kong, Taiwan, South Korea, France, the U.K. and Germany losing ground.

The weak undertone of the market was further corroborated by the fact that over 1,650 stocks lost ground on the BSE, as against 921 gainers.

Bank of Baroda, Dena Bank and Vijaya Bank were in the limelight after the swap ratio was announced on Wednesday.

## Dena Bank plummets

While shares of Bank of Baroda remained unchanged, Vijaya Bank and Dena Bank lost 7.25% and 19.78%

respectively.

"Prima facie, valuations for both Dena Bank and Vijaya Bank have been taken at a discount, which makes it advantageous for BoB shareholders," said Lalitab Shrivastava, AVP - Research, Sharekhan.

"However, we believe the share swap discount is done to either sweeten the deal for better-run banks or in anticipation of higher clean up in Dena Bank, which would, therefore, not upset the asset quality and earnings picture of the combined

stocks such as M&M, ONGC, Vedanta, Tata Steel, L&T, HDFC and NTPC all losing more than 2% each.

**Jet loses 7%**

Jet Airways (India), which saw a rating downgrade by ICRA on Wednesday due to missed payments, saw its share price fall nearly 7% or ₹16.90 to close at ₹246.85.

The rupee also weakened for the second straight session, slipping 2 paise to 70.20 against the U.S. dollar.

## Printing of ₹2,000 notes reduced to minimum'

High value notes were meant for remonetisation, plan to limit printing not new: official

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI

The printing of ₹2,000 banknotes, introduced post-demonetisation in November 2016, has been reduced to "minimum" by the Reserve Bank, a top finance ministry official said on Thursday.

Soon after the sudden decision to ban old ₹500/1000 currency notes by the government, the Reserve Bank of India had come out with the ₹2,000 currency note along with a new



look ₹500 note as part of its massive remonetisation exercise.

The official said that the RBI

and the government, from time to time, decided on the quantum of currency to be printed on the basis of money in circulation.

When the ₹2,000 note was launched, it was decided that the printing would be "scaled down" going forward, since the new high currency value note was meant for meeting the remonetisation need.

"The printing of 2,000 rupee notes has been substantially reduced. It has been decided to limit the printing of 2,000 currency notes to minimum. This is nothing new," the official said.

According to RBI data, there were 3,285 million pieces of ₹2,000 notes in circulation at end-March 2017. A year after (on March 31, 2018), there was only a marginal increase in the number at 3,363 million pieces. Of the total currency in circulation amounting to ₹8,037 billion at end-March 2018, ₹2,000 notes accounted for 37.3%, down from 50.2% at end-March 2017.

## Johnson & Johnson India sales dip 3% in 2017-18

Reports overall sales of ₹58.28 billion

REUTERS

Johnson & Johnson's sales in India dipped 3% in the year to March 2018, a regulatory filing showed on Thursday, as the U.S. drugmaker grappled with the country's stringent medical device pricing policies.

The company, currently mired in a controversy surrounding the safety of its baby talcum powder, reported overall sales of ₹58.28 billion (\$829 million) in India for the year, its filing with the country's Ministry of Corporate Affairs shows. But its after-tax profit for the period rose 18% to ₹98 million on other income, including foreign exchange gains.

## IN BRIEF



## NHAI to raise ₹10,000 cr. via Bharatmala bonds

NEW DELHI The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) plans to raise ₹10,000 crore through Bharatmala Taxable Bonds in the current fiscal, Parliament was informed on Thursday. Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari said as per the internal and extra budgetary resources approved for 2018-19 by the government, ₹62,000 crore is to be raised by NHAI through various sources including Bharatmala bonds. PTI

## Mahindra Finance to raise ₹3,500 cr. via NCDs

MUMBAI Mahindra & Mahindra Financial Services is planning to raise up to ₹3,500 crore through a non-convertible debenture issue of various maturities. The base issue size is ₹500 crore with an option to retain oversubscription up to ₹3,000 crore, the non-banking finance company said here on Thursday. Investors will get 9 to 9.50% per annum, respectively, payable annually. PTI

## MAHB cancels stake pact with GMR

HYDERABAD Malaysia Airports Holding Berhad (MAHB) said it had terminated the share purchasing agreement with GMR Group for selling its 11% stake to the latter, as the Indian infra major did not fulfil obligations before December 31. GMR Airports Ltd. entered into a pact with MAHB and its subsidiary to acquire 11% of the stake the Malaysian firm holds in GMR Hyderabad International Airport, for \$76 million. PTI

# Object of IBC paramount, says NCLT

Directs Unimark IRP to consider bid placed after last date; order may have bearing in Essar Steel case

PIYUSH PANDEY

MUMBAI

The Mumbai Bench of the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) has observed that rejection of a resolution plan on technicalities, without going into its merits, goes against the spirit of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code.

Hearing the case of the applicant Omkara Assets Reconstruction Private Limited, the applicant, against the Interim Resolution Professional (IRP) of Unimark Remedies Ltd., the corporate debtor, the NCLT Bench noted that the applicant had submitted a resolution plan to the interim resolution professional (IRP) on December 11, 2018, even though IRP had set October 31, 2018 as the deadline.

The applicant submitted



**Spirit of the law:** Omkara's proposal had come in before any plan was finalised by Unimark's CoC. ■ GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

that the CoC, at the 13th meeting held on December 12, 2018, refused to open the envelope containing the resolution plan submitted by the applicant solely on the ground that it was submitted after the cut-off date.

Omkara alleged that the CoC acted in an arbitrary

manner by refusing to accept the plan submitted by it and contended that no harm or prejudice would be caused to the company or the CoC or the corporate debtor, if the plan submitted by the applicant was considered purely on merit.

"It is clear that the resolu-

tion applicant had approached the IRP with a proposal at the 12th hour, but certainly before accepting or finalisation of any resolution plan," the NCLT Bench comprising Justice Bhaskara Pantula Mohan and V. Nallasenapathy noted. The Bench directed the IRP to consider the bid on its merits.

The verdict may have bearing on the proceedings in the Essar Steel case, where the NCLT Ahmedabad has seized with similar circumstances.

The CoC for Essar Steel had given its nod to an ArcelorMittal bid for the company under the IBC framework.

The original promoters of the beleaguered steel firm had put in a higher bid after the last date was over.

A day later, the CoC decid-

ed in ArcelorMittal's favour. In Omkara's case, the Bench observed: "Keeping in view the very object of the code, when there is a clash/conflict between the regulations and the code, the object of the code is paramount and not the regulations which are formed only for the just implementation of the code."

## 'Expedite proceedings'

Separately, the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal has asked the Ahmedabad Bench of the NCLT to expeditiously take the final decision in the Essar Steel case, where the CoC's selection of ArcelorMittal as the highest bidder is being contested by Essar Steel's promoters.

The original promoters of the beleaguered steel firm had put in a higher bid after the last date was over. A day later, the CoC decided

# CESC wins distribution bid for Malegaon Circle

Has 600 MW plant in Chandrapur

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT KOLKATA

CESC Ltd. has won the bid for distribution franchisee in the Malegaon Circle in Maharashtra, regulatory filing by the company said.

"As per a letter of intent dated January 2, 2019 issued by Maharashtra State Electricity Distribution Co. Ltd., a government of Maharashtra Undertaking, we have been declared as successful bidder for appointment as distribution franchisee in respect of Malegaon Municipal Corporation area under Malegaon Circle" it said.

Besides a 1,725 MW thermal power capacity (including an independent power plant at Haldia), it also has a 174 MW renewable power capacity through three wind power plants in Gujarat, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh, and a solar power plant in Tamil Nadu.

Firm is engaged in power distribution in Noida, Kota, Bikaner and Bharatpur

subsidiary) and Kota, Bikaner and Bharatpur in Rajasthan (as a franchisee), besides West Bengal where it has a 567 square km distribution area with 3.2 million customers. Its consumer base is more than 4.3 million.

Besides a 1,725 MW thermal power capacity (including an independent power plant at Haldia), it also has a 174 MW renewable power capacity through three wind power plants in Gujarat, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh, and a solar power plant in Tamil Nadu.

# E-way bill system changes confusing, say transporters

No option to raise another bill with same invoice details'

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI

The government's decision to make some changes to the e-way bill system effective November 16, 2018, has not gone down well with transporters, who claim that it has not been communicated properly and has led to 'complete confusion'.

### Transit delay

"When A sells a material to B, he raises an invoice and subsequently prepares an e-way bill. While on transit, if the vehicle breaks down or is delayed for some reason, then the original e-way bill expires. In the new system, there is no option for the

transporter to move the material. System has been blocked [if you want] to raise another e-way bill with the same invoice details. This has led to complete confusion among transporters," said Abhishek Gupta, chairman, legal & GST committee, Bombay Goods Transport Association (BGTA).

**With changes made by the National Informatics Centre which is handling the e-way bill project, the system has been formatted in such a way that if the consignor has generated one e-way bill on a particular invoice, then none will be allowed to generate one more e-way bill on the same invoice number.**

If the transporter or consignee has generated one e-way bill on the consignor's invoice and if any other party tries to generate the e-way bill, the system will alert about the existence of an e-way bill for that invoice.

Mr. Gupta alleged that penalties for mistakes on tax paid material was mounting and tax officials were concerned only about meeting their targets. "At this rate, transportation business is becoming unviable," Mr. Gupta said. "Instead of making the process easier, new rules have made it more complicated," said Rohit Chaturvedi, founder & CEO, TransportHub.

# CarDekho raises \$110 million

## PRESS TRUST OF INDIA NEW DELHI

CarDekho, the flagship portal of GirnarSoft said it had raised \$110 million from various investors. The company intends to utilise the proceeds to expand its business verticals.

The firm has raised the capital in a Series C funding with investments from Sequoia India, Hillhouse, CapitalG (Alphabet growth investment arm) and Axis Bank. "We plan to infuse the raised capital in the used car business, insurance and finance verticals... These segments have huge potential to scale up and we are focussed on getting them to a massive scale," said CarDekho CEO Amit Jain.

# Graft, securing funding main challenges for start-ups: study

Angel tax remains a key hurdle, says LocalCircles report

## PRESS TRUST OF INDIA NEW DELHI

A large number of start-ups, small and medium enterprises view corruption and bureaucratic inefficiencies, securing loans as well as funding as major challenges in 2019, according to a report by citizens' engagement forum LocalCircles.

The report, based on responses from over 15,000 start-ups, SMEs and entrepreneurs, found 45% respondents saying that corruption or bureaucratic inefficiencies as the top challenge, followed by securing loans and funding (37%), and business growth (18%).

"Angel tax is one area that falls under corruption and



bureaucratic inefficiencies as it takes the focus of entrepreneurs away from building a product or service to responding to tax notices and filing appeals, something that start-ups can clearly do without," it added.

Several start-ups and angel investors have raised concerns over notices received from the authorities related to taxation of angel funds. The Centre has set up a panel to look into the taxation issues faced by start-ups and angel investors. The study noted that 38% of the respondents said they had received at least one notice.

"Angel tax continued to be a key pain point for start-ups, where the assessing officers in many cases reject the valuation method used by the start-up and instead treat the capital raised as income from other sources, thereby, raising a tax demand and penalty on the start-up."

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THE HINDU GROUP

# Rock-solid Pujara highlights India's dominance on day one

Mayank sets up the platform as the visiting batsmen show resolve to thwart the Aussie attack

## OZ CHALLENGE

S. DINAKAR  
SYDNEY

Cheteshwar Pujara's eyes reflect his intensity. He does reflect the sniff of a duel.

Riding on Pujara's resolve and that ability to construct lasting edifices, India took a firm step towards its first ever Test series triumph in Australia.

Virat Kohli's team was on a comfortable 303 for four at stumps on the first day of the fourth Test at the SCG on Thursday. The Indians were positive and the runs came freely. Pujara was on a well-paced unbeaten 130 of patience and judicious strokeplay. And the promising Hanuma Vihari was batting on an impressive 39.

Countering the second new ball, the undefeated fifth-wicket pair has added crucial 75 runs, putting away a tired Aussie attack in the last hour.

### Rahul flops again

Earlier, opener Mayank Agarwal, continuing to grow in stature, came up with a strokeful 77 even as his partner K.L. Rahul, nibbling at a Josh Hazlewood delivery outside off, edged tamely to first slip.

In the morning, Virat Kohli did his side a huge favour by winning the toss. The pitch was good for batting on day one, the ball came on to the bat and encouraged strokeplay.

But then, this wicket has

**Stat attack**

**1** Kohli is the fastest to 19000 international runs (399 innings) surpassing Tendulkar (432)

**1** First time two Karnataka players — Mayank and K.L. Rahul — have opened for India in Tests

**1** Kuldeep is the first chinaman bowler from an Asian country to appear in a Test in Australia

**2** Indian Test teams that haven't featured Ishant or Ashwin in the playing XI since the latter's debut. The earlier match was at Southampton in 2014

**3** Pujara became the third Indian to notch up three centuries in a Test series in Australia after Kohli (four tons, 2014-15) and Gavaskar (three, 1977-78)

**5** Test hundreds by Pujara while batting at No. 3 against Australia. It is six for all the other No. 3s put together (Mohinder & Laxman 2 each, Dravid & Vengsarkar 1 each)

**18** Pujara crossed 400 runs in the series while registering his 18th Test century. He also became the third batsman after Tendulkar and Hayden to achieve the feat thrice in the Border-Gavaskar Trophy series



the reputation of assisting spin from day three and Australia has a big job on hands. It's advantage India.

### Emulating Sunny

And the never-say-die Pujara held centrestage. He has now joined Sunil Gavaskar with three hundreds in a Test series down under. Only Kohli, with four here in 2014-15, has more centuries by an Indian batsman.

The right-hander's powers of concentration have been exemplary. He has worn down this Australian attack, seen through spells and ses-

sions and cashed in.

Essentially a bottom-handed player, Pujara has employed the cut — a productive shot in Australia — effectively. He waits and waits and anything short, he dismisses past point.

When Mitchell Starc provided him width outside off, Pujara cut him to the fence. Strong back-foot play has been the key to Pujara's stupendous success in Australia.

And then, like most bottom-handed batsmen, Pujara is strong off his legs. Deliveries to his pads are whipped through mid-wicket. Hazel-

## SCOREBOARD AUSTRALIA VS INDIA, FOURTH TEST, DAY 1

### INDIA — 1ST INNINGS

Mayank Agarwal c Starc b Lyon (112b, 7x4, 2x6), K.L. Rahul c Marsh b Hazlewood 9 (6b, 2x4), Cheteshwar Pujara (batting) 130 (250b, 16x4), Virat Kohli c Paine b Hazlewood 23 (59b, 4x4), Ajinkya Rahane c Paine b Starc 18 (55b, 1x4), Hanuma Vihari (batting) 39 (58b, 5x4); Extras (lb-2, w-5); 7; Total (for four wkts. in 90 overs) 303.

### FALL OF WICKETS

1-10 (K.L. Rahul, 1.3 overs), 2-126 (Mayank, 33.6), 3-180 (Kohli, 52.5), 4-228 (Rahane, 70.2).

### AUSTRALIA BOWLING

Starc 18-0-75-1, Hazlewood 20-7-51-2, Cummins 19-3-62-0, Lyon 29-5-88-1, Labuschagne 4-0-25-0.

### TOSS: India

wood steamed in with the second new ball and landed one on middle and leg. Pujara flicked the sphere to the fence.

**Interesting battle**  
The duel between Lyon and Pujara was fascinating. When Lyon flattered, Pujara used his feet; not always for runs. There were other occasions when he pierced the field.

When Lyon changed the pace of the ball or varied the angle, Pujara adjusted capably. The Indian won the face-off.

Vihari was both solid and forceful against the second new ball. The confidence with which the youngster cut Starc underlined his ability. Earlier, he had punched the left-arm quick through the off-side field.

The right-hander's game is built on sound defence. He has a trigger movement forward but adjusts to the length quickly and does collect runs off his backfoot between cover and point.

The small-built Mayank is making big strides. There was no complaining.

some movement and carry for the pacemen in the morning under a cloud cover and on a pitch with a greenish tinge but the young opener was balanced and poised as he met the ball.

Mayank sets himself up very well in his stance with wonderful distribution of weight. He does not commit himself and has this ability to attack without being rash. His cover-drives off either foot off Starc and Cummins scorched the turf.

And the Karnataka opener employed his feet well against Lyon, striking sixes down the ground and over long-on. But then, the wily off-spinner held one back, and Mayank, dancing down, holed out.

Kohli missed out, rather unluckily gloving a delivery down leg-side from Hazlewood to keeper Paine. And Rahane was fired out by a nasty short-pitched ball from Starc.

But then, this Australian attack lacked persistent control from both ends to create the pressure. The Indians were not complaining.



**Mr. Dependable:** Cheteshwar Pujara enhanced his reputation with an unbeaten, workmanlike century. ■ CAMERON SPENCER/GETTY IMAGES

## L'affaire Ashwin — an avoidable fiasco

S. DINAKAR  
SYDNEY

The fiasco over R. Ashwin's injury and all the speculation about his availability for the fourth Test — it continued till the morning of the Test — does not present Indian cricket in good light.

Look at the events that transpired on Wednesday. Virat Kohli announced Ashwin would not be a part of the team for the final Test here. "He is not 100%, we are all disappointed," he said.

However, news from very reliable sources in the team-management trickled in soon. It said Ashwin suffering a relapse of the abdominal injury, as feared, was only a false alarm.

"It's only a minor niggle. He should be all right and is certain to play," the source said to *The Hindu*. And out of nowhere, Ashwin was in the list of 13 players short-listed for the match.

Ashwin had been bowling and batting in the nets here and it was assumed that he would play, even if it meant taking painkillers, in such an important game.

**Coaches keen, but...**  
It is believed coach Ravi Shastri and bowling coach Bharat Arun were keen on



R. Ashwin...troubled times. ■ QUINN ROONEY/GETTY IMAGES

Ashwin taking the field at Sydney and teaming up with Ravindra Jadeja.

Yet, Kohli has this obsession with 100% fitness and he might not have wanted to take a risk with Ashwin. Particularly since playing Ashwin, who was grappling with a groin strain, in the Southampton Test against England backfired.

The official reason given by the Indian team in the evening was that Ashwin failed a fitness test in the morning. After Ashwin could not get through, Kuldeep Yadav started bowling.

On matters of fitness, there needs to be greater transparency from the team-management.

minute — he did bowl in the morning ahead of the fourth Test — since he was not totally convinced about his fitness.

Or including and then leaving out Ashwin could have been a double bluff by the team management to catch the host unaware about the threat of Kuldeep.

Unfortunately for Ashwin, his injury concerns have surfaced at the worst possible time for India, both in England and now in Australia. India's No. 1 spinner needs to get himself fit.

**Yardstick for selection**  
The BCCI should not have Yo-Yo Test as the only yardstick for India selection. Yo-Yo is useful in telling us about stamina and lung power.

But what about the other areas of fitness. For instance, Jadeja came into this tour carrying a shoulder injury. And this was made known to the media only after the second Test at Perth in which he should have featured.

Ahead of a series, a complete and comprehensive fitness assessment has to be made, not just the Yo-Yo test.

The Karnata batsman said about Pujara, "It is definitely great to watch him bat from the other end and also watch the way he grinds the bowlers, he has got a pattern

to it. He understands his strengths and knows he is very tight with his defence."

On missing out on a hundred, Mayank said, "Disappointment is there that I threw away my wicket."

"I was looking to dominate him, and it didn't work out."

Marcus Labuschagne had

a forgettable day, his feeble

## Mayank credits Dravid

Says the latter told him to manage his mental energy

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
SYDNEY

Mayank Agarwal, who followed up his promising debut in Melbourne with an impressive 77 on Thursday, revealed Rahul Dravid had played a significant role in strengthening his mind.

Mayank said, "He [Dravid] told me to particularly think about how to manage my mental energy and that's something we have spoken about for four to six months and he has helped me go through that path."

The opener added, "We, as batsmen, speak about our technique and the game and he is out there to guide us and help us climb the ladder."

### Stringing a partnership

Mayank, who added 116 runs for the second wicket with Pujara to lay a sound platform for India, said, "We spoke about putting together a partnership. They were bowling really well and we said 'let us try and play close to the body and not give them wickets. He kept talking to me."

The Karnataka batsman said about Pujara, "It is definitely great to watch him bat from the other end and also watch the way he grinds the bowlers, he has got a pattern

to it. He understands his strengths and knows he is very tight with his defence."

On missing out on a hundred, Mayank said, "Disappointment is there that I threw away my wicket."

"I was looking to dominate him, and it didn't work out."

Marcus Labuschagne had

a forgettable day, his feeble



**Sweet spot:** Mayank Agarwal was positive in his approach while conjuring up another impressive knock. ■ AP

leg-spin being taken for runs by the Indians.

The Australian revealed he will have a more important role to play with the bat — he will be coming in at No. 3. He said, "I have pretty much batted most of my time in Queensland at No. 3. I am definitely excited, batting three for Australia who wouldn't be excited?"

MacGill was impressed

## 'Warne put leg-spin on a pedestal'

MacGill elaborates on his own craft

S. DINAKAR  
SYDNEY

This Aussie could cause a lot of damage with his flight, dip and bounce. And despite competing with a legend, he left his imprint in world cricket. Stuart MacGill's 208 wickets in just 44 Tests came at a stunning strike rate of 54.00. And he could run through sides — the leg-spinner had 12 five-wicket innings and two 10-wicket match-hauls.

Yet, MacGill largely played for Australia when Shane Warne was injured or was out for disciplinary reasons. Of course, there was a handful of occasions when the two played together in Tests.

The 47-year-old MacGill, speaking to *The Hindu*, here on Thursday, said "I didn't think of Warne as a rival. Perhaps, he was my destiny. He put leg-spin on a pedestal and I got noticed."

Talking about his craft, MacGill said, "For me it was more over-spin. I would flight the ball, then there would be drop and bounce. I wanted to get batsmen playing forward and then get them to realise they are not quite there."

And he was delighted with mystery spinner C.V. Varun — he went for a whopping ₹8.4 crore in the IPL auction — rating him ahead of Warne.

"There is work on the ball and you can see the ball fizz through the air. But it's unfortunate that Ashwin is injured. He was beginning to bowl well in Australia with over-spin and bounce."

"I read the things he said about me. It made me very happy. I saw some of his videos. He does have very good variations."



Stuart MacGill. ■ S. DINAKAR

## South African pacers run through Pakistan



Only skipper Sarfraz offers some resistance

REUTERS  
CAPE TOWN

Opener Aiden Markram made a return to form as he scored 78 to help South Africa into a strong position on the opening day of the second test against Pakistan at Newlands on Thursday.

Markram's contribution put South Africa on 123 for two wickets at close, 54 runs behind after bowling out Pakistan for 177 at tea.

South Africa, which won the first Test last week, will be confident of building a substantial first-innings lead after its four-man seam attack ripped through the Pakistani batting line-up.

The 24-year-old Markram was bowled off the last ball of the day by Shan Masood.

Hashim Amla, who is 24 not out, will resume on Fri-

## SCOREBOARD SOUTH AFRICA VS PAKISTAN

**Pakistan — 1st innings:** Imam-ul-Haq lbw b Philander 8, Fakhar Zaman c Bavuma b Steyn 1, Shan Masood c de Kock b Raabda 44, Azhar Ali c Amla b Olivier 2, Asad Shafiq c Elgar b Rabada 20, Babar Azam c du Plessis b Olivier 2, Sarfraz Ahmed c de Kock b Olivier 56, Mohammad Amir (not out) 22, Yasir Shah c du Plessis b Olivier 5, Mohammad Abbas c de Kock b Steyn 0, Shaheen Afridi c de Kock b Steyn 3; Extras (b-8, lb-2, nb-1, w-3): 14; Total (in 51.1 overs): 177.

**Fall of wickets:**

# Bopanna-Divij save six match points

Top seeds beat Paes & Reyes-Varela 17-15 in super tiebreak; Anderson to meet Simon in semifinals

## TATA OPEN

N. SUDARSHAN  
PUNE

They were shunted to the outside courts, but it didn't quite stop the Leander Paes-Miguel Reyes-Varela and Rohan Bopanna-Divij Sharan combines from putting on a show at the Tata Open Maharashtra on Thursday.

After an hour and 45 minutes of mad, nerve-wracking but uplifting tennis, where momentum shifted often, the Indian top seeds saved six match points to clinch a 6-7 (4), 6-4, [17-15] win.

"I have never played such a close match," said a beaming Bopanna. "In a super tie-break you are in it till the last point. In fact I can't recall any of the six match points right now. But my experience of having played consistently on the circuit helped me."

**Intense atmosphere**  
The setting suited Paes the most. With limited seats, the atmosphere was intense. The energy in the air was palpable and he seemed to have a point to prove. His old magic hands made their first appearance as early as in the second game; two perfectly



**Victory cry:** Rohan Bopanna and Divij Sharan emerged winners after an hour and 45 minutes of mad, nerve-wracking but uplifting tennis. ■ R. RAGU

sliced backhand volleys showing his was no anachronistic art. He would come up with those many times over.

Modern-day doubles though is increasingly a three or four-shot game – one booming serve followed by a crunching ground-stroke. Bopanna was its best embodiment on the day. He was the only player not to have had his serve broken.

It was then left to Reyes-Varela to match his tennis to Paes' and for Divij to match his to Bopanna's. The two

blew hot and cold. Divij's serve came under pressure twice in the first set, in the seventh and eleventh games, but he managed to wriggle out on both occasions and stretch it to a tiebreak.

After Bopanna-Divij earned a mini break to 2-1, Leander came up with arguably the shot of the match – a remarkable drop volley hit with such underspin that the court appeared to swallow the ball. Paes erupted, so did the crowd and the set was had minutes later.

Much of the second stanza witnessed error-strewn tennis. Reyes-Varela and Divij saw their serves broken twice each and Paes once. But true to form, Bopanna held firm, holding to love when it mattered the most – at 5-4 to level at one set apiece.

This pattern would play out multiple times in the super tiebreak before Divij finally sorted his service game. Even as Bopanna saved the first match point at 8-9 with an immaculate ace, Divij crucially negated two on his racquet.

As fortunes swung back and forth, Bopanna chose to take the bull by the horns. In addition to his backcourt game, he came up with three high-risk, but eventually high-rewarding poaches, which Paes at his best would have been proud of. It was fitting that the match-ending shot was his, an inch-perfect lob which no outstretched arm could reach.

### Powering through

On Centre Court, Kevin Anderson entered the semifinal with a neat 6-3, 6-3 win over Spaniard Jaume Munar.

In a repeat of last year's final, the top seed will next meet defending champion Gilles Simon who battled past compatriot Benoit Paire 3-6, 7-6(4), 6-4. Paire, in fact, was serving for the match at 5-4 in the second set before his game crumbled.

**The results (quarterfinals):** Kevin Anderson (RSA) bt Jaume Munar (Esp) 6-3, 6-3; Steve Darcis (Bel) bt Malek Jaziri (Tun) 7-5, 6-2; Ivo Karlovic (Cro) bt Ernesto Gulbis (Lat) 7-6(5), 7-6(5); Gilles Simon (Fra) bt Benoit Paire (Fra) 3-6, 7-6(4), 6-4.

**Doubles:** Rohan Bopanna & Divij Sharan bt Leander Paes & Miguel Reyes-Varela 6-7(4), 6-4, [17-15].

# I'm on the right track'

Ramkumar's all-round game has improved



**Optimistic:** The hard-working Ramkumar feels it is only a matter of time before he gets the results. ■ R. RAGU

N. SUDARSHAN  
PUNE

Ramkumar Ramanathan may have lost to Tunisian World No. 45 Malek Jaziri 6-7 (6), 7-6(5), 6-3 in a fierce contest which stretched into the wee hours of Thursday, but the performance has given him a lot of confidence. The effort came on the back of his victory over former top-20 player Marcel Granollers in the first round of the Tata Open Maharashtra.

"It was a very close game and I gave my best," Ramkumar said.

"I played very well against Marcel and against Jaziri too it was a good effort even though I lost. I think I am on the right track."

As closely matched as the

two players were, especially in the first two sets, Ramkumar clearly had the better chances to turn the tie his way. At 5-5 in the second set, Jaziri was down 15-40, but the Indian couldn't capitalise. In all, Ramkumar squandered four break points in that set alone and also threw away a 3-0 lead in the tie-break.

The third set was an implosion; where he didn't allow Jaziri a single shy at his serve in the second, he was broken thrice in the third, including the game at 3-3 in which he served three double faults. Among the biggest positives will be the improvement in his all-round game, which complemented his big serve well.

**I am not too bad on grass: Paes**

**SPORTS REPORTER**  
PUNE

Leander Paes, the grass courts at Kolkata and Davis Cup seem made for each other. But not one soul batted an eyelid when he was not selected for India's tie against Italy next month.

The 45-year-old though was cheeky in his reply when asked if he was disappointed.

"I got the Davis Cup world record. So what's there to be disappointed about?" he responded.

### Good luck

"I think it's important that the best team is chosen and I wish it good luck."

"The results show for themselves and there's no secret about what's going on in the Davis Cup [team]."

"But whenever I'm called to represent the country I will put my best foot forward. Sure, Kolkata, grass... not too bad on grass, am I? It'd be fun to play if I'm called."

## wishes pour in for Schumi



Michael Schumacher.  
■ FILE PHOTO: AFP

**AFP**  
MARANELLO (ITALY)

Ferrari issued an emotional message on Thursday to mark the 50th birthday of Michael Schumacher, who has not been seen in public since he suffered head injuries in a skiing accident five years ago. The German won a record seven F1 drivers' championships.

"Our champ turns 50 today. We're all with you Michael #KeepFighting," Scuderia Ferrari tweeted.

The official Formula 1 account tweeted: "We join the whole of the #F1 family in sending Michael @Schumacher our very best wishes on his 50th birthday #KeepFightingMichael #Michael50."

## Smashers beat Aces

### PBL

G. VISWANATH  
AHMEDABAD

Chennai Smashers began its campaign against Pune 7 Aces with the famous English husband-wife pair of Chris and Gabby Adcock winning the Trump match and another Englishman, Rajiv Ouseph, outwitting Frenchman Brice Leverdez in the first men's singles.

The two victories put Smashers 3-0 ahead in their Premier Badminton League match on Thursday.

South Korean Sung Ji Hyun delivered a three-game win against the fancied Carolina Marin for Smashers to record its second victory in three fixtures.

There was plenty of drama and thrill in the third game between Sung Ji and Carolina. When the experienced South Korean grabbed the first game by a whisker at 15-14, it seemed that the side in yellow had



**Flying high:** Ouseph outlasted Leverdez. ■ VIJAY SONEJI

## Kerala men start strongly

West Bengal women have the measure of Tamil Nadu



**In smashing form:** Kerala's Ajith Lal fires one past Karnataka blocker. ■ K. PICHUMANI

### NATL. VOLLEYBALL

K. KEERTHIVASAN  
CHENNAI

The Kerala men's team, sans two senior players Vibin George and Rithesh, still looks quite competitive.

Going for a hat-trick, the seven-time champion played a compact game to outwit Karnataka 25-18, 25-20, 25-21 and start its Group-A campaign on a bright note in the senior National volleyball championships at the Nehru Indoor Stadium on Thursday.

Though each set was fast-paced and pretty even, Kerala upped the ante when it mattered and all credit to attacker G.S. Akhin and blocker Sarang Santhilal for pulling the team through tough situations.

Karnataka trailed by only a

point in both the first (15-16) and second (16-17) sets, but it couldn't rise to the occasion when the sets entered the closing stages. As coach K.R. Lakshmi Narayan observed, the team missed the services of Anup D Costa, who had met with an accident prior to the event.

Karnataka played its best in the third Test with central blockers A. Karthik and Ashwini Rai attacking and blocking with conviction.

At 18-19, Kerala accelerated with G.S. Akhin and Ajith Lal smashing with impunity.

Earlier, the Tamil Nadu women went down tamely to West Bengal 25-23, 24-26, 25-14, 25-11 in a Group-A contest.

The local team had no business to lose the first set especially after being in the front for the major part.

Leading 16-13 and 19-16, the host failed to apply itself. Though it won the second, TN failed to capitalise on the momentum and Puja Dalui and Aneena Shaji took the match away.

With setter Juhi Shaw's guidance, Puja and Aneena blocked and smashed their way to success. One felt that, unlike its opponent, Tamil Nadu lacked a good attacker to finish the points.

**The results:** Men: Group-A: Kerala bt Karnataka 25-18, 25-20, 25-21; Group-B: Railways bt Andhra Pradesh 25-17, 25-19, 25-21. Women: Group-A: West Bengal bt Tamil Nadu 25-23, 24-26, 25-14, 25-11; Group-B: Maharashtra bt Karnataka 25-13, 25-18, 25-18.

**Wednesday:** Men: B: Services bt Haryana 25-18, 19-25, 25-15, 26-24; Women: B: Kerala bt Telangana 25-11, 25-16, 25-15.

## Fortunegiants through

Will meet Bulls in the summit clash

### PKL

NANDAKUMAR MARAR  
MUMBAI

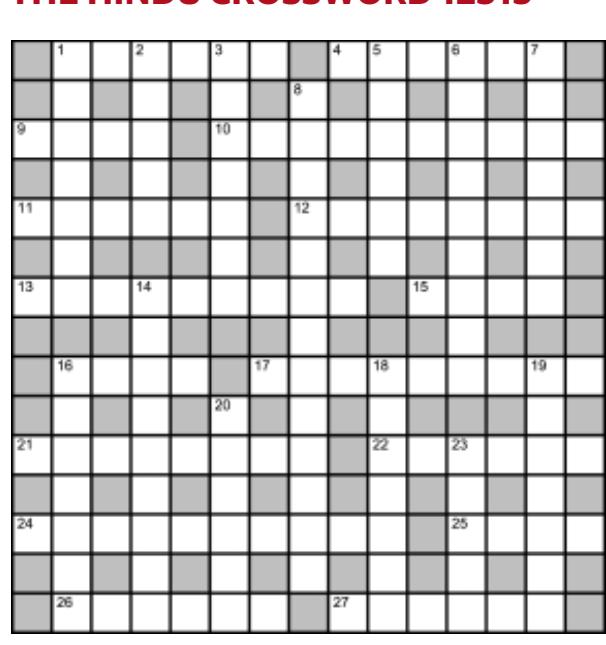
Gujarat Fortunegiants, displaying a solid defence and confidence all around, got past UP Yoddha 38-31 in Qualifier-2 of the ProKabaddi League on Thursday. The Gujarat side clinched a spot in the final for the second consecutive time. Bengaluru Bulls stands in the way in the final face-off on Saturday.

Raiding spearhead Sachin Tanwar proved his worth with a controlled show in the rival half, going into the opponent's zone 18 times, returning successfully seven times. He finished with nine raid points and one tackle point for the only 10-pointer of the night. Tilting the scales in the side's favour were defenders Hadi Ostakar, Sunil Kumar, and Sachin Vittala (three each).



**Slipping away:** K. Prapanjan escapes the clutches of the Yoddha defenders. ■ VIVEK BENDRE

## THE HINDU CROSSWORD 12515



### ACROSS

- 1 Son and daughter receive appropriate care; blessed (6)
- 4 Hymn on air about following passion mostly (6)
- 9 Perhaps greeting on Christmas and relishing dinner's foremost... (4)
- 10 ...these days in Rome, could be best essentially in celebrations (10)
- 14 ...to get a medal, say (4)
- 16 ...in small, perhaps light vehicle (4)
- 17 A biracial on a safari wandering about (4-5)
- 21 Deity reinstated overlooking rule, resistance suppressed on festival (8)
- 22 At the end, network got grainy, blank with a harsh tone (6)
- 24 Perhaps, pigs are found in barracks constructed to house cattle (10)
- 25 Lead, lead from the boundaries to get a medal, say (4)
- 26 Urge player to stretch over before a drink (6)
- 27 Fun and games forcibly banned by doctor (6)

1 File kept by writer is on leading scam highlighting ambiguous riches (7)

(set by Afterdark)

- 2 Noticed archbishop carrying a tree (5)
- 3 Thrilled that direct taxes are rectified to include arts (7)
- 5 Restricts student, one joining US university/school (6)
- 6 Judges ban new novel that's detailed, through reforms (9)
- 7 Accessory in batteries is released, rehabilitated (7)
- 8 Be extraordinarily nice, embrace Pope, face Jesus, perhaps (6,2,5)
- 14 Half of them, essentially best in band compose the signature tune (5,4)
- 16 Perhaps, meat expert touring America... (7)
- 18 ...on winding routes to cross Baltimore initially, making it slower (7)
- 19 Essentially man's company and love is charming, leading to heavenly (7)
- 20 Devil possesses a bishop breaking new idol (6)
- 23 LA loses out power (5)

### SUDOKU



DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★★

### Solution to puzzle 12514



### Solution to yesterday's Sudoku



## FAITH

### The disobedient mind

Vallalar in his Deiva Manimalai says his mind is like a playful, distracted boy. Just as a boy does not pay attention to his teacher, the mind too does not heed its guru – namely the intellect. Vallalar then describes all the dangerous things this boy, that is his mind, does. Unable to curb desire, the mind falls into kama, which is like swirling water from which a person cannot save himself. In other words, kama is like the deep water in a river, which ends a person's life. Moha is the darkness into which the mind moves. Misery is the dark cave into which it disappears. Arrogance is the hill it climbs, only to fall from it. Jealousy is the pit into which it falls. "With such a mind, that cannot be controlled, what am I to do, oh Muruga, who resides in Kanda Kottam?" Vallalar asks. Kanda Kottam is the temple for Lord Shambukha, to whom the entire Deiva Manimalai is addressed, said M.A. Manickavelu in a discourse.

Thayumanavar says the mind is a monkey. If he were to be under the control of the mind, he would be like a garland in the hands of a monkey – torn to bits in no time at all. Lord Siva is the One who saves us from such a plight. When will I serve at Lord Siva's feet, asks Thayumanavar. Keeping the mind still is not easy to achieve, but it is stressed as the first step in spiritual enlightenment. Sivajima Sithiyar says if we cultivate good habits, get rid of bad qualities like anger, if we worship Lord Siva with flowers and prayers, He will bless us. So, His blessing clearly comes only to those who have shed bad qualities. In order to get rid of bad qualities, the mind must be controlled. That is what Vallalar is pointing out in his verse.

When the mind is a disobedient child, how can we control it? Only with His grace can we conquer temptations.

## TV PICKS

**Australia vs India:** 4th Test, day two, Sony Six & Ten 3 (SD & HD), 5 a.m.  
**NBA:** Sony Ten 1 (SD & HD), 6.30 a.m.  
**Women's Challenger Trophy:** Star Sports 2 (SD & HD), 9 a.m.  
**South Africa vs Pakistan:** 2nd Test, Sony ESPN (SD & HD), 2 p.m.  
**Tata Open:** SS Select 2 (SD & HD), 4.30 p.m.  
**I-League:** Star Sports 3, 1.30 p.m. & 7 p.m.  
**PBL:** Star Sports 1 (SD & HD), 6.30 p.m.

## IN BRIEF



Djokovic wants Nadal to bounce back

DOHA Novak Djokovic said that sport needed "legend" Rafael Nadal to make another comeback after it was announced that the injury-plagued Spaniard had withdrawn from his season-opening tournament in Brisbane. "He has done the comebacks for so many times in his career that you always believe that he can do it again," said Djokovic. "Sport needs Rafa, no question about it. He is one of the greatest legends of all time and we want to see him play."



Liverpool will drop points, says Guardiola

MANCHESTER Pep Guardiola is convinced Premier League leader Liverpool will drop points between now and the end of the season. "We are there, still with a lot of games to go and I think everyone will lose points this season, even Liverpool, because there are a lot of competitions." Guardiola feels his own team deserve credit for amassing 47 points in 20 league matches and is certain they will get opportunities to apply pressure on Liverpool.



Sarri admits Chelsea needs more strikers

LONDON Maurizio Sarri admitted Chelsea need attacking reinforcements after it was frustrated by Southampton on Wednesday. "The club knows my opinion. I think we need something else for our characteristics," said Sarri when asked if he would consider recalling on loan forwards Michy Batshuayi and Tammy Abraham. I have to think of my responsibility with the training. I have to try to improve my players in the offensive phase.

## Anirudh-Vijay Sundar in last four

## SPORTS BUREAU

Anirudh Chandrasekar and Vijay Sundar Prashanth reached the semifinals with a 7-6(5), 6-4 victory over the Chinese pair of Jie Cui and Weiqiang Zheng in the \$25,000 ITF Futures on Thursday.

However, the Indian challenge ended in singles as Nitin Kumar Sinha and Vijay Sundar Prashanth were beaten in straight sets in the second round.

## The results:

**Singles (pre-quarterfinals):** Jung-Woong Na (Kor) bt Nitin Kumar Sinha 6-4, 6-4; Hao Wu (Chn) bt Vijay Sundar Prashanth 7-5, 6-2.

**Doubles (quarterfinals):** Ruixuan Wang & Hao Wu (Chn) bt Wei-De Lin (Tpe) & Nitin Kumar Sinha 3-6, 7-6(5), [10-7]; Anirudh Chandrasekar & Vijay Sundar Prashanth bt Jie Cui & Weiqiang Zheng (Chn) 7-6(5), 6-4.

## Sharath looking to overtake Kamlesh

Sathiyan & Co. will, however, be keen to stop him; all eyes on Soumyajit who is making a return

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
CUTTACK

A. Sharath Kamal will hope to emerge as the sole leader in the list of the most National championship titles; G. Sathiyan will be keen to solidify his claim as Sharath's successor by ending his singles drought.

Manika Batra will look forward to cement her place as the undisputed queen of Indian table tennis while Soumyajit Ghosh will be keen to return to competitive circuit with a bang during the II Sports 80th senior National & inter-state table tennis championship, to be played at the JN Indoor Stadium here from Friday.

At the last National championship, Sharath equalled Kamlesh Mehta's long-standing record of eight singles titles, the most in Indian table tennis history. The veteran



G. Sathiyan. ■ FILE PHOTO



A. Sharath Kamal. ■ FILE PHOTO

paddler couldn't ask for a better start to 2019 than winning a record ninth trophy. But Sharath, the World No. 30, will be aware that the road to the title could be the steepest this time around.

Sathiyan, who trails Sharath by a solitary position in the World rankings, has been gunning to take over the Indian table tennis mantle from the ageing warrior. And

her authority by regaining the women's title that she last won three years ago.

Ghosh, on the other hand, is relieved to have seen the TTFI lift his suspension and just participate in the Nationals.

In March, Ghosh, who now represents Haryana in the domestic arena, was suspended days before the team's departure for the Commonwealth Games after being accused of rape. Having settled the disputes on the personal front, the 2011-12 champion will enter the six-day tournament as the dark horse.

## PSPB favourites

The tournament will start with the team championship for the first three days. And with virtually all the top paddlers being recruited by the Petroleum Sports Promotion Board (PSPB), it will be inter-

esting to see if teams like Maharashtra A, Railways Sports Promotion Board, Tamil Nadu and Haryana can pose any challenge to the favourites.

After all, the PSPB men – with Sharath and Sathiyan leading the pack with A. Amal Raj, Manav Thakkar and Sudhanshu Grover completing the pack – have been unbeaten in the team championship for 16 years in succession.

The PSPB women will hope to resume their winning streak. After their prolonged domination was halted by West Bengal in 2016-17, the PSPB women regained the gold last year in Ranchi. Batra and Co. – with veteran Mouma Das, seasoned Madhurika Patkar and youngster Archana Kamath completing the line-up – will hope to repeat the feat in Cuttack.

Kushal Das said, "These matches will be shown with commentary, highlights and replays."

I-League CEO Sunando Dhar said, "The commitment was to show all the matches, and we are happy that they will be live streamed."

This comes days after Minerva Punjab owner Ranjit Bajaj on Sunday threatened to move court under the aegis of I-League (Private) Clubs Association if the All India Football Federation (AIFF) did not sort out the telecast row.

The association was up in arms against the AIFF after it recently announced that it would reduce the I-League TV coverage to just 30 of the 61 remaining matches.

## Solskjaer's perfect record continues

Chelsea again disappoints the faithful at Stamford Bridge



Opening strike: Romelu Lukaku drills Manchester United's first goal past Newcastle United custodian Martin Dubravka. ■ MICHAEL REGAN/GETTY IMAGES

## PREMIER LEAGUE

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
LONDON

Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's Manchester United made it four wins out of four in the Premier League on Wednesday, beating Newcastle to close the gap on fourth-placed Chelsea, which was held at home by Southampton.

United was forced to dig deep to emerge with a 2-0 win against a disciplined Newcastle side at St James's Park.

The victory leaves it in

sixth spot in the table with 38 points, just three behind Arsenal and six adrift of Chelsea.

Substitute Romelu Lukaku broke the deadlock just 38 seconds after coming on midway through the second half, pouncing after Newcastle's goalkeeper Martin Dubravka had spilled a fierce Marcus Rashford free kick and Rashford himself made sure of the points in the 80th minute.

## Misfiring

It was a frustrating evening for Chelsea as the side failed to score for the third time in its past five games

The home side shared six goals with Watford in a helter-skelter first half.

## The results:

**Group B: Greece bt Switzerland 2-1** (Stefanos Tsitsipas lost to Roger Federer 7-6(5), 7-6(4); Maria Sakkari bt Belinda Bencic 6-3, 6-4; Sakkari & Tsitsipas bt Bencic & Federer 4-3(4), 2-4, 4-3(3)).

## Britain bt United States 2-1

(Cameron Norrie bt Frances Tiafoe 7-6(4), 6-0; Katie Boulter lost to Serena Williams 6-1, 7-6(2); Boulter & Norrie bt Williams & Tiafoe 3-4(2), 4-3(4), 4-1).

## Brazil bt Australia 2-1

(Pedro Cachola bt Thanasi Kokkinakis 6-3, 6-4; Bruno Soares & Marcelo Melo bt John Peers & Jordan Thompson 6-3, 6-4).

## Ireland bt Japan 2-1

(Colin Fleming & Michael Venus bt Kei Nishikori & Yuichi Sugita 6-3, 6-4; Michael Venus bt Taro Daniel 6-3, 6-4).

## New Zealand bt South Africa 2-1

(Kane Williamson put on 163 for the second wicket.

Martin Guptill cracked five sixes and 11 fours to celebrate his return to the New Zealand side with his 14th ODI century in his 160th match, becoming the ninth-fastest player to pass 6,000 runs in the format.

**The scores:** New Zealand 371 for seven, Sri Lanka 326 in 49 overs (N.

Dickwella 76, D. Gunathilaka 43, Kusal Perera 102, Neesham three for 38).

## Lovlina through without throwing a punch

Walkovers rule the day; middleweight class witnesses high-quality bouts

## WOMEN'S BOXING

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
BALLARI

past Gujarat's Riya Upadhyay. Anaswara won on points (5-0) against Maharashtra's Shayaan Pathan.

For Haryana, Anupama was the lone boxer who benefited from a walkover from Ravi Chandrika Balga of Andhra Pradesh while Nisha, Nupur and Pooja Rani showed their superiority in the ring.

Lovlina got a walkover from Andhra Pradesh's Marathamma Saitivada in the welter class (69 kg) pre-quarters. The 21-year-old will enter the ring for the first time when she takes on Mithrem Jagirdar of Gujarat, who stopped Delhi's Anjali.

The best bouts were witnessed in the middleweight class where Railways' Neetu beat AIP's Kalawanti 3-2 and Avneet Kaur of Chandigarh got past Delhi's Shalakha Sansanwal 3-2.

Fousiya got a walkover from AIP's Neha Jhadav, Divya beat Tamil Nadu's S. Preethi 5-0 while Indira got

past Gujarat's Riya Upadhyay. Anaswara won on points (5-0) against Maharashtra's Shayaan Pathan.

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Lovlina is yet to enter the ring at the National championship.

■ FILE PHOTO: SANDEEP SAXENA



Perfect conditions: With the winds conducive at 8-10 knots, the sailors had a smooth day. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

**SAILING**

**SPORTS BUREAU**  
CHENNAI

The second day of the 10th India International Regatta saw the Indians occupy the top spot in most of the classes. The winds were conducive at 8-10 knots and the sailors competed eagerly at the seas outside the port of Chennai.

**The results:**

**Opti Main Fleet:** 1. Julia Werton (Swe); 2. Emil Wolfgang (Swe); 3. Jai Kiran Kumar Bolli; **420:** 1. Navyn Prabhakar & Neelanand; 2. Chitresh Thattha & Aniketh; 3. M. Binob & Pilli.

**Laser 4.7:** 1. Harshita Tomar; 2. Ram Milan Yadav; 3. Hemant Nagireddy; **Laser radial:** 1. Ramya Saravanan; 2. M. Koteswara Rao; 3. Satish Yadav.

**RS One:** 1. Muhammad Ramadhan Syarif (Inda); 2. Rahul Chaudhary; 3. Sathya Sudhan; **29er:** 1. Suruvapu Gagan & Abhishek; 2. Ashish Vishwakarma & Alankar; 3. Jayalakshmi Sundaravadivel & Ashwin.

**Opti Green Fleet:** 1. Raval Parandi; 2. John Yerollo; 3. Karthik Nenavath.

## I-League games on Hotstar, Jio TV

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI

Bowing to intense pressure from aggrieved clubs, the All India Football Federation and its commercial partners have decided to show all the I-League matches, which will not be televised, on online platforms Hotstar and Jio TV.

After all, the PSPB men – with Sharath and Sathiyan leading the pack with A. Amal Raj, Manav Thakkar and Sudhanshu Grover completing the pack – have been unbeaten in the team championship for 16 years in succession.

The broadcast will start with the Neroca FC-Chillong Lajong game on Friday.

"Having worked this out with our commercial partners Football Sports Development Limited (FSDL), we have come to the conclusion that the matches which will not be broadcast, will be available online," the All India Football Federation (AIFF) general secretary

Kushal Das said. "These matches will be shown with commentary, highlights and replays."

I-League CEO Sunando Dhar said, "The commitment was to show all the matches, and we are happy that they will be live streamed."

This comes days after Minerva Punjab owner Ranjit Bajaj on Sunday threatened to move court under the aegis of I-

League (Private) Clubs Association if the All India Football Federation (AIFF) did not sort out the telecast row.

The association was up in arms against the AIFF after it recently announced that it would reduce the I-League TV coverage to just 30 of the 61 remaining matches.

## Neesham and Guptill emerge the stars

All-round show by former, latter comes up with a century

## LANKA IN NZ

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
TAURANGA (NEW ZEALAND)

Jimmy Neesham made a dream return to international cricket on Thursday, crushing Sri Lanka with both bat and ball as New Zealand won the opening One-Day International by 45 runs here.

The win not only gave the Swiss a 1-0 lead in their Group B encounter, but also meant they were guaranteed a spot in Saturday's final despite eventually losing the tie-2-1.

Earlier, Serena Williams made it three wins from as many outings, as she prepares for the upcoming Australian Open, but USA went down 2-1 against Britain.

## The results:

**Group B: Greece bt Switzerland 2-1** (Stefanos Tsitsipas lost to Roger Federer 7-6(5), 7-6(4); Maria Sakkari bt Belinda Bencic 6-3, 6-4; Sakkari & Tsitsipas bt Bencic & Federer 4-3(4), 2-4, 4-3(3)).

## Britain bt United States 2-1

(Cameron Norrie bt Frances Tiafoe 7-6(4), 6-0; Katie Boulter lost to Serena Williams 6-1, 7-6(2); Boulter

## IN BRIEF



Kim and Kanye West expecting fourth child

LOS ANGELES

Kim Kardashian and Kanye West are expecting a fourth child – again using a surrogate, according to multiple media reports on Wednesday. Celebrity magazines *Us Weekly* and *People* quoted sources close to the couple as saying the surrogate was expected to give birth in May. REUTERS



Indian wins 15 mn dirhams in UAE raffle

ABU DHABI

Several Indian expatriates won big in an Abu Dhabi raffle draw on Thursday, with the jackpot of 15 million dirhams (₹28 crore) going to Sarah Purushothaman, who is based in Dubai. The second prize of 100,000 dirhams was won by Jinachandran Vazhooor Narayanan. IANS



Serena takes up Bumble's women-first message

LOS ANGELES

Tennis champion Serena Williams will star in a year-long marketing campaign for the Bumble social networking app that will kick off with a message of women's empowerment during the February 3 Super Bowl. In the campaign called "The Ball is in Her Court", Ms. Williams will urge women to make the first move in all aspects of their lives. REUTERS

# Meet the 'snowman' floating in space

NASA shares detailed images taken by New Horizons of the distant celestial body called Ultima Thule

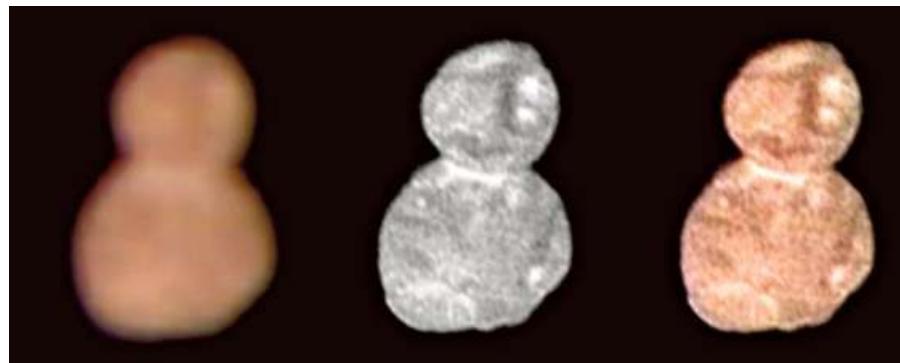
AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
WASHINGTON

Ultima Thule, an icy celestial body, is aptly shaped like a giant snowman, NASA scientists have announced.

The first detailed images beamed back from the U.S. agency's New Horizons mission allowed scientists to confidently determine the body was formed when two spheres, or "lobes" slowly gravitated towards each other until they stuck together – a major scientific discovery.

The New Horizons spacecraft on Tuesday flew past Ultima Thule, which was discovered via telescope in 2014 and is the farthest and potentially oldest cosmic body ever observed by a spacecraft.

Before that flyby, the only image scientists had was a blurry one showing Ultima Thule's oblong shape, re-



Two lobes: Images with separate colour and detail information, and a composited image of both, showing Ultima Thule as observed by the New Horizons spacecraft. AP/NASA

ssembling something like a bowling pin or a peanut. "That image is so 2018... Meet Ultima Thule!" said lead investigator Alan Stern, doing little to hide his joy as he revealed a new sharper image of the cosmic body, taken at a distance as close as 27,000 km with a resolution of 140 metres per pixel.

"That bowling pin is gone – it's a snowman, if anything at all," Mr. Stern said during a NASA briefing.

## Faint light

Ultima Thule's surface reflects light about as much as "garden variety dirt," he said, as the sun's rays are 1,600 times fainter there

than on the earth. The body completes its own rotation in about 15 hours. NASA dubbed the larger lobe Ultima, and the other, which is about three times smaller, Thule.

"This is the first object that we can clearly tell was born this way" Mr. Stern said, instead of evolving as a

sort of "bi-lobe." "This really puts the nail on the coffin now. We know that this is how these kinds of objects in many cases form."

Some 4.5 billion years ago a cloud of frozen pebbles began to join forces, gradually forming two bodies – Ultima and Thule.

Slowly turning, they eventually touched at each other at what mission geology manager Jeff Moore called an "extremely slow speed" – maybe just one to a few kilometres per hour.

The lobes, according to Mr. Moore, are really just "resting on each other."

"New Horizons is like a time machine, taking us back to the birth of the solar system," Mr. Moore said.

"We are seeing a physical representation of the beginning of planetary formation, frozen in time."

# Beyonce helps Louvre set visitor record

Singer made a video in the museum

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
PARIS

The world's most popular museum, the Paris Louvre, received over 10 million visitors in 2018, a record which it partly attributed on Thursday to a Beyoncé video shot against the backdrop of the Mona Lisa and other famous works.



Beyoncé

The wildly popular clip, which has been viewed 147 million times on YouTube, went on to form the basis of a tour designed by the Louvre that takes in the 17 paintings and sculptures featured in the video.

"The Beyoncé clip and the opening of the Louvre museum in Abu Dhabi had people around the world talking about the Louvre," Mr. Martinez said.

# Veganuary campaign turns a hit

1,70,000 people across 14 countries make a resolution to go meat-free

REUTERS  
LONDON

As rising numbers of people start 2019 vowing to go vegan for environmental and other reasons, chefs, restaurants and supermarkets are jumping on the bandwagon.

A record 1,70,000 people across 14 countries have signed up for Veganuary, in which people pledge to go vegan to January, nearly triple the number just two years earlier, said organisers of the British-based campaign.

Vegans eat a diet that is entirely plant based, eschewing the traditional eggs and milk of traditional vegetarianism.

"It's entering the mainstream," said Rich Hardy,



cording to a report which also said cutting animal products from diets would be a "relatively easy and cheap way" to tackle climate change.

## Celebrity boost

Interest in veganism has been boosted by celebrity fans, including pop stars Miley Cyrus and Ariana Grande, with supermarkets and restaurants quick to pick up on the trend.

The number of vegan food and drink products launched globally more than doubled in the five years to June 2018, according to data from market research firm Mintel.

Restaurants and takeaways have also been increasing their offerings, with

popular British bakery chain Greggs announcing it would launch a vegan version of its sausage roll in response to consumer demand.

Much of the growth in vegan food sales was driven by "flexitarian" eaters, who are looking to reduce their consumption of animal products instead of committing to a solely plant-based diet, said Mintel.

"There has just been such a buzz around meat-free foods, and that wasn't there before," said Emma Clifford, the firm's associate director of food and drink.

The top reason given for taking part was concerns over animal welfare, followed by health reasons and then the environment.

# Netflix asks viewers to stop taking #BirdBoxChallenge

Film leads to memes with people blindfolding themselves

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
LOS ANGELES

Netflix has urged its viewers to refrain from undertaking #BirdboxChallenge.



Blind following: A still from Bird Box. AP/NETFLIX

NOT HURT YOURSELVES WITH THIS BIRD BOX CHALLENGE. We don't know how this started, and we appreciate the love, but Boy and Girl have just one wish for 2019 and it is that

you not end up in the hospital due to memes," the US arm of the streaming giant tweeted. Netflix has claimed that over 45 million of its subscribers watched *Bird Box* within a week.

# Unveiling India's Gateway of Trade and Commerce with South-East Asia

## Highlights of ICP Moreh

## India's Gateway to South-East Asia

Located on NH-39 (Asian Highway-1) on the India-Myanmar Border

Spread over 38 acres with separate Passenger and Cargo facilities

Project Cost ₹ 90 crore

## Inauguration of

# Integrated Check Post at Moreh, Manipur

by

**Narendra Modi**

Prime Minister

Date: 4<sup>th</sup> January 2019, Friday

In the august presence of

**N. Biren Singh**

Chief Minister, Manipur

Department of Border Management  
Ministry of Home Affairs  
Government of India

Land Ports Authority of India

The advertisement is for the inauguration of the Integrated Check Post (ICP) at Moreh, Manipur. It features a large photo of Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the upper left. The text includes:

- Highlights of ICP Moreh**
- India's Gateway to South-East Asia**
- Located on NH-39 (Asian Highway-1) on the India-Myanmar Border**
- Spread over 38 acres with separate Passenger and Cargo facilities**
- Project Cost ₹ 90 crore**
- Inauguration of Integrated Check Post at Moreh, Manipur**
- by Narendra Modi Prime Minister**
- Date: 4<sup>th</sup> January 2019, Friday**
- In the august presence of N. Biren Singh Chief Minister, Manipur**

The background shows a view of the ICP building with mountains in the distance.

# FRIDAY REVIEW

 [www.thehindu.com](http://www.thehindu.com)  
 <https://www.facebook.com/thehindu>  
 <https://www.twitter.com/The Hindu>



■ AVINASH PASRICHA

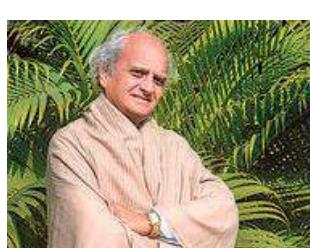
## A date with dance

From wall calendars to wallpapers, the covalent bond between dance and photography continues to spur imagination **Pages 6 & 7**

### INSIDE



The stage is set  
Theatre director  
and actor Om  
Katare gears up to  
celebrate 40 years  
of his  
group Yatri **P4**

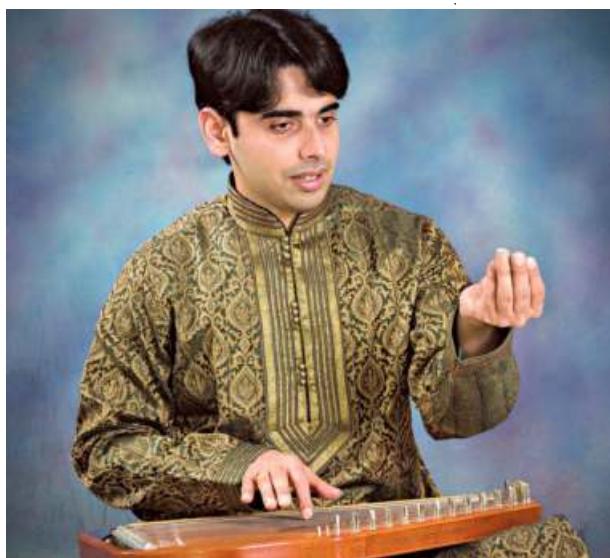


Checking the  
pulse  
Senior artistes tell  
us what worked and  
what did not  
materialise in 2018  
**P8**



Life and death in an  
unequal world  
Rahman Abbas tracks the  
pernicious design of war  
mongers to reflect on  
innocent victims and  
silent witnesses **P11**

## TIME OUT



Pritam Bhattacharjee will present Hindustani classical recital  
**INDIA HABITAT CENTRE**

**JANUARY 4**

**OPEN PALM COURT GALLERY**

Lehto, a glimpse of life and culture of the nomads of Jammu & Kashmir. A duo exhibition of paintings and photographs by Adnan Kohli and Sumaria Mumtaz

**INDIA HABITAT CENTRE**

**JANUARY 4**

**STEIN AUDITORIUM**

Kuchipudi recital by Ananya Khosla, disciple of Dr. Raja and Radha Reddy and Kaushalya Reddy.

**INDIA HABITAT CENTRE**

**JANUARY 4**

**AMALTAS**

Hindustani classical vocal recital by Pritam Bhattacharjee, disciple of Pandit Jasraj. Accompanying artistes will be Vinod Lele (tabla) and Paromita Mukherjee (harmonium). This is in collaboration with The B.Roy Music Trust.

**INDIA HABITAT CENTRE**

**JANUARY 4**

**MANDI HOUSE METRO STATION**

Aana Jaana exhibition presents different perspectives of Delhi's urban mobility generated by young women living in Delhi's resettlement colonies, urban villages and border towns. Using maps, photographs, videos and WhatsApp diaries, the exhibition will curate women's stories of in the city.



The Two-Headed Lore is a theatre piece

**INDIA INTERNATIONAL CENTRE**

**JANUARY 5**

**C.D. DESHMUKH AUDITORIUM**

The Two-Headed Lore, a theatre piece, will be staged by director Manjari Kaul. Presented by Devised Theatre, it will be performed by Astha Aggerwal, Manjari Kaul, Mauraya Sharma, Maya Ghosh; Kiran Naig and Vikas Gupta. Folklores, fairy tales and myths emerge through this journey which explores the dualities of life.

**INDIA HABITAT CENTRE**

**JANUARY 5**

**JORBAGH METRO STATION**

The second edition of Habitat Photosphere, a photography festival curated by Dr Alka Pande. Sustainable development is the narrative of the exhibition.

# Stepping into the future

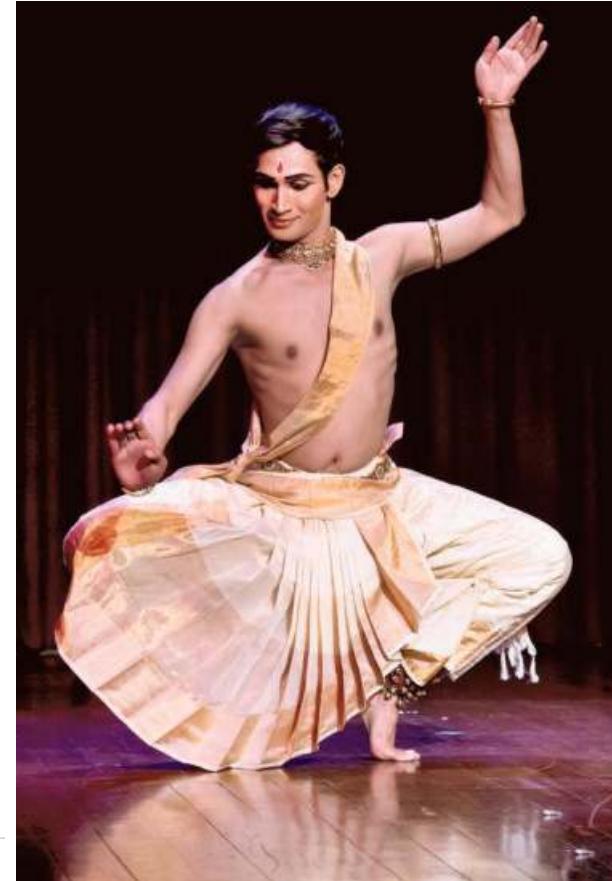
The boy brigade surpassed the girls at the just concluded "Unbound Beats of India" in New Delhi

RANEE KUMAR

Guru Ranjana Gauhar's year-end fest, 'Unbound Beats of India', celebrating young classical dancers' foray into this arena, presented Dr. Sridhar Vasudevan (direct disciple of V Jayantimala) on the Bharatanatyam front, Dheerendra Tiwari in Kathak (pupil of Rajendra Gangani) and Kuchipudi dancer Avijit Das (disciple of Kishore Mosalikanti) - three up and coming male dancers pitted against Swapnakalpa Dasgupta (Odissi - Kelucharan Mohapatra school), Vrinda Chadha (Odissi - Guru Ranjana Gauhar's pupil) and twin Kathak dancers Varsha Dasgupta and Era Dogra (Vidha Lal's students).

Since there were so many solo artistes on stage within one evening, one is bound to draw comparisons in terms of quality, repertoire and overall stage presence. Though all of them were able to keep the audiences' interest up without waxing, there were some who elicited more than a round of applause which was richly deserved.

Vasudevan gave an electrifying performance with just two power-packed pieces - one invoking goddess Lakshmi and the other, Ravan's Shiv Tandav. He embedded these into the alarippu format very creatively. His footwork to 'Anjali' mudra as an opening statement conveyed both obeisance to the goddess Lakshmi as well as his viewers. The deity is extolled as perched inside the heart lotus that floats on the milky ocean - a very esoteric way of



In full flow Avijit Das; (below) Vrinda Chadha  
■ COURTESY JAISON THOMAS

presenting the goddess. A flawless footwork with matching mudra merged harmoniously into the verses of Mahalakshmi Ashtakam wherein the artiste in his inimitable style and mercurial mukhabhinaya (facial expressions) depicts her in swift succession as gentle to her devotees and unflinching to detractors, and finally as omniscient, bringing the contrasting elements with perfect clarity.

**Dexterous dancer**

The dancer's expertise in showing the refrain 'namostuthe' in diverse ways and not just with an Anjali mudra is worth a mention. The Shiv Tandav began with mind-boggling nritta to a percussion that emulated the damru with matching mnemonics. The ultimate unification of Mahalakshmi and Shambu was done with flair and finesse.

The lithe Avijit Das has already established himself as a dancer to reckon with in the realm of Kuchipudi. His costume, a milky white aesthetically clad dhoti was in keeping with his theme for the evening. The Narayana Teertha tarangam, a quintessential piece from this genre was replete with varied abhinaya and sanchari along with



the field of abhinaya though the Odissi element hardly figured in the performance. It was more in the form of a solo dance theatrical, yet very engrossing as she unfolded the story of her in a dialogue with her little son Babruvahan. With an aesthetic headgear which embellished her costume, the dancer's narration of Chitrangadha, the warrior princess of Manipur's love for Arjun, her transformation into a beautiful damsel to gain his attention, her guilt of trying to kill her own identity and finally her realisation of her self-worth that fetched Arjun for her, was played out through the language of eyes and gestures with astounding clarity. The earlier Ashtapadi, 'Sakhi hey...' was executed with lovely body alignment. But the two women she portrayed had nothing in common nor in contrast to be shown in sequence.

Vrinda Chadha's showcased the popular goddess Durga with striking postures and dance alike but these poses and mannerisms have become commonplace now with many a dancer in this genre. However, her 'Dancing footsteps in the rain' was an original piece choreographed by guru Ranjana Gauhar. With a lucidity and limpid expression, she elucidated the raindrops as intermittent tiny bubbles touching the earth and causing joy to fauna and flora alike. Her peacock gait with its jerky movements went down well with the audience. But somehow in this school (bani) of Odissi, the sway of the upper half is missing and so is the aesthetics. Vrinda pulled off the crescendo and the fall towards the end, quite adroitly.

The duet Kathak by Varsha Dasgupta and Era Dogra took up a unique theme, 'Krsna Rang' which runs on the lines of Shiv-Shakti as two halves of a whole. Here it is Radha and Krsna who are depicted as a unified entity which when seen apart are two slices. The moves and dance enriched the idea with statuesque stances with perfect sync between the two dancers. Their dance with 'gwanan' (cowherd) gesture was very impressive. The footwork artistry would have complimented the theme had both been more nimble in body and movements.

The one-day fest was hosted at Triveni Kala Sangam.

# Stories of social upheaval

Sahitya Kala Parishad's Yuva Natya Samaroh saw some high class dramatic performances on stage

DIWAN SINGH BAJELI

**C**handrasekhar Kambar, an eminent Kannada playwright and poet, is held in high regard by theatregoers in the Capital who have watched the Hindi translation of some of his significant plays, especially "Jokumaraswamy" ("Aur Tota Bola") and "Siri Sampige" ("Akash-Tamasha"). Directed by Bhanu Bharti for the National School of Drama Repertory Company, "Akash-Tamasha" has acquired the status of a milestone in contemporary Indian theatre.

"Aur Tota Bola" was first directed by Rajinder Nath for the SRC Repertory. Lokendra Tripathi produced his Karmai in Hindi translation. The discerning theatre audience has been able to see his new play in Hindi translation by Veena Sharma titled "Shivratri", which was staged at Sahitya Kala Parishad's Yuva Natya Samaroh at the Kamani auditorium.

#### Historic movement

Directed by Susheel Sharma, the dramatic action unfolds against the backdrop of the Sharana social reform movement in the 12th century Karnataka, seeking equality of all men and women with the emphasis that human labour should be respected and those who are parasites should be forced to do productive labour. A movement essentially against Sanskrit-speaking elite, the historic movement is led by Baswanna, a man of impeccable integrity, high intellectual attainments with a deep-rooted commitment to ensure dignity, liberty and equality to the socially and economically suppressed masses. The major part of the action takes place in the house of a high society prostitute. Baswanna's humanistic movement is in conflict with two forces - the state headed by King Bijjal and high caste oligarchy. Though the king appreciates Baswanna's movement who has brought him to head the treasury of the state but the king has to defend his class interest. The reaction of the upper caste is violent who are destroying the mud-houses of Dalits, setting them on fire. Baswanna also seeks to liber-

ate prostitutes from the degrading social position and protecting the young girls from the slavery of the members of royalty.

The production captures the social upheaval and the bloody resistance of the privileged class to the rise of the oppressed in an intense manner, stirring the audience intellectually and emotionally. Director Sharma's production brings to the fore the contemporary relevance of a social movement launched in the 12th century in the context of Dalits assertion and their struggle for equality in a society divided by class with elite in the commanding position.

Director Sharma is a leading practitioner of the theatre music but in this production his instrumental music at times becomes loud enough to disrupt the rhythm of the production. In realistic productions, music should integrate with other forms of expressive means to form an artistic whole. Rajat Dahiya as Baswanna gives a brilliant performance, displaying inner moral strength and conviction. Pradeep Kataria as

the king who visits incognito to the house of high society prostitute, demanding his monopoly for the company of a young girl, reducing her to become his sex slave and Dakshi Lamba, a mentally crazy woman witness to the savagery of the ruling class, act admirably.

#### Celebrated work

Mahashweta Devi's celebrated fictional work "Rudali" and its stage version are a thought-provoking and disturbing experience both for the readers and the theatre audience. We have seen some stage versions of "Rudali", including one by seasoned theatre director Usha Ganguli. Its latest version, under the direction of Arvind, was presented at the Natya Samaroh which depicts effectively the grim reality of the lives of professional mourners hired by the rich to weep for their dead. Crushed by hardships caused by a heartless society of the privileged, they are unable to weep for the death of their near and dear ones but as professionals, they beat chest, pretend to cry loud enough to be paid more.

Arvind has also adapted the story. At places, especially where he introduces the mother of Sanichari, the protagonist, who has eloped with her lover, a Nautanki actor, abandons her infant daughter, tend to be abrupt. The script needs to have more cohesiveness. The music, dialogue and costumes establish the fact that the action is set in Rajasthan. The climactic scene leaves emotional impact on the audience. Priyanka Sharma as Sanichari, Veena Sharma, as the bubbly professional mourner and Bhupesh Joshi as Laxman Singh, the kind-hearted landlord romantically attracted towards Sanichari, give consistently impressive performances.

conscious ruler who has no enemy.

Some vital sequences are enacted upstage which weakened the visual and aural impact. The dialogues are chiselled, economic and rich in philosophic undertones reflecting complexities about human relationships, suggesting with subtlety that anger, rapaciousness and greed stand in the way of inner happiness of man. Leading performers like Sanjay Makhija as King Bimbsar, Dushyant Singh as the son of King Bimbsar and Kapil Pal as Devdatt display their flair for acting.

#### White blood

Yuva Natya Mahotsav came to an end with the presentation of "Saphed Khoon"

under the direction of Javed Sameer. A rehash of William Shakespeare's "King Lear", it is written by Aga Hashr Kashmiri and translated by Anis Azmi. A melodrama, Khakaan (King Lear) is cruelly treated by his two daughters whom he has given his entire kingdom. The third daughter, who is deprived of her right to the kingdom, rescues her old and senile father, looking after him with love and care. The villains -Bairam (Edmund) and cruel daughters -fight, kill one another. The play has a happy ending. Sudheer Rikhari's music score is entertaining. In tune with the Parsi theatre style, the production includes songs and dance sequences which are not related to the main plot. Javed has pruned the original longish script to reduce the playing time. On the whole, it is a feel good production.

Ramesh Khanna, who is a popular Ramlila actor, is aptly cast in the role of Khakaan, revealing melodramatic acting style. Himmat Singh Negi as Gulkairo and Ritu Pandey as Guldam bring to their dance sequences vitality, exuberance and spontaneity providing the audience light-hearted entertainment.



In sync with present times Scenes from "Shivratri"; "Saphed Khoon" ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT



## Decoding Manto on stage

Saadat Hasan Manto, the writer known for his incisive writing holding up a mirror to society, now comes to life in a play "Ek Mulaqat Manto Se" that will be staged at Stein Auditorium of India Habitat Centre this Saturday and Sunday.

Ashwath Bhatt, who showcased his mettle in Meghna Gulzar's much

talked about film "Raazi", decodes the enigma and idiosyncrasies of Manto, in the guise of the famous writer. It will showcase Manto contemplating his journey, changing mindsets, family life and poetry.

Interestingly, this performance is based on articles penned by Manto. The play explores his life, the times he

lived in and the social changes he witnessed during the Partition. Ashwath Bhatt as Manto will engage with the audience in person, trying to answer the biggest question "Why I write what I write". To highlight the pathos of Manto's life, Begum Akhtar's iconic ghazals will be used in a couple of places.



Ashwath Bhatt playing Saadat Hasan Manto

# 4 VOICEOVER



Reaching out to an era Charlie Puth

## The West Wind

# The 'reference' sheet

## The power of multiplier effect in music

PRINCE FREDERICK

This New Year's eve, I heard *Marvin Gaye* by Charlie Puth on the drive, being played by an FM radio station.

Listening to the upbeat and raunchy song, I noticed the faint glimmer of a concept entering my mind. Since that evening, this concept has somewhat crystallised. Honestly, I am not sure if it really deserves the dignity of being labelled a concept. Nevertheless, I am sharing it with you, more in the way of thinking aloud.

Here goes. I call it the "reference-multiplier effect"; I have noticed it brilliantly at work in Puth's song which topped the UK Singles chart.

It draws upon the popularity of Marvin Gaye's funk song 'Let's Get It On' and, of course, that of the legendary singer himself.

**Bridge to a different era**  
With the reference to both in the very first line - 'Let's Marvin Gaye and get it on' - Puth's song builds an imaginary bridge to a different era, which automatically multiplies its "reach quotient".

Now, 'Let's Get It On' by Marvin Gaye from the Seventies was so popular that the sentiment of the song got transferred to the singer. Check Urban Dictionary, and you will receive confirmation of this. Without being explicit, let me say that Puth is using 'Marvin Gaye' in one of the ways Urban Dictionary defines it.

The sentiment of Puth's song matches that of the nearly four-decades-old song, and thereby benefits from the "reference multiplier effect".

Now, Puth's song is impressive on various counts, hence its popularity. Its effective reference to the neo-soul genius has added to it.

In the hip-hop song 'Mope' by Bloodhound Gang, you see it at work. There are

references to musical and other creations, which includes the super-popular 'Rock Me Amadeus' by Johann Holzel (known by his stage name Falco) and the video game Pac-man.

What Mindcraft is to Millennials, Pac-Man is to the 1980s generation. With the Pac-man blended into it and Pac-Man appearing in the music video, the song ensures a long-range connect, and the multiplier effect kicks in.

From a purely chart-numbers point of view, Mope may not be called a great success. It has to be slotted into the "comedy hip-hop", and it does great justice to this category, partly by those evocative references.

There is a sub-category to this concept, where the references don't leap across eras and generations, but stay in the present. In the process, it is presented to later generations as a musical-whiff of history.

*I can't Get started* (1936) fits into this category. There are references to Franklin D. Roosevelt, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Studios and Greta Garbo.

Here are some great lines from the original song written by Ira Gershwin and Vernon Duke: 'I've been consulted by Franklin D./ Even Greta Garbo has asked me to tea/ But now I'm broken hearted/ Can't Get started with you.' In other versions through the years, some names and situations have been replaced with contemporary ones.

Let me close this column, on a slightly tangential note. The reference-multiplier effect is at work in various forms of entertainment.

For example, here in Kollywood and other "film-woods" across India, there is the often-adopted practice of a film being named after the first line of a popular song from elsewhere. Isn't that an attempt to harness the power of the reference-multiplier effect?

## Talking Theatre

# Forty and still counting

The New Year begins on a celebratory note for Om Katare as his group, Yatri, reaches a milestone

DEEPA GAHLOT



The year that has just dawned is a milestone in the journey of Om Katare's theatre group, Yatri. It was in January 1979, a couple of months after the inauguration of Prithvi Theatre in Mumbai, that Katare formed his group and staged the satirical play *Ek Tha Gadha*.

Now, forty years later, Yatri (which means Traveller) has staged over 55,000 shows of 75 plays; Katare has written about 20 plays, directed most of them, conducted numerous workshops and extended the scope of theatre to include product launches for corporates.

Katare started planning the 40th year splash a year in advance, and this year, the annual Yatri Festival will have 40 shows of 10 plays at 10 venues across Mumbai. "No other group has done such a big festival before," he says. To mark the anniversary, Yatri, will perform some of their old favourites including 'Hadhi Kar Di Apne', 'Chinta Chhod Chintamani', 'Ravanleela' and 'Kaal Chakra', with two new plays, 'Genius Chor' and 'Dekho Woh Aa Gaya'. "Genius Chor is very different from our other plays," he says, "it has no set, just lights and music; it is an interesting story about a thief who makes a vow that he will never tell a lie, and the situations he gets into because of it; the second play, I haven't even started working on, we will rehearse in the gaps during the festival."

Over the years, Yatri's most successful play has been 'Hadhi Kar Di Apne' about a middle-aged couple who suddenly find they are to be parents again. "I know, this year's big Bollywood hit has been *Badaai Ho* on the same subject. I had been taken by a friend to meet a major production company, and they turned down the script – they didn't understand that a story about a family will never fail, these emotions are in-built into the Indian psyche. Our other superhit play, 'Chinta Chhod Chinatamani' is about a joint family, and the emotions resonate with audiences everywhere, who miss the warmth of living in joint families."

Katare believes that the biggest challenge for a theatre group is to find good scripts. "We had decided right at the start, that Yatri would do family-oriented plays that a regular audience can understand. Whether we do a serious play or a comedy, it is such that families can watch them together. Of course, some of the productions I personally liked failed, like 'Savita Damo-

dar Paranjpe', which was a psychological thriller, and 'Chakra', on reincarnation. We recently revived a musical, a play based on Harishankar Parsai's story, *Rani Nagfani Ki Kahani*, which had done well earlier, but this time it did not work. I realized that today's audience is cut off from Hindi literature and probably could not understand Parsai's humour. So, to figure out what audiences will like always causes some tension. Gimmicks cannot take you far, ultimately a play should be able to succeed on its own steam. People always expect something new."

## Quality takes backseat

"Frankly," he continues, "we have been working for 40 years, but there is no fun doing theatre any more. It has become a money game. People do large, expensive productions and then have to charge high ticket prices, which most audiences cannot afford. 'Housefull' has become a criterion, quality has taken a backseat. There is also the shortage of dates in auditoriums. If we want to do a proper production with sets, music and all, we should be able to do regular shows, so that actors can be retained too. That is impossible now. If we travel, then we have to go by air, because actors these days are busy with shoots and can't spend so much time in trains, but how many organisations that invite groups to perform in their cities can afford air fares? Still, we do manage to tour when we can."

Katare is all praise for a Nashik school that not just brings its students to Mumbai to watch plays, but also invited Yatri to do workshops in their school. "There is so much talent in our country. If other schools also emulated this example, theatre would benefit a great deal."

Unlike many other theatre artistes, Katare did not abandon the stage for films or TV. "I could not have managed a group for 40 years if I had been distracted."

His dream, after the festival is completed, is to do a production of *Draupadi*, based on a story by Pratibha Rai. "It is a unique take on Draupadi's life. It is a strong play, that says that there has been little change in society's attitude towards women. Whoever has heard it wants to be a part of it."

Looking back over 40 years, he says, "It's something I never dreamt of. The journey has not been without obstacles, but the blessings of *Rangdevta* (god of theatre) must have been with it, because without that nothing can work."



Family drama From Om Katare's 'Kaal Chakra'

The writer is a critic and columnist

## Mind Your Yoga

# Find the missing ‘you’

A guru is needed to reach this heightened state of awareness

A.G. MOHAN AND DR. GANESH MOHAN



A mudra is a kind of “seal” in that its purpose is to seal a thought in our mind. Yoga mudra is also called *cin* mudra or *jnana* mudra. There is a well-known story behind this mudra. Siva, representing the Divine, once took the form of a boy of sixteen. Seated, absorbed in meditation, with an aura of deep calm, and radiant in appearance, he was approached by sages who saw through his disguise and recognised his true nature.

#### Simple mudra

The sages asked with reverence, “What is the essence of the Vedas and all spiritual teaching?”

Siva gave no answer, but showed them this simple mudra – he raised his palm toward them and brought his index finger down to join its tip to his thumb.

The sages understood what he was saying, though he had never said a word! The guru’s discourse was silence, but the students’ doubts were dispelled.

So what did the sages understand from this simple mudra? The index finger is the individual – the self or the ego. The thumb is the Divine. The other three fingers are the three qualities of the mind and nature (*sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*). When the mind moves away from the flux of these qualities and reaches stillness, the individual is united with the Divine nature within.

This mudra is called *cin* mudra because the word *cit* (which becomes *cin* when joined with the word mudra) means “consciousness.” It says let go of the ego of the mind, and you will experience the true nature of consciousness.

This mudra is also known as the *jnana* mudra, the word *jnana* meaning “to know” – to know one’s true nature or the nature of the

Divine, that is.

Classically, the explanation of this mudra involves the Divine and the idea of joining with it. While the *anjali* mudra is useful to define the attitude of humbleness in the practice, this yoga mudra points to the goal that is at the end of the practice.

From the ancient yoga texts, we learn of the experiences of those who achieved these heightened states of awareness. The fundamentals that these sages have described come from empirical knowledge, from their own experiences. The role of the guru is to help us understand the teachings and guide us in our practice.

There is a famous parable that illustrates this. A group of ten men on a journey reached a river on their path. They managed to cross the river, and emerging on the other side, they wanted to ensure all ten had made it safely. The last one to cross began counting and found only nine men. He was alarmed and alerted the others. Each one counted in turn and found only nine! As they were in tears, mourning their missing companion, a passing sage came upon them and asked them what the problem was.

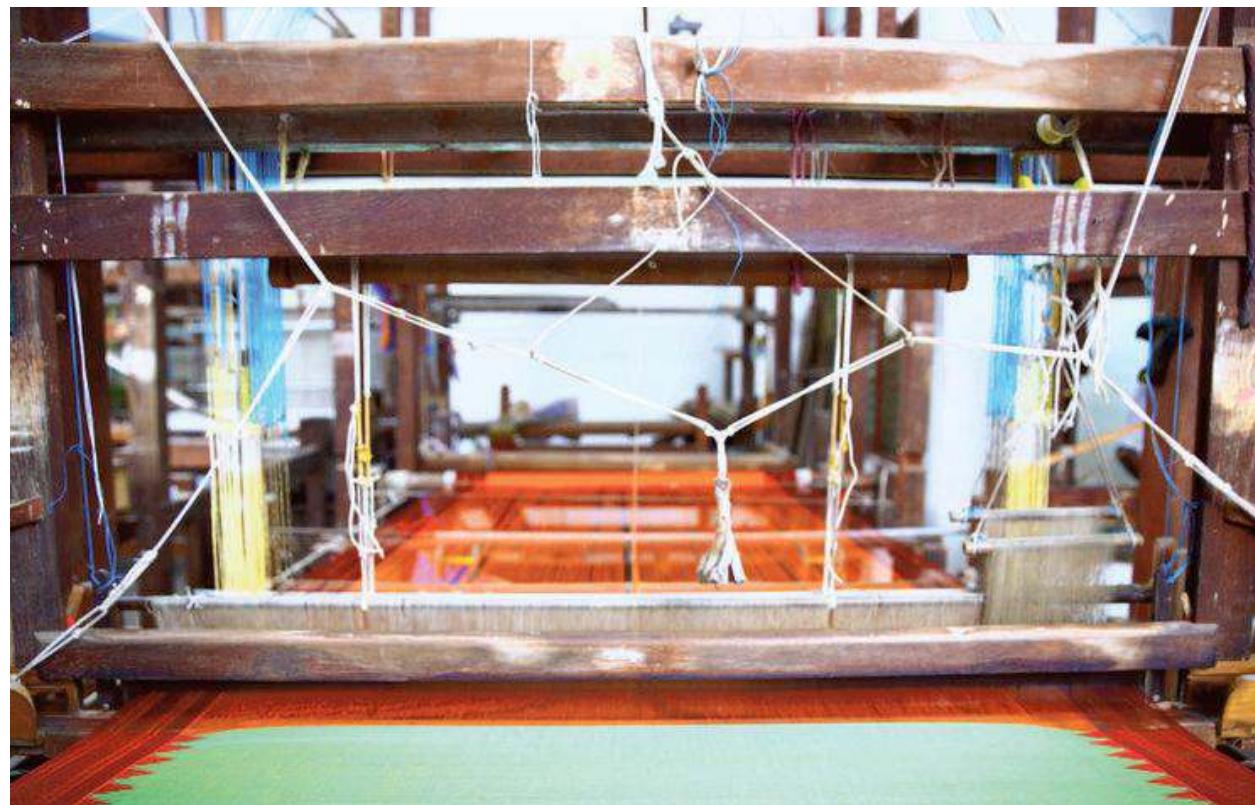
“Alas, sage!” they cried. “One of us is missing, lost in the treacherous waters of the river!”

The sage smiled and said, “Let me count.” And he found ten. Of course, each person who was counting included everyone but himself. Only with the intervention of the sage, or the guru, were they able to find themselves!

But a key point to note here is that the sage did not bring the tenth man with him. He only pointed out what was already there. The realisation was not from outside, but from within.

The guru is only the catalyst. The student is the practitioner, the one who has to seek and undergo the transformation. If we look within ourselves, we will find the one who is missing!

*The writers are yoga practitioners and authors of several books*



#### Colours Of Earth

# Dance of the Loom

The art of weaving shares the intricacies of geometry with Natya

V.R. DEVIKA



“Ki ta ta ka tha ri ki ta thom...”

Wood striking on wood producing a metallic rhythmic sound is not the only sound you hear inside Kalakshetra. There is the rhythm of the beautiful Kolam and the clack clack rhythm of the handloom weaving magic. While dancers weave magical narratives through their bodies, the weavers are weaving a magic of their own in the loom. The founder of Kalakshetra, Rukmini Devi Arundale, never looked at dance in isolation. It just had to be connected to Nature, traditional crafts and handloom.

In a recent seminar, “The Art of seeing art,” curated by Revathi Ramachandran, Director of Kalakshetra, Annapurna Mamidipudi drew our attention to the weavers. I decided to talk to a young weaving couple at the crafts section of Kalakshetra. Govindaraj and Deepa had an intercaste love marriage in a village in Kanchipuram. They have four children. They found that there was no way they could continue to work on hand loom and educate their children when Ulaganathan, a weaver working at Kalakshetra asked them to come there.

“We are very thankful for this opportunity of working here,” say the couple. Kalakshetra has given us a place to stay and is educating our children free of charge in their school. We are paid by the number of pieces we produce. We are really happy,” they say.

What is with textiles and dance?

There is arithmetic and geometry in both, according to Revathi Ramachandran. If Rukmini Devi expressed esoteric and complex philosophical thought in creating Kalakshetra, the same is expressed using textile terminology in India. Dance and fabric have a strong vocabulary. They are visual, tactile and structured. The concept of time itself is conveyed in the Rig Veda, the oldest philosophical text, as the weaving of the warp and weft and thus the creation of days and nights. The warp signifies that which stretches beyond.

“The act of weaving is a ritual and devotional act for us,” say the couple. Deepa was not born into a family of weavers but she has learnt the skill and helps her husband, who is slightly disabled. “There is an inner rhythm as we weave and that is very powerful,” say the two together. I can certainly understand. I had decided to wear only saris and only handloom after I saw a handloom being put together by a weaver. The building of a loom itself is an engineering feat and an artistic installation.

#### Perfect coordination

I watch mesmerised as the couple begin to weave. There is a synchronised choreography in the weaving. Fingers dance on the loom as the shuttle moves back and forth rhythmically and the warp and weft come together in a production. I am wearing the peacock blue green double shot silk sari woven in this very place and it seems there is a poetic image it is showing as I stand under the great Banyan

tree merging in the power that dancers’ bodies hold while also revealing the fragility. There is a magical quality to the air here bringing a great joy by evoking a sense of awe and wonder. Artistic awareness is necessary to conserve, restore and design life enhancing environments for the art. The Therukoothu artistes, who demonstrated said that they felt there was a lyrical beauty and a feel of timelessness to the space as they performed under the Banyan tree.

The form of a work of art, be it folk or classical, and the meaning communicated by the artiste through the form, is generated by the intention of the artiste and the technique employed. The artiste, here the Bharatanatyam dancer or the Kattaikoothu artiste or the Kutiyattam artiste or the weaver, is the source and the work is the medium. Just as the sari I am wearing throws up green or blue hues as I move, I am receiving and experiencing the message from all these forms. While Koothu is robust Koodeyattam is calm, and both, just as the fabric is, produce an emotional impact through their imagery.

To hold the fabric, to know it, pleat it and to feel the texture is in itself a dance. Textiles we know are the markers and symbols of the culture of a place. That Rukmini Devi went about systematically to get traditional motifs and designs back into the mainstream and created a textile culture for dance is to be celebrated.

*The writer is a cultural activist and Gandhian scholar*



The capturing of 'the moment' is not known to the performer or to the photographer, but the outcome is an art piece by the latter. The performance gets a longer life in someone's life for a month, even if it is somebody who never saw the performance

**Of movement and moment** (clockwise from above) Senior dancer Purvadhanhshree in a calendar shot by Avinash Pasricha; Pt. Birju Maharaj with Inni Singh's calendar; Avinash Pasricha; Priti Patel in a table calendar image shot by Satyaki Ghosh

In a calendar, the image with dates assumes an entity after a month dances out leaving behind a sense of linked association where the performance lingers on

NAVINA JAFNA

Many years ago, a research field trip took me to an artist's home in Varanasi. I entered a darkly-lit dining room where on a wall hung a calendar with a lively image of a dancer. Soon the image came alive as the queen of Kathak - Sitara Devi, dressed in the same costume, entered the room. A photograph of her by the iconic performing arts photographer Avinash Pasricha on a calendar conjured up that surreal moment.

A calendar with dance images is a visual correspondence to mark time through the two art forms of photography and dance. Images on the calendar could be chosen from either a live performance or a studio shoot. An artist like Pasricha prefers to shoot individuals where there is greater energy between two artistic genres and individuals. Photographing a group is a different task- there are more bodies to orchestrate, different issues of the composition to consider.

Whether on a wall or on a desk, the calendar images especially those from a live performance catch and freeze a temporal fleeting movement of a dynamic enchanting human face and body in time-space. The image is placed in a calendar against a table with numbers organised in columns and rows. Lest we forget, that the Indian dance is a magical art woven in mathematics and to capture expression and movements is a fascinating play in time. The pioneering technique of multiple exposed images in a film camera by Pasricha, some of which he gave for calendars, like the one on the cover page featuring veteran Bharatanatyam and Kuchipudi exponent Yamini

Krishnamurthy, are artistic creations of capturing movement. He says, "Of course, the shift from the film to the digital camera is significant to the synergy between dance and photography. With the film camera, for the multiple exposures, I put the shutter

down to capture a series of fastidious complex continuous moments assimilating flow and completion of a movement."

With the film camera, the number of pictures clicked was defined to the 36 images in a roll, while the digital camera has infinite capacity (delete), hence, the main essence was luck and anticipation to capture the best in a limited space, and one which was final.

This is unlike the digital cameras where capacity is unlimited,

the tool of multiple exposures is provided or can be later created but the hindrance is that after clicking one image there is a gap before the next one which leads to a loss of capturing the continuity in dance movements. The unlimited capacity results in a large number where a great amount of time is spent in the selection of images.

The memories of the past have their own charm says dance photographer Ashwini Chopra. "There was much suspense in the days of film photography since we did not know what will happen after the film was developed, and all kinds of incidents occurred. Today, with digital cameras it is

very mechanical. I once took pictures of Madhumita Raut (Odissi dancer) and took the film for developing to a lab who wrote my name on the wrong film, next day the developed film was not of dance but of the 26<sup>th</sup> January parade. It was only when the other person returned that I got the pictures."

#### The function of the dance on calendars

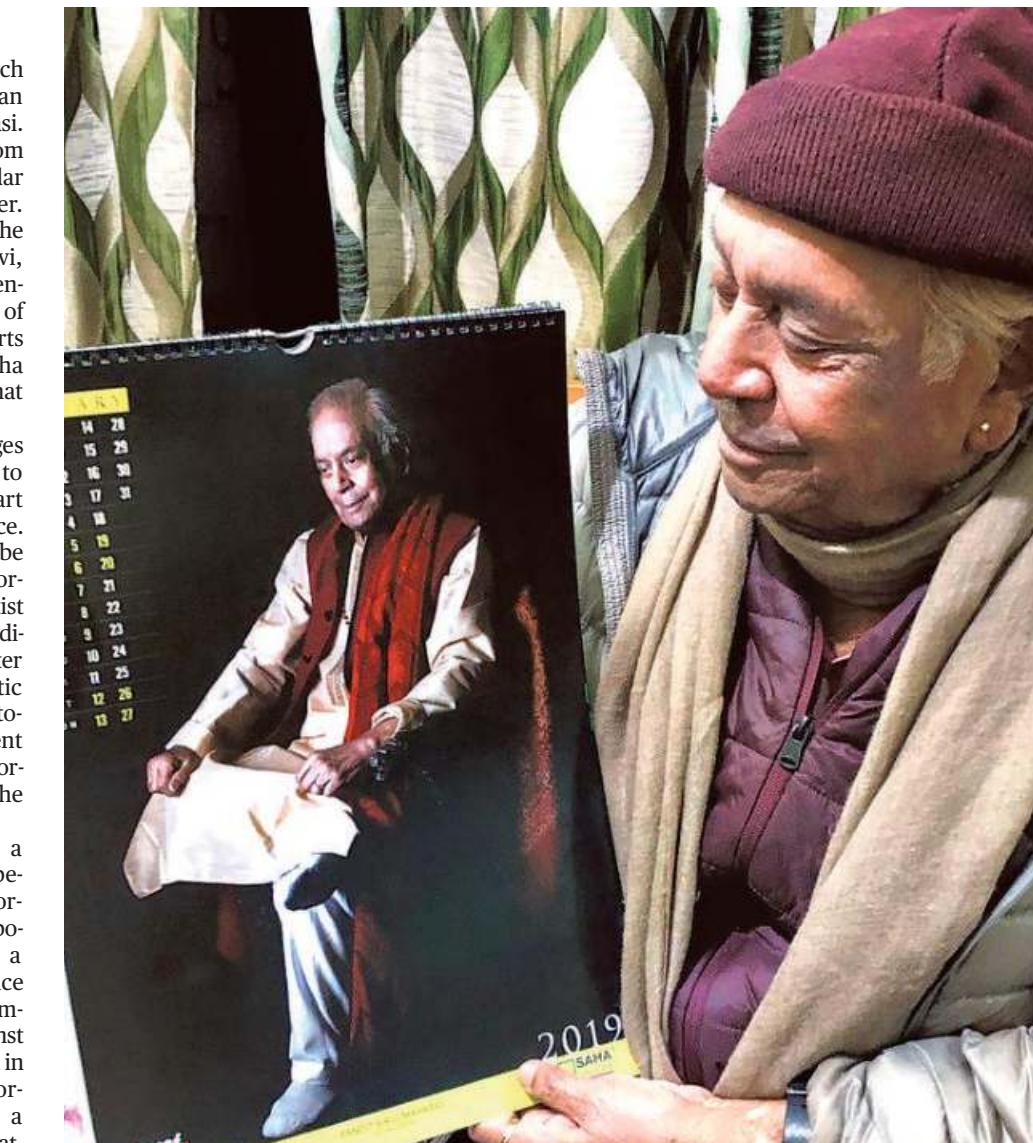
The image on calendar brings dance into the everyday existence of the person who owns and daily interacts with it. The term 'calendar work' refers to the manner people communicate with calendars, after all, the image is there for 30 days. Without knowing it forms a part of personal ecology and unconsciously locates itself in the everyday mental time. Says Vilasini Natyam dancer Purvadhanhshree who has been producing calendars since 2015, "I have always chosen a theme, and images only from live performances.

The capturing of 'the moment' is not known to the performer or to the photographer, but the outcome is an art piece by the latter. The performance gets a longer life in someone's life for a month, today, with digital cameras it is



## A shot at posterity

In a calendar, the image with dates assumes an entity after a month dances out leaving behind a sense of linked association where the performance lingers on



**Maverick with two umbrellas**  
In the early 1980s as students without internet, making brochures was the tool for creating marketing linkages. At the Kathak Kendra, it was a common sight to see Avinash Pasricha coming with his black and white umbrella, for monitoring light to do a shoot in what was known as the back hall. With costumes adorned, he asked dancers to play music and give him a performance, like in a Chinese checkers game the umbrellas would change places and one would negotiate for Pasricha to get a good shot. In, out and around, and yet neither he nor we would know what his art was about until the film was exposed and the image danced a new life as a print. In some ways, Pasricha, we would say, was a maverick photographer with his two umbrellas to which art historian Roger Lipsey remarks, "I like the term, it conveys the need for wilderness, for unfettered vision if one is to capture effectively a still image of a dance movement."

even if it is somebody who never saw the performance."

However, exclusively commissioned individual shoots could be inspirational. Way back in 1935 Barbara Morgan, an American photographer known for her art of capturing modern dancers, worked to arrest the dance of Martha Graham. It took six years for the photographer to produce 16 photographs in the historical collection with the goal of catching the spiritual energy. Each session was an endurance test for both artists that ended in the production of one of the greatest dance photographs. Similarly, for dancer Priti Patel, who in 1992 chose to celebrate her production 'Chitrangada' as a table calendar instead of a brochure, "the process of working with Satyaki Ghosh who began his career with Satyajit Ray was a creative joy as (while) he attempted catching passionate human expressions."

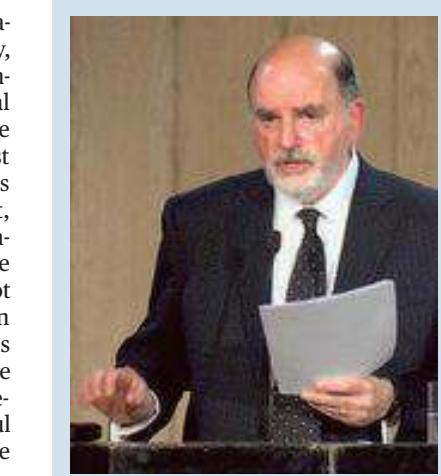
Calendars on dance were extremely popular in the 1980s and 90s where dance images functioned to enhance the national image. The making of such calendars coincided with presenting India through the modality of the Festivals of India in different parts of the world; a soft cultural diplo-

## Blink-of-an-eye moments of glory

Roger Lipsey says a dance photographer's images are first homages, and only secondarily commodities

Roger Lipsey, American art historian and an authority on A.K. Coomaraswamy, the pioneering philosopher on Indian Art, has written on a wide range of topics. His work on 'Spirituality in 20thc Art' is a landmark work on art history and ideas. His response to questions sent on dance photos on calendars, therefore, are relevant.

At one point, he wrote, "Dancer is one who is a rigorously trained, hard-working artist. There is inevitably in all we do at least a trace of egotism, but in the self-aware artist it can be subordinated to the demands of the art, the honest wish to communicate with audiences, gratitude to the guru's lineage and even to the god represented or served by the dance. Egotism, at its best, adds flash and conviction without distracting from the essence of dance. Similarly, the art of photography is a demanding art or craft to make still images of the ultimate art of movement - dance. They capture, so perfectly, that ephemeral quality of dance through nothing less than heart-pounding, blink-of-an-eye moments of glory. The images can be sold or publicised, all things physical can become commodities, but essentially where the photographer is a devoted soul and craftsman - their images are first homages, and only secondarily commodities.... dance, like all the arts, has inner and outer aspects. Outwardly there is the joy and pleasure of skilled, attractive dancers projecting their art, their confidence, their joie de vivre. And that is pleasant for the calendar owner, the one turning the pages from month to month. But you know me, a child of A.K. Coomaraswamy I think also of the inner dimensions- the disciplined work over years and years, the heightened sense of being that must often visit the dancer while performing, the reference ultimately to a divinity who is adored and served, and who oversees and enriches the dance moment. A skilled photographer will capture the outward strengths and beauties. A very special photographer might sometimes capture also the inner aspects shining through."



## Chiselling masterpieces

BR Pandit and Abhay Pandit are showcasing their mastery in myriad facets of ceramics

GIRISH SHRIVASTAVA

The moment you enter the sanctum of the gallery Art Heritage, you are caught in the womb of the eye catching and enchanting world of ceramics - incredible vases, bowls, platters, jars, vessels, plates, urns, stoneware, porcelain, Raku and ceramic sculptures. You are in the web of an amazing gloco-local universe of the clay and its myriad procreations - and instantly Kabir's Sufi verses float on your lips, "Guru is the potter, disciple is the (unbaked) pot. He gives shape and cures the flaws with care, protecting always with palm from inside while pounding the pot from outside."

The exhibition, "The Shape of Things: The Ceramics" of the father-son-duo of BR Pandit and Abhay Pandit at the Capital's Art Heritage displays some wonderful sensibility of sculpture and the practicality of utilitarian ceramic wares without which the community life is difficult. The veteran master of glazes, BR Pandit's work is distinguished by his sparkling red-copper-reduction glazed pots, the mottled blue soda-fired glazed pots and chatter-marked pots.

His studio pottery workshop named Pandit Art Ceramic, located in Kalakar Niwas, Bhayander turns out over three hundred bonsai and Ikebana pots everyday. "Pottery, for me is an expression of various moods. I like to make bold, huge, tall pots as they are a challenge. I break many pots on the wheel itself, till I am totally satisfied with a piece," he said. Born in 1949 in a traditional potter family in a remote village called Bhorambagh, Nawada in Bihar, Brahma-deo Ram Pandit was trained at Sekho Devra Ashram (Sarvodaya Ashram) Bihar and Khadi Village Pottery Institute, Karnataka. Deeply influenced by the Gandhian ideology of Jayaprakash Narayan, he set up his base in Bhayander, on the periphery of Mumbai, where he is producing his work for two distinct markets. The art/studio ceramics go to galleries, museums and are commissioned as art installations, but the everyday production that sustains the workshop goes to the bonsai societies all over India. The exhibition, spatially conceptualized, designed and curated by Amal Allana fetches the ethos of aesthetics through multiple sensibilities of art and elicits some spectacular visual and kinetic feel of the art.



A head on display at the exhibition



Time for introspection Pandit Ulhas Kashalkar, Manjusha Patil, Ustad Shujaat Khan and Ustad Wasifuddin Dagar ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

## Checking the pulse

Senior artistes tell us what worked and what didn't in 2018

SHAILAJA KHANNA

**G**iven the nature of their calling, performing artistes are sensitive, acutely perceptive beings. While going about their routine business of performing to audiences all over the world, they are susceptible to subtle changes in listeners' expectations, also changing expectations of them from organisers. A musician, who doesn't want to be named says, "Nowadays, I am frequently told, we have included your item at this point of the schedule to make a bit of a splash; wake the audience up, we expect fireworks on stage, please!" Artistes also notice even very imperceptible concert presentation changes in their peers and younger artistes; in terms of format, length of a piece, content. These are all indicative of subtle changes that are inexorably taking place, and which over time mould the style of concert presentation.

**Pt. Birju Maharaj, Kathak exponent**

"I am happy that in my family so many of my children and grandchildren are in this line - they are carrying forward the family tradition, the parampara

Of course, new ideas are always presented, that is a given, but I always remain within the "dairaa" of tradition - anga, bhaava, taal, laya. I even like to stick to traditional costumes as well, colours change but I don't allow western clothes. Over the

years I have composed many acts I presented these again in 2018 as they were novel for a younger generation. The innovations were very subtle, not obvious. Laya is intrinsic to nature, each of us lives within laya; gati, har dil ke dharkan mein hai - some live in a faster mode, some slower, but all of us are within its confines. My creativity is always linked with prakriti (nature)".

Even when a confined monkey, tied to a pole, dances in a circle, there are claps as it is entertaining, but dance is more than entertainment. Aisa naach mein nahin pasand karta, dance mein gairahi honi chahiye. (Dance should have depth)"

**Manjusha Patil, vocalist**

Gradually, performers are resorting to gimmicks in music to attract audience attention. Our music is for meditativeness, we must not lose that. There is a way of proceeding in a concert, how to slowly unfold a raga, slowly display all its aspects. It is only after bringing alive the raga aurally can one proceed to speedy passages. Even with that there should be display of craft, not attention seeking musical phrases. My goal is to sing better, to be able to maintain the tradition to which I belong, to create a maahaul, a mood, not to impress my audience with my speed and dexterity. I want to sing music that lasts.

**Pt Narendranath Dhar, sarod exponent**

I find the style of playing is

changing. Alaapchaari is being shortened. "Jhala" is usually played very little, and that too usually only the straight 4 bol seedha or ulta jhala, no other types are practised. I remember my Guru made me practice different jhalas for 6 months! Vocal taans are being incorporated on instruments, with no importance being given to the bols or strokes; the tantrakaari gat tora" is being forgotten. Constantly repeating pre-rehearsed tihaais to get audience applause is dominating the performance, ending with ati drut speed where the clarity of the bols is missing.

**Ustad Wasifuddin Dagar, vocalist**

In 2018, I observed that the fashion for the all night festival is again getting revived in North India which is great. I also feel audiences are getting rigid in their expectations - especially Delhi audiences. They only want to hear stars not artists. This is wrong and I hope it stops.

**Anantha Krishnan, mridangam exponent**

For me, 2018 was a very enriching year, musically. Many issues in the world of music came up in 2018 - issues of community, divisiveness, gender issues...I think these do need to be dealt with openly. Being a part of the creative environment can help us in becoming more inclusive and better humans.

**Ustad Shujaat Khan, sitar exponent**

It seems we musicians are the fringe element in society,

the most non-essential commodity there is. All over the world, whether it's the West or here, we are the first to be scrapped if cost cutting has to happen.

In 2018, there has been a climate of fear in the country, there is financial instability and the field of music has been affected too. With GST being imposed, we are earning much less than we used to.

On the positive side, as there is a lot of sub standard junk in the world of popular music, it has created a backlash in favour of classical music.

People want to hear something soothing and pure and so they are thronging to our concerts to hear something beautiful and simple. I play happy, relaxed music; it works!

**Pt. Ulhas Kashalkar, vocalist**

At every time in our history, the innovative artists have been criticised.

If you read old reviews of artists like Pt Kumar Gandharva and Kishori Amonkar, who are today held up as icons, you will see how they were criticised then for forging their own paths.

Today people complain about innovations on stage, I say let it be, it's all a part of evolution, let's see what has the staying power and remains, and what withers away.

One hopes to hear high quality classical music in 2019.

# Enriching experience

The ongoing Saptak festival promises the best of Hindustani and Carnatic music in Ahmedabad

**Q**uiet, without media hype, Saptak festival attracts the biggest names in the world of music. This year, it features Pt Birju Maharaj, Pt Hari Prasad Chaurasia, Dr N Rajam, Pt Shiv Kumar Sharma, Begum Parveen Sultana, Pt Ulhas Kashalkar, Pt Rajan and Sajan Mishra, Pt Ajoy Chakrabarty, Ustad Shahid Parvez, Ustad Shujaat Hussain Khan and Pt Vishwamohan Bhatt. Popular artists like Gundecha Brothers, Shubha Mudgal, Kaushiki Chakravorty, Malini Awasthi, Purbayan Chatterji, Amaan and Ayaan Ali Bangash, and Rahul Sharma are also performing.

The Carnatic tradition is represented by a jugalbandi between flautist Pt Ronu Mazumdar with Vidwan Mysore Manjunath on the violin, and a recital by Vidushi Bombay Jayashri Ramnath. She mused, "In North India, unlike in the South, where we have the December music season, there are a few key music festivals in different cities that dominate the world of music. Amongst these is Saptak at which I have been privileged to perform in the past. I appreciate that platforms in the North are becoming available to Carnatic musicians; at the end of the day, music is music."

There has always been a strong link with percussion; this year the festival is dedicated to the memory of Ustad Allah Rakha, and both his sons Ustad Fazal Qureshi and Ustad Taufiq Qureshi will be performing solos, while Ustad Zakir Hussain will be accompanying Pt Shiv Kumar Sharma. Senior disciple Pt Yogesh Samsi will be accompanying Ustad Shahid Parvez and Kaushiki Chakravorty. Pt Nayan Ghosh will be performing a tabla jugalbandi with his immensely talented young teenage son Ishaan. Young Vinay Mundhe will present a solo tabla recital, and Shubham Ugale, a pakhawaj solo,

Saptak was established by late tabla maestro Pt Nandan Mehta, and his sitar playing wife Vidushi Manju Mehta. Apart from the annual festival, the institution holds concerts throughout the year in Ahmedabad and other cities in Gujarat. It also has an impressive musical archive with some really valuable old recordings of the masters of yesteryear, which are released periodically as commercially available cds. Saptak also runs a school teaching classical music.

Manju Mehta spoke of the logistic difficulties in handling a festival of this scale, without any financial support from anyone, nor even logistic support from an outside event manager. The students



Pandit Shiv Kumar Sharma

of the Saptak school volunteer to look after the performing artists and handle other organisational details she adds.

Artists are, of course, excited as always by performing at Saptak. In the words of Pt Ulhas Kashalkar, "It's like an annual pilgrimage for me, I have been performing there consecutively for the last 10-15 years, I don't even remember how long. Pt Nandan Mehta himself has also accompanied me on tabla. Saptak is today a unique festival giving a platform to young artists as well as offering listeners the best there is. I hear people from all over the world are now coming to Saptak knowing they will hear quality music". Purbayan Chatterji concurs, "I always go back to my first performance at Saptak - Pt Kishan Maharaj ji had recommended my name to Nandan Mehta ji and I was fortunate to play with Pt Kumar Bose ji. Saptak has always been like a special place for 'hazari' in the concert calendar. The stage has been graced by all the greats so just sitting there makes you soar and rise to the occasion!"

The fact that the festival is run by artists has also mattered; without hesitation artists accommodate on remuneration, dates and other logistics. Dr N Rajam recalls her old association with the family. "Nandan ji used to come very often to Banaras when I was living there, as he was a disciple of Pt Kishan Maharaj. I have very fond memories of him, and I have been playing at Saptak now for years. Every alternate year I perform. This year I will be playing a solo, but in the past I have played with my daughter, my granddaughters, and even all four of us together." Saptak is on till January 13 in Ahmedabad.

SHAILAJA KHANNA

# Of theory and practice

Shreshtha Bharat Sanskriti Samagam saw an amalgamation of our tangible and intangible cultural heritage

MANJARI SINHA

**S**hreshtha Bharat Sanskriti Samagam (SBSS), conceived by the Sangeet Natak Akademi, was presented in its 4th edition (after Bhubaneswar, Ahmedabad and Amritsar) at Guwahati, in association with the Department of Cultural Affairs, Government of Assam at Srimanta Sankardeva Kalakshetra from 26th to 30th of December, 2018. Dedicated to the memory of Dr. Bhupen Hazarika, the five-day festival was like a meeting of creative minds with seminar in morning discussing the past, present and future of the particular artform followed by its performances in the evening.



Familiarising with raga Pt. Ajoy Chakravarty; (below) Chetan Joshi

**E**ngrossing play The SBSS took a flying start with "Agra Bazar", one of the most captivating plays of the late Habib Tanvir and his Naya Theatre. The seminar on music next morning was chaired by Shekhar Sen with a distinguished panel of scholars for academic discussions and artistes for lecture-demonstrations. Chetan Joshi, the renowned flautist from Delhi, presented a well-researched paper on the past, referring to the excavations in Slovenia and Harappa, traced the evolution of flute from Vedic to Buddhist era and its literature to the present age. Joshi talked about the improvements on the structure of the instrument innovated by his Guru Pt. Raghu Nath Seth and demonstrated how he has devised it to cover three-and-a-half octaves. He also elaborated upon the present and future trends of flute playing.

Dilip Ranjan Barthakur, who has also written a book on tabla in Assamese, presented a paper on tabla. Vidwan Haridwaramangalam A.K. Palanivel spoke with the help of an interpreter but when he came to the recitation of Kanokkols of Thavil, language was no bar. He fluently explained the Chinna-Melam, Periya-Melam and demonstrated variations in tempo with compressing 4,5,6,7,8, and 9 matras in just one beat, without changing the laya or 'nada'.



Pt. Chandra Prakash, who belongs to the Kishangarh Pushti-Margi Sampraday of Swami Vallabhacharya, gave a melodious demonstration of the devotional padas of Haveli Sangeet, relating to the Ragamala paintings and Bani-Thani, who wrote with the pseudonym Rasik-Bihari. He also talked about the Ashta-Yaam Seva referring to Shringaar ke Pada and Bhog ke Pada. He further demonstrated the specific ragas of the Kishangarh tradition like Shuddha Lalit singing the pada "Lal tum aaye/ Raina ganvaye...". He also sang a Hori Pada in Adana set to the specific theka of Aditala in the Kishangarh style.

Prof. Krishna Bisht elaborated upon the concept of raga, tala and ragadari in reference to the distinct features of Dilli Gharana and demonstrated the terms like "Rachaav" and "Ghulaav" through her own past recordings.

## Structure of shehnai

Pt. Rajendra Prasanna, who is an equally renowned exponent of both shehnai and flute, deliberated upon the specific features and structure of shehnai, as desired by the chair. He opened with an important statement, "Shehnai is a very difficult instrument and is possible to be practised and performed by only those who have 'swara' within themselves and demonstrated how there is no fixed position of any note. He demonstrated the gayaki ang through a Banarsi Kajri. The seminar concluded with a lively question/answer session with enthusiastic floor participation.

The Hindustani vocal recital by Pt. Ajoy Chakravarty was the main attraction of the evening concert that had opened with a Carnatic Veena recital by Vidushi Jayanthi Kumaresan and concluded with the tala vadya

kacheri by Yella Venkateswara Rao. Accompanied by Indranil Bhaduri on tabla, Gaurav Chatterjee on harmonium and his own disciple Mihir for vocal support, Pt. Chakravarty offered a reposeful rendering of raga Jog.

Explaining how melody, harmony and aesthetics conjure up the concept of a raga, he opened with an introductory achar (alaap) prefacing his own composition "Jal mein Naav rahe...", set to vilambit Ek-tala. Unfolding the lower reaches of the raga, he went until the Ati Mandra Shadja and then did the gradual barhat while elaborating the whole of sthayee before he graduated to the 'laya ka kaam' with the intricate patterns of sargams while playing hide and seek with the tempo in reaching the sam providing a sense of wonder.

The finely wrought ideas joined subtly with phrases and nuances sung with an assurance of a lifetime lived in sadhana. His voice had that lucidity and focus which always seemed effortless and gave his style a singular enchantment.

The bandish gave a texture to the raga that went along with feeling. He seemed in no hurry to finish the slow composition without squeezing the last drop of rasa even to proceed further to the multi-hued taans.

The chhota khayal in Teentala, "Dhan joban nadi-naav sanjog...." was a lovely composition of his Guru Pt. Jnan Prakash Ghosh, which was followed by a tarana set to Jhaptala in the same raga and by the same composer. The versatile genius of Pt. Jnan Prakash Ghosh as a composer was beautifully matched by the aesthetic sense of Pt. Ajoy Chakravarty in rendering them with a subtle sense of proportion.

The inspired sangat of not just the harmonium and tabla but even his disciple did the guru proud.

# Salute to age and scholarship

Ahead of Sri Chandrasekharendra Saraswati's 25th Aradhana on January 8, a look at Veda Pata Nidhi Trust he created for the welfare of old and indigent pundits

GEETHA VENKATARAMAN

**V**eda Pata Nidhi Trust, which was launched 35 years ago, at the command of Sri Chandrasekharendra Saraswati, 68th Pitadi-pati of Sri Kanchi Kamakoti Pitam, has made long strides touching the lives of thousands of Vedic scholars. N.C. Sarabeswaran, one of the Trustees, traces the beginning. "We know the background from Annadurai Iyengar, Vedic secretary for Periyava, who shared it later," says Sarabeswaran. It was in 1983 soon after his Jayanti celebration that Mahaswami raised the question: "You have celebrated my jayanti with great fanfare. I have the Math and the people in it to look after me in my old age. What about all those Vedic pundits, who are old and more learned than me? They will be physically weak and cannot pursue activities with vigour. How will their work be recognised?"

Silence prevailed, until the Acharya spoke again. "Let's start a

Trust for this purpose – Veda Pata Nidhi Trust – with the aim of reaching out to indigent Vedic scholars," he said. The only criterion was that the pundit should have mastered the Moolam of at least one Sakha of a Veda. Periyava entrusted the job to Annadurai Iyengar, who was his Vedic secretary, and a lawyer. What age would be appropriate? Periyava favoured two categories – 65-79 and those above 80.

A Trust needs a Chairman, president, etc. "Make T.S. Santhanam Founder, Nani Palkhivala Chairman and Sanat Mehta Trustee," said the Acharya. Annadurai Iyengar was secretary. "By selecting these people, Periyava made sure that at least three regions of the land were represented," points out Sarabeswaran. The amounts were fixed as ₹100 and ₹120 respectively. Periyava told Annadurai Iyengar, "This money is not for the Vedic Pundit's *jeevanam* (livelihood). It is more a recognition of the service he has done to the Vedas and society. His family should be reminded of his



From the album Scholars chanting Vedas during Mahaperiyava Jayanti celebrations. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

*vidwat* and how it is cherished."

### Sadas convened

It became Annadurai Iyengar's task to identify the beneficiaries. Sarabeswaran points out that the Acharya had in mind pundits, who lived in villages, where the clientele was limited and hence income much less. An announcement was given in the newspapers about the scheme and a sadas was convened at the Music Academy. This was attended by both prospective beneficiaries and those who could give information. A list of 2,000 was made of which 600 were accessible. Money was despatched to them, a practice that has continued.

The organisation with former Attorney-General K. Parasaran as Chairman, has flourished in the past three decades, thanks to the sustained efforts of the Trustees –

Ram Santhanam, N.C. Sarabeswaran, J. Jayaraman, S. Mahalingam, Dr. V. Chandramouli, Sridhar Subasri, V. Shankar, T.S. Krishnamurthy, G.S. Kale, S. Sankaran and L. Sabaretnam. The honorarium has been increased to ₹1,000 and ₹1,250 respectively. Besides, scholars are honoured twice in a year – on Mahaswami's Aradhana, January 8, and his Jayanti in May. Money that is surplus with the Trust is distributed among the scholars. A sum of ₹5,000 is sent to the family on the passing of a scholar. "This is done almost immediately so that the family members have the cash to conduct the obsequies for 13 days," explains Sarabeswaran.

"At present, the Trust is supporting 150 scholars. The number is dwindling, but on the positive side the scholars get more money. Number does not matter," says Sarabes-

waran. "The Trust, however, is making intensive efforts to identify beneficiaries across the country. By middle of this year, we'll come up with more people," he adds.

A corpus fund was created to sustain the scheme. "But it is time to dismantle the corpus arrangement," says Sarabeswaran. "Periyava never believed in hoarding money. The Trust will continue to campaign for donations and divide the money among the scholars," he reveals. The Trust has put in place an accident insurance scheme, first of its kind. The process to bring all the beneficiaries under Mediclaim is almost through.

The good deed is open to the public too, through the 'Adopt a Pundit' scheme. For details about the Trust and the scheme call 24611223. Website:

vedapatanidhitrust.org

H H Wilson not only compiled a mammoth glossary but also translated the Rig Veda into English

K S S SESHAN

**R**esearchers working on the history of British administration in India cannot think of a meaningful study without making use of Wilson's Glossary. This multi-volume compilation – *Glossary of Judicial and Revenue Terms in Persian, Arabic, Hindustani, Urdu, Telugu, Tamil, Kanarese, Malayalam and every Indian Language* – by Horace Hyman Wilson was not only comprehensive and exhaustive but was first published by the East India Company administration itself in 1855. The revenue and judicial terms used by the successive dynasties, their meaning and significance, were useful for the Company officials and administrators to arrive at the quantum of tax to levy on Indian peasants and in formulating their own judicial reforms.



Orientalist scholar HH Wilson; a book of his translations ■ BY ARRANGEMENT

Horace Hyman Wilson, the man was multi faceted – great scholar in Sanskrit, a metallurgist, a qualified surgeon and above all a first ranking Orientalist with

strong pro-Indian leanings. H. Wilson was born in 1786 in England and studied medicine at St. Thomas Medical School and Hospital in London. He secured an appoint-

## THE GLOSSARY MAN

ment as Assistant Surgeon with East India Company to work in Calcutta and at 22, Wilson arrived in India. But his knowledge in metallurgy got him appointed at the Mint in Calcutta, where there was dearth of qualified personnel in minting coins. Though comfortably employed in the Company administration, Wilson's heart was always on Indian culture, its languages and its ancient heritage. Having noticed his interests, H.T. Colebrooke, another well known Orientalist recommended Wilson in 1811, to be appointed as Secretary to the Asiatic Society at Calcutta, founded by William Jones earlier.

Wilson's close association with the Asiatic Society enabled him to delve deep into the rich Indian culture and heritage. He soon mastered Sanskrit as he thought it was the window to India's priceless past. With a passion for the Vedas, he translated Rig Veda into English, the first person to do so. He published an English translation of Kali-

dasa's *Meghadoota* in (1813) as well as *Vishnu purana* (1840).

In 1819, Wilson compiled the first ever Sanskrit-English dictionary and was lauded by the famous German Indologist, Otto Von Bohling when he prepared a similar dictionary half a century later. Being a trained surgeon, he studied the ancient Indian systems of surgery and practices in curing cholera and leprosy and published several works on such practices for doctors in England.

In 1827, Wilson published a survey of theatre practices of Hindus and translated several



Sanskrit plays into English. At the request of the East India Company officials, Wilson prepared a descriptive catalogue of the extensive collection of Colin Mackenzie's large volume of manuscripts. Wilson also published *The Historical Sketches of the First Burmese War* and *A review of External Commerce of Bengal* as well as *The History of British India from 1805 to 1835*.

When Lord Macaulay proposed in his most infamous minutes, that English to be made the sole medium of instruction in India, H.H. Wilson was one of staunchest opponents of the proposal and had to face the wrath of the Company officials. The crowning moment in his career came in 1832, when he was selected to be the first occupant of the newly founded Boden Chair Professorship of Sanskrit at the Oxford University considered even now as the most prestigious position.

As Dr. Johnson is known as the 'Dictionary Man', H.H. Wilson is euphemistically known as the 'Glossary Man'.

## Going Native

# Life and death in an unequal world

Blessed with a blend of creative insight and social commitment, Rahman Abbas constantly tracks the pernicious design of war mongers to reflect on the innocent victims and silent witnesses

SHAFEEY KIDWAI

**I**t is a time when the trouncing waves of intolerance are about to wash over us and the Horacian axiom “*Dulce et decorum est Pro patria mori*” (It looks sweet and fitting to die for one's country) still produces an infectious and renewed enthusiasm for jingoism across the globe. Notwithstanding its widespread acceptance, many authors, artists and poets express disdain for glorifying warfare by turning attention to the grotesque and appalling aftermath of the brutal reality of conquest.

For them, war leaves behind an unending legacy of pain and torment and their creative outpouring draws its sustenance from Wilfred Owen's widely acclaimed anti-war poem “*Dulce et Decorum est*” that offers a satirical commentary on war. For Owen war by its very nature betrays the scariest face of human cruelty as the wounds wars create continue to ooze blood like cancer: “Obscene as Cancer, bitter as cud/ Of vile, incurable sores on innocent tongues/ My friend, you would not tell with such high zest/ To children ardent for some desperate glory/ The old lie: *Dulce et Decorum est pro matri mori*.”

In line with it, the futility of bloodshed and hatred is evocatively articulated by a well known Urdu poet Sahir Ludhianvi. War, contrary to popular notion, according to the poet, can never resolve an issue as it blots us every trace of optimism and expectation. War itself is the biggest problem. War produced borders symbolising never ending cycle of hatred and revenge, but the borders can offer an alternative perspective if the guns are raised to salute separation and it is what celebrated poet and artist Sukrita Paul captures effortlessly: “I love

Rahman's worth admiring power to entertain, inspire, engage and entangle the complexities of life has been appreciated by prominent Urdu critics such as Professor Gopichand Narang, Waris Alavi and Naiyyar Masood, etc



**Portraying pathos** Rahman Abbas

you the most/ at Wagah/ When the guns are raised to salute separation, division and rapture/ when the neighbour dies and wears the shroud/ Becomes enemy all at once.”

A young and widely acclaimed poet Rochelle Potkar whose poem “War Specials” was adjudged the first runner up at the “Great India Poetry Contest” does not articulate the horrors of war but rather zeroes in on how man ruthlessly bridles animals: As they went to war, animals on their plates/ animals were politicised too/ pigs squealed, camels patrolled/ mules carried supplies, oxen artillery,/ moose were trained not to be gun-shy for deep-snow cavalry/ and dogs threw their weight or sniffed out mines/ Monkeys dipped in oil n' fire, were thrown into enemy territory.”

War generates hatred not only for the enemy but also for the power that-be. The scourge of hatred leaves us in the quagmire of turmoil and anguish. Can we go to heaven if we practice mutual butchery? This infuriates a reputed Urdu novelist Rahman Abbas

whose latest novel “*Rohzin*” has been creating waves outside the Urdu world as it appeared in German and its translations in English and Hindi are about to hit the stand.

#### Classifying hatred

Now Rahman intends to fashion a gripping narrative on the basest prejudice of man that manifests in war and conflicts. His anti-war novel, through its nuanced portrayal of the protagonist, is set to identify hatred as a wicked but perhaps necessary trait of the world we live in. Obsession for conquest and subjugation is a malaise that needs to be eradicated. It ruins both the winners and the losers. War has become a billion dollar industry and now we have war for the war's sake and for Rahman it has been creating an increasingly more unequal world.

His novel *Rohzin* bagged

the prestigious Sahitya Academy Award this year. Rahman coined a new compound word *Rohzin* (wound of the soul) to describe the mental agony of those children who catch sight of extra-marital relations of their parents. It inflicts a wound that never heals and their unprecedented torment cannot be put into words. His layered narrative poignantly betrays a least discussed aspect of love. Promiscuity can produce a pulsating narrative of true love. Employing the charming irreverent tone, Rahman explores the intriguing aspects of hard boiled noir and takes the readers to the site of stunning complexity of the underworld and unexpected luminosity of crime fighting. Mythology provides creative impetus to writers and Rahman wrote a separate chapter on Mumba Devi (Mumbai or Bombay owes its existence to this deity). The novelist tried to set in motion a cross culture discourse involving Indian, Persian Gulf and Greek mythology. It is perhaps the first attempt to unravel cross culture dimensions of mythology.

Rahman has published seven books including four novels and his writings cannot be put into run-of-the-mill stuff. His first novel “*Nakhlistan Ki Talash Mein*” (Search for an oasis) presents a searing examination of the illusion of all pervasive central authority governing human life. His heightened sense of curiosity about uncertain world of divinity landed him into deep trouble and a case under Section 292 IPC was filed and his service (a lecturer of Urdu) was terminated. His ordeal continued through 2016 and Rahman has no regrets for writing such a bold novel but he is still haunted by the memories of termination induced anguish. Rahman's worth admiring power to entertain, inspire, engage and entangle the complexities of life has been appreciated by prominent Urdu critics such as Professor Gopichand Narang, Waris Alavi and Naiyyar Masood, etc. His intent on depicting what has not been forgotten draws applause from all quarters.

## Telling Voices

## When numbers excite

Dan Finkel offers a novel solution for students struggling with maths

SUDHAMAHI REGUNATHAN

“The beauty and power of mathematical thinking has changed my life,” says Dan Finkel, who has books and worksheets and also some riddles online for children. Finkel says teaching of mathematics is so poor that students leave school committed to avoiding maths. “Without math, their career opportunities shrink and they become easy prey for credit card companies, lenders...”

Finkel takes off with the mathematician and philosopher, Rene Descarte's famous quote, “I think therefore I am.” He says, “What is a thinking being? It is that which doubts, understands, conceives, affirms and denies. It imagines also. This is the kind of thinking we need in every math class.”

Finkel gives five principles that will enable this to happen in every class, “The first principle is to start with questions while most math classes begin with answers and never arrive at the real question. In this model the matter is to memorise the steps. There is no room to doubt, imagine or refute.” Finkel shows a chart of numbers each in different colour combinations. He says, “...there is a mystery lurking in them...a pattern, something beautiful....” And then he refuses to divulge that, “I am not a mean person but I know that if I rush to give you the answer I would have robbed you the opportunity to learn. Thinking happens only when we have time to struggle...”

The second principle is “We have to teach students to struggle, to persevere. They think if they cannot answer a math question in thirty seconds, they are not math persons...the only way we can teach them to persevere is to give them time to think and grapple with real problems. Struggling with a genuine question, students deepen their curiosity and their powers of observation. They also develop the ability to take a risk...”



Perhaps the most significant thing Finkel says is, “The teacher is not the answer key...and this is so applicable to parents also...inquisitive students are a wonderful thing to have in class and if you can respond by saying I don't know, let us find out, math becomes an adventure and stops being a threat. You don't have to know all the answers when you sit down to do math. Not knowing is not failure. By refusing to be the answer key you create space for mathematical conversations and this draws everyone in...”

#### Playing maths

The fourth principle is not so simple. He says, “Say yes to your students' ideas...if the student says two plus two is twelve, you have to correct them...but accept it, study it and dis-prove it. To reject it outright is a sign of disrespect...” Taking this idea of two plus two as twelve, Finkel shows that you cannot move backward along the number line, unless you had cyclical number line. “That is how new math is created...” And he leads to the idea of number circle. The fifth rule is to play math for that gives ownership and develops courage curiosity and creativity.”

# An auteur, a gentleman

It's very important for the viewer to cultivate himself to be able to understand the film, Mrinal Sen used to say. The legendary director who passed away last week emphatically held that he did not go by the concept of a 'film for the masses'

S.SHIVA KUMAR

**M**adras, in the eighties was the Mecca for cinematic activities be it the sprawling studios or the processing labs. If stars like Raj Kumar, NT Rama Rao and Prem Nazir lived there for convenience as well as to ward off their legion of fans, the city also boasted the best cinematic obstetricians who helped deliver the dreams of directors of the calibre of Satyajit Ray and Mrinal Sen. Hotel Palmgrove, conveniently located, reasonably priced and boasting the best idlis in town was preferred by visitors. If you sat in the lobby you could bump into a range of celebrities from 'Kokila' Mohan who literally lived there to Somayajulu and Mrinal Sen. Mrinalda's preferred lab was Gemini which was right next door. He was popular among the hotel service staff not because they'd watched his films or tipped them heavily but treated them with empathy and chatted with them like a childhood chum. They knew he was a famous director though. "They say he's more popular abroad," said a waiter, which was true. I was visiting Mohan when a waiter I knew mentioned that Mrinalda was staying with them.

I knocked on his room door that was ajar and saw Mrinalda tapping away at his typewriter. He offered me tea and engaged in small talk but I sensed trepidation as he postponed my request for an interview. It was on my third visit that he asked me if I'd watched any of his films. Blaming lack of opportunities I confessed I'd watched only 'Ek Din Prati Din' and found it intriguing. I beamed when he said he sensed a passion for cinema and it was my persuasiveness that made him relent. His demeanour was disarming as he lit a cigarette, sat cross legged and asked me to shoot. Before I could start he put his hand on my shoulder, smoke curling onto my face and asked, "What do you think of Kamalahanan?" I told him. "I love that boy's acting. I've watched 'Aval Appadithan' and 'Kokila' and feel he performed remarkably. Commercial cinema will not affect his talent." I did mention this to Kamal later. Mrinalda answered a range of questions candidly. "I want to share my views with my spectators. I show the reality around me. This is what I convey through my



**His films did not point fingers or offer simplistic solutions** With Shashi Kapoor, Sharmila Tagore, Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee and veteran cinematographer Ramananda Sengupta

"I want to share my views with my spectators. I show the reality around me. This is what I convey through my films. Nobody need agree but it is enough if I can raise a debate..." said an emphatic Mrinalda

films. Nobody need agree but it is enough if I can raise a debate. I want to feel the atmosphere in which social, political and moral issues can be discussed freely, frankly and intelligently. That's precisely why I make a film," said an emphatic Mrinalda.

His films did not point fingers or offer simplistic solutions but made us ask ourselves tough questions. I asked him how he rated Satyajit Ray. "He's the person who set the ball rolling. Cinema had not achieved much till he made the great 'Pather Panchali'. It was fantastic. I'm enormously impressed by his body of work and have also been critical of some of his work," he said. I knew he liked the interview when he gave me his address '14, Beltola Road' and asked me to post a copy.

The interview appeared unedited in a Mumbai tabloid and a couple of weeks later my friend Manivannan, the director who later turned character actor, waved a Tamil weekly in my face with a sheepish grin. He'd got the interview translated and published. I told him we should have taken permission but he smirked

and said, "They can sue me but this interview deserves wider readership." Manivannan was keen on meeting Mrinalda, so the next time he visited, I forwarded the request. Mrinalda invited me to watch the 'first copy' of 'Kharij' which is a rare privilege, like being in the labour room to watch the birth of a creative baby. As I was leaving his room Mithun Chakravorty, his protégé who was shooting nearby, dropped in. I beamed when he told Mithun, "He looks like a kid but asks very inter-

esting questions."

One of my most cherished memories in my journalistic journey is Mrinalda sitting between me and Manivannan to watch 'Kharij' in a bare empty auditorium in Gemini studios. Since the film had not been subtitled yet, he patiently translated every single line spoken. It helped that his films are more visual than verbose. The film was a searing take on the moral dilemma of a family after their under aged domestic help succumbs to carbon monoxide poi-

soning. Manivannan was touched by the great man's humility as much as the film's social sensibility. 'Kharij' went on to win the Jury Prize at Cannes.

"How do you manage to know every time I come here?" asked Mrinalda, when I visited him a couple of years later. I looked for a trace of annoyance but perceiving none told him. His favourite waiter was my informer. He laughed and unhesitatingly acceded to my request for another interview. His 'Khandar' had received mixed response from critics and he was in Madras to get the print of a film he'd made for Doordarshan processed. "I've developed a close relationship with the people here," he said. I told him critics felt he'd mellowed and was not as vociferous as before. "I don't agree. What you see in me now is an extension of what I was ten years ago. Now the anger is internalised. A superficial view of my films will make me appear mellowed. You may notice despair," he said. "You may find me pessimistic on the surface but I'm now talking about inner strength, trying to dissect myself instead of going in for wishful thinking which most of the so-called political films indulge in. For instance, in 'Kharij', when the servant boy's father returns from the crematorium to meet his employer one expects him to slap him. Instead you and I got the slap which perhaps we can't swallow but had the man been slapped you would have felt happy and allowed the status quo to continue. My business is to make you suffer, feel bad about the whole thing and look at yourself. The slapping would have been wishful thinking much in the genre of Amitabh and Co." I pointed out that the whole exercise of trying to stimulate people's conscience seemed defeated since his films did not reach the masses. He sucked deeply at the cigarette, sighed and said, "I appeal to the sensitivity of people. I need educated audiences like a writer needs an educated reader. It's very important for the viewer to cultivate himself to be able to understand the film. I do not go by the concept of a 'film for the masses'. That's dangerous. I would like a large number of people to watch my films but I have to be pragmatic. I explore situations in my films not exploit them."

I lost touch with him over the years. His visits to Madras too were few and far between. Whenever I visited Hotel Palmgrove for a regular fix of their 'idlis', the staff remembered him fondly and never failed to mention that they'd not seen him spend as much time with others as he did with me. I hope he finds his favourite brand of cigarette wherever he is.

**Ban on entry of trucks**

To come into effect from 11 p.m. today; EPCA urges public to minimise use of personal vehicles [Page 2](#)

**Pile-up due to fog**

Outer Delhi's Kanjhawala-Bawana road sees a pile-up of 25 vehicles owing to dense fog [Page 3](#)

**Language of the heart**

Ahead of "Bazm", Shabana Azmi and Ameeta Parsuram speak of the relevance of ghazal [Page 5](#)

**Yes to food, no to diets**

Rujuta Diwekar tells why thinness is still big in a world that's becoming less diverse [Page 6](#)

**IN BRIEF****AAP to launch 'bijli andolan' in Punjab**

NEW DELHI

The AAP will launch a door-to-door campaign and "bijli andolan" to protest against the hike in electricity bills in Punjab after January 30, senior party leader Gopal Rai.

[CITY ▶ PAGE 2](#)**2 US citizens hurt after car overturns on E-way**

GREATER NOIDA

Two US citizens, including a 15-year-old girl, were severely injured after a van overturned on Yamuna Expressway on Wednesday evening, the police said on Thursday. They were discharged on Wednesday. The four-member family had hired a van to visit Taj Mahal.

[CITY ▶ PAGE 3](#)**Air quality of Delhi-NCR**

Delhi 444 Gurugram 370

Ghaziabad 458 Faridabad 411

Noida 447 Greater Noida 433

Good 51-100

Moderate 101-200

Poor 201-300

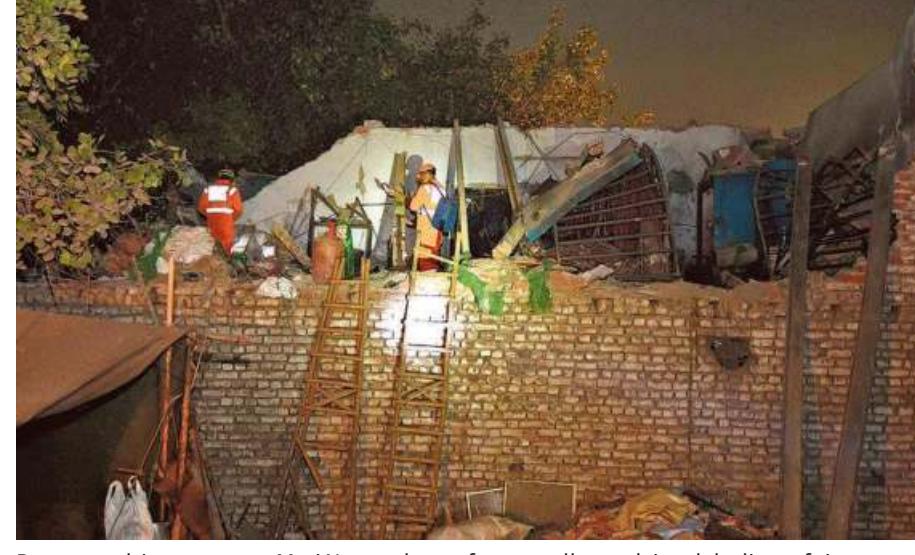
Very poor 301-400

Severe &gt;401

AIR QUALITY INDEX AT 4 P.M. YESTERDAY (AVERAGE OF PAST 24 HOURS) | SOURCE: CPCB

# 'Officials only sealed factory's toilet two days ago'

Locals claimed the unit was supposed to be sealed as its condition was terrible and the walls had cracks; rescue operation under way



Rescue work in progress at Moti Nagar where a factory collapse claimed the lives of six persons in New Delhi on Thursday. ■ SUSHIL KUMARVERMA



**C**I heard a blast around 8.45 p.m. and immediately rushed to the spot along with others. About 15 to 20 workers, including owner Ankit Gupta, were on the first floor of the factory, where the blast happened.

The condition of the factory was terrible. There were cracks on the walls," said Sandanand Jha, a social worker and local resident. He claimed several such factories were running in Basai Darapur, where the incident happened.

Talking about the incident, which happened at Sudarshan Park, local resident Manish Sehgal said he heard a blast around 8.45 p.m. and immediately

rushed to the spot along with others.

"The unit is involved in the painting of ceiling fan's rods and has a powder coating plant too. About 15 to 20 workers, including owner Ankit Gupta, were on the first floor of the factory, where the compressor blast happened," Manish said.

A fire broke out on the first floor due to the blast and a wall on that floor collapsed, said a local. He ad-

ded that this, in turn, affected the ground floor and the adjacent godown.

**'First-floor wall fell'**

"The debris from the first floor wall fell in the godown, where women and children were also present. The families worked and lived on the premises," he said.

Another resident, 21-year-old Suraj claimed he had helped rescue about 15 people, including the facto-

ry owner, from the spot. They were alive at the time of rescue, he added. "I pulled out two children, one woman and four men from the debris. When I asked them what happened, they said 'achanak dhama ka hu... phir malba gira... uske baad kuch yaad nai [there was a blast... followed by falling of debris... we cannot recall what happened after that]'," Suraj said, adding that the victims

were bleeding and shouting for help.

Seniors officers, including Deputy Commissioner of Police (West) Monika Bhardwaj and Joint Commissioner of Police Devesh Srivastava, were present at the spot along with the local police, and teams from the Delhi Disaster Management Authority (DDMA), the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) and the Fire Department. The rescue

teams are checking whether more people are trapped inside.

Another local, Amarjeet (58) complained of pollution due to the factory. "There was a furnace in the factory, which caused pollution. They dried paint there. It was impossible to breathe in the evening. We repeatedly complained to local authorities [about the factory] but nothing happened," he alleged.

## Flights, trains affected due to dense fog

Wife of ex-MLA, house help arrested; accused, driver sent to 7-day custody

HEMANI BHANDARI

NEW DELHI

The police on Thursday arrested Renu Singh, the wife of former Janata Dal (United) MLA Raju Singh, and their house help Ramender Singh, in addition to formally arresting the MLA and his driver Hari Singh, in the case of celebratory firing on New Year's Eve that claimed a woman's life.

The maximum temperature was recorded at 20.5 degrees Celsius, four notches above the season's average while the minimum temperature was a notch below the normal, a Met department official said.

Flight operations at the Indira Gandhi International Airport were disrupted for two hours.

The departures were put on hold from 7.30 a.m. to 9.30 a.m. due to low visibility conditions and 10 flights were diverted, said a source.

Besides, 55 trains were cancelled.

The frequency of 25 trains was reduced while two trains remained partially cancelled across northern railways, stated the official figures.



Former Bihar MLA Raju Singh in police custody in New Delhi on Thursday. ■ PTI

Renu and Ramender have been arrested for destroying evidence, the police said. "When the police reached the farmhouse, they did not find any bloody cartridges. Renu and Ramender had wiped the floor clean and also hid the spent cartridges," Mr. Kumar said.

**'Threatened guests'**

Renu and Ramender also threatened the guests against speaking to anyone about the incident and told them to delete videos from their phones, the police claimed.

However, the police recovered two spent cartridges and a pistol from Raju's car, Mr. Kumar said. They also obtained CCTV camera footage

of the crime spot.

The recording shows "Raju and Hari walking with weapons in their hands nearly 15 minutes prior to the incident". The police recovered two rifles and about 800 cartridges from the farmhouse where the incident happened. "The accused have claimed that all the weapons have permits but this information is yet to be verified. We also need to ascertain how and why the accused were in possession of the huge number of cartridges and whether they were bought legally," Mr. Kumar said.

The police took statements of "neutral witnesses", including the DJ and people working at the party, as part of investigation.

Archana's husband Vikas Gupta, a businessman-cum-builder, stated in the FIR: "There were celebrations and dancing at about 12 a.m. Archana, my daughter and I hugged and wished each other. That is my last memory of my wife."

Archana's last rites were performed on Thursday.

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VIJAY KUMAR

DCP (South)

never, investigation has revealed that about seven-eight rounds were fired," Mr. Kumar said.

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Archana's last rites were performed on Thursday.

Harvested organ being transported by Fortis Hospital medical staff.



■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

added, "Till Tuesday, the patient continued to be critical and was on life support. Despite best efforts by doctors, she could not be revived and was declared brain dead."

"After her death, the proposal to donate her organs was discussed with the family. Post consultation, they agreed to donate her kidneys. The NOTTO [National Organ and Tissue Transplant Organisation] states that once a patient is declared brain dead, the hospital can approach the family for organ donation," said hospital director Mangla Dembi.

NOTTO protocol states that a hospital has to inform

a family about possible organ donation. Following this, the government decides which organ is to be sent to which hospital and specific locations based on a list of priority recipients. In this case, one of Archana's kidneys was sent to Apollo Hospital and the other to Fortis in Vasant Kunj, said the hospital.

Fortis Organ Retrieval and Transplant (FORT) director Avnish Seth said there is an urgent need to streamline the process of organ donation throughout the country.

"It is extremely motivating to see a gradual shift in public perception on the issue of organ donation in the country. As per available statistics, there were 570 donations following brain death cases in the country in 2015. These resulted in transplantation of 1,675 organs, including 1,007 kidneys, 510 livers, 110 hearts, 37 lungs, four pancreas and two small intestines. This is not a small number in a country where, till a decade ago, organ donation was synonymous with donation of a kidney or part of the liver from a living donor," Dr. Seth added.

## Centre trying to stop Metro phase-IV, alleges AAP

The construction is expected to begin this month

**C**For phase-I and phase-II, the Delhi government and the Centre have shared profit and loss 50:50 as the ownership is of the same proportion...

KAILASH GAHLOT

Transport Minister

used officers to delay the project for years, referring to the objections raised by the Delhi Finance Department on the viability of three of the six corridors of phase-IV. The Cabinet had overruled these concerns when it approved all six corridors, which will be constructed at a total cost of ₹46,845 crore. The 103.93-km-long phase-IV will be split into six corridors – Rithala to Narela, Janakpuri West to R.K. Ashram, Mukundpur to Majupur, Inderlok to Indraprastha, Aero City to Tughlakabad and Lajpat Nagar to Saket G-Block. Construction is expected to begin this month and take until December 2024 to complete.

He added that the Centre

## Retired BSF officer duped twice by same fraudsters in 5 years

The cheats lured the senior citizen with schemes, bonus on life insurance policies

SAURABH TRIVEDI

NEW DELHI

Five years after he was cheated of ₹5 lakh, a 72-year-old retired Border Security Force (BSF) Deputy Commandant on Wednesday registered a first information report claiming he was duped of ₹36 lakh by fraudsters in 2018.

Victim Ved Prakash Sharma filed his complaint at south Delhi's Malviya Nagar police station, the police said on Thursday. Mr. Sharma told the police that the accused had in April promised to help him get both the money he lost in 2013 along with the promised bonus.

He stated in his complaint that he had received a call from a person in 2013 who

claimed that the government was giving ₹10 lakh to senior citizens under the 'Common Wealth Games Scheme' if they had life insurance policies. The caller not only convinced him to buy a life insurance policy but also insisted that he purchase more policies or he would lose his deposit.

Convinced, the retired BSF officer decided to purchase nine life insurance policies worth ₹5 lakh in his son's name. Soon after that, the accused stopped taking his calls and disconnected the mobile number.

"I only deposited one instalment for the nine policies because the agent promised I will get my money back with a bonus. I lost hope after that," said Mr.

**C**The caller had all the details of the policies I had purchased in 2013... The caller then claimed I would lose all the money I had deposited so far if I did not continue to make payments. I deposited ₹36 lakh in various bank accounts

VED PRAKASH SHARMA

Victim

was not in a position to deposit money for three years to continue the policies. Even the insurance companies refused to refund my money saying I had not completed the three-year payment. I lost hope after that," said Mr.

Sharma. In April 2018, the victim received a call from a man who claimed he was a government official with the Jeevan Bima Lokpal in Mumbai. Claiming he had received Mr. Sharma's file, the accused told him that he would receive ₹45 lakh. He claimed the amount included a refund of the instalment amount the victim had paid for the policies in 2013 along with the bonus he was promised.

"The caller had all the details of the policies I had purchased in 2013. He told me to deposit money for timely clearance of my file. I stopped after making a few deposits. The caller then claimed I would lose all the money I had deposited so

far if I did not continue to make payments. I deposited ₹36 lakh in various bank accounts," Mr. Sharma said in his complaint.

He recently got a call from another "agent" who claimed that his file was stuck due to the appointment of a new Governor at the Reserve Bank. The new "agent" demanded more money on the pretext of releasing "₹45 lakh".

At this, Mr. Sharma got suspicious and reported the matter to the police.

"We have registered a case under Section 420 [cheating] of the Indian Penal Code at Malviya Nagar police station. The case is under investigation," said a senior police officer.

## IN BRIEF

**DUTA calls for shut down over various issues**

NEW DELHI In a bid to demand various issues, including the release of allowance as per the 7th Pay Revision, the Delhi University Teachers' Association on Thursday called for a university shut down on January 8 and 9. "The DUTA unequivocally condemns the recalcitrant attitude of the V-C for stubbornly refusing to place the report of his own panel set up to facilitate the adoption of the UGC regulations. The DUTA also expresses its grave concern about the failure of the government in bringing an ordinance on the reservation roster issue so that the university/college can be treated as a unit and the release of pension to retired employees. The DUTA also demands processing of promotions which are long pending and the counting of past service," the statement added. STAFF REPORTER

**BSES signs power deal to meet peak demand**

NEW DELHI Electricity discom, BSES signed a power sale agreement with the Solar Energy Corporation of India to procure 200 MW of wind power, the company said in a statement on Thursday. The power is expected to be available from 2021 at a rate of ₹2.84 per unit. Prior to this, the discom has signed wind power agreements to the tune of 400 MW, of which 50 MW has been in operation since October 2018, it said. The wind energy is expected to help support night-time peak power demands and help the company meet its renewable power obligations it added. STAFF REPORTER

## Ban on entry of trucks into city for 24 hrs

To come into effect from 11 p.m. today; EPCA urges motorists to minimise use of personal vehicles

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI

Entry of trucks to Delhi would be stopped for 24 hours starting 11 p.m. on Friday in view of the severe pollution in the national Capital, the Supreme Court-appointed Environment Pollution Control Authority (EPCA) has instructed authorities.

In a letter to Chief Secretaries of Delhi, Uttar Pradesh and Haryana, Environment Pollution Control Authority (EPCA) chief Bhure Lal directed them to stop the entry of truck traffic into Delhi, except essential commodities, from 11 p.m. on January 4 to 11 p.m. of January 5.

"The enforcement of this direction requires coordination of all NCR (National Capital Region) States and you are therefore, requested to take steps to ensure that this happens.

**Alternative routes**

"Also, the opening of the Eastern and Western Expressway will make this easier to implement as the trucks that are not destined for Delhi now have convenient alternative to take," Mr. Lal said.

The decision has been taken in view of the severe pollution level in the Capital for over 31 hours.

Mr. Lal also urged people to minimise use of personal vehicles and avoid being outside for prolonged periods.

The direction came after the recommendations of the Central Pollution Control Board-led taskforce.

Delhi's air quality remained severe for the second day on Thursday due to adverse meteorological conditions.



People huddle together for warmth on a cold Thursday morning in the Capital. ■ R.V. MOORTHY

## Police asked to take steps against pollution from traffic in Shahdara

Plea before NGT alleges jams due to encroachment by hawkers

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has directed Delhi Police Commissioner to look into a plea alleging air pollution resulting from traffic jams in Shahdara.

Taking note of the petition that alleged heavy traffic jams owing to encroachment by hawkers, a Bench headed by NGT Chairperson Justice Adarsh Kumar Goel

**C** Since traffic jams can be seen on Google Maps, the traffic police must evolve a mechanism so as to take prompt remedial and preventive steps at places where there is congestion

JUSTICE ADARSH KUMAR GOEL  
NGT Chairperson

prompt remedial and preventive steps at places where traffic jams are taking place."

The directions came

while the green panel was hearing a complaint which alleged heavy traffic jams in the area due to encroachment of space.

"Allegation in this letter, which has been treated as an application is that heavy traffic jams are taking place which is also on account of hawkers at Loni, Balbir Singh, Shahdara, resulting in air pollution...copy of the order along with complaint

be sent to the Commissioner of Police, Delhi for taking appropriate steps in accordance with law," said the Bench.

## Air pollution remains 'severe'

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

Air pollution in Delhi remained severe for a second consecutive day on Thursday as average levels of particulate matter in the air reached over four times the safe limits.

According to the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), the air quality index (AQI) for Delhi as of 4 p.m. was 433, slightly higher than Wednesday's AQI of 430 – both in the severe category. The levels of the harmful PM2.5 and PM10 pollutants remained four times over the standards of 60 micrograms per cubic metre and 100 micrograms per cubic respectively.

According to the SAFAR index, the 24-hour average concentrations of PM10 and PM2.5 as of 9 p.m. were 489 micrograms per cubic metre and 272 micrograms per cubic metre.

On Friday, Delhi's air quality could dip further, with SAFAR forecasting PM10 and PM2.5 levels at 532 micrograms per cubic metre and 296 micrograms per cubic metre respectively. SAFAR said the current peak in pollution was due to the moisture brought in by the winter pre-shower condition.

Only a sufficient amount of rainfall would reduce pollution as scant showers would only add moisture, making dispersion of pollutants more difficult, according to SAFAR.



Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal holds meeting with AAP Punjab representatives in the Capital. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

## AAP to launch 'bijli andolan' in Punjab

Will also start door-to-door campaign

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

Ahead of the Lok Sabha elections, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) will launch a door-to-door campaign as well as a "bijli andolan" to protest against the hike in electricity bills in Punjab after January 30, senior party leader Gopal Rai said here on Thursday.

Mr. Rai was speaking after a meeting of all-party office-bearers, from Lok Sabha to block level, for Punjab with AAP national convener Arvind Kejriwal here.

After interacting with "around 800" of the AAP Punjab representatives, the AAP leadership decided that a door-to-door campaign would be launched after January 30 after booth-level workers are in place, Mr. Rai said.

He added that from the discussion with the party's Punjab unit, it was clear that the increased power rates was an important issue in that State. Like the protests against electricity rates the AAP carried out in

From the discussion with the party's Punjab unit, it was clear that the increased power rates was an important issue in that State. Like the protests against electricity rates the AAP carried out in

GOPAL RAI  
Senior AAP leader

Delhi before coming to power, Mr. Rai said, a "bijli andolan" would be carried out in Punjab.

He added that the AAP had announced five candidates out of the 13 Lok Sabha seats in Punjab already and the remaining would be finalised after the State core committee submits its suggestions to the political affairs committee.

## Commotion in Assembly over 'Rajiv Gandhi resolution'

BJP MLAs suspended; Sirsa 'created drama', alleges AAP leader

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

The Delhi Assembly witnessed ruckus on Thursday as the Opposition BJP alleged that Speaker Ram Niwas Goel had removed a reference to former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi from a recent resolution passed in the House, leading the BJP MLAs to be suspended for the day.

BJP MLA Manjinder Singh Sirsa had demanded the removal of the Speaker for allegedly taking out the demand for withdrawal of the late Prime Minister's Bharat Ratna from a resolution passed on December 21, 2018, seeking justice for 1984 anti-Sikh riots victims.

While the AAP MLA who read out that resolution, Jarnail Singh, had made the demand, the statement was not included in the written resolution distributed in the House that day as well as the bulletin of the proceedings published later.

**Proceedings adjourned**  
Reacting to Mr. Sirsa's demand, the Speaker said the notice could not be accepted as it has to be given 14 days in



BJP MLA Manjinder Singh Sirsa (second from right) after being marshalled out of the Assembly. ■ SANDEEP SAXENA

advance. After that, Mr. Sirsa entered the well of the House to protest. Mr. Goel then ordered marshals to escort Mr. Sirsa out, suspending him, Leader of the Opposition Vijender Gupta and BJP MLA Jagdish Pradhan for the day. Proceedings were adjourned for 15 minutes.

Speaking to reporters outside the House, Mr. Sirsa alleged that the marshals had manhandled him and removed his turban.

"We had moved a resolution that the Congress should be declared a party of murderers for their involvement in the massacre of in-

nocent Sikhs in 1984. Just because the AAP wants to get into an alliance with the Congress, they have removed the reference to Rajiv Gandhi in the resolution," Mr. Sirsa said.

When the House reconvened, AAP MLA Saurabh Bharadwaj alleged that Mr. Sirsa had "created a drama" by "removing his own turban" and that marshals had dithered in removing him from the House. While Mr. Bharadwaj demanded Mr. Sirsa be suspended for two sessions, the Speaker handed over the matter to the Privileges Committee.

"In any case the Delhi government has already released more funds ranging between 14% and 17% of the

## Civic bodies to get 12.5% of total taxes

An increase from the 10.5% share as Delhi govt partially accepts Fifth Delhi Finance Commission report

DAMINI NATH  
NEW DELHI

The Capital's cash-strapped North and East Delhi municipal corporations will be given a greater share of funds till 2021 as the Delhi government has accepted most of the recommendations of the Fifth Delhi Finance Commission, the Delhi Assembly was told on Thursday.

Tabling the report of the 5th DFC in the House, Urban Development Minister Satyendar Jain also presented the explanatory memorandum on the action taken on the recommendations. Covering a period of five financial years from 2016 to 2021, the 5th DFC's recommendation of devolution of 12.5% of taxes to the civic bodies was accepted by the government, Mr. Jain said. This, he said, was an increase from the 10.5% share mandated by the third DFC.

Mr. Jain also presented the action-taken report of the 4th DFC saying that the Centre had rejected it, so the Delhi government could not implement it.

"In any case the Delhi government has already released more funds ranging between 14% and 17% of the

**C** Of the total 171 recommendations of the 5th DFC, 88 had been accepted by the government, 20 related to devolution of funds were accepted after amendments, 13 were left to the civic bodies to decide upon, 17 were sent to committees and 29 were rejected

SATYENDRA JAIN  
Urban Development Minister

net tax collection which includes funds released for plan projects/schemes under UD, health and education] than what has been recommended by the government. Mr. Jain said. This, he said, was an increase from the 10.5% share mandated by the third DFC.

Mr. Jain said the government had also decided not to recover the additional amount given to the corporations for the period of the 4th DFC, which was from 2011-2012 to 2015-2016.

Of the total 171 recommendations of the 5th DFC, Mr. Jain said 88 had been accepted by the government, 20 that related to devolution of

funds were accepted after amendments, 13 were left to the civic bodies to decide upon, 17 were sent to committees and 29 were rejected.

Under the framework suggested by the 5th DFC, the basic tax assignment for civic bodies would be divided into two parts – the first to be shared by the East Delhi Municipal Corporation and the North Delhi Municipal Corporation in a ratio of 65:35 to meet their revenue deficit and the second to be shared equally by all five civic bodies of Delhi.

**BJP hits out**

The Opposition BJP, which is in power in the three municipal corporations of Delhi, however, hit out against the AAP government. Leader of the Opposition Vijender Gupta said the Delhi government had "played a big fraud on Delhiites in its apparent acceptance of the 5th DFC's report".

He said the government had misrepresented facts by saying the share of the municipal corporations had gone up from 10.5% to 12.5%, when, according to him, it had fallen from 17%.

## Passing of 5th DFC a political stunt: Kataria

Calls for implementation of 4th DFC

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

Leader of the North Delhi Municipal Corporation Tilak Raj Kataria on Thursday, called the passing of the fifth Delhi finance commission (DFC) a political stunt and called upon the Delhi government to implement the recommendations of the fourth DFC.

In a statement, he said that the Delhi government had not fully implemented the recommendations of the fourth finance commission as a result of which the three corporations had allegedly not received funds to the tune of ₹1,531 crore.

The Delhi govt has not fully implemented the recommendations of the fourth finance commission as a result of which the three corporations have allegedly not received funds to the tune of ₹1,531 crore

TILAK RAJ KATARIA  
Leader of the North Delhi Municipal Corporation

Central government had rejected the fourth DFC report.

As a consequence, the existing devolution of funds to the municipal bodies, made for the period between 2011 to 2016, which was meant to be dictated by the fourth DFC, have been done according to recommendations of the third DFC and no recoveries will be affected, it added.

**Action-taken report**  
The 'action-taken report' on the recommendations of the fourth Delhi finance commission (DFC), states that Delhi government was unable to recommend its implementation because the

It has continued to collect conversion charges, alleges AAP MLA

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

The BJP-run municipal corporations of Delhi had continued to collect conversion charges from certain commercial establishments after the Delhi Development Authority had clarified there was no need to, Aam Aadmi Party MLA Saurabh Bharadwaj alleged on Thursday.

**'Not liable to pay'**

Speaking during a discussion in the Delhi Assembly on the sealing drive by the municipalities, Mr. Bharadwaj said a letter from the DDA to the South Delhi Municipal Corporation and the North Delhi

**C** They have collected hundreds of crores in conversion charges from establishments that are already declared commercial, so what are they converting?

SAURABH BHARADWAJ  
AAM AADMI PARTY MLA

Municipal Corporation in September 2018, had said commercial units in local shopping centres were not liable to pay conversion charges. They have collected

hundreds of crores in conversion charges from establishments that are already declared commercial, so what are they converting?" asked Mr. Bharadwaj.

He accused the BJP-run civic bodies of "cheating" the traders of Delhi, referring to the sealing drives in Defence Colony, Greater Kailash and South Extension markets, which have been designated for commercial use.

Later in the discussion, Urban Development Minister Satyendar Jain asked the Centre to pass an ordinance to end the sealing drive in Delhi.

## Traders' body protests sealing drive

Asks govt to introduce Bill; demands SC-appointed committee be disbanded

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

Traders in the city staged a protest against the sealing drive under the banner of the Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT) at Parliament Street on Thursday.

In a statement, the CAIT called upon the government to take immediate steps to restrict the sealing drive which it said had devastated trade in the city and threatened the livelihood of lakhs of people.

The sealing drive started in December 2017 when the Supreme Court-appointed monitoring committee started shutting down properties in the city that had violated

land-use policies.  
The traders' body demanded that the government introduce a Bill in the current session of Parliament or introduce an ordinance which would set a cut

date for properties that were being sealed along with a provision to bring about immediate desealing of shops.  
The traders' body also demanded that the committee

be disbanded "in the wake of its dictatorial and undemocratic attitude".

**On encroachments**

At the protest, traders raised slogans against the monitoring committee and burnt effigies to mark their



## IN BRIEF



## Illegal plastic crusher seized, 4 held in Noida

NOIDA  
Four men were arrested on Thursday after they were found operating a plastic crusher here in violation of the National Green Tribunal (NGT) orders, the Gautam Buddha Nagar administration said. The illegal crusher was also seized during a raid in Sector 74 by the administration officials, City Magistrate Shailendra Mishra said. PTI

## Man arrested, jailed under Arms Act

NEW DELHI  
A man was arrested under the Arms Act on Thursday, officials said. The accused was a resident of Lajpat Nagar. He was arrested in a case under the Arms Act on Thursday, they said. PTI

## R.K. Dhawan's widow has no rights to bungalow

NEW DELHI  
A Delhi court Thursday restrained the widow R.K. Dhawan, who was a confidante of former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, from creating any third-party rights to a bungalow she is residing in at Delhi's Golf Links till further orders. A lawyer associated with the case said that the widow, Achala Mohan, was staying at the ground floor of the bungalow which originally belonged to late C.P.N. Singh, former Governor of Punjab and Uttar Pradesh. In an ex parte order, Additional District Judge Chandra Shekhar issued summons to Ms. Mohan for February 14, the next date of hearing. PTI

## 2 drug peddlers held in Greater Noida

NOIDA  
Two suspected drug peddlers were arrested on Thursday while selling cannabis near a college in Greater Noida, the police said. Nearly two kg of cannabis was seized from their possession by officials from the Knowledge Park police station, they said. PTI

# Ministry to fill up seven vacant posts of law officers

Parliamentary panel also cites vacancies in Tax Appellate Tribunal

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

The Law Ministry on Thursday said that it was in the process of filling up seven vacant posts of law officers, out of a total strength of 25.

The law officers are entrusted with the responsibility of advising the Central government on legal matters referred to them and representing the government before the Supreme Court and High Court.

**Staff crunch**  
“The Department will soon fill the vacant posts of Law Officers,” the Ministry said responding to recommendation of a Parliamentary Standing Committee to fill

up the vacant posts.

The committee also cited a large number of vacancies existing in the Tax Appellate Tribunal (ITAT) across the board.

“The committee fails to understand why no solution has been found to deal effectively with this problem even after so many years,” it said in a report tabled in the Parliament on Thursday.

Due to the vacancy, some of the Benches are not functioning regularly, resulting in increased pendency, the Committee remarked.

The Ministry replied that the government has taken pro-active remedial measures to lessen the shortage of manpower in the ITAT.

The ministry said that it has invited applications for appointments of 21 Judicial Members and 16 Accountant Members in July last year.

Justice P.P. Bhatt, former judge of the Gujarat High Court, was appointed as the President of the ITAT and another seven Vice-President posts were also filled last year.

On the recommendation of the Department of Promotion Committee, 10 officials of the ITAT has been promoted to the post of Assistant Registrar, the Ministry noted.

The committee headed by headed by BJP lawmaker Bhupender Yadav asked the Ministry to undertake a

comprehensive case analysis for the huge backlog of cases at ITAT.

It said the tribunal should truly live upto its moto of “Nishpakash Sulabh Satvar Nyay”, which stand for impartial, easy and speedy justice.

## International tax

The Ministry replied that a substantial portion of litigation before the ITAT relates to international tax issues which are complicated in nature, time-consuming and also have high stakes.

It said that the ITAT, Income-Tax Department and the ITAT Bar Association will meet to find ways to speed up disposal of cases.

## Centre to boost indigenous pharma sector

Cabinet gives nod for 100% FDI under automatic route for manufacturing devices

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

“The endeavour of the Central government is to provide affordable and quality healthcare for all and to boost indigenous pharmaceutical sector through Make in India. In this direction, the Cabinet has given approval for 100% FDI under automatic route for manufacturing of medical devices,” said Union Minister D.V. Sadananda Gowda here on Thursday.

The Minister for Chemicals and Fertilisers, and Statistics and Programme Implementation was addressing the media during a curtain raiser for ‘India Pharma 2019 & India Medical Device 2019’.

**Fourth conclave**  
The Department of Pharmaceuticals, under the Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilisers and the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce &

key stakeholders of the pharma and medical devices sectors under one roof and provide an opportunity to discuss the government policy and challenges facing the Industry. Government is striving to make the processes in the sector as transparent and easy as possible.

Minister of State Chemicals and Fertilizers Mansukh Mandaviya noted that the event will have brainstorming sessions on various aspects of pharmaceuticals and medical device sector and in its 4<sup>th</sup> edition the event will help in resolving the bottlenecks of growth in the sectors. He invited the industry, media and the healthcare fraternity to participate in a big way at the event.

Speaking on the rationale of holding the annual conference, Secretary (Pharmaceuticals), J.P. Prakash said

that the event is held annual-

ly to get new and innovative ideas from all stakeholders in the conference. This helps the department to prepare the annual action plan for the pharma and medical device sectors. During the conference, the annual action taken report on the issues raised at the last edition of the event along with new areas of concern will be discussed, he added.

At the main event in Bengaluru, over 150 CEOs of the global pharma and medical device industry are expected to participate.

International Drug Regulators from 15 countries have been invited to the event for interaction with Indian Drug Regulators and Industry Regulatory Officers. Ambassadors and commercial counsellors of more than 50 countries have been invited for close interaction with government of India and participating Industry.

A Bench headed by NGT chairperson Justice Adarsh Kumar Goel said, “Let North Delhi Municipal Corporation look into the matter, take appropriate action in accordance with law and furnish a factual and action taken report to the tribunal.”

The directions came while the green panel was hearing a complaint submitted before tribunal which alleged that Bhagwan Mahavir Hospital in Pitampura had encroached upon an open space in a park.

“Allegation in this letter, which has been treated as an application, is that during the course of remodelling of Bhagwan Mahavir Hospital

medical negligence by the consumer forum. IMA representatives have to be included in the consumer mediation cells and district, State and national consumer councils as the prominent stakeholders,” he said.

“IMA is opposing the IMC (Amendments) Bill 2018 which was recently passed in the Lok Sabha. IMA has very strong reservations in the way that an elected MCI was superseded for no credible reason and undue haste was shown to proclaim an ordinance creating a nominated Board of Governors

while the election process was underway. MCI represents the plurality of opinion from multitude of institutions in our federal nation. It is preposterous to install a Group of nominated Board of Governors who will never be able to fulfil the legitimate aspirations of diverse people of our country,” said IMA secretary general R.V. Asokan.

He added that all the three Bills have potential to adversely change the profile of medical profession and healthcare in India.

# IMA to stage protest against anti-federal Bills

Ups the ante against three Bills pending before Parliament

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

The Indian Medical Association (IMA) has opposed the National Medical Commission Bill, 2017, IMC (amendments) Bill, 2018, and Consumer Protection Bill, 2018, pending before the Parliament calling it anti-people and has proposed to observe an all-India protest on Friday which will see the participation of all the local and State branches of the association.

**Seat reservation**  
“NMC Bill, 2017, aims to centralise the entire authority in the hands of the Government of India. The current proposal if adopted would result in repeal of the Indian Medical Council Act, 1956. The NMC still remains an anti-poor, anti-people and anti-federal legislation which if allowed to pass will have unforeseen consequences not only on the healthcare sector but also on the federal structure of the country,” noted a release issued by the IMA on Thursday.

The association said that

reservation of medical seats up to 50% for managements is denial of equitable opportunities and is certainly anti-people and pro-rich. At present most of the States have a fee-fixing committee. After the implementation of the NMC Bill, they would lose their power to regulate fees, said IMA national president Santanu Sen.

He added that the NMC Bill was referred to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on health which had recommended 24 amendments unanimously.

The government of India had only accepted recommendation in a partial manner.

“The IMA demands capping of compensation for medical negligence cases, unreasonably high compensations will give rise to more frivolous litigations and promote defensive medicine. Litigations by organisations or associations are vindictive in nature. It will be a bad precedence to allow such a practice. Moreover, peer expert opinion has to be mandatory before taking up a case of

## NGT seeks report on hospital encroachment

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

Following a plea alleging encroachment of open space by a hospital in Pitampura, the National Green Tribunal (NGT) has directed the North Delhi Municipal Corporation to provide an action taken report before the tribunal.

A Bench headed by NGT chairperson Justice Adarsh Kumar Goel said, “Let North Delhi Municipal Corporation look into the matter, take appropriate action in accordance with law and furnish a factual and action taken report to the tribunal.”

The directions came while the green panel was hearing a complaint submitted before tribunal which alleged that Bhagwan Mahavir Hospital in Pitampura had encroached upon an open space in a park.

“Allegation in this letter, which has been treated as an application, is that during the course of remodelling of Bhagwan Mahavir Hospital

at Pitampura, the park is being encroached, depriving the residents of open space,” the green Bench observed while noting the complaint.

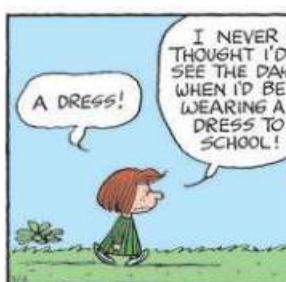
The Bench on Wednesday also said, “Needless to say that order of the NGT is binding as a decree of court and non-compliance is actionable by way of punitive action including prosecution.”

The civic body has been directed to furnish the report within one month.

## POOCH CAFE



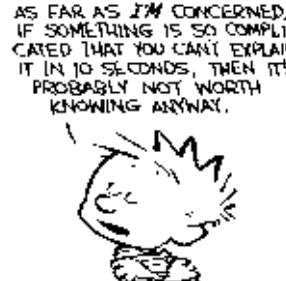
## PEANUTS



## HAGAR THE HORRIBLE



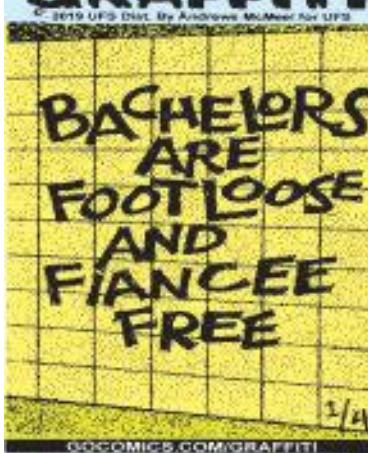
## CALVIN AND HOBBES



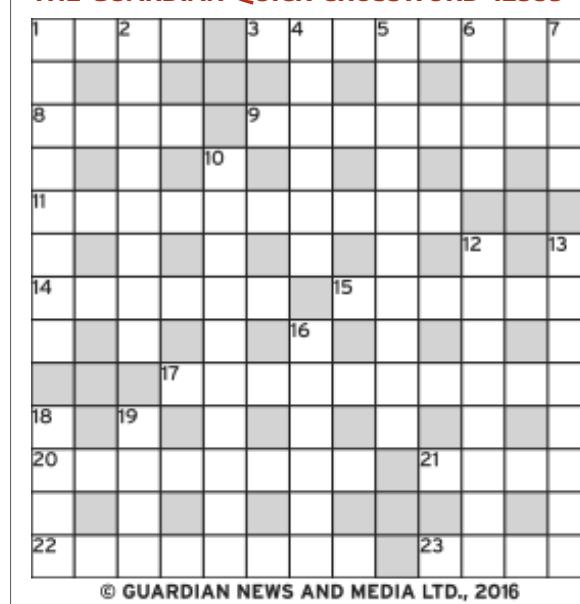
## TIGER



## GRAFFITI



## THE GUARDIAN QUICK CROSSWORD-12959

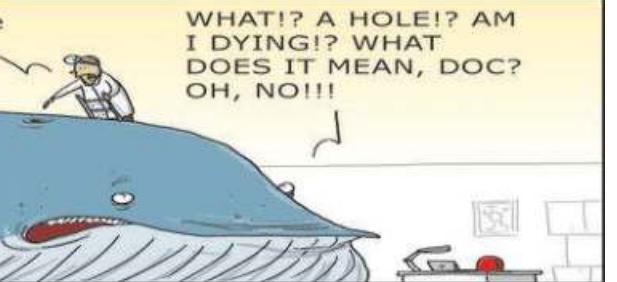
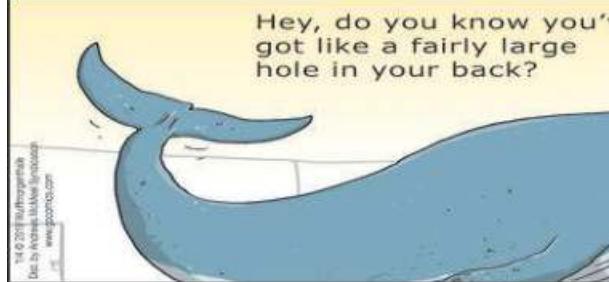


- 4 Break – respite (6)
- 5 Cow, sheep or chicken? (4,6)
- 6 Bend or twist (4)
- 7 Toy consisting of a spool and string (2-2)
- 10 Watering (10)
- 12 Unfairly organised situation (6-2)
- 13 Give resentfully (8)
- 16 Cloud of gas and dust in outer space (6)
- 18 Leash – Pb (4)
- 19 Welsh actress, Catherine Jones, b. 1969 (4)

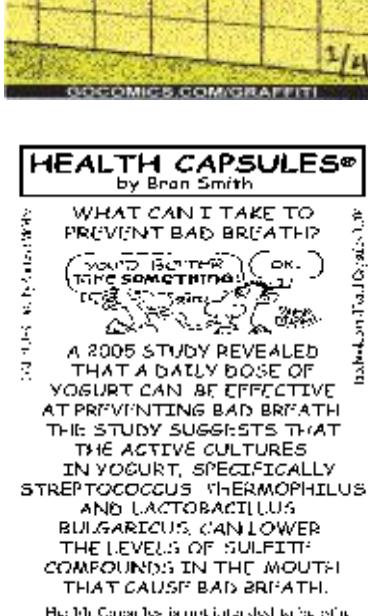
Solution will appear in Delhi Metro dated January 5, 2019.

Solution No. 12958

## WUMO



## HEALTH CAPSULES



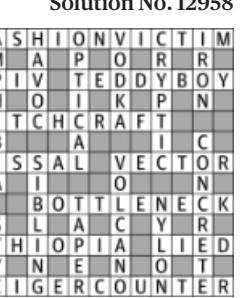
## THE GUARDIAN QUICK CROSSWORD-12959



- Across
- 1 Celebrity (4)
- 3 Typewriter feature, used to achieve capital letters (5,3)
- 8 Vow (4)
- 9 Itinerant state (8)
- 11 Beyond a normal person's power (10)
- 14 Immeasurably small – omit AC (anag) (6)
- 15 Goodness (6)
- 17 Sinner (10)
- 20 Professor retired from regular work (8)
- 21 Dull sound of something hitting the ground (4)
- 22 Approach (4,4)
- 23 Semicircular end of a church, behind the altar (4)
- Down
- 1 Old writing paper size – cops loaf (anag) (8)
- 2 Figure of speech (8)



## PEARLS BEFORE SWINE



# Language of the heart

Ahead of the "Bazm", Shabana Azmi and Ameeta Parsuram speak of the relevance of the ghazal today

ANJANA RAJAN

"Bazm", the annual ghazal event instituted by poet Ameeta Parsuram in New Delhi, is set to celebrate its 10th edition this evening. The landmark coincides with the centenary of Kaifi Azmi, and the evening begins with a tribute to the celebrated poet. It will be a three-tiered affair, the second part being a mushaira featuring young Urdu poets in their 20s, and the third a concert by popular ghazal singer Jaswinder Singh - who will sing ghazals of Kaifi Azmi as well as other poets.

Ameeta, who goes by the pen name Meeta, has dedicated her energies to popularising the ghazal, and over the past decade she has felt a change in audience response. If earlier she was asked by well-wishers why she was sinking her money in

an unpopular, outmoded medium, she now proudly counts among her acquaintances and university students youngsters who have developed a taste for the poetry, the music and the language of this art.

Veteran actor and social activist Shabana Azmi, among the celebrities that have backed Ameeta in her effort to champion the ghazal, will be the chief guest at the event that pays tribute to her father. "I congratulate Ameeta on her commitment to the ghazal," says Shabana. "It's been 10 years since Bazm started and she has succeeded in expanding her audience."

#### Taste for aesthetics

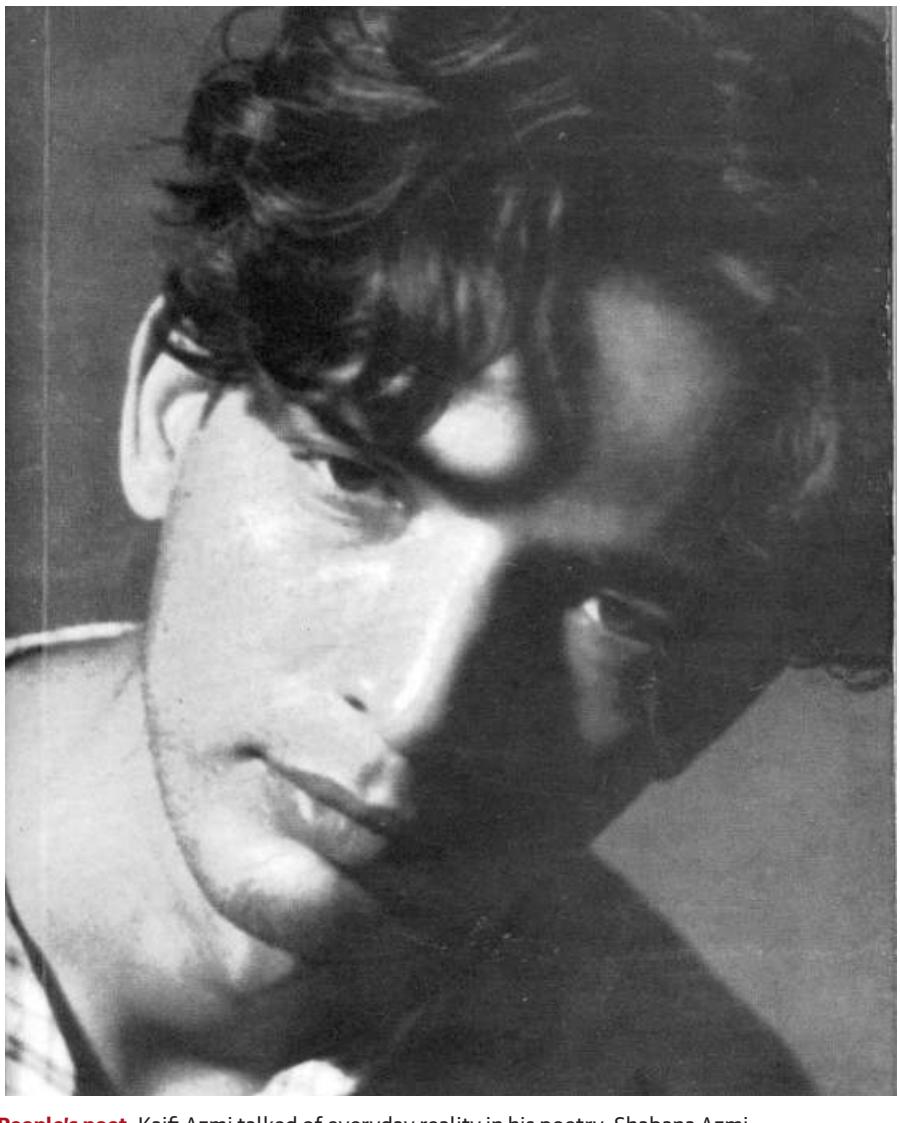
She notes, "It is important to popularise the ghazal but curating the show to separate the wheat from the chaff is equally important so you

develop a taste for aesthetics."

One wonders, in today's India where the arts are mostly considered hobbies for the well-heeled, while the major occupation for everyone else is to make a living, how can a refined art like the writing and performing of the Ghazal, requiring years of dedication, thrive?

Ameeta, a professor of psychology at Delhi University, feels, "We have the Maslow theory which says at first all basic needs should be met and only then a person will go towards aesthetics - that art is a need which comes much later. But that is not the basis for saying that this is meant only for moneyed people." The connection with the "ruh", she says, has nothing to do with socio-economics. In villages we see labourers and farmers coming together to share creativity through song and dance and storytelling. "Where have folk music, dance arts, storytelling, come from," she asks. "It transcends all money barriers. I think it's just a mythical thought."

Shabana points out, "Art is not separate from life. The biggest contribution of the Progressive Writers Movement and IPTA was that they turned lofty concepts of art into subjects of everyday reality. The sweat on the brow of a peasant woman, the rough hands of a labourer working in the mills became symbols of beauty. Along the way, however, we



**People's poet:** Kaifi Azmi talked of everyday reality in his poetry; Shabana Azmi

• SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT, THE HINDU

lost this connect. We must strive to bring this connect back and realise that art is required to give true meaning to our lives. Educational institutes, corporate bodies, individual efforts can help."

Kaifi was known for seamlessly blending the aesthetic requirements of poetry with an activist's messages for the common citizen. In the current turbulent times of polarisation and violence, the nay-

sayers would call it naïve to believe arts like poetry and music could raise awareness in society.

Shabana contends, "Now, more than ever is the time to remind ourselves that art should be used as an instrument for social change. Kaifi was a product of the Communist Party and the PWA. These were people tuned to the sounds of a different drummer. In celebrating Kai-

f's life we also celebrate the times in which he and his colleagues functioned. Today some celebrities give a sound byte on an issue and are satisfied they have done their bit. But people like Kaifi were foot soldiers who worked in the trenches. There was no dichotomy in Kaifi's words and actions. I think music and poetry have the capacity to create a climate of sensitivity in which it



# A year in children's books

From contemporary tales to fantasy and rebellious girls, here's how 2018 flew by in wonder for Bijal Vachharajani



**For the young soul:**  
(From extreme left)  
Nevermoor; Hello  
Universe; Art Matters  
and When Morning  
Comes • SPECIAL  
ARRANGEMENT

Williams-Garcia.

I was pleased as a conservationist who spots a Great Indian Bustard, when we printed one of our attempts at the same - *The Very Wiggly Tooth* (Pratham Books) by Reshma Thapa Gurung and Canato Jimo, a contemporary tale set in Sikkim.

I also read Devashish Makhija and Priya Kuriyan's *When Ali Became Bajrangbali* (Tulika), a seven-year-old picture book that had somehow never got my hands on.

#### Future is female

This was truly the year to read girl positive books - Aparna Jain's *Like a Girl* (Context), *Rad Women Worldwide: Artists and Athletes, Pirates and Punks, and Other Revolutionaries Who Shaped History* (Ten Speed Press) by Kate Schatz and Miriam Klein Stahl, Katha's gender series, *I Need to Pee* (Pen-

guin) by Neha Singh, Meenal Singh and Erik Egerup, *Anna's Extraordinary Experiments with Weather* (Pratham Books) by Nandita Jayaraj and Priya Kuriyan, Anita Vachharajani and Kalyani Ganapathy's *Amrita Sher-Gil: Rebel with a Paintbrush* (HarperCollins). My friend Shimbalib's daughter adored *Brazen: Rebel Ladies Who Rocked the World Paperback* (First Second) by Pénélope Bagieu.

But, *Nimona* by Noelle Stevenson, a graphic novel recommended by Aparna, has my heart.

Oh, talking of fantasy, do read *The Magicians of Madh* (Duckbill) by Aditi Krishnakumar as well as Shazaf Fatima Haider's *A Firefly in the Dark* (Talking Cub).

This year, I had the privilege of visiting Kashmir twice - once on holiday with friends and the other with Bookaroo Festival of Children's Literature.

Which is why perhaps I felt more convinced about our book, *Mission Cycle* (Pratham Books) by Rohini Mohan and Jayesh Sivan. Talking of war, I also read the stellar *When Morning Comes* (Duckbill) by Ayushi Raina, *Red* (Tulika) by Sagar Kolwankar, and Khaled Hosseini and Dan William's stunning *Sea Prayer* (Bloomsbury).

#### Words and pictures

When Ankit Chadha left us too soon, I reread his book, *Amir Khurau: The Man in Riddles* (Penguin). When I was sent a *New Yorker* piece, I discovered *From the Mixed-Up Files of Mrs. Basil E Frankweiler* by EL Konigsburg.

I don't think I have highlighted as many phrases in a book as in *Hello, Universe* (Green Willow) by Erin Entrada Kelly.

The book series that made me the happiest was *Nevermoor* (Ha-

chette). Written by Jessica Townsend, the series is funny and wildly imaginative and fills a Potter-shaped hole for me.

I got a staggering pile of books from a friend and fell in love with Cori Doerrfeld's *The Rabbit Listened*, about loss and empathy; and *Town is by the Sea* by Joanne Schwartz and Sydney Smith.

I ended 2018 with two books: My first Liz Climo book, *Lobster is the Best Medicine*. And secondly, and *Strange Worlds! Strange Times! Amazing Sci-Fi Stories* (Talking Cub).

The latter is edited by Vinayak Varma and has some of the coolest names in sci-fi writing and it's for young adults! 2019 better live up to last year's reads.

*I do read books for adults, a lot of them, in case you were wondering. More recommendations on Instagram at bam\_books.*

is possible for change to occur." Shabana replies, "It is really an individual's choice. It is valid for some to think of art for art's sake and others to use art as a catalyst for change. I respect both viewpoints. But as the daughter of my parents Shaukat and Kaifi and raised in a commune till the age of nine, it was inevitable that I would choose the path I did.

There are many artistes who are deeply invested in the society around them and use their art to raise public consciousness. An artist's resource base must be life itself. It follows then that inevitably an artist will question why is there social injustice? Why equal opportunity is not available for all sections of society?"

Yet again, Kaifi's age was an age of Hindustani, when the common citizens mixed Hindi and Urdu freely. Today Urdu has been relegated to a far slimmer linguistic segment. The quality of the ghazal depends on a felicitous use of language, and its widespread appreciation depends on a knowledgeable audience.

Ameeta agrees, "People are not connected with Urdu like they used to be. It has been a big challenge with me even in Bazm, selecting ghazals."

And even as she mentions how singers explain the meaning of obscure words in their *shers* to enhance audience enjoyment, she underlines, "Poetry is not dependent on using big words."

And so, although the news may be filled with words that wreak havoc like missiles, let's lend an ear, for a change, to the language of the heart.

**(At Kamani auditorium, Mandi House, New Delhi, 6 p.m.)**

## SHORT TAKES

### Celebrating civilization

"Satyamev Jayate", an art exhibition in which the participating artists will celebrate the ethos of civilisation, will be held for three days at Artizen Art Gallery on Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg, beginning January 10.

According to Erum Khan, the curator, "Satyamev Jayate" is no ordinary phrase for India. "Originating from a mantra from our ancient and sacred Upanishads, it means truth alone prevails. It is the national motto of India inscribed on our national emblem, all our institutions and our currency."

As art is the mirror of the artist's soul, the artist who pours the honesty and virtue of one's character into one's art, is the one whose art shines through and prevails and is respected in

times to come. As India prepares to celebrate her Republic Day, the day will become our national motto."

Artists from across the country are showcasing their masterpieces in this exhibition in the form of paintings, sculpture and photography, and much more.

The participating artists include Razi Khan, Hari Singh, Laxman Kumar and Harjot Dhillon, Chinmay Sharma, Sargam Chopra, Razi Khan.

**Bazaar is back**  
The 33rd edition of Dastkari Haat Craft Bazaar that will see celebration of Indian art, crafts and textiles opened at Dilli Haat in Delhi on Tuesday.

The fortnight long cultural event's highlight is craft and skill exchange programme between Indian and Indonesian artists. More than 180 artisans and master craftsmen from all parts of the country are participating at the craft bazaar. The event will also see workshops being conducted and also showcase talent of Kabir

Mushtaq Ahmed, a flute maker from Varanasi, Moorala Marwada, a Sufi folk singer from the Janana village of the Kutch District, Gujarat who will sing poetry of Kabir

**SHOPPING**



#### SHOPPING

**Pashmina shawls**  
Varuna Anand of The Splender of Kashmir, showcasing her new heirloom collection 2019 titled, "Relive the Tradition". An exhibition-cum-sale, it features exclusive collection of luxurious Pashmina shawls along with other range of hand embroidered and hand woven shawls. The show is part of promoting the old age art of shawls.

**VENUE:** The Imperial Hotel, Janpath

**TIME:** 11 a.m. - 7 p.m.



#### EXHIBITION

**Art**  
Tomorrow is the last day to attend artist Vinita Karim's solo art show "Magical Musings". Her paintings on acrylic oil and gold leaf on canvas manifests her perception of nature in colourful modes. The abstract cityscapes reveals the beauty and grace, that invite the viewer to enter them and inhabit a world.

**VENUE:** Gallerie Ganesh, Greater Kailash-II

**TIME:** 11 a.m. - 7 p.m.



#### BEVERAGE

**Winter Special**  
This South African themed restaurant, Barcelos at DLF Saket mall serves Portuguese, African and Lebanese cuisine. Apart from its regular menu, Barcelos has now come up with the perfect cocktails and non-alcoholic beverages for this winter season, which will make you feel extra cosy and relaxed.

**VENUE:** Barcelos, DLF Place, Saket

**TIME:** 11 a.m. - 11 p.m.

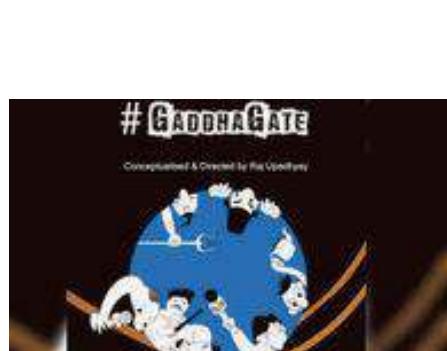


#### PERFORMANCE

**Comedy**  
Comic acts are growing quickly and picking up pace with a lot of variety and events. Canvas Club at Noida brings tonight, a hilarious Hinglish comedy show that will feature promising comedians Srijan Kaushik, Piyush Sharma and Amit Sharma. They will talk about Bollywood, politics and life in urban Indian society.

**VENUE:** Canvas Laugh Club, M-03, Sector- 18

**TIME:** 7:30 pm



#### THEATRE

**Gaddhagate**  
Thespian Society presents "Gaddhagate", a Hindi play conceptualised and directed by Raj Upadhyay. This humourous drama unfolds in society when a man falls into a gaddha. It also shows the bureaucracy, the politics, the red tape and how all this somehow creates the lack of social responsibility in the citizens.

**VENUE:** Vasuki Auditorium, Lok Kala Manch

**TIME:** 7 p.m.



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# The culinary and the literary

Chef Alfred Prasad weighs in on the role of books in the food industry, and more

MEGHNA MAJUMDAR

He was the youngest Indian chef ever to have earned his restaurant a Michelin star. Having spent years making his mark on Britain's culinary scene, Chef Alfred Prasad is back in India and busy with his restaurant Omya, in Delhi. We catch up with him, a few days ahead of his panel discussion at the upcoming *The Hindu Lit For Life* in Chennai.

#### Are there any books or publications in the food industry that you look to, for information and/or education?

- From my hotel school days, I have respected Harold McGee's book, *On Food and Cooking*. It has been a bible to me and I still gift that to young chefs or aspirants. The book helps you zone into understanding the science to cooking and ingredients, which is such a crucial dimension to cooking.

#### On a related note, how much credit would you give to books, as against practical experience, in the industry?

- I think good books will always inspire and that is hugely valuable more so as a young chef when the days are long and gruelling and there are more dark clouds than silver linings. Setting aside the take-home value from the book, the inspirations are important to feel re-energised and keep going. I think the same is true for more experienced chefs. Of course, chefs are craftsmen and the practice is what gets us nearer to perfection, adds to our experience and shapes our journey.

#### How ardent (or disinterested) a reader are you, and what genre of books do you enjoy? What book are you reading at the moment?

- I have always been strapped for time and it was easier to buy magazines that I love like *New Scientist* and *National Geographic* and shove them into my bag, so I could read en route to work or on a short break.

If I do pick up a book, it's more likely to be on science, philosophy or non-fiction. I enjoy reading Bill Bryson, as he brings a wonderful sense of humour to his narratives. A particular favourite is his book titled *A Short History of Nearly Everything*.

A recent book which changed my way of thinking as a chef was *Gastro-*



Fine art: (Clockwise from left) Lahori murgh tikka by Chef Alfred Prasad; his phool rezala and Omya chaat • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

physics by Professor Charles Spence. He talks about the new science of eating, which is fascinating. It was published a year or so ago and I have bought several copies and shared with chef friends and am currently re-reading it.

**Chef Anthony Bourdain could keep a reader hooked to his narratives. But most books by leading chefs are recipe-based, with their culinary philosophy woven in. So, is writing an art that comes naturally to the creative minds of chefs?**

Chef Bourdain was a wonderful storyteller, and was brave enough to talk about controversial topics in the restaurant/food business. He gave travel a lot of importance and his narrative draws on that extensive knowledge. His journey in that sense was

very unique, as most chefs are too strapped for time to travel.

If I read a chef's book and think I now know the person, I guess the book has worked. In whichever form of content structure, if the book connects with the reader, the job is done. Like with other writers, if the right publisher or editor works closely and collaboratively, I think the story would come out right.

**Can other art forms, such as music, add to the sensory experience of dining on good food? Is that something a chef has the scope to explore?**

I am a huge believer that a meal should be a complete multi-



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sensory experience. Since you have mentioned music, I read a very interesting piece in *Gastrophysics* about sonic seasoning, that will be big going forward. It also said: by boosting high frequency sounds, you could make food seem 15% crunchier and fresher than if you cut those sounds.

From the colours of the plate, the weight of the cutlery, to the layout of food on the plate and also several off-the-plate elements that add to the sensory experience, there is a lot of food for thought in this area.

# Yes to food, no to diets

Rujuta Diwekar talks us through why thinness is still big in a world that's becoming more homogeneous and less diverse



SUNALINI MATHEW

illnesses) that come with it. Food – like clothes, culture, and even the way we build our houses – seems to be converging, making the world 'flat'.

Diets are changing with rising incomes and urbanisation – people are consuming more animal-source foods, sugar, fats and oils, refined grains, and processed foods. According to the International Food Policy Research Institute, this 'nutrition transition' is causing increases in overweight and obesity and diet-related diseases such as diabetes and heart disease. Urban residents are making the nutrition transition fastest – but it is occurring in rural areas too.

#### It's not you, it's them

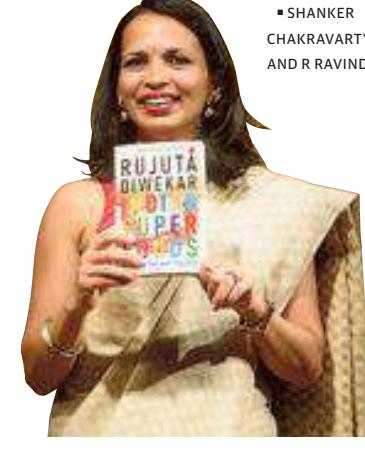
"Every diet comes like a cult," says Rujuta. "A diet that is only raw, or vegan will say it's going to help you solve diabetes and obesity; a diet that is only meat will also say the same."

It's not just about faddish, complicated-sounding ingredients that get you a hit on social media, it's also about a systemic and policy failure. "If you hop across the street, you'll get berries from Portugal, but you won't get fruit that's growing 50 kilometres away from you." There is still a lack of linkages from rural to urban markets. "It's also because we're part of a developing economy, where no one seems to be thinking about sustainable development. It's a much larger issue than height-weight ratios."

So if you're obese, rather than seeing yourself as someone with no discipline, take a moment to pause, remember what we ate and how we ate as children – at the dining table, with family, at a set time each day. It's a skill we learnt in childhood, and when we decide to go back to it, we know exactly what to do, says Rujuta.

The Hindu *Lit For Life* will be held from January 12 to 14 in Chennai. The fest is working towards a zero waste festival in association with Chennai Kalai Theru Vizha.

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• SHANKER CHAKRAVARTY AND R RAVINDRA

# Giving coffee and cake a break

An off-beat café moves into South Delhi and Gurugram, attempting to mainstream healthy food

SUNALINI MATHEW

I am back at Greenr, in a couple of weeks, which says a lot, considering I eat meat at two meals a day. Placed in the heart of the Basant Lok market, which is getting a makeover, the "California plant-based kitchen", will soon draw crowds from the under-renovation PVR Cinema, the just-started Cult.Fit, and from people who hop off the Magenta Line. It's just the right place to meet friends or even go solo (free wifi) – it gives you a break from the cookie-cutter coffee places that serve insipid cappuccinos and bread-eay (talk about a gluten OD) snacks.

Greenr, with a ground and mezzanine that makes the space double height at its core, used to be in Shapoor Jat, but has moved to Vasant Vihar about a month ago, and also has a new location



Fresh take: (Clockwise from left) Raw peanut butter and banana cashew triangle; a plate with Havana green banana, sweet potatoes, sweet potato falafel, and beetroot mixed salad; a view of the Vasant Vihar branch • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

In 32<sup>nd</sup> Milestone in Gurugram, opened a few months ago. It's one of those places you're tempted to call pretentious, because 80% of the menu is vegan (the rest vegetarian) and also because of items

like the ragi nacho plate and the turmeric ginger latte (espresso, plant milk, ginger, coconut butter, turmeric). For the health-food person, it's where manna falls.

The latte is like drinking in a sip

of Kerala's hills and backwaters in a cup (only plant milk). The ragi nachos are crunchy, even if they get soggy in a little while, because they're made fresh, sans the preservatives of packaged foods. Just because there's 'health' in the tangle doesn't mean it's boiled, boring food. Quite the contrary.

For starters, it's nice to sit in a space that's 'adult' (prices are too, at about ₹ 800-1,000 for two). You'll finally get to try something new (blue cheese buckwheat gnocchi or Austin smoked jackfruit). The bonus is that you're surrounded by the lovely Nimai jewellery.

**Clean living**  
In fact, if you're trying to start the year on a 'clean living' note, this is the place to go. Yes, they have kombucha, for the gut; (veg) protein that comes in combos, because it's tough to get quality protein from a single vegetarian food. So the Shroom Balls, for instance, has mushroom, spinach, olives, brown rice. Foods that contain possible allergens (gluten, dairy, nuts, raw) are identified in a key.

The menu is 99% (yes, they're very specific) free of refined sugar, artificial flavours and colours, and preservatives. There's no honey, because vegan, remember. Everything's made fresh, including the almond, coconut, and peanut

butter, as well as the vegan cheese (okay so there's nothing like the real thing, but it's still worth a try).

There's a separate food and beverage menu and the Hibiscus Rosemary soda is a nice hit if you've walked in from a warm afternoon of shopping. People

come in just for the Mocha Mucho smoothie (almond milk, dark bitter-sweet valrhona chocolate, vanilla, dates, cold brew coffee, peanut butter). The smoothie bowls are great for a 4 pm snack if you plan to go light on dinner.

There's something for everyone, which means if you're al-

ready introduced to health food, you could try the Raw Peanut Butter and Banana Cashew Triangle, while someone who's just at the café to pander to your vegan (or gluten-free) ways, may like either the Cake, Cream & Crumble or the Chocolate Ganache & Wildberry desserts (can be shared with the gluten-averse). If you're really into it, then try Hail Kale (coconut milk, kale, banana, spinach, ashwagandha, mint, jaggery, pumpkin seeds). I didn't.

There's a winter menu too, but it's difficult to have a super-educated conversation with the waiters, so it's a bit of an adventure in every sort of way. If you look at just the tabs of the menu, there are starters and salads, burgers and rolls, pizzas and pastas, so no one feels intimidated. And for the follower of slow living, there are the Earth Bowls, meals in themselves.

If you're a beginner at this, a good place to start is to take a friend or two along, and order the Community Platter and do a Healthy Soda. I promise, you'll come back for more. And then possibly head out to Perch, around the corner for a glass of wine, after you've paid the bill that appears in *Where There is Light*, a book on yoga by Sri Sri Paramahansa Yogananda. Well okay, so maybe it is a wee bit pretentious.

