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20th January (SUNDAY)
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 Batch 1 : 21st January 2019
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 Morning : 7 am to 9:30 am
 Afternoon : 2 pm to 4:30 pm
 Evening : 5 pm to 7:30 pm

WEEKEND
 Batch 1 : 19th January 2019
 Batch 2 : 23rd February 2019
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 Sunday : 9 am to 8 pm

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NEARBY



AQI slips to 'severe' level,
no respite till Jan. 21

NEW DELHI
 The air quality in the Capital slipped to the 'severe' level again on Thursday with an average AQI score of 440, based on 34 monitoring stations of the Central Pollution Control Board. The last time the city's AQI was in the 'severe' category was on January 13.

DEHLI METRO ▶ PAGE 1

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

Dera chief, 3 others get life term for killing scribe

Court also imposes a fine of ₹50,000

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT PANCHKULI

The special Central Bureau of Investigation court here on Thursday sentenced the Sarsa-based Dera Sacha Sauda chief Ram Rahim Singh and three others to life imprisonment for the murder of journalist Ramchander Chhatrapati.

The court also imposed a fine of ₹50,000 on each of them.



Judge Jagdeep Singh, who pronounced the sentence, had last week convicted all the four accused, Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh, Nirmal Singh, Kuldeep Singh and Krishan Lal.

All the accused appeared through video-conferencing when the quantum of sentence was pronounced.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 10

Court sets deadline for Lokpal panel

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday gave the Lokpal search committee time till February-end to short-list a panel of names for chairperson and members of the Lokpal to be placed before the high-power selection committee led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

It posted the PIL petition for hearing on March 7.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 10

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Soaring costs

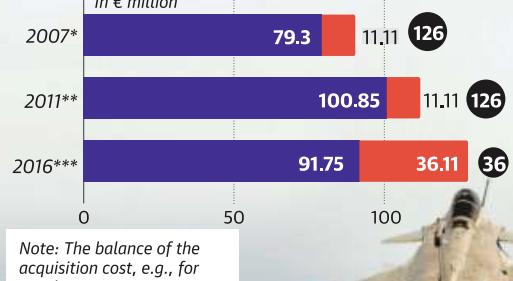
The design and development cost shot up from €11.1 million per aircraft in the original Dassault bid in 2007 to €36.11 million when the deal for 36 flyaway Rafale aircraft was struck in 2016. The effect of this was the increase in the overall price of the Rafale jet from €90.41 million in 2007 to €127.86 million in the 2016 deal (an increase of 41.4%).

and operational capabilities of the defence equipment." The restriction clearly does not apply to the disclosure of pricing details. In fact, a scan of news media coverage reveals that there has been selective background briefing by military and civilian defence officials on technical and other supposedly sensi-

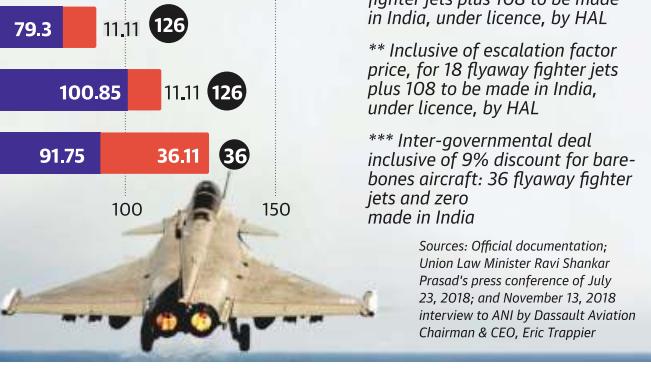
tive details of the deal and that these briefings have helped answer some, but not all the critical questions being asked about the Rafale deal, chiefly on the pricing of these medium multi-role combat aircraft (MMRCA).

This article, based on information exclusively availa-

PRICE PER FLYAWAY AIRCRAFT (BARE-BONES) ● TOTAL NUMBER OF AIRCRAFT



Note: The balance of the acquisition cost, e.g., for simulators, spares, training infrastructure, weapons, etc., is similar right through



government for the 36 Rafales it was buying from France through an Inter-Governmental Agreement brought this per-aircraft price down to €91.75 million.

But that is not even half the story. Dassault claimed a €1.4 billion cost for the 'design and development' of 13 India Specific Enhancements, that is, additional capabilities in the form of hardware as well as software that had been specified by the Indian Air Force all along, and this cost was negotiated down to €1.3 billion. What it meant was that the design and development cost, now distributed over 36 Rafale fighter jets, shot up from €11.1 million per aircraft in 2007 to €36.11 million when the deal was struck in 2016.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 11

ble to *The Hindu*, focusses on the interesting question of *how and why* the price per Rafale fighter jet of the F3-R standard, with practically the same configuration and capabilities, changed substantially over three points, in 2007, 2011, and 2016.

In 2007, five years before

M/s Dassault Aviation was declared the L1 vendor, that is, the Lowest Bidder and the presumptive winner of the tender floated by the United Progressive Alliance government for the supply of 126 Rafales (18 flyaway plus 108 to be manufactured, under licence, in India by Hindus-

tan Aeronautics Limited), the price quoted by the vendor for one flyaway bare-bones aircraft was €79.3 million. By 2011, the escalation cost factor had taken this per-aircraft price up to €100.85 million. In 2016, the 9% discount on the 2011 price obtained by the NDA

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 11

Navy robot locates body in Meghalaya mine

Extrication attempts with device fail

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT GUWAHATI

The Navy's underwater remotely operated vehicle on Wednesday captured the image of a human body in a rat-hole mine in Meghalaya, where 15 miners have been trapped since December 13. But attempts to extricate it with the underwater device failed after it was pulled up towards the mouth of the mine, officials said.

The bloated body was de-

tailed 210 ft inside the rat-hole mine. The rat-hole, a near-horizontal tunnel, branches out from the vertical shaft at a depth of 160 ft. "Divers are not able to go down due to the conditions. So they have employed an ROV," Navy spokesperson Capt. D.K. Sharma said.

Officials said the search at the Ksan mine, where 10 Na-

vy divers are at work for

more than three weeks, has

been a trial and error effort.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 10

SC lifts curbs on Mumbai dance bars

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday quashed several "unreasonable" restrictions that have led to the virtual shutdown of dance bars in the Maximum City since 2005. It criticised the Maharashtra government for being "more influenced by moralistic overtones."

The judgment came on a petition filed by women working in the State's bars.

BATTLE WITH GOVT. ▶ PAGE 7

Asthana, three others moved out of CBI

Meeting on Jan. 24 to choose Director

MAHESH LANGA AHMEDABAD

In a move before the appointment of the new CBI Director, the Modi administration on Thursday shunted out four top officials, including the controversial Special Director Rakesh Asthana, from the country's premier investigating agency with immediate effect.



The Centre has called a meeting of the high-power selection committee for January 24 to select a new Director. The others removed are A.K. Sharma, M.K. Sinha and Jayant Naiknavare. Department of Personnel and Training sources told *The Hindu* that except Mr. Naiknavare, all three will be accommodated at the Centre.

ASTHANA MAY HEAD AVIATION SECURITY BUREAU ▶ PAGE 10

First off the block



Youth trying to tame a bull at the Alanganallur jallikattu, which is held as part of the Pongal festival, in Madurai district of Tamil Nadu on Thursday. A man in the spectators' gallery died of heart attack and 40 tamers were injured. ■ MOORTHY (REPORT ON PAGE 7)

Loot on Duronto Express

STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI

Passengers of two second-tier AC coaches of the Jammu-Delhi Duronto Express were looted at knifepoint by a group of men near Badli in Delhi early on Thursday.

DCP (Railways) D.K. Gupta said around 4.40 a.m., three-four young men entered coach B3 and B4 of the Duronto Express (train number 12266) and robbed the passengers of cash, gold chains, mobile phones and other valuables.

DETAILS ON ▶ DELHI METRO PAGE 1

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Gulshan Mahal, the elegant 19th-century bungalow in South Mumbai, was once known for qawwalis and cultural gatherings. Now it is all set to return in a new avatar – as the home of the National Museum of Indian Cinema (NMIC). The refurbished building of five floors and two mezzanine floors, will be opened by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on January 19. An evocative property, the Peddar Road structure has been refurbished by the

NBBC (India) Ltd at a cost of ₹40.61 crore.

Built in mid-1800s Originally known as Gulshan Abad (garden of prosperity), it was built in the mid-1800s. It was owned by Peerbhoy Khakaldina, a Gujarati businessman from the Khoja Muslim community. The house, where he lived with his wife and son, was in a five-acre property between Peddar Road and Warden Road, overlooking the sea. Over the years, Gulshan Mahal has been put to different uses. It has served

NBBC (India) Ltd at a cost of ₹40.61 crore. The building will host several exhibitions. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

India and the Films Division, and been used for film shoots like *Munnabhai MBBS*. Modernised with the idea of turning the complex into a 'film hub', the NMIC now has been well equipped with state-of-the-art facilities, including expansive auditoriums and a multi-purpose hall that could be used as a movie preview theatre or a seminar hall. In carrying out the project, NBC had to work in a congested area with barely any working space. Another major constraint

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Odisha extends free health services to all medical colleges

Cashless care under Biju Swasthya Kalyan Yojana for all patients from February 1

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT BHUBANESWAR

Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik on Thursday announced extension of free health services under Biju Swasthya Kalyan Yojana to all government medical college and hospitals from February 1.

All patients, irrespective of APL or BPL category, will be able to avail of this facility. Besides, all patients will be provided blood bank facility free of cost. Earlier, the free treatment facility for all were available at sub-centres in villages and district headquarters hospitals.

The BSKY was launched



Focus on health: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik made the announcement on Thursday. ■ FILE PHOTO

on August 15 last year. It has received overwhelming response with over 2.25 crore instances of free healthcare service being availed by

the people of the State, according to an official release.

This cashless care is being provided to all persons

without any requirement of income, residence or any other document. The free services will cover all procedures available in all government health institutes such as in-patient beds, surgeries, Operation Theatre and ICU facilities.

₹100 crore for scheme
The State government has made an additional provision of over ₹100 crore from its budget for this purpose.

In empanelled private hospitals, over 70 lakh families will continue to avail of cashless care up to ₹5 lakh per annum per family, and ₹7 lakh for women members, the government said.

Mizoram bans import of pigs to prevent swine disease

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA AIZAWAL

The Mizoram government has banned import of pigs and piglets to prevent outbreak of a disease that has cost the lives of thousands of swines in the State.

The State government has instructed deputy commissioners of all eight districts to issue prohibitory orders banning the import of pigs and piglets from other countries, Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Minister K. Beichhua said on Thursday.

The porcine reproductive and respiratory syndrome (PRRS) has cost the lives of over 10,000 swines in Mizoram since 2013 and it is believed that it happened due to import of pigs from Myanmar where the disease was known to be prevalent, officials said. Mr. Beichhua said the ban of import of pigs from other countries was the only way to prevent outbreak of the PRRS in the State.

The symptoms of PRRS include reproductive failure, pneumonia and increased susceptibility to secondary bacterial infection, the sources said.

Air quality situation in Kolkata

Non-complying days during the year	Days (months) when pollutant concentration remained above the national daily standard		
	PM10 (100 µg/m³)	PM2.5 (60 µg/m³)	NO _x (80 µg/m³)
2016	164 (5.5 months)	149	0
2017	166 (5.5 months)	157	0
2018	176 (5.5 months)	163	0

Non-compliance during the year	Pollutant concentration remained above the national yearly standard		
	PM60 (100 µg/m³)	PM2.5 (40 µg/m³)	NO _x (40 µg/m³)
2016	123.8	70.5	43.3
2017	123.8	71.0	38.4
2018	123.8	72.8	38.6

Kolkata has to comply with both daily and yearly standards

SOURCE: WEST BENGAL ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT

West Bengal Environment Minister Suvenu Adhikari, along with senior officials of WBPCB, on Wednesday held a meeting with representatives of real estate firms, different municipalities and public sector undertakings involved in mega construction projects.

Closure warning
Mr. Adhikari said that the pollution control board is equipped with enough laws to issue a closure notice to construction sites which are not adhering to the norms.

Nandu Belani, president of Bengal chapter of Confed-

eration of Real Estate Developers' Associations of India, who was present at the meeting, assured the Minister that all members will comply with the pollution norms.

The Minister highlighted two circulars issued recently – one by the Kolkata police which bans burning of solid waste and another by the State Transport Department prohibiting the entry of commercial vehicles which are more than 15 years old in the city. He also announced commissioning of 10 vehicles for watering of roads by the State's Environment Department.

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Chatralayams for education

With their focus primarily on empowering rural India through education and community development, AIM for Seva has been reaching out to communities in 16 states, through 129 projects for the past 20 years.

With 97 'Chatralayams' or free student hostels, 4 schools and a college, they are tackling the challenges of accessibility in the hostels, such as



bility and student drop-outs. Underprivileged students stay at these hostels and attend schools nearby. From their stay, food, extra-curricular activities like yoga, sports, etc., to the tuition fee at these private or public schools is entirely sponsored by AIM for Seva.

They go a step forward and guide the students to pursue a higher education and also get employed. With most students being 1st generation learners, the stories of transformation are heart-warming.

A farm labourer's son

putting together solar panels to being engaged in kitchen gardening and more.

"The sky is the limit when it comes to Seva. In the near future, we are looking to increase our Chatralayam footprint to 120 from the current 97. We would like to set up

more Chatralayams across rural India, and enable children to have uninterrupted access to education.

The focus is to strengthen our hostel network with schools," says Mrs. Sheela Balaji, Chairperson & Managing Trustee, AIM for Seva.

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Odia films on politicians to hit screens ahead of polls

Nimki and Biju Babu in the pipeline

PRAFULLA DAS BHUBANESWAR

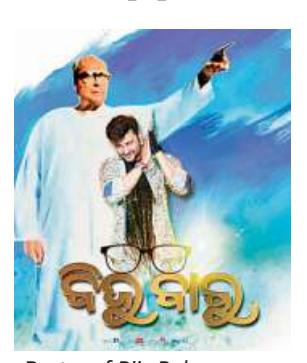
Odisha does not seem to be lagging behind the rest of the country when it comes to matching the prevailing trend of films on politicians ahead of the forthcoming general election.

When movies such as *The Accidental Prime Minister*, *NTR Kathanayakudu*, *Thackeray* and *PM Narendra Modi* are hitting headlines across the nation, two Odia feature films - *Nimki* and *Biju Babu* - are in the pipeline for release in Odisha where Assembly and Lok Sabha polls are scheduled to be held simultaneously.

The upcoming films are not exactly biopics on Chief Minister and BJD president Naveen Patnaik and his late father Biju Patnaik. The posters of the two films, however, are prominently featuring the photographs of the two leaders.

While *Nimki*, with the tag line *Nimpur Ru Naveen Niwas* (From Nimpur to Naveen Niwas), will be released in the State on January 23, *Biju Babu* is likely to hit screens in April first week.

Nimki is a story of a village girl, Nimki, who is inspired by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik and overcomes all hurdles to travel from her village Nimpur to reach Naveen Niwas, the residence of Mr. Patnaik in Bhubaneswar, to solve the problems being faced by her village. Biju Patnaik had built Naveen Niwas



Poster of *Biju Babu*.

PHOTO COURTESY: TWITTER

and named it after his younger son.

The BJD connect

Coincidentally, the lead role of *Nimki* has been played by Barsha Priyadarshini, one of the leading actresses of Odisha, and the lead role in *Biju Babu* is being played by her husband Anubhab Mohanty - popular Odia actor and sitting Rajya Sabha Member of the BJD.

Biju Babu will highlight some important aspects of the life of Biju Patnaik, former Odisha Chief Minister after whom the BJD has been named. The poster of *Biju Babu*, which is being produced by well-known film producer Nila Madhab Pandda and others, was released outside Anand Bhawan, Biju Patnaik's ancestral house in Cuttack on Tuesday.

According to political analysts, both the films may encourage young BJD workers and supporters and help the party draw political mileage in the run-up to the polls.

IN BRIEF



'Govt. may announce sops for farmers in Budget'

NEW DELHI
The Central government may announce a package for farmers in the Union Budget, according to Agriculture Minister Radha Mohan Singh. "Wait for the Budget, we will certainly make some new announcements for farmers, we have done so every year," he said on Thursday on the sidelines of an event.

ISRO to launch a satellite for Home Ministry

NEW DELHI
The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) will launch a satellite exclusively for the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), a Ministry statement said. Home Minister Rajnath Singh approved the report of a task force created by the MHA to identify areas for use of space technology in improving border management.

EC orders probe into fake news on poll schedule

NEW DELHI
The Election Commission on Thursday directed the Delhi Chief Electoral Officer to ask the State police to take legal action against those involved in circulating "fake news" about the Lok Sabha poll schedule on social media.

Mentally ill man kills two in Odisha

BHUBANESWAR
Two persons were killed and six injured when a mentally ill man went on the rampage at Odagaon in Odisha's Nayagarh district on Thursday. Nirjan Mallick, 42, fatally attacked a security guard of the Odagaon Market Committee with a rod. He then attacked an elderly woman with a stick, killing her.

Police remove woman's body from pyre for probe

MUZAFFARNAGAR
Police pulled out the body of a 50-year-old woman from the funeral pyre at Godhra in the district on Wednesday and booked her husband and four others, suspecting foul play behind her death. The woman's brother lodged a complaint, alleging that her in-laws had killed her and were secretly trying to cremate the body to destroy evidence, police said. PTI

No bar on dance
A chronology of the case

Aug. 2005: The Maharashtra government bans all dance bars in the State
Nov. 2005: Indian Hotel and Restaurant Association (AHAR) moves the Bombay High Court
April 2006: Bombay High Court quashes the ban
July 2013: Supreme Court upholds the order of the Bombay HC



April 2014:
The Dance Bar Regulation Bill passed by Maharashtra Assembly unanimously
Sept. 2014:
Contempt plea filed in SC against the Bill by AHAR

April 2016: The Maharashtra Prohibition of Obscene Dance in Hotels, Restaurant and Bar Rooms and Protection of Dignity of Women Rules, 2016 brought in
Sept. 2016: Supreme Court permits three dance bars to operate with CCTV surveillance

Jan. 2019: SC allows re-opening of dance bars

SC records how the bar girls took on the Maharashtra govt.

They exposed in court the State's 'patriarchal notion of morality'

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL

NEW DELHI

The 100-page judgment of the Supreme Court delivered on Thursday records for posterity how the Bharatiya Bar Girls Union of women working as dancers, singers or waitresses in bars, restaurants and beer halls challenged the might of the Maharashtra government.

The women ridiculed the State's "patriarchal notion of morality" to bring a draconian law in 2016 which stripped them of their livelihood and dignity.

The union's challenge led the Bench of Justices A.K. Sikri and Ashok Bhushan to conclude that the State had no right to thrust its notion of morality on society.

For one, the State had claimed that bar girls were usually minors or victims of trafficking or prostitution



Fighting back: A 2016 law stripped the dancers of their livelihood and dignity. ■ AFP

and other forms of flesh trade. But the Bar Girls Union, represented by advocate Nikhil Nayyar, challenged the Maharashtra government to produce proof in the Supreme Court to back its claim.

On the other hand, the bar girls' union produced research material on record to show that reality was "diago-

nally opposite" to what the State claimed.

Newer opportunities'
"The bar girls have voluntarily embraced dance bars to live with dignity and earn their livelihood... it (dance performances) opened newer opportunities and the option to leave exploitative sex work..." the judgment said, citing their argument.

The union argued that bar dance was a "non-obscene performance" as held by several High Courts. It said the Maharashtra government wanted to "perpetuate a myth that dance bars pose any danger to law and order or cause disturbance to peace and tranquillity."

The union pointed out that dance bars remained closed across the State since 2005. Then where did the government get reliable data about immoral activities in them.

Mr. Yadav, the then Chief Minister, held the additional

ED begins money laundering probe in U.P. illegal mining case

Action comes in the wake of FIR recently lodged by CBI

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate has registered a money laundering case in connection with the alleged illegal mining of minor minerals in Uttar Pradesh's Hamirpur district between 2012 and 2016.

The action has been initiated on the basis of an FIR recently lodged by the Central Bureau of Investigation on the direction of the Allahabad High Court.

"The case has been registered under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act to probe the money trail involved in the alleged commission of offence," said an ED official.

The CBI had earlier said that the role of mining Ministers in Uttar Pradesh between 2012 and 2016, who include Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav, would also be probed. However, their names had not been mentioned in the FIR.

Mr. Yadav, the then Chief Minister, held the additional



Akhilesh Yadav

named 2008 batch IAS official and then Hamirpur District Magistrate B. Chandrakanta; Samajwadi Party's Member of Legislative Council Ramesh Kumar Mishra; Sanjay Dixit, who had fought election in 2017 on the Bahujan Samaj Party ticket; and eight others.

'Obstructed period'

It has been alleged that the public servants allowed illegal mining of minor minerals between 2012 and 2016 by fraudulently granting fresh or renewed leases.

They also allegedly permitted mining by the existing lease-holders during the "obstructed period" when the National Green Tribunal had barred the activity. The leases were also issued in violation of a May 2012 order of the State government for e-tendering.

Some accused persons also stole minor minerals, and extorted money from lease holders and drivers of the vehicles transporting minor minerals.

AAI to study early arrivals at three busy airports

Bunching of flights causing delays

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

■

The Airports Authority of India (AAI) will conduct an year-long study to examine early arrivals at the Delhi, Mumbai and Bengaluru airports – among the busiest in the country – in order to devise ways to improve operational efficiencies.

Block-timing refers to the span of time between switching on the aircraft's engines before take-off and switching them off after landing. Officials are of the opinion that if airlines are able to inculcate discipline or self-regulate, there may be no need for penalties.

A study conducted by the AAI between September and November 2018 showed that 20.6% of aircraft arriving at Delhi, Mumbai and Bengaluru from 80 other airports were landing earlier than their scheduled time.

Streaming services sign code

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Preempting any government move to impose censorship, eight video streaming services – Hotstar, Voot, Zee5, Arre, SonyLIV, ALT Balaji, Netflix and Eros Now – have signed an 8-page self-regulatory code that establishes guiding principles for these platforms.

It broadly prohibits content that deliberately and maliciously disrespects the national emblem or national flag; any visuals or storyline that promote child pornography; any content that "maliciously" intends to outrage religious sentiments; content that "deliberately and maliciously" promotes or encourages terrorism; and lastly, content banned for exhibition or distribution by law or a court.

State can prohibit obscene dances'

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday said there was nothing amiss with the definition of 'obscene dance' under the Maharashtra Prohibition of Obscene Dance in Hotels, Restaurant and Bar Rooms and Protection of Dignity of Women (Working therein) Act, 2016.

It said there was nothing vague in finding dance obscene if it "arouses the prurient interest of the audience."

A Bench led by Justice A.K. Sikri was ruling on a petition filed under the banner

of the Bharatiya Bargirls Union, and a separate plea by the Indian Hotel and Restaurant Association.

The court concluded the definition of 'obscene' in the State law was strikingly similar to the one given to obscene books, acts and songs under Sections 292 and 294 of the Indian Penal Code.

It cannot be denied that dance performances, in dignified forms, are socially acceptable and nobody takes exceptions to the same. On the other hand, obscenity is treated as immoral. Therefore, obscene dance performance may not be accepta-

ble and the State can pass a law prohibiting obscene dances," the court observed.

The Bench did away with other conditions like the installation of CCTV cameras in the dance area as a violation of privacy.

It set aside the condition that only persons of good character would be allowed to run dance bars, saying the term 'good character' is too vague.

It also disagreed with the segregation of patrons who drink, from those who want to watch the dance performances in the bars.

NCP sees nexus

STAFF REPORTER

MUMBAI

The NCP on Thursday alleged a nexus between the State government and the dance bar owners' association to ensure that the ban was lifted by presenting a "weak defence" in the Supreme Court.

"Two years ago, there was a secret meeting with the dance bar owners' association at the Chief Minister's residence, which was facilitated by BJP leaders Ashish Shelar and Shaina NC. Huge amount of money was exchanged," NCP chief spokesperson Nawab Malik said.

"The exercise will help us to collect data, which will be used to optimise block-tim-

Twenty-nine people injured during 'jallikattu' in Tamil Nadu

A total of 748 tamers were registered at Madurai event

STAFF REPORTER

MADRASI

A total of 29 people sustained minor injuries at the 'jallikattu' (bull-taming) event held in Alanganallur in Tamil Nadu's Madurai district on Thursday.

The event, which was largely incident-free, however, saw the death of one spectator who suffered a cardiac arrest, officials said.

According to sources, Sadayandi, 45, from Alanganallur, who was watching the sport from the audience gallery complained of dizziness and was immediately taken to the local Urban Primary Health Centre. The patient was then referred to the Government Rajaji Hospital (GRH) where he was declared 'brought dead'. Sadayandi is survived by his wife and three children.

District Collector S. Natarajan, who addressed the media after the start of jallikattu, said only six tamers were referred to the GRH. Many others sustained only minor injuries.

He said, "A total of 748 tamers were registered and 697 took part. A total of 1,400 bulls were registered but only 729 were able to enter the arena. It is a matter of pride to announce that there were only minor injuries."

The players who entered in batches of 100 competed in eight rounds



'Jallikattu' in progress in Tiruchi district.

■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

with finalists (those who tamed more than three bulls) entering the last round. Revenue Minister R. B. Udayakumar, Health Minister C. Vijaya Bhaskar and several other local MLAs took part in the event. K. Ranjith Kumar from Alanganallur was ad-

judged the best tamer and a 'Chelli Amman temple bull' from Parambutti was chosen as the best bull.

Both will receive cars from Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami and Deputy CM O. Panneerselvam before the end of the week.

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA, "e"- PROCUREMENT NOTICE

WORKS DEPARTMENT

E-mail : ceroads.bbsr@gmail.com

1135-B: Bid Identification No. CE-DPI & R-70 / 2018-19

1. The Chief Engineer (DPI & Roads), Odisha on behalf of Governor of Odisha invites percentage rate bids in double cover system in ONLINE MODE from eligible contractors for Road / Bridge works as mentioned below:
2. Nature of work : Road / Bridge works
3. No. of work : 11 Nos.
4. Tender Paper Cost : Rs.10,000.00
5. Class of Contractor : 'A' Class / Special Class / Super Class as noted against each work
6. Available of bid document : From 10.00 A.M. of 18.01.2019 to 5.00 P.M of 04.02.2019 in the website.
7. Date of opening of Bid : Dt.05.02.2019 at 11.30 AM
8. The Bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only. Further details can be seen from the website : <https://tenderodisha.gov.in> . Any addendum / corrigendum / cancellation of tender can also be seen in the said website.

Chief Engineer (DPI & Roads), Odisha.

OFFICE OF THE ENGINEER-IN-CHIEF (CIVIL), ODISHA, BHUBANESWAR

34117/11/0182/1819

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA, DEPARTMENT OF SPACE

SATISH DHAWAN SPACE CENTRE SHAR, CONSTRUCTION & MAINTENANCE GROUP

SRIRAKOTA-524124.

Corrigendum-I to E-TENDER BRIEF NOTICE D: 16/01/2019

1. On behalf of the President of India, online e-tenders are invited for the following work on EPC (Design & Build mode) for the work of "Construction of Launch view Gallery at proposed Visitor's Complex, SDSC SHAR (Design and build of RCC Precast Structure including foundation)" vide NIT No:CMG/C/O 1887045 dt:07/01/2019.

Sl. No.	Description	Read for	Read As
1	Estimated Cost put to tender	₹29.66 Crores	₹14.66 Crores
2	Period of Completion	05 Months	02 Months
3	Period during which the tender documents can be requested	From:11/01/2019,10:00 Hrs To : 21/01/2019,14:00 Hrs	From:11/01/2019,10:00 Hrs To : 24/01/2019,14:00 Hrs
4	Last date and time for uploading of tenders	24/01/2019,14:30 Hrs	28/01/2019,10:00 Hrs
5	Date and time of opening of tenders.	24/01/2019,15:00 Hrs	28/01/2019,10:30 Hrs

2. Interested tenderers may please refer Detailed Notice Inviting Tender (NIT) from website www.isro.gov.in / www.tenderwizard.com/ISRO. For further details and purchase of tender documents visit www.tenderwizard.com/ISRO.



Collegium controversy

An unusual change of decision brings the judicial appointments system under scrutiny

The controversial collegium system of judicial appointments is under public scrutiny once again. This time, the potential for embarrassment to the superior judiciary is much higher. Former Chief Justices of India, a sitting Supreme Court judge, and the Bar Council of India have taken exception to the collegium's unusual action of revisiting decisions made at an earlier meeting, and recommending the elevation to the apex court of Justice Dinesh Maheshwari and Justice Sanjiv Khanna, instead of two judges whose names had been considered earlier. The allegation is not merely one concerning the seniority or the lack of it of the two appointees; rather, it is the much graver charge of arbitrarily revoking a decision made on December 12 last year. The official reasons are in the public domain in the form of a resolution on January 10. It claims that even though some decisions were made on December 12, "the required consultations could not be undertaken and completed" in view of the winter vacation. When the collegium met again on January 5/6, its composition had changed following the retirement of Justice Madan B. Lokur. It was then decided that it would be "appropriate" to have a fresh look at the matter, as well as the "additional material". The only rationale for the names of Rajasthan High Court Chief Justice Pradeep Nandrajog and Delhi High Court Chief Justice Rajendra Menon being left out is the claim that new material had surfaced. However, it is not clear what the material is and how it affected their suitability.

Former Chief Justice of India R.M. Lodha is right in underscoring the institutional nature of decisions by the collegium. Can the retirement of one judge be a ground to withdraw a considered decision, even if some consultations were incomplete? There is little surprise in the disquiet in legal circles. Another curious element in the latest appointments is that Justice Maheshwari, who had been superseded as recently as last November, when a judge junior to him was appointed a Supreme Court judge, has been found to be "more suitable and deserving in all respects" than any of the other chief justices and judges. There is no objection to the elevation of Justice Khanna except his relative lack of seniority. There is little substance in this criticism, as it is now widely accepted that seniority cannot be the sole criterion for elevation to the Supreme Court. However, the fact that there are three other judges senior to him in the Delhi High Court itself – two of them serving elsewhere as chief justices – is bound to cause some misgivings. The credibility of the collegium system has once again been called into question. The recent practice of making public all resolutions of the collegium has brought in some transparency. Yet, the impression that it works in mysterious ways refuses to go away. This controversy ill-serves the judiciary as an institution.

Learning little

The reading and arithmetic abilities in rural schools are shockingly dismal

The latest assessment of how children are faring in schools in rural areas indicates there has been no dramatic improvement in learning outcomes. The picture that emerges from the Annual Status of Education Report, Rural (2018) is one of a moribund system of early schooling in many States, with no remarkable progress from the base year of 2008. Except for a small section at the top of the class, the majority of students have obviously been let down. The survey for 2018 had a reach of 5.4 lakh students in 596 rural districts. It should put administrators on alert that while 53.1% of students in Class 5 in rural government schools could in 2008 read a text meant for Class 2, the corresponding figure for 2018 stood at 44.2%; for comparison, private schools scored 67.9% and 65.1% for the same test in those years. Arithmetic ability showed a similar trend of under-performance, although there has been a slight uptick since 2016: an improvement of about 1.5 percentage points in government schools and 1.8 percentage points in private institutions, among Class 5 students. Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Kerala and Haryana did better on the arithmetic question with over 50% students clearing it, compared to Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and even Karnataka, which scored below 20%. A significant percentage of students were not even able to recognise letters appropriate for their class, highlighting a severe barrier to learning.

Now that the ASER measure is available for 10 years, the Centre should institute a review mechanism involving all States for both government and private institutions, covering elementary education and middle school. A public consultation on activity-based learning outcomes, deficits in early childhood education, and innovations in better performing States can help. At present, children start learning in a variety of environments: from poorly equipped anganwadi centres to private nurseries. The enactment of the Right to Education Act was followed by a welcome rise in enrolment, which now touches 96% as per ASER data. Empowering as it is, the law needs a supportive framework to cater to learners from different backgrounds who often cannot rely on parental support or coaching. There is concern that curricular expectations on literacy and numeracy have become too ambitious, requiring reform. It is worth looking at innovation in schools and incentivising good outcomes; one study in Andhra Pradesh indicated that bonus pay offered to teachers led to better student scores in an independently administered test in mathematics and language. The solutions may lie in multiple approaches. What is beyond doubt is that governments are not doing their duty by India's children.

The seats around the Afghan round table

India must shed its diplomatic diffidence as a stakeholder, even with the Taliban's presence



RAKESH SOOD

One year ago, on New Year's Day, the Indian establishment welcomed U.S. President Donald Trump's tweet: "The United States has foolishly given Pakistan more than \$3 billion dollar in aid over the last 15 years, and they have given us nothing but lies & deceit, thinking of our leaders as fools. They give safe haven to terrorists we hunt in Afghanistan, with little help. No more!"

This year, in a Cabinet meeting on January 3, he rambled, "I get along very well with India and Prime Minister Modi. But he is constantly telling me he built a library in Afghanistan. Okay, a library... That's like, you know what that is? That's like five hours of what we spend [in Afghanistan]. And he tells it and he is very smart. And we are supposed to say, oh, thank you for the library." This left those in the Indian establishment miffed and scratching their heads, only to conclude that Mr. Trump possibly mistook the Parliament building in Kabul built by India at a cost of \$90 million for a library.

Mr. Trump is frustrated with his Afghanistan policy and is desperately seeking a way out. To be fair, when he announced his Afghanistan policy in August 2017, he had said that his original instinct was to pull out. He was persuaded otherwise by his then Defence Secretary James Mattis, Chief of Staff John Kelly, National Security Adviser H.R. McMaster, and Afghanistan commander Gen. John W. Nicholson, all of whom have since been replaced, making it easier for him to follow his 'instinct'.

Failure of the Afghan policy

Currently, the U.S. spends \$45 bil-

lion a year in Afghanistan, including \$5 billion for Afghan security forces and \$780 million on economic assistance. The balance is for U.S. forces and logistical support. These figures have reduced over time, as U.S. troop deployment is down to 15,000 now from 100,000 in 2010. However, over the last 18 years, the cumulative cost to the U.S. has been estimated at \$800 billion on U.S. deployments and \$105 billion in rebuilding Afghanistan. About 2,400 U.S. troops have been killed though casualty figures since 2015, when the U.S. withdrew from combat operations, are down to 12 a year. Despite expending this blood and treasure, the situation on the ground continues to deteriorate. Mr. Trump's questioning of the usefulness of continuing U.S. military presence in Afghanistan is justified but no decision had been taken. However, it is clear which way the wind is blowing.

The 2017 policy aimed at breaking the military stalemate by expanding the U.S. presence by 5,000 troops, putting Pakistan on notice, and strengthening Afghan capabilities. More than a year later, clearly the policy has failed. The military situation has improved in favour of the Taliban, while the Taliban and Haqqani Network sanctuaries in Pakistan remain intact.

Afghan security forces are suffering unacceptable attrition. Since 2015, when the Afghan security forces took charge of combat operations, they have suffered around 30,000 casualties. Civilian casualties are over 3,000 a year. With recruitment drying up and desertions on the rise, the Afghan security forces are down by more than 10% from their sanctioned strength.

Parliamentary elections were conducted on October 20 last year with much fanfare but the announcement of the final results has been repeatedly postponed amid allegations that more than one-fourth of the votes cast were



R.V. MOORTHY

rigged. Unconfirmed reports that the U.S. was withdrawing 7,000 troops from Afghanistan began to circulate hours after James Mattis's resignation as Defence Secretary. The White House backtracked by subsequently clarifying that this was one of the options being explored but no decision had been taken. However, it is clear which way the wind is blowing.

Accumulating mistakes

The reason is that over the last 18 years, the U.S. (and coalition partners) have made a series of mistakes, of omission and commission. The Afghan Constitution, adopted in 2004, centralised power in a U.S.-style presidential system but lacking the institutions of legislature, judiciary and civil society, checks and balances were missing. Governance structures were weak as an entire generation had been lost in the anti-Soviet jihad and Taliban conflicts.

The Iraq invasion in 2003 rapidly sucked in more and more U.S. resources as the focus shifted away from Afghanistan. By 2006, when the Taliban had regrouped and begun to engage in suicide attacks and IED blasts in Afghanistan, the U.S. was unwilling to acknowledge it and preferred to bribe Pakistan to gain its cooperation.

Poppy production grew to finance the Taliban insurgency. Since 2002, the international community has spent nearly \$15 billion on counter-narcotics, and yet, in 2017, poppy production was four

times what it was in 2002. International troop presence from 34 countries lacked a unified command and control and adopted different rules of engagement. British troops, deployed in Helmand, were the first to reach a quiet understanding with the local Taliban by ignoring the opium cultivation.

Hamid Karzai was President from 2001 to 2014. During the Barack Obama administration, his relations with the U.S. grew increasingly strained with both sides engaging in frequent sniping. His open criticism of Pakistan's duplicity irritated the U.S., which was even more dependent on Pakistan after the surge in U.S. troops in 2010. Mr. Obama's decision to announce the surge along with a timetable for withdrawal only emboldened the Taliban.

The strength of the Afghan security forces was hurriedly doubled to enable them to take combat lead in 2015 but lack of training and equipment soon began to take its toll. Only the Special Forces (Ktah Khas) raised in 2015 have successfully blunted Taliban onslaughts. But their numbers are limited and they are dependent on U.S. airlift and intelligence imagery.

The cumulative effect is that the U.S. has lost goodwill and its troop presence is a liability. It is hardly surprising that the U.S. is now seeking an exit. Managing the optics of withdrawal is critical though and that is what Zalmay Khalilzad, as the Special Representative for Afghanistan Reconciliation, is tasked to ensure. The Afghan presidential election has been pushed by three months to July 20 but it is unlikely that the election machinery can be reformed and the promised biometric ID system put in place. The national unity government led by President Ashraf Ghani and Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah has lost legitimacy and cannot continue beyond July.

Since the security situation does not permit new elections, the U.S. is likely to push for a new version of the 2001 Bonn Conference to set up an interim government that can plan a Loya Jirga and an election in a year or two. The process would provide the window for a U.S. exit. The difference is that unlike in 2001, it is clear that the Taliban will be present at the table, speaking from a position of strength. This is evident from their announcement on January 8 that they were calling off the next round of talks with the U.S. on account of differences on issues relating to release of Taliban prisoners, participation of Afghan government officials and U.S. troop withdrawal. Reflecting the Taliban's growing legitimacy, Russia is planning another regional conference in the Moscow format. Pakistan had engineered a meeting of the Taliban with Saudi Arabia and the UAE while a Taliban delegation was in Tehran in end-December.

What India should do

India needs to shed its diplomatic diffidence because unlike in the 1990s, India's options for engagement today are not restricted. It may not have the leverage of being a spoiler but neither does it carry uncomfortable baggage. During the last 18 years, India has earned goodwill cutting across Afghanistan's geographies and ethnicities. Instead of playing favourites, it has supported institution building and shown that its interests coincide with the idea of a stable, secure, independent and peaceful Afghanistan. What is needed is more active and coordinated diplomacy, official and non-official, so that India remains at the table as Afghanistan's preferred development partner through its transition.

Rakesh Sood is a former diplomat and currently Distinguished Fellow at the Observer Research Foundation

The view from the outside

As a democracy, India must have a better record of upholding human rights



PRIYA PILLAI

The role that India can and should play on the world stage is a topic that elicits much excitement and, of late, hyper-nationalism. It is often stated that it is time for India, as the world's largest democracy, to take on an increasingly significant mantle in the international realm. Aspects such as economic and military power have been the usual focus of this debate. However, an important component of this enhanced stature necessarily relates to the safeguarding and protecting of human rights. In India, there is a blind spot in relation to rights and the intersection with foreign relations and policy discussions, and ignoring this has its perils.

Track record on human rights
Recently, India's Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations expressed concern over the "politicisation of human rights

as a foreign policy tool", while addressing the work of the UN and the Human Rights Council. If part of the argument that India seeks to make is that it is a torchbearer of democracy and should therefore have a greater say, including on issues such as UN reform, an integral part of the case to be made relates to upholding international laws and standards pertaining to human rights. So, how does this stand up to scrutiny?

Within the country, many lawyers, activists, academics and human rights organisations have pointed to the deteriorating climate in relation to human rights. But how is the track record on human rights perceived outside the country, particularly by international law and human rights experts appointed as part of the UN human rights machinery? It is instructive to assess the record of UN independent experts towards India. For clarity, this assessment excludes the Human Rights Council, made of a group of states which can run the risk of allegations of partisanship based on membership. Instead, only statements of UN Independent Experts or Special Rapporteurs are examined, being thematic or subject matter

experts on specific aspects of law (such as freedom of expression, extrajudicial executions, human rights defenders, etc.).

Negative statements

On January 11, four UN Special Rapporteurs – on summary executions, torture, freedom of religion, and the situation of human rights defenders – issued a statement drawing attention to "extrajudicial" killings in Uttar Pradesh. In a strongly worded call, the UN experts expressed concern about the "patterns of events", including arrest, detention and torture prior to summary executions of 59 individuals since March 2017. This enhanced and negative scrutiny excludes the first ever UN report on human rights violations in Kashmir, conducted by the Office

of the High Commissioner for Human Rights – an indicator of how far the situation has deteriorated, as well as the inevitable enhanced scrutiny. A review of the press releases by the UN human rights office from 2010 to date shows that there have been 26 critical statements (mostly by UN experts, with some by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights). Nine were issued in 2018, which was the year that saw the highest number of negative statements on India in the period examined. The statements have dealt with a number of issues, including the Assam National Register of Citizens process (in photo), online hate speech, the killing of journalist Gauri Lankesh, jailing of human rights defenders, deportation of Rohingya refugees, and excessive police response to protests.

These statements indicate a few things. First, there has been enhanced scrutiny by international experts of the deteriorating human rights environment in India, particularly in 2018. Second, the magnification of domestic rights violations in the international sphere is inevitable. Third, the metric of human rights and compliance with international law can

not be dismissed. Inevitably, there will be the counterarguments, many of which can be addressed. Yes, this is not a comparison to other countries, but based on self-made claims of enhanced stature in the international arena – so how we fare in the eyes of international experts is important. No, this is not a question of external interference which can be dismissed out of hand – these statements are extremely serious, not issued lightly and are an integral part of the machinery of accountability for human rights violations in the international realm and will be a part of India's human rights record for posterity.

India's record of upholding human rights is abysmal; it must do better. The primary consideration should be the welfare and rights of individuals within the purview of the state. The secondary consideration should be perception and the place that India wants for itself in terms of stature and prestige. From both perspectives, the respect of the rights of individuals must be non-negotiable.

Priya Pillai is an international lawyer, with expertise in human rights and humanitarian issues

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.

Confusion in Karnataka

The events taking place prove that any post-poll alliance will hit many roadblocks; only a government formed with a majority can survive the full term ("Relief for Congress as dissidents relent" and "We are not trying to pull down govt. in Karnataka, says BJP", Jan. 17). Before elections, politicians beg for votes and make grand promises. After winning, they concentrate only on their welfare. The trend now seems to be to stay at lavish hotels and amass wealth by threatening defection to the Opposition. Given all these threats to defect and attempts to poach, it is better that a majority government comes to power.

D. SETHURAMAN,
Chennai

Earlier, horse trading, crossing the floor and defections happened behind the scenes. There was fear that these acts would be exposed by the media. In the last decade or so, these acts have become so brazen. "Resort politics" has become the norm. How does a legislator who wants to hop over to the opposite camp face his voters?

R. KRISHNAMACHARY,
Chennai

Sedition yet again
The editorial is right that the charges are exaggerated, but the action against the students should not be seen as an "attempt to criminalise contrarian view" ("Sedition and politics", Jan. 17). Shouting slogans about splitting the country or against the hanging of anti-India

elements like Afzal Guru certainly do not come in the category of radical politics or democratic rights.

Y.G. CHOUKSEY,
Pune

The Supreme Court had reiterated in 2016 that sedition and defamation cannot be invoked for criticism. The filing of sedition charges against three former JNU students, and also against an Assamese scholar and two others, shows that the government is desperate before the elections.

V. PADMANABHAN,
Bengaluru

Section 124A of the IPC states that sedition charges can be slapped only if there is an attempt to create public disorder. The JNU

students did not attempt to do that. College campuses ought to nurture different opinions. The ignorance of the law of the land and the crackdown on every dissenter is a sign that our democracy is eroding.

ASMITA SINGH,
New Delhi

The students shouted slogans against the hanging of a man who masterminded the attack on Parliament. These are no ordinary slogans. Parliament is the citadel of democracy. No doubt it took years to frame a charge sheet but it is highly unfortunate that your editorial is so one-sided.

SESHAGIRI ROW,
Hyderabad

Brewing trouble
K.L. Rahul and Hardik

Pandya should have merely been suspended for two matches for their sexist comments ("Players brought the game into disrepute, so did the CoA and the BCCI", Jan. 17). An orientation programme should be put in place for young players who don't know how to deal with all the new-found money and fame that comes their way.

K.M. SRINIVASA GOWDA,
Bengaluru

The article rightly condemns the short-sightedness and high-handedness of the cricket administration. However, it is unfair to pin the blame on Pandya's parents. People are brought up differently and it's not right for us to judge them.

VIKRAM SUNDARAMURTHY,
Chennai

I am confused. What did Hardik Pandya say that brought disrepute to the game? What he does in his personal life is not a matter of concern to us. What he tells his parents is none of our business. Calling him a "woman hater" is harsh; if the women he hit on didn't have a problem with him and nor did his parents, who are we to judge? Given the hypocritical attitude that we have about sex in this country, I'm glad that we are at least talking about sex and the importance of carrying protection on air. The writer takes the moral high ground by castigating Pandya's parents, which is unfair. This is moral policing.

JAYARAJ MENON,
Thiruvananthapuram

MORE LETTERS ONLINE:
www.thehindu.com/opinion/letters/

A ND-NDE

YES, NO, IT'S COMPLICATED

Will the BSP-SP alliance in Uttar Pradesh be successful?

YES



BADRI NARAYAN
is the director of the Govind Ballabh Pant Social Institute

Both parties successfully transfer votes to each other and have some similarities

I believe that the alliance between the Samajwadi Party (SP) and Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) will be successful in Uttar Pradesh.

This is not merely an alliance between two parties but between two social bases: the Other Backward Classes (OBCs) and the Dalits. While it is true that both these parties do not command the support of all OBC and Dalit groups, it is also true that the Yadavs, who form the caste base of the SP, constitute a large chunk of the OBC population and are likely to attract other OBCs

and Most Backward Classes (MBCs) through social networking. Similarly, the BSP's influence among the Yadavs, who form the largest Dalit community, is likely to attract a few smaller Dalit groups. Many MBC communities, such as the Nishads and Pals, who voted for the SP in the last election have an easy interaction with the Dalits in their everyday life.

Transferring votes

Both these parties also successfully transfer votes to each other, which

may hold the key to the success of the alliance. At a recent press conference, BSP chief Mayawati said that past experience suggests that the SP and the BSP successfully transfer votes to each other. This happened in the 1993 Assembly election in U.P. and the alliance was successful in forming the government. In the by-elections in Phulpur and Gorakhpur in March 2018, even without a formal alliance the BSP's votes got easily transferred to the SP. This suggests that there is not much work needed to create a chemistry between the two vote bases. The only thing that



the alliance needs to do now is disseminate its message to the voters.

Some similarities

Besides these caste-based relationships and electoral calculations, there is also the question of ideology. Ram Manohar Lohia's ideology and B.R. Ambedkar and Kanshi Ram's ideology bear certain similarities. Both the leaders talked about *bhagidari*, or representation to social groups supporting a party in accordance with their strength. This was emphasised in Kanshi Ram's slogan: "Jiski jitni sankhya bharai, uski utni hissedari."

Despite being archrivals otherwise, it is clear that the politics of the BSP and the SP have a lot in common. Many Lohiaites, such as Ramswaroop Verma, had worked hard to create Ambedkarite-Lohiaite unity in the State in the 1970s. So, there are trained cadres in the Lohiaite movement who may emerge as opinion-makers of this unity. This will help disseminate the message of this alliance at the grass-roots level.

The Muslim vote

The Muslims in the State will also view this alliance with some consideration. There is a sense of fear among Muslims given the strong

NO



SHANTANU GUPTA
is the author of *The Monk who became Chief Minister*, a biography of Yogi Adityanath

An opportunistic alliance at the top will not easily percolate down to the cadres

Given that it is the most populous State in India, Uttar Pradesh is certainly a very important piece in the electoral puzzle of 2019. The much-talked-about mahagathbandhan, or alliance of non-BJP parties, to defeat the BJP is primarily based on the hyper narrative of the prospective success of the BSP-SP alliance in U.P. However, a deep dive into the electoral numbers and political equations makes this citadel look pretty vulnerable.

Examining vote shares

The SP-BSP combine is setting its

hopes on the bypoll victories in Gorakhpur, Phulpur and Kairana in 2018. There are multiple flaws in this assumption. First, the unsuccessful seat-sharing arrangement in the Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan Assembly elections between the "arrogant" Congress, as BSP chief Mayawati put it, and the SP and the BSP has pushed the Congress out of the opportunistic mahagathbandhan in U.P. for 2019. With the Congress out of the equation, going by the 2014 Lok Sabha figures, the SP and the BSP, which had a combined vote share of 42.1% then, will have a

lower vote share than the BJP and the Apna Dal, which had a vote share of 43.6% then. Even with the addition of the Rashtriya Lok Dal's vote share, the combined vote share of the BSP-SP-RLD combine (43%) will be lower than that of the BJP-Apna Dal combine.

Second, the bypoll victories came with a wafer-thin margin, with considerably lower voting percentages. In 2014, for example, Yogi Adityanath won the Gorakhpur seat with a margin of more than 3 lakh votes, but in the bypoll, SP candidate Praveen Kumar Nishad won by a margin of only 21,000 votes. Ev-



ery parliamentary seat has around 2,000 polling booths and every booth has around 1,000 votes. A margin of 21,000 votes can be reversed just by improving the vote share in two or three dozen booths. Besides, bypolls never generate the political euphoria and engagement that a general election does, so there's a lower voter turnout. The 1% percentage point drop in voting in the Gorakhpur bypoll went against the BJP, which can easily be reversed.

Cadre-level problems

Third, these were just three bypolls where the BSP silently supported

the SP and RLD candidates. A larger exercise of seat-sharing for the 80 seats in U.P. between the SP and the BSP and possibly the RLD will not be smooth, given the complex electoral arithmetic and clash of egos. This is the same BSP whose leader publicly declared to never do business with the SP after the infamous guest house attack on her by SP leaders in 1995. The BSP and SP field cadres have worked against each other for more than two decades. An opportunistic alliance at the top will not easily percolate to the cadre level. On whichever seat the SP loses the ticket to the BSP or vice-versa, the respective party cadres will be highly demoralised and the vote share of the two par-

ties will simply not add up in all the seats. The BSP has a far more committed and loyal cadre than the SP. Ms. Mayawati will be able to transfer the BSP's votes to the SP's candidates. But in seats where BSP candidates will contest, it will not be easy for SP president Akhilesh Yadav to transfer the SP's votes to the BSP.

The only motive that this alliance has is to beat the BJP. Caste is its only trump card. But by promulgating an ordinance to reaffirm the SCs and STs (Prevention of Atrocities) Act and by providing 10% reservation to economically weaker members of the upper castes, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has taken even this away from these regional satraps.

of the BSP have found it difficult to convince their supporters to vote for the BSP. This explains why Ms. Mayawati has been so lukewarm to alliances in the past.

Finally, the continued split in the anti-BJP vote in the State will also have to be kept in mind. The Congress has announced its intention to contest all the seats. This will result in a split of the anti-BJP vote. Whether the Congress will reach a tacit or even an open understanding with the SP-BSP combine prior to the elections will be closely watched. This could decidedly tilt the balance in favour of the non-BJP alliance.

At this stage, it looks quite complicated.

IT'S COMPLICATED



SANDEEP SHASTRI
is a political scientist and the national coordinator of the Lokniti network

Victory is not about arithmetic alone, but about chemistry between the allies and their voters

The BSP-SP alliance in U.P. for the general election this year has begun a debate on the wider political implications of this electoral agreement. Uttar Pradesh sends over a seventh of the members of the Lok Sabha and accounts for about one-fourth of the BJP MPs in the House. Any change in electoral equations in the State is bound to have an impact on the nature and structure of political competition in the country in general and the ruling BJP in particular.

On the face of it, this looks like a decidedly winning combination if

we consider the electoral arithmetic. Yet, victories and defeats are not merely about simple arithmetic and the mechanical adding up of past trends in voting and extrapolating them to the future. It is also about political chemistry between the allies – between their leaders, their workers, and, more crucially, among their voters.

If one were to just bring together the votes secured by the SP and BSP in the 2014 Lok Sabha polls in U.P. as well as the Assembly elections of 2017, one notices that in terms of sheer numbers they could pose a

formidable challenge to the BJP. In 2014, the SP and BSP together secured just 0.5% votes less than the BJP. In the Assembly elections of 2017, their combined vote tally was a good 9 percentage points ahead of the BJP. This by itself, and the results of the three byelections to the Lok Sabha from the State, must be giving the BJP sleepless nights as it had a 70-plus contingent in 2014 in the Lok Sabha from this State (it is less than 70 now).

Ground-level issues

Yet, two important factors need to be considered in this discussion.



First, it would be politically naïve to simply add up the SP-BSP votes in the past and assume that those numbers would hold for this election. Will this political chemistry work at the ground level? While SP president Akhilesh Yadav and BSP chief Mayawati have patched up and stitched an alliance, will this be logically carried forward by the local party units and leaders? Let's not forget that the SP and the BSP have been traditional rivals, and the Yadav-Dalit rivalry at the local level has been in some ways a key factor in State politics. A lot depends on the ability of both Mr. Yadav and Ms. Mayawati to per-

suade their local leaders to sink their differences and work in unison, at least in this election. Both parties are making no pretensions of a long-term alliance. Local leaders of both the SP and the BSP are probably mindful of this fact, even as they are encouraged to work together this time around.

Voting patterns

The ability of leaders and cadres to get voters loyal to the party to switch votes to the alliance partner in a seat that they are not contesting will be critical. Past experience has shown that the BSP has not faced a serious challenge in transferring votes to whoever it allied with. On the other hand, the allies

SINGLE FILE

Balancing act in Afghanistan

India should be informed of the developments in the peace process for which the U.S. is taking Pakistan's help



MICHAEL KUGELMAN

In recent weeks, a new policy conundrum has emerged for the U.S. as it attempts to help launch a peace process in Afghanistan. Soon after the U.S. government formally requested Pakistan's assistance to bring the Taliban to the table, Islamabad helped facilitate meetings between senior Taliban representatives and U.S. officials in Abu Dhabi. The U.S. government appears to be acknowledging that Pakistan, given its influence over the Taliban, is an important and potentially helpful player in the peace process in Afghanistan.

However, it has also signalled its desire for India, its growing defence partner, to be more involved in reconciliation efforts and in Afghanistan more broadly. At various times during his term, President Donald Trump – sometimes crudely, as with his mocking comment about New Delhi limiting itself to building libraries in Afghanistan – has suggested that New Delhi step up its game. The recent visit to India of Zalmay Khalilzad (in photo), the U.S. Special Representative for Afghanistan Reconciliation, highlights the importance that Washington accords to India in Afghanistan.

Herein lies the dilemma: the U.S. cannot have it both ways. If Pakistan is enlisted in reconciliation efforts, India won't be keen to get involved. But if India does take on a larger role, then Pakistan may well step back.

To be sure, India and Pakistan have proved to be willing and able to partner regionally. They may struggle to coexist in SAARC, but they do cooperate on the TAPI pipeline, and they're both members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, an arrangement mostly of Central Asian states, and China and Russia.

Of course, partnering in Afghanistan is much more delicate and challenging. Fortunately for the U.S., this policy dilemma may work itself out on its own. Despite Prime Minister Narendra Modi's desire for a more robust regional foreign policy, India appears content to keep a low profile in Afghanistan, outside of its continued development and economic assistance projects. Tellingly, New Delhi has distanced itself from the Indian Army Chief's remark supporting talks with the Taliban with no preconditions. Additionally, India will not volunteer to play a role in reconciliation efforts unless formally invited by Kabul. Afghan officials, grudgingly cognisant of Pakistan's significant role, are unlikely to do so unless current efforts to kick-start talks do not bear fruit, or Pakistan is no longer seen as helpful.

Still, it is important that India not be left on the outside looking in amid efforts to spark a reconciliation process with such major implications for it. Accordingly, the U.S. should keep India fully informed, at the highest levels, about any developments in reconciliation. U.S. officials owe that engagement to one of their most important partners in South Asia.

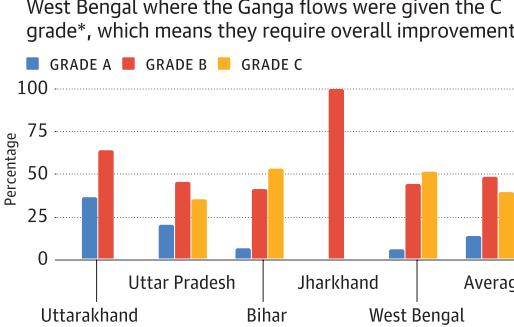
The writer is Deputy Director and Senior Associate for South Asia with the Asia Program at the Woodrow Wilson International Centre for Scholars, Washington, DC



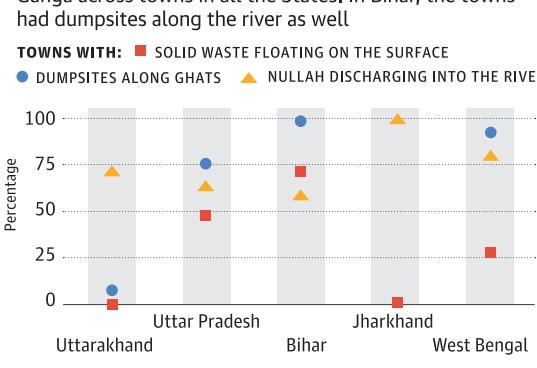
DATA POINT

Where the filth flows

How they fared | Over half the towns in Bihar and West Bengal where the Ganga flows were given the C grade*, which means they require overall improvement



River dumps | It is common for nullahs to drain into the Ganga across towns in all the States. In Bihar, the towns had dumpsites along the river as well



*Grades: A - Clean ghats, good solid waste management (SWM); B - Partially clean, needs better SWM; C - Needs overall improvement

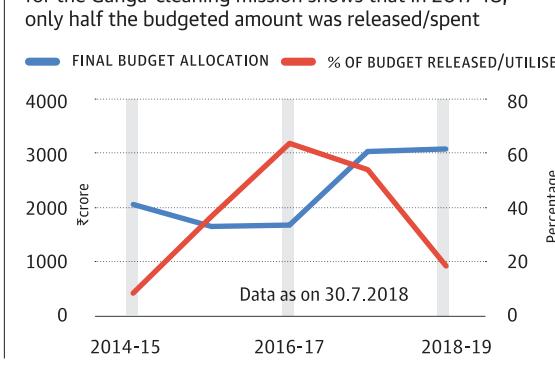
Source: Third party inspection of 97 Ganga towns' report by Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs; Rajya Sabha Q&A

Population matters | Only three towns with a population of more than a lakh each were graded A. Most of the towns which received the A grade had a low population

Population	Grade A	Grade B	Grade C	No. of towns ranked in each State
<1 lakh	9	26	12	West Bengal: 39, Uttar Pradesh: 20, Bihar: 17, Uttarakhand: 14, Jharkhand: 2
1-4 lakh	2	16	19	
>4 lakh	1	2	5	
Total	12	44	36	

*Only 92 towns were considered as data could not be obtained for five towns

Low fund utilisation | An analysis of funds allocated for the Ganga-cleaning mission shows that in 2017-18, only half the budgeted amount was released/spent



FROM The Hindu ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO JANUARY 18, 1969

'India on verge of economic take-off'

Mr. Chester Bowles, American Ambassador, said here [New Delhi] to-day [January 17] that India was on the verge of an economic take-off. Addressing a large gathering of Indo-American business community, on the occasion of the inauguration of the North India Council of the Indo-American Chamber of Commerce, Mr. Bowles said his optimism about India's economic prosperity was based on the agriculture breakthrough, the recent spurt in exports and the brightening of aid prospects. Noting that he had earlier forecast self-sufficiency in foodgrains in India by 1974, he said it appeared the country would achieve self-sufficiency by 1972 itself – two years in advance. The Ambassador said he was hopeful India would achieve the target of seven per cent growth in exports so that the gap between imports and exports which was of the order of \$100 million last year would be wiped out.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO JANUARY 18, 1919

Education to Soldiers.

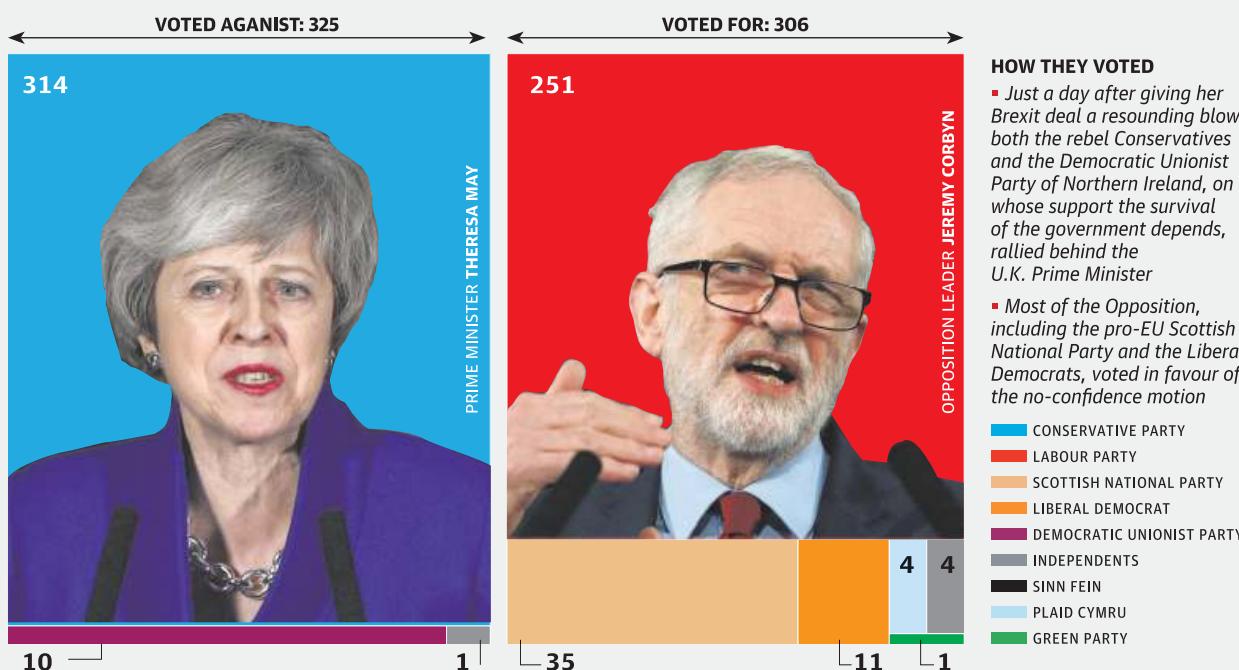
(From an Editorial)

Brexit deadlock continues as PM calls for cross-party talks

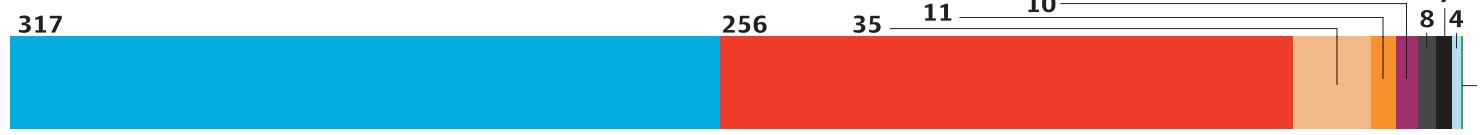
Corbyn rejects May's offer as a stunt, Opposition parties want govt. to take no-deal exit off the table

Hunt for a Plan B

Following narrow survival of her government in the no-confidence vote on Wednesday, British Prime Minister Theresa May is scrambling to create a Plan B, which she needs to present to the House of Commons by Monday. After the Labour Party tabled the motion on Wednesday, the vote went largely along partisan lines



COMPOSITION OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS: The graph below shows the number of MPs of each party in the House. The Conservatives currently have 317 MPs, a large majority of them committed to delivering on Brexit but split on the backstop option. Labour is the biggest Opposition group, with 256 members



WHERE THEY STAND ON BREXIT



A) MAY LOYALISTS: 196 MPs – the people who backed her deal on Tuesday



B) REBEL TORIES: 118 MPs – Most of them support Brexit but think that May has compromised too much with the EU; they are primarily opposed to the backstop arrangement, fearing that it would lock the U.K. permanently in the EU Customs Union

▪ This includes the 70-odd MPs who comprise the European Research Group of hard-Brexiters. They want a complete break from the EU

Norway-style arrangement: The EU has indicated that this can be attained without any change in the present terms of the deal. This would mean that the U.K. remains part of the Free Trade Association and the European Economic Area, addressing the concerns of those who don't want a hard border in Ireland

Conservatives

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Labour Party

A) Just three of its MPs voted in support of May's deal on Tuesday but there are about 25 of them who are either pro-Brexit or represent pro-Brexit constituencies

B) Labour's official position, backed by most of its 256 MPs, is to remain in the Customs Union within the EU and the single market during the transition period, which can be extended up to 2022. The party, led by Jeremy Corbyn, has also ruled out backing a no-deal Brexit

▪ 70 Labour MPs on Wednesday called for a second referendum

Democratic Unionist Party

The Northern Irish party is opposed to a backstop that it fears may lead to a different set of rules for Northern Ireland from that for the rest of the U.K. It is also pro-Brexit while the Republic of Ireland is an EU member

Scottish National Party

Scotland voted to remain within the EU in the 2015 referendum and the party wants Scotland to remain within the European single market and Customs Union. The SNP also wants a Norway-style option for Scotland even if the rest of the U.K. chooses otherwise

Plaid Cymru

The party opposes Brexit and believes that Wales should retain single market access. Any powers returned from the EU should rest with the Welsh National Assembly, it says. It also wants the free movement of people linked to employment to be retained

Liberal Democrats and Green Party

They have been consistently opposed to Brexit and are now seeking a second referendum

Sinn Fein

It wants Northern Ireland to be given special designated status which will allow it to remain within the EU. It also wants the North to have access to a single market, retain free movement of people and Common Travel Area and maintain existing EU funding streams

Graphic: KARTHIK S.T.

VIDYA RAM LONDON

The deadlock in British politics continued unabated on Thursday, as Opposition parties reiterated their calls for Prime Minister Theresa May to show her willingness to engage with them by taking the prospect of a no-deal Brexit off the table.

After MPs decisively rejected her Withdrawal Agreement on Tuesday night, Britain runs the risk of exiting the EU with no prior formal agreement with the bloc at 11 p.m. on March 29.

The next vote on Britain's Brexit strategy is set to take place on January 29, though it looks unlikely that any new strategy that all sides can agree on and which would be acceptable to Europe too can be agreed on within that time frame.

The government has maintained the pressure, declining to extend Article 50 and delay Brexit till a solution can be found.

Not ruling out 'no-deal' After winning the no-confidence motion put forward by the Labour party on Wednesday, Prime Minister May had called for cross-party dialogue to "find solutions that are negotiable and command sufficient support" in Parliament, but her failure to rule out the no-deal scenario meant that Labour did not take part in the talks.

Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn rejected her offer as a "stunt" of "phoney talks" offered to "run down the clock and try to blackmail MPs to vote with the botched deal." "Take no deal off the table now please Prime Minister," he said in a speech on Thursday morning.

Following the conversation with Ms. May on Wednesday evening, the Scottish National Party (SNP) also backed out of further talks until no-deal was ruled out. "The SNP won't be complicit

in more time wasting. The PM's offer of talks is a promise to listen, but only if we all agree with her," said Nicola Sturgeon, the First Minister of Scotland.

The Greens and Liberal Democrats have indicated they will continue to talk but re-emphasised the urgency for them of taking no-deal off the table.

While maintaining the threat of a no-deal is seen as an essential part of the government's negotiating strategy, the refusal to take no-deal out of the equation is not just about this. There are many within the Conservative Party – in particular members of the powerful European Research Group – who believe that exiting

the EU is the right strategy going forward.

The issue of a second referendum also remains on the backburner despite vocal calls for one from some Opposition parties, and a group of 71 Labour MPs. The government has ruled out that option. Mr. Corbyn has conceded that it is among the options on the table, but that he remains convinced that pushing for a general election is the right strategy going forward.

To achieve this, he would be counting on disgruntled Conservative MPs – unimpressed with the Prime Minister's unwillingness to take no deal off the table – potentially changing tune and supporting the Labour stance, though this remains a very unlikely scenario at least for now.

There are also major questions around what compromise, if any, could come from Europe, particularly on the controversial issue of the Brexit backstop. Irish Taoiseach Leo Varadkar was among those to indicate a willingness to engage in further dialogue but he also insisted firmly that the "onus is on Westminster to come up with solutions they can support" that would also be solutions acceptable to the EU and Ireland.

In addition, what progress in the form of changes to the rejected Withdrawal Agreement can be achieved in that timeframe remains to be seen. The government has made clear that it won't com-

mand a majority remains uncertain.

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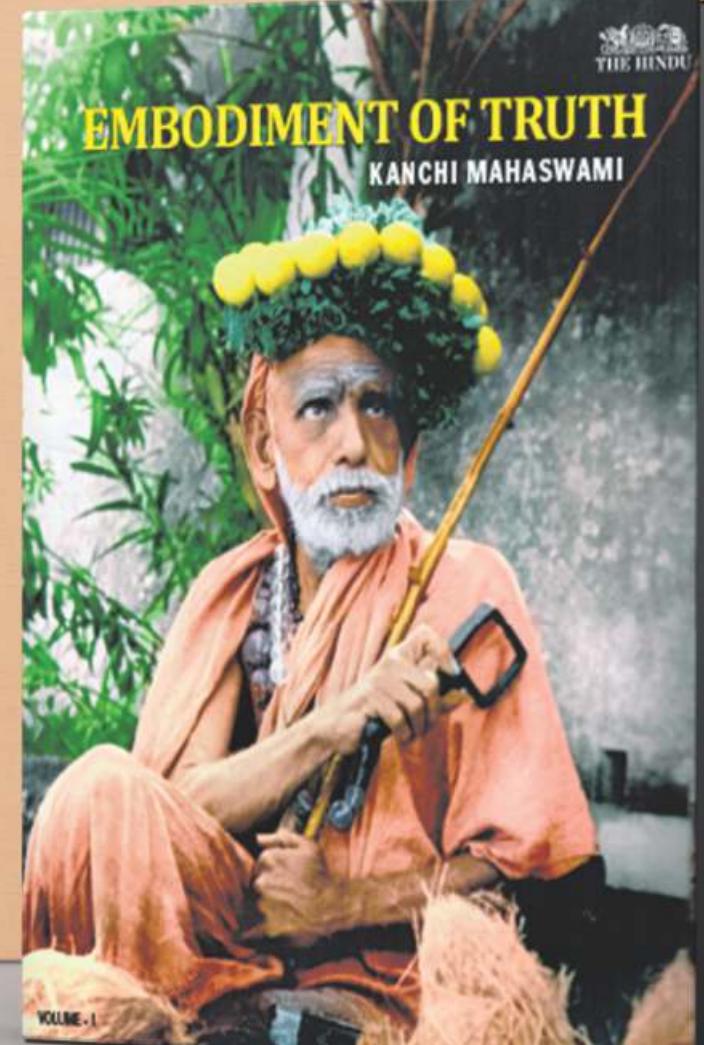
in further dialogue but he also insisted firmly that the "onus is on Westminster to come up with solutions they can support" that would also be solutions acceptable to the EU and Ireland.



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A SPECIAL PUBLICATION FROM THE HINDU GROUP

Indian-American named to key panel

Krishnamoorthi is the first South Asian to be chosen for Intelligence Committee

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

WASHINGTON
Democratic lawmaker Raja Krishnamoorthi has been appointed as a member of a Congressional committee on intelligence, becoming the first South Asian to serve in the powerful body tasked to strengthen U.S.'s national security.

Mr. Krishnamoorthi, 45, who represents Illinois' 8th Congressional District in the House, was chosen along with Congresswoman Val Demings of Florida, Sean Patrick Maloney of New York and Peter Welch of Vermont as the four new Democratic members of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence (HPSCI) for the 116th Congress. The



Raja Krishnamoorthi, Congressman from Illinois. ■ THE HINDU

HPSCI is tasked with overseeing the activities and budget of the 17 intelligence agencies of the U.S.

Speaker of the House of

Representatives Nancy Pelosi appointed Mr. Krishnamoorthi on Wednesday. Ms. Pelosi said: "Our new members of the Intelligence Committee bring exceptional judgment, expertise and determination to our mission to honour that oath and, guided by the strong, principled leadership of Chairman Adam Schiff, will restore the long tradition of bipartisanship and integrity of this critical committee."

'Very humbling'

Mr. Krishnamoorthi, after Ms. Pelosi announced his appointment, said: "It is very humbling to be chosen to serve on the Intelligence Committee in this Congress, and I am ready to join with

my colleagues in preserving the safety and security of our nation". "The intelligence challenges and international threats facing our country today are vast, ranging from terrorism to cyber-warfare to investigating Russia's previous and continuing attempts to sabotage our democracy. Mr. Krishnamoorthi, whose family moved to New York when he was three months old, has attended Princeton University, where he earned a Bachelor's degree in Mechanical Engineering. He also attended Harvard Law School.

Early this week, Ms. Pelosi appointed Indian-American Congresswoman Pramila Jayapal to the House Education and Labour Committee.

ELSEWHERE



North Korean envoy heads for Washington

SEOUL
North Korea's top envoy involved in denuclearisation talks boarded a flight in Beijing for Washington on Thursday, South Korea's Yonhap agency said. U.S. and South Korean media previously quoted sources as saying Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and North Korean official Kim Jong-chol were expected to meet on Friday. REUTERS

'No entertainment on Pak. flights to Saudi'

LAHORE
The Pakistan International Airlines has banned in-flight entertainment for pilgrims travelling to Jeddah and Medina and will only play Koranic verses and naats from them, an official said on Thursday. The decision was taken "in light of the peoples' sentiments," PIA spokesman Mashhood Tajawar said.

FB removes 500+ pages, accounts linked to Russia

All connected to news agency Sputnik



Facebook announced on Thursday that it has removed more than 500 pages, groups and accounts originating in Russia for engaging in what the social network called "coordinated inauthentic behaviour".

The California-based social media giant said they were part of two separate but similar Russian-based influence operations, one that was active in a variety of former Soviet republics and another focused specifically on Ukraine.

"We didn't find any links between these operations, but they used similar tactics by creating networks of accounts to mislead others about who they were and what they were doing," Nathaniel Gleicher, the head of Facebook's cybersecurity policy, said in a post. He said 364 pages and accounts were removed that posed as

N. Korea still a threat: U.S. defence review

REUTERS

WASHINGTON
President Donald Trump unveiled a revamped U.S. missile defence strategy on Thursday that called North Korea an ongoing and "extraordinary threat," seven months after he declared that the threat posed by Pyongyang had been eliminated.

The Missile Defence Review, which also detailed concerns about the burgeoning capabilities of Iran, Russia and China, was a broad examination of efforts to shield the U.S. from enemy missiles.

Acting U.S. Defense Secretary Patrick Shanahan called North Korea's missiles a "significant concern".

"While a possible new avenue to peace now exists with North Korea, it continues to pose an extraordinary threat and the United States must remain vigilant," the report said.

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A SPECIAL PUBLICATION FROM THE HINDU GROUP

MARKET WATCH

	17-01-2019	% CHANGE
Sensex	36,374	0.15
US Dollar	71.03	0.29
Gold	33,300	0.33
Brent oil	60.81	0.32

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	394.50	5.20
Asian Paints	1389.60	-0.15
Axist Bank	676.65	12.65
Bajaj Auto	2729.65	12.20
Bajaj Finserv	6359.00	-105.85
Bajaj Finance	2535.90	-33.95
Bharti Airtel	332.05	-1.90
BPCL	355.20	7.95
Cipla	509.60	-1.90
Coal India	232.05	0.00
Dr Reddys Lab	2619.15	2.20
Eicher Motors	20369.95	-365.75
GAIL (India)	332.40	6.90
Grasim Ind	828.10	1.80
HCL Tech.	954.70	16.45
HDPC	2004.55	29.55
HDFC Bank	2132.30	12.10
Hero MotoCorp	2903.60	23.75
Hindalco	206.00	-2.40
HPCL	244.20	3.60
Hind Unilever	1751.50	-21.05
Indiabulls HFL	816.75	-12.85
ICICI Bank	374.60	-0.70
IndusInd Bank	1523.00	-3.70
Bharti Infratel	280.45	4.60
Infosys	733.35	-3.45
Indian Oil Corp	137.65	1.85
ITC	293.95	-0.10
JSW Steel	289.00	2.55
Reliance Ind	1134.45	-1.45
State Bank	297.40	-5.75
Sun Pharma	426.55	-27.25
Tata Motors	184.90	-0.55
Tata Steel	473.15	-1.40
TCS	1894.30	24.15
Tech Mahindra	705.55	5.65
Titan	961.55	-0.35
UltraTech Cement	3846.45	-40.55
UPL	769.05	2.95
Vedanta	197.45	1.15
Wipro	335.40	-1.15
YES Bank	201.50	-6.85
Zee Entertainment	440.90	-11.20

BULLION RATES CHENNAI

January 17 rates in rupees with previous rates in parentheses

Retail Silver (1g) 42.90 (42.7)

22 ct gold (1g) 3111 (3072)

RIL net rises 8.8%, revenue climbs on higher volume, realisation

Conglomerate is first private sector firm to cross ₹10,000 crore in quarterly profit

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI

Reliance Industries (RIL) third quarter consolidated net profit rose 8.8% to ₹10,251 crore.

The higher profit came despite refinery margins falling to ₹8.8 per barrel during the quarter compared with ₹11.6 in the year-earlier period. Retail and telecom businesses contributed 25% of the consolidated EBITDA.

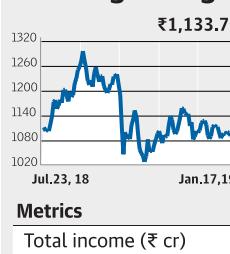
The profit during the quarter was reported on a 55.9% increase in total income to ₹1,71,336 crore primarily on account of higher price realisations and volumes for petrochemical and refining businesses along with continuing strong growth momentum in consumer businesses.

Commenting on the results, RIL chairman Mukesh Ambani said, "In our endeavour to consistently create more value for our country and stakeholders, our company has become the first Indian private sector corporate to cross ₹10,000-crore quarterly profit milestone."

"I am proud to be part of the committed and talented team at Reliance that has helped achieve many milestones in our continuing growth journey."

RIL's exports, including

Growing stronger



Exports rose 35.2% to ₹62,378 crore on higher volumes of polymer products and fibre intermediates as well as higher product prices in petrochemical and refining business

Metrics

Q3 FY19

Q3 FY18

Growth(%)

Total income (₹ cr)

1,71,336

1,09,905

55.9

Profit (₹ cr)

10,251

9,420

8.8

Earning per share (EPS in ₹)

17.3

16

deemed exports from India operations, were higher by 35.2% at ₹62,378 crore (\$8.9 billion) due to higher volumes of polymer products and fibre intermediates and higher product prices in petrochemical and refining business.

RIL's debt increased to ₹2,74,381 crore (\$39.3 billion) as on December 31, 2018 compared with 'cash and cash equivalents' of ₹77,933 crore (\$1.2 billion).

Revenue from RIL's organised retail segment during the quarter grew 89.3% to ₹35,577 crore as healthy festive season sales and new store openings resulted in another robust quarter. EBIT from organised retail rose 210.5% to ₹1,512 crore.

Revenue from the petrochemicals segment increased by 37.1% to ₹46,246 crore (\$6.6 billion) due to increase in price realisations and volumes primarily in polymer products and fibre intermediates. Petrochemicals

Revenue from retail

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segment EBIT increased 42.9% to ₹8,221 crore (\$1.2 billion). The company's finance costs almost doubled to ₹4,119 crore (\$590 million) primarily on account of commencement of petrochemical projects at Jamnagar, digital services business and higher loan balances.

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Case relates to promoter stake dilution

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI

The Bombay High Court on Thursday adjourned the hearing till March 12 on the private sector lender Kotak Mahindra Bank's plea challenging the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) stance on promoter's stake dilution.

Kotak Bank had challenged the RBI's decision in the Bombay High Court.

The court had asked the central bank to file its affidavit by January 17. The RBI counsel sought more time to file the affidavit. A division Bench comprising Justices B.P. Dharmadhikari and Revi Moti Dere then posted the petition for hearing to March 12.

Start-ups seeking angel tax exemption get relief

Govt. sets ₹10 cr. capital threshold cap

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The government has eased the norms under which start-ups can apply for exemption from the angel tax which would otherwise be applicable on them.

According to the notification issued by the government on Wednesday, start-ups, whose aggregate amount of paid-up share capital and share premium after the proposed issue of share does not exceed ₹10 crore, are eligible for the exemption.

On the investor side, the notification says the angel investor should have filed I-T returns of at

least ₹50 lakh for the year preceding the year in which the investment was made.

Further, the investor's net worth has to be at least ₹2 crore or the amount of investment made in the start-up, whichever is higher, as on the last date of the financial year preceding the year of investment.

To claim the exemption, start-ups and investors have to make an application to the DIPP, in the prescribed format. Once approved, the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) is to then issue a certificate of exemption within 45 days of the application.

The intent of [Section 29(A)] was very clear and simple and has been very well documented in the Parliamentary proceedings also, but again, this section, in my view, is being stretched

too far," Mr. Kumar said at an event. Citing an example, he said if two brothers had parted 25 years ago and if one of their businesses is in trouble, barring the other brother from bidding for any asset is currently accepted.

The section deals with related-party provisioning and aims to prevent defaulting promoters from taking back their companies.

The portfolio is being acquired on a debt-free and cash-free basis. The acquisition would help Aurobindo Group enter the branded oncology market with a range of products that are well-recognised by the oncology community.

The group would also acquire a well-established and experienced branded commercial infrastructure to continue commercialising these brands, a release said.

The portfolio is expected to generate around \$100 million revenue for the first 12 months after completion of the transaction for Aurobindo. The acquisition also brings in an experienced

maker, which is making the acquisition through a step-down subsidiary.

Acrotech Biopharma LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Aurobindo Pharma USA Inc., has entered into a definitive agreement with Spectrum Pharmaceuticals Inc.

The portfolio is expected to generate around \$100 million revenue for the first 12 months after completion of the transaction for Aurobindo. The acquisition also brings in an experienced

Aurobindo acquiring oncology portfolio worth \$300 million

Drug firm set to buy 7 injectable products from Spectrum

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

HYDERABAD

Aurobindo Pharma on Thursday said it was acquiring a portfolio of seven marketed oncology injectable products, intellectual property and commercial infrastructure from Nasdaq-listed Spectrum Pharmaceuticals Inc.

The acquisition is for an upfront purchase price of \$160 million in cash and up to \$140 million on achieving regulatory and sales-based milestones, said the drug

maker, which is making the acquisition through a step-down subsidiary.

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The portfolio is expected to generate around \$100 million revenue for the first 12 months after completion of the transaction for Aurobindo. The acquisition also brings in an experienced

IBC's related party norms stretched too far: Kumar

Sec. 29 (A) needs clarity, says SBI chief

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

MUMBAI

SBI chairman Rajnish Kumar on Thursday said Section 29 (A) of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) is being 'stretched too far' and there is need for more clarity on the issue.

The section deals with related-party provisioning and aims to prevent defaulting promoters from taking back their companies.

"The intent of [Section 29(A)] was very clear and simple and has been very well documented in the Parliamentary proceedings also, but again, this section, in my view, is being stretched

too far," Mr. Kumar said at an event. Citing an example, he said if two brothers had parted 25 years ago and if one of their businesses is in trouble, barring the other brother from bidding for any asset is currently accepted.

"But, to say that the other brother running a business successfully cannot bid for any asset, I think is carrying the interpretation too far," he said.

Meanwhile, SBI said it has raised ₹1,250 million by issuing bonds, of which ₹400 million is due in 2022, with a coupon rate of 4%, and ₹850 million due in 2024, with a coupon rate of 4.375%.

Infrastructure Leasing & Financial Services Ltd. (IL&FS) said it would be unable to service its obligation in respect of interest of non-convertible debenture (NCD) due on January 19,

"The company would be unable to service its obligation in respect of the interest of non-convertible debenture due on January 19," the company said in a BSE filing.

IL&FS total debt stood at more than ₹94,000 crore as of October 8, 2018.

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IN BRIEF



Naming code notification to spur textile exports

COIMBATORE

The Apparels Export Promotion Council has said that with the government notifying Harmonised System of Nomenclature codes for 207 specific technical textile products, focused strategies can be evolved to promote export of these goods. Council vice-chairman A. Sakthivel said that now there can be product-specific sops. Many technical textile goods are high-value products or inputs for high-value garments.

Divine Solitaires to focus on domestic expansion

COIMBATORE

Diamond brand Divine Solitaires will focus on expanding its presence in the domestic market, in jewellery outlets and on e-commerce sites. Jignesh Mehta, founder and managing director, Divine Solitaires, said the brand had 150 shop-in-shops in the country now. It is targeting to have 350 such outlets in two years. The company had a limited online presence and would focus on growth in e-commerce platform, he said.

Cyclent defers decision on share buy-back

HYDERABAD

IT firm Cyclent said its board would discuss the proposed share buy-back issue at a later date. The firm has posted a net profit of ₹92.5 crore, 6% higher than the ₹87.1 crore reported in the corresponding period of the previous year. Net profit declined by 37.29% from ₹127 crore recorded in the quarter ended September 30. Revenue from operations in the third quarter rose 20.75% to ₹1,187 crore.

Rupee pact with Iran to aid pharma exports

Half of amount credited by Indian firms for oil could be utilised by Iran for pharmaceutical purchases

N. RAVI KUMAR
HYDERABAD

The Indian pharma industry now has an opportunity to increase exports to Iran, following a rupee payment mechanism agreed upon recently by India and the Persian Gulf nation.

Under the agreement, Indian refiners make payments in rupee for oil imports from Iran, to designated accounts maintained with UCO Bank. A portion thus received is to be used by Iran to pay for imports from India, including pharmaceuticals.

Indian pharma exports to Iran were at \$124.05 million last fiscal. Iran has a well-established pharma industry that meets 80% of the country's requirement. The



Low dose: From \$180.50 mn in 2015-16, pharma exports to Iran declined to \$160.33 mn in 2016-17. ■ GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

remaining 20% is met predominantly through imports from Europe," said Ravi Uday Bhaskar, director general, pharmaceuticals export promotion council of India (Pharmexcil).

With a cloud of uncertainty hovering over continued pharmaceutical supplies from Europe in the wake of the U.S. sanctions against Iran, the Indian pharma industry could explore opportunities to step up exports, he emphasised. The U.S.,

had in May last year, come out from a nuclear accord with Iran and re-imposed sanctions. The rupee payment agreement came within weeks of the sanctions to cover oil imports from Iran.

While imposing the sanctions again, the U.S. provided a time window of exemption under which India and a few other countries could continue to import oil for some time, but of relatively less quantity.

Pharmexcil, in a circular, intimated its members recently about the agreement under which 50% of the amount credited by Indian oil companies could be utilised by Iran for making payments to Indian exporters of goods and services. These

funds may also be used for settlement of payments to Indian exporters for transactions that took place prior to operationalisation of the arrangement.

On the wane
Constituting mostly APIs (bulk drugs), Indian pharma exports to Iran have been declining in recent years.

From \$180.50 million in 2015-16, pharma exports to Iran fell to \$160.33 million in 2016-17. Mr. Bhaskar said Indian drug makers ought to eye a bigger pie in Iran's \$1.3 billion generic market.

On replacing European suppliers, he said it was possible as not all the drugs imported by Iran were innovator drugs.

fronts." The potential investment comprises the development, construction and operation of production plants including propane dehydrogenation (PDH), oxo C4 complex (butanols and 2-ethylhexanol), glacial acrylic acid (GAA), butyl acrylate (BA) and potentially other downstream products, said the statement.

Domestic market focus
The products are predominantly for the Indian market to serve a wide range of local industries, including construction, automotive and coatings.

"BASF's intention to invest in a major new site for the acrylics value chain in India clearly demonstrates our strong and long-term commitment to our Indian customers," said Martin Brudermüller, chairman of the board of executive directors, BASF SE.

"Together with the Adani Group, we would have the opportunity to provide our customers with high-quality chemicals and support them in growing their business. With our production powered by renewable energy, we would be able to minimise our impact on the environment," he added.



Right chemistry: The venture will produce several chemicals that are currently being imported. ■ REUTERS

BASF, Adani ink €2 bn petrochemicals MoU

To explore JV in acrylics value chain

PIYUSH PANDEY

MUMBAI

Germany's BASF SE (BASF) has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Adani Group to invest €2 billion or ₹16,000 crore in the acrylics value chain, making it BASF's largest investment in India to date.

The designated site would be located at Mundra port in Gujarat, said the companies in a joint statement. A feasibility study would be completed by the end of 2019 and BASF would hold majority stake in the venture.

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Narendra Modi
Prime Minister of India



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18 19 20 JANUARY 2019

Mahatma Mandir, Gandhinagar, Gujarat.

Key Events:

Roundtable Interaction with Sovereign Wealth Funds, Pension Funds & Institutional Investors

Vibrant Gujarat Global Trade Show

Gujarat's Sprint to 2022

Exhibition on Futuristic Technology

15+ Seminars

Online & Onsite B2B / B2G Networking

Inauguration by:

SHRI NARENDRA MODI

Hon'ble Prime Minister of India

18 January 2019, 09:00 a.m. onwards

“ A warm welcome to all the visiting dignitaries, investors and delegates to Gujarat - the land of opportunities. ”

Nitinbhai Patel
Deputy Chief Minister of Gujarat



PARTNER COUNTRIES



**DUTA rallies against govt**DUTA leads march against the government's policy towards higher education **Page 2****Khyala stabbing case**A day after 3 members of a family were stabbed in west Delhi's Khyala, the accused lands in police net **Page 3****A good film in quick time**Emraan Hashmi on what he learnt from Danis Tanovic and his shift towards character-driven films **Page 5****Oenology 101**A professor of wines explains how the subject is taught to future leaders of the hospitality industry **Page 6****IN BRIEF****Noida-Greater Noida metro to open on Jan 25**NEW DELHI
The Noida-Greater Noida metro line is likely to be inaugurated by Uttar Pradesh CM Yogi Adityanath on January 25, said officials of the Noida Metro Rail Corporation on Thursday. The nearly 30-km corridor of Aqua Line has been ready for a month now, with the CMRS having granted requisite approvals in December itself.

CITY ▶ PAGE 4

Air quality of Delhi-NCR			
Delhi	440	Gurugram	364
Ghaziabad	473	Faridabad	450
Noida	440	Greater Noida	436
Good 0-50	Satisfactory 51-100	Moderate 101-200	
Poor 201-300	Very poor 301-400	Severe >401	
AIR QUALITY INDEX AT 4 P.M. YESTERDAY (AVERAGE OF PAST 24 HOURS) SOURCE: CPCB			

IN BRIEF



■ R.V. MOORTHY

Street vendors' protests against civic bodies

NEW DELHI
The AAP party's street vendors wing marched till the BJP's national office on Thursday to protest against the BJP-ruled municipal corporations of Delhi for their treatment of vendors. They demanded an end to the eviction of street vendors and practice of "collection" of bribes by the municipal corporations. STAFF REPORTER

Safai karamchari end hunger strike

NEW DELHI
The safai karamchari union leaders ended their 10-day hunger strike after meeting the North body Mayor Adesh Gupta. He said demands of the sanitation workers have been accepted. Their demands included regularisation of contract workers and implementation of cashless medical service among others. STAFF REPORTER

Awareness drive for differently abled voters

NEW DELHI
Ahead of the Lok Sabha elections, the South-West Delhi district election authorities launched an awareness programme for differently abled voters on Thursday. Delhi Chief Electoral Officer Ranbir Singh said it was important to make elections "accessible, inclusive and ethical". STAFF REPORTER

North officials conduct inspection

NEW DELHI
North body Standing Committee Chairperson Veena Virmani, Commissioner Varsha Joshi and other officials inspected the Sanjay Gandhi Transport Nagar, the corporation stated. The Chairperson directed officials to submit a report on vacant plots, plots for petrol pumps and revenue from properties and parking space in the area. She said new sources of revenue will be explored. STAFF REPORTER

South body school uniform to change

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI
Uniforms worn by students in schools of the South Delhi Municipal Corporation will change in the coming academic year, a motion to this effect was passed at a house meeting, over a year after the proposal was first introduced on Thursday.

Currently, the students wear blue-colour shirts along with navy blue shorts or skirts and navy socks. A resolution to have this changed was first submitted in December 2017.

Shirts and tunics worn by students will change to a "medium check shade of maroonish-red, blue and yellow stripes on a white background" the motion read. While the skirts, pants and socks will grey-coloured, the jerseys will be maroon with grey stripes at the neck and waist.

DTA protests against govt's policy on higher education

No job security for over 4,000 ad hoc and temporary teachers, they allege

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI
The Delhi University Teachers' Association (DTA) on Thursday led a march from Ramlila Maidan to Parliament Street in protest against government's policy on higher education.

Hundreds of teachers participated in the march to highlight the plight of over 4,000 ad hoc and temporary teachers who have worked for years at DU under "insecure" conditions of service.

Barricades were put up at Jantar Mantar to stop protesting teachers from proceeding further and they courted arrest on Parliament Street. DTA condemned the Ministry of Human Resource Development for its "indifference" to the plight of the teachers and the "callous" approach of the government towards issues afflicting teachers and higher education.

"The policy thrust adopted by the MHRD is an assault on public-funded education by using every possible method to withdraw funding. The latest step is the attempts to bring in contractual jobs in DU. The DTA also condemns the MHRD for refusing to meet representatives of teachers to start a dialogue for resolution of the issues," the teachers said.

The teachers, in a memorandum to HRD Minister Prakash Javadekar, wrote that over 4,000 teachers working on temporary and ad hoc basis in colleges and departments of DU are forced to carry on teaching without any job security, annual increments, and service benefits like maternity/ paternity leave, study/sabbatical leave, etc., des-

pite satisfying all eligibility criteria and possessing high qualifications like doctorates and post-doctoral research experience.

Calling it a "human tragedy of immense proportions", they said DU's failure to make permanent recruitments in a routine manner since 2010 has assumed such a critical proportion that it is adversely impacting the quality of the teaching-learning process in Delhi University, thus affecting even the students studying in one of the premier institutions in the country which claims to offer quality

and affordable higher education. The DTA demanded that the MHRD immediately considers a roadmap for the absorption of ad hoc and temporary teachers as permanent teachers for the sake of ensuring institutional stability and dignified conditions of work essential to maintenance of standards in teaching-learning.

They have called for a two-day strike to highlight issues related to the promotion of teachers who have been denied their due for years and will stage a dharna at the university on January 18.



DTA members marched from Ramlila Maidan to Parliament Street on Thursday. ■ SANDEEP SAXENA

Very difficult to say if there will be an alliance: AAP Delhi chief

Party to get 4 units — one each for OBC, rural, doctors, RWAs

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI
Whether or not the Aam Aadmi Party and the Congress will end up aligning for the upcoming Lok Sabha elections would be "very difficult" to say, AAP Delhi convenor Gopal Rai said on Thursday.

Addressing a press conference to announce the formation of four new frontal organisations of the AAP, Mr. Rai was asked whether his party would enter into an al-

C The AAP will defeat the BJP for the seven Lok Sabha seats in Delhi, while the Congress was far behind



AAP leader Gopal Rai at a press conference in the city on Thursday. ■ R.V. MOORTHY

liance with the Congress.

"It is very difficult to say if there will be an alliance or not. But the truth is that in Delhi politics and given the situation developing in the country, the party that can defeat the BJP in a particular State will get the vote of those who want to defeat the BJP," he said. He added that the AAP would defeat the BJP for the seven Lok Sabha seats in Delhi, while the Congress

was far behind. Answering a question about former Chief Minister Sheila Dikshit taking over as Delhi Congress president on Wednesday, Mr. Rai said the people of Delhi had "given a farewell" to Ms. Dikshit after her 15 years as Chief Minister. He added that it appeared that the Congress had not only "lost ground", but was also lacking leadership. Meanwhile, Mr. Rai announced the setting up of four new units of the party — one each for OBC, rural, doctors and RWAs — taking the number of frontal organisations of the party to 22.

He added that all frontal organisations would carry out a "yatra" next month to highlight the work of the AAP government, which will complete four years on February 14.

GTB Hospital to start 'Happiness Therapy'

Aiming at developing relations between patients and staff, it includes songs, dance

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Delhi Health Minister Satyendar Jain on Thursday inaugurated a new concept — Happiness Therapy — for a speedy recovery and better healing of patients admitted at the Guru Teg Bahadur Hospital.

The therapy soon to be introduced in all Delhi government hospitals will not be available in ICU and Emergency wards.

Mr. Jain said: "Happiness Therapy involving medical staff and patients in group dance will help in better healing, speedy recovery, in-

creased harmony and bonding between the staff and patients."

He added that the therapy will include dance, music, songs, meditation, yoga and laughter under proper supervision.

A release issued by the government noted that various types of diseases like cancers, infections, injuries, developmental disorders, hypertension, diabetes, etc., have a direct and negative impact on the mental health of the patients. In order to positively impact these aspects of the mental stress of patients,

various forms of wellness therapies such as yoga, inspirational talks, dance and music can be utilised.

This is a pre-tested idea which is followed in many other countries such as the US and Brazil. In GTB Hospital, this concept has been introduced to make it the friendliest hospital under the government. The hospital chose to utilise the music and dance therapy for simplicity and ease of connectivity with patients willfully participating [as best as they can] and also for those spectating," the release stated. The Health De-

partment noted that all care is being taken to ensure that the patients are safe and can participate as per their willingness, consent and ability.

Further, guidelines are being developed to ensure no harm is done to recuperating patients. The patient and their attendants have appreciated this initiative.

Welcoming the move, the doctors said: "Anything done for the holistic care of patients is a welcome move, however, the State Health Department should also look at the welfare of its medical staff too."

NGO says death of homeless persons on rise every year; DUSIB refutes allegations

From December last to January 14, 331 unidentified bodies were found with 80% of them being homeless, data by ZIP Network show

BINDU SHAJAN PERAPPADAN DAMINI NATH
NEW DELHI

In the Capital, 331 unidentified bodies were found between December 2018 to January 14, 2019, with 80% of them being homeless, show data by the Zonal Integrated Police Network, Ministry of Home Affairs.

The death rate in December to January — among the coldest months in the Capital — has remained over 400 from 2009 with the figures rising each year for June — the hottest month during the year.

The figures show that despite various measures rolled out by the Delhi government, the death rates

have continued without halt. Last year, Delhi recorded 3,289 deaths. In 2017, the number was 2,979, 3398 in 2016, 3222 in 2015," said Sunil Kumar Aledia from Centre for Holistic Development, which also tabulated the data.

Anil Bansal of the Delhi Medical Association said most deaths are of the homeless persons who are already fighting drug abuse, neglect, inadequate food supply and diseases getting spiked with adverse weather conditions.

Meanwhile, the Delhi Urban Shelter Improvement Board (DUSIB), which operates 248 night shelters in the city, refuted the allegations. DUSIB said it "strongly re-

butts the unsubstantiated and unconfirmed" report by Centre for Holistic Development.

"The figures are exaggerated and have no direct connection with the shelter for the homeless. Due to elaborate and substantial arrangements of night shelters in the city by DUSIB, lives of several homeless persons have been saved. In the past 14 days, the average number of users in night shelters have been around 11,000 persons," the DUSIB said, adding that it has the capacity for 17,595.

DUSIB member Bipin Rai told The Hindu that the data cited by the NGO had been taken by the Zonal Integrated Police Network portal of the

Home Ministry where no cause of death has been mentioned and refers to unidentified bodies, which include those who died and went unclaimed in hospitals. The data was not of those who had died due to the cold on the streets and similar number of unidentified bodies are reported every month irrespective of the season, he added.

BJP slams govt
Meanwhile, Delhi BJP president Manoj Tiwari hit out at the AAP government over the reported deaths. He said the Arvind Kejriwal government had spent crores on night shelters but has not been able to reduce the deaths of homeless people.

Padayatra against 'govt's anti-students moves' at DU

Event coincided with death anniversary of Rohit Vemula

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Young India National Coordination Committee, a group of 60 student-youth organisations from across India, on Thursday organised a padayatra against the anti-students' moves of the government at Delhi University.

The group is planning a march to Parliament in the first week of February in connection with the issue. The event, which was held to gather support, coincided with the death anniversary of Rohit Vemula. The students said the government's education policies were leading to complete "destruction" of social justice — from



The Young India National Coordination Committee members during the protest march in New Delhi on Thursday.

■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

killing reservation to untrained atrocities — on Dalits across the country.

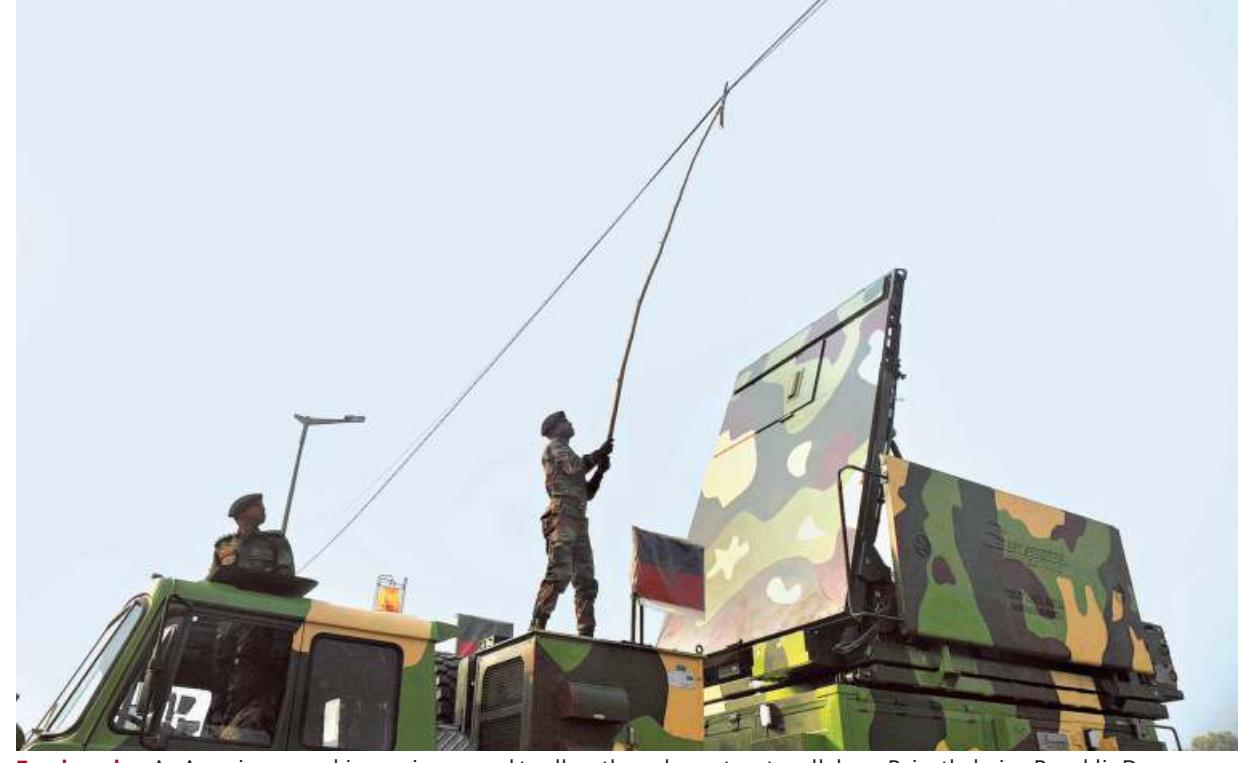
"Rohit Vemula's vision will continue to haunt the BJP government. In these dark times, he will continue to be our inspiration to defeat a communal regime," the students echoed.

JNUSU president N. Sai Balaji said the government came to power promising development and jobs for the youth but its own statistics do not show jobs. "Rather than creating new jobs, it has even failed to fill the lakhs of posts which are lying vacant

in its own sector," he said, appealing to students to set the agenda of youth and students for 2019 general election.

"It is for the first time that over 60 organisations have come together under one banner on the issue of unemployment, education, freedom of expression and women's security. The youth will play an important role in the upcoming central elections and have set their agenda, demanding jobs and education for all," said AISA Delhi president Kawalpreet Kaur.

Clearing the decks



For show day: An Army jawan pushing a wire upward to allow the radar system to roll down Rajpath during Republic Day rehearsals in New Delhi on Thursday. ■ SANDEEP SAXENA

Work on road connecting Akshardham to EPE, Saharanpur to start soon: Tiwari

'Work would be completed in 15 to 20 months'

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The foundation stone of National Highway 709 B, parts of which will connect Delhi's Akshardham to the Eastern Peripheral Expressway and further till Shamli in Uttar Pradesh, will be laid on January 26, said Delhi BJP president Manoj Tiwari.

"Today it is a matter of great pleasure for me that in reply, Mr. Gadkari approved the six-lane NH-709 B of 155 km connecting Baghpat, Shamli, Saharanpur, Geeta Colony and Khajuri Khas at a cost of ₹4,405 crore," he said.

While hitting out at the AAP government for "failing to implement development schemes" in Delhi, Mr. Tiwari said he had taken up the is-

sue of traffic jams in his constituency with Union Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari.

"Today it is a matter of great pleasure for me that in reply, Mr. Gadkari approved the six-lane NH-709 B of 155 km connecting Baghpat, Shamli, Saharanpur, Geeta Colony and Khajuri Khas at a cost of ₹4,405 crore," he said.

He added that the work would be completed in 15 to 20 months. Of the total highway, the section from Akshardham till Khajuri Khas Del-

HC bids farewell to Justice Khanna

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

The Delhi HC on Thursday bid farewell to Justice Sanjiv Khanna after his elevation to the Supreme Court.

Justice Khanna, who will be sworn in on Friday, will serve as an apex court judge till May 14, 2025.

The 58-year-old is likely to be the Chief Justice of India for six months as per seniority. Before him, Justice D.Y. Chandrachud is expected to be the CJI and his term will end on November 10, 2024. The superannuation of judges of the top court is at 65 years.

Grim figures

Number of unidentified bodies found in the Capital over the years

MONTH	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019*
January	217	287	283	233	241	251	262	245	207	273	96
February	200	214	179	225	195	188	275	233	190	226	-
March	217	244	221	182	182	221	270	242	231	237	-
April	206	217	222	198	225	242	259	275	235	249	-
May	229	259	322	312	323	240	291	288	275	267	

IN BRIEF



30 gold bars found in toilets of plane at airport

As many as 30 gold bars worth ₹56 lakh were found hidden behind mirrors of three toilets in a plane at Delhi airport, officials said on Thursday. Based on inputs, security personnel searched the plane after it arrived in Delhi from Bengaluru on Tuesday, officials said. PTI

Foreign national held at airport with live bullet

NEW DELHI

A man from Saudi Arabia has been apprehended at the Delhi airport for allegedly carrying a live bullet in his bag, an official said on Thursday. A.S. Wunaymir T. was going through security check at the Indira Gandhi International Airport on Wednesday evening when a Central Industrial Security Force jawan detected a "bullet-like object" in his luggage, the official said. PTI

69 held in 3 hours in crackdown on criminals

NOIDA

As many as 69 people were arrested within three hours in Gautam Buddha Nagar district on Thursday in a concerted crackdown on criminals by the Noida police, officials said. The arrests were made during "Operation All Out" launched by Senior Superintendent of Police Vaibhav Krishna in the district, including Noida and Greater Noida, the officials said. PTI

Two held for molesting teenage girl

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

A 19-year-old girl was allegedly molested by two persons in Connaught Place on Wednesday night. Police have arrested the accused and identified them as Ankit (24), and Praveen (25).

Police sources said they received a call from a girl around 9.30 p.m. alleging harassment by two men near Gate number-1 of Rajiv Chowk metro station. The girl in her complaint told the police that her uncle, who resides in Patel Nagar, had come to drop her at the metro station. "I was walking towards the metro station when two men passed lewd remarks at me. I told them to stop doing it following which they started troubling me. In the meantime, I also informed my uncle and he caught hold of the accused," said the girl in her complaint.

A case under Sections 354 (assault or criminal force to woman with intent to outrage her modesty), 509 (word, gesture or act intended to insult the modesty of a woman) and 34 (common intention) was registered against the duo.

DELHI TODAY

Talk: Lecture on "Cosmopolitan dreams: the making of modern Urdu literary culture in Colonial South Asia" by Prof. Jennifer Dubrow, Associate Professor of Urdu, Asian languages and literature, University of Washington. Chair: Prof. Mohammed Asaduddin, Department of English, Jamia Millia Islamia at Conference Room - I, India International Centre (IIC), 6:30 p.m.

Talk: Panel discussion on "Are print resources lifeline for the libraries? With a wider question: whether in the age of ICT the survival of print media is synonymous to survival of libraries". Panelists: Prof. Neera Chhandok; Dr. Sukrita Paul Kumar; Dr. Babli Moitra Saraf; Dr. H.K. Kaul and Ms Shafina Segon at Conference Room - II, India International Centre (IIC), 6 p.m.

Music: "Celebrating Shyam", an evening of Indian classical music in memory of V. Shyam Sunder, a mridangist and a music composer. Classical vocal by Lavanya Sundaram followed by flute recital by Pt. Rajaendra Prasanna at M.L. Bhartia Auditorium, Alliance Francaise De Delhi, 72, Lodhi Estate, 6:30 p.m.

Exhibition: "Kakaritriyo Mein Hindi Shyama Ke Ras-Rang" an art show by Manjot Singh at Exhibition Hall, Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA), 11, Mansingh Road, 11 a.m.-7 p.m.

(Mail your listings for this column at cityeditor@thehindu.co.in)

Khyala murder: daughter says parents left to bleed

Day after woman's death, husband succumbs to injuries; accused arrested

HEMANI BHANDARI
NEW DELHI

A day after three members of a family were stabbed in west Delhi's Khyala, the accused was arrested on Thursday morning. The incident left a 35-year-old woman dead on Wednesday while her husband succumbed to injuries at the hospital the next day and son battling for life.

Meanwhile, the daughter of the victims alleged that her parents were left to bleed on the street for over an hour and a half but no one took them to the hospital.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (West) Monika Bhardwaj said that the accused Mohd Saleem*, a resident of Khyala's JJ colony, was arrested from Zakhira on Thursday morning for allegedly killing Anita* and her husband Ram Pal* (41) and injuring their son Amit* (20) with a chopper.

Fateful day

Recalling the incident, the couple's 18-year-old daughter Priya*, who is five-month pregnant, said her father, brother and younger siblings - Vidushi* (8) and Raman* (11) - were at home on the fateful day, and the mother had gone to the market to buy vegetables and sweets she had asked for.

"My mother returned home and said that she wants to call the police as Saleem had misbehaved with her at the sweet shop. We told her to tell us what happened," she said.

Narrating the incident, Priya said that Saleem was



The accused in police custody on Thursday. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

coming from work when he spotted Anita at the sweet shop and made an "offensive" gesture.

"My mother then said 'tu marega kisi din' [you will die someday]. At this, he abused her and then gestured as if he would hit her. She came back home and told us all about the incident," she said.

Priya's elder brother then went to Saleem's house, located right opposite theirs, and criticised him for misbehaving with his mother. At this, Saleem brought a chopper from inside and stabbed him in the stomach. Hearing the commotion, Ram Pal and Anita intervened. Saleem stabbed them too.

Screamed for help

"He first stabbed my father in the stomach and then slashed my mother's throat. She died on the spot. He then went back to my father and did not let go of him. All

this happened within a few minutes," Priya said.

Meanwhile, the woman claimed that she took her younger sister a few metres outside the street to save her and also screamed for help. "After the attack, my parents asked my younger brother to run away from the place. He was taken to the hospital by locals in a rickshaw," she said.

The 18-year-old also said that a lot of people stood watching the incident and captured it in their phones, but none came to the family's rescue. She also alleged that her parents were left to bleed on the street for over an hour and a half, but no one took them to the hospital. "The police also reached after an hour and a half. Meanwhile, I ran to my uncle's house a few kilometres away to ask for help. By the time, I returned police had taken my parents to hospital

tal," she said.

The neighbours said that they got really scared because the accused was trying to attack everyone who tried to intervene. "I tried to intervene but he started waving the knife at me. He did the same with two others too. I took my daughter and went inside. I also fainted," said Sonia, a neighbour.

Another neighbour Manpreet said that her husband threw a few stones at the accused and that is when he fled the spot in fear of getting caught.

The daughter said that she had come home from her in-laws' house in Agra only two days ago.

Ram Pal used to work in a dye manufacturing company. Priya's younger sister is in Class II and younger brother in Class V. The elder brother used to work in a factory manufacturing bulb holders.

(*Names changed)

Man thrashed by elder sister dies

STAFF REPORTER
GHAZIABAD

A 35-year-old man from Vijay Nagar in Ghaziabad, who was allegedly beaten by his elder sister and her children with wooden stick and iron rod, succumbed to injuries at the hospital on Thursday. Family dispute was said to be the reason behind the scuffle, said the police.

According to police, the deceased Ashok Kumar runs a food kiosk near his house in Bur Bharat Nagar. On January 11, Ashok was beaten up by his sister Pushpa along with her children and son-in-law with a wooden stick and iron rod. After that Ashok was admitted to GTB hospital for treatment. But he did not respond to the treatment and died at the hospital around 11 a.m. on Thursday.

"The accused in the case has been identified as Pushpa [Ashok's sister], Mama [Pushpa's daughter], Puja [Pushpa's daughter], Dinesh [Pushpa's son] and Amit [Puja's husband]," police said.

Vijay Nagar SHO Sanjeev Kumar said "Pushpa and her family were living adjacent to Ashok's house. She also runs a food kiosk in the same locality and wanted Ashok to shift the location of his business."

Based on a complaint from Madhu, wife of the deceased, an FIR has been filed against Pushpa, Mama, Puja, Dinesh and Amit under various Sections of the IPC, said the police.

Accused molested daughter 2 yrs ago

Had evil eye on women: neighbours

HEMANI BHANDARI
NEW DELHI

Accused Mohd Saleem's daughter on Thursday told police that she was molested by her father over two years ago and he continued to pass sexual remarks, following which the police registered a case under relevant sections of Prevention of Children from Sexual Offences Act against the accused.

A senior officer said the daughter, now 20-years-old, was a minor when the alleged molestation took place.

Neighbours alleged that Saleem had an evil eye on women and often misbehaved with the residents of the locality. They also claimed that he had named three neighbours who he "wanted to kill" during a fight with his wife on Monday.

Rude to neighbours

"The husband and wife used to fight often. On January 14, she asked him not to play loud music and a fight ensued between them. As it was audible to all of us, some of us started looking at his house and he asked us to stop doing so. He said he already had three people in his list, who he wants to kill," said Sunita, a neighbour, who claimed to be one among the three.

Neighbours claimed that Saleem was always rude to neighbours and he kept staring at women. "He would often stand naked inside his house and look at women outside. He often instigated people to fight with him. He wouldn't let anyone park their vehicle outside his house or even stand on the steps," said Sonu, another neighbour adding that they never complained against him because they were scared that he'll harm them.

The neighbours claimed that while his family stayed in the area for over 10 years, he only joined them two years ago after coming back from Mumbai. They said that he had a troubled relationship with his family and used to stay on the ground floor while his wife and two children stayed on the first floor.

Talking about his behaviour with the victim's family, neighbours said that about six months ago, water bottle of victims - Anita and Ram Pal's daughter Vidushi (8) - fell from their terrace, but did not hit him. However, he got angry, took a stick and went to attack the family.

The police said that accused's wife had also approached the court to have evicted from the house.

Man threatens PM, detained

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

A tailor from central Delhi's Anand Parbat has been detained for allegedly making a threat call against PM Narendra Modi on Wednesday morning. The accused was arrested on Thursday, the police said.

The police said they received a PCR call wherein a man claimed that he has plans to kill Mr. Modi.

He also used foul language against the PM and other ministers.

The information was shared with security agencies and units of Delhi Police. The accused was identified as Mohd Muktiyar.

He was detained and during interrogation it was found that he was drunk while making the call. Further investigation is under way, the police said.

Woman's speeding car kills man on NH-8

Accused held, later released on bail

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

A 53-year-old man was killed when his bike was hit by a speeding car being driven by a 36-year-old woman on National Highway-8 in southwest Delhi's Mahipalpur on Thursday afternoon. The accused was arrested and subsequently released on bail, the police said.

Enquiry from locals revealed that the woman was speeding and is suspected to be on a phone call when the incident happened. She first hit the motorcycle from behind which she hit another truck and finally rammed the iron barrier on the side.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (South-West) Devender Arya said that the victim has been identified as Narinder Kumar, a resident of Uttram Nagar, who used to work at a leather products export company in Gurugram. The accused has been identified as Neha Siddharth Kapur, a resident of Model Town who had recently shifted to Gurugram.

The police said that they received a PCR call around 1 p.m. regarding a fatal accident.

(With inputs from Sports Bureau)



The mangled remains of the car involved in the accident. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

CBI acts against four SAI officials on graft charge

Will be arrested soon, say officials

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

of 3% for clearing bills to the tune of ₹19 lakh of Mr. Ahuja. The agency has initiated action on a tip-off," the official said.

Searches conducted

The agency conducted searches in the offices of the accused persons at SAI headquarters in Delhi's Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium.

Responding to the CBI move, SAI Director-General Neelam Kapur told *The Hindu*: "We welcome this investigation because we have zero tolerance for corruption in SAI." It is learnt that the SAI, on getting information about the alleged malpractice, had intimated the CBI for taking necessary action.

The accused public servants had demanded a cut

(With inputs from Sports Bureau)

Jewellery shop employee arrested for decamping with 3 kg of gold

Stolen jewellery recovered from house of accused

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

A 23-year-old man was arrested for allegedly decamping with three kilogram of gold which his employer had given him to handover to another trader, police said on Thursday.

The stolen gold was recovered from the house of the accused, they added.

On January 14, Mohit Agarwal, who owns a jewellery shop in Chandni Chowk, had approached the Kotwali police station with a complaint against his employer, who had gone missing with three kilogram gold, said the police.

No police verification The accused Ashish Yadav alias Nantu is a resident of Gaya district in Bihar. He was working at Shivam Jewellers in Chandni Chowk since last one month. However, his police verification was not done by the owner. He was given two boxes containing gold jewellery weighing approximately three kg and told to hand

it over to another jeweller in the same area," said a police officer.

He left the shop with the jewellery, but never returned. Based on a complaint from Mr. Agarwal, an FIR under IPC Section 408 (criminal breach of trust) was registered at Kotwali police station.

A police team under the supervision of Kotwali police station SHO Rajeev

Bhardwaj was sent to Gaya. "With the help of local police and using technical surveillance, the police team managed to nab Ashish Yadav on Wednesday. He was arrested and the entire jewellery recovered from his house. The accused was taken on one-day transit remand and produced before the court on Thursday and has been sent to jail," said a police officer.

"We came to know about the matter [the thrashing in

Security guard found dead inside school

A day after he was thrashed in public

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

A security guard in a Rohini school was found dead on the premises on Thursday, a day after he was allegedly thrashed by the family of a youth who is accused of kidnapping and raping his niece last October. The 30-year-old security guard was found hanging by his elder brother, who works in the same school, the police said.

The police stated that no note has been recovered from the spot but they have recovered the security guard's mobile phone, which is being scanned to establish whether he was investigated by someone. The family has claimed that the 30-year-old was being threatened by the brothers of the accused youth for the last few weeks.

The security guard's family members said the accused youth was out on bail and that the deceased had approached an appellate body to reconsider the youth's bail application. The plea is pending.

On Wednesday night, the youth's relatives got into an argument with the security guard. His family added that the relatives of the accused allegedly dragged the victim out of his house and thrashed him in public.

They said the 30-year-old was upset since the incident but went to work anyway.

"We came to know about the matter [the thrashing in

Man circulates obscene pictures of ex-girlfriend

Accused allegedly blackmailed victim

STAFF REPORTER
NOIDA

Police arrested a man, in his twenties, for allegedly circulating obscene pictures of his female friend on social media after their break-up. The brother of the victim filed a complaint on Wednesday in which he alleged that the man was blackmailing his family saying that he will not let the victim marry anybody else.

The accused, a resident of Sector 20, works at a private company in Noida. He was arrested on Thursday morning from his

IN BRIEF



ED opposes scribe Upendra Rai's bail plea

NEW DELHI
The ED on Thursday opposed the bail plea of scribe Upendra Rai, arrested in a money laundering case related to alleged extortion and dubious financial transactions. The Additional Sessions Judge reserved his order for Saturday on the plea after hearing arguments from both sides. PTI

Ravi Shankar Prasad discharged from AIIMS

NEW DELHI
Union Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad, who was admitted to AIIMS following complaints of nasal congestion, was discharged on Thursday. He was shifted out of the ICU on Wednesday, hospital sources said. He was admitted to the Pulmonary Medicine Department on Monday. PTI

Comedian assault: cops to reach out to YouTube

GURUGRAM
The Gurugram Police said on Thursday that it will reach out to YouTube to ascertain the authenticity of a video purportedly showing comedian Deepak Kalal being assaulted by a man near the Delhi-Gurugram toll plaza. The incident happened on Tuesday night at Rajokri border. A video of the assault was shared widely on social media. It was allegedly shot by the man's accomplice. PTI

Two drug peddlers arrested in Ghaziabad

GAZIABAD
Two alleged drug peddlers were arrested in two separate cases here on Thursday, the police said. They seized 19 kg of drugs from one of the accused and 1.5 kg of narcotics from the other following a tip-off, a senior officer said. Two separate cases have been registered and a probe is on, the police added. PTI

A river interrupted



People walking along the polluted Yamuna. The river, often called Delhi's lifeline, is gasping for life. ■ PRADEEP KUMAR

₹29 lakh solatium for kin of accident victim

The 28-year-old self-employed man was killed by a speeding car in west Delhi's Punjabi Bagh last year

NIRNIMESH KUMAR
SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

A Motor Accident Claims Tribunal (MACT) has awarded a compensation of ₹29.25 lakh to the family of a 28-year-old self-employed man who was killed by a speeding car in west Delhi's Punjabi Bagh last year.

Initial demand

The wife, father, step-mother and sister of the deceased had demanded a compensation of ₹50 lakh, submitting that the victim earned ₹15,000 per month on an average.

But the court fixed the compensation amount on



Keeping in view...
the guidelines laid down by the Delhi HC, the insurance firm is directed to deposit ₹29,25,468 with SBI, Tis Hazari courts

RAJ KUMAR
MACT Presiding Officer

the basis of the minimum wages of an unskilled worker at the time of the accident since the victim's father could not produce documents in support of his son's income.

The victim was riding pillion on a motorcycle with one of his friends when the

car hit them from behind. Both fell down.

Brought dead

The victim was declared brought dead when he was taken to a hospital for treatment.

The driver and owner of the offending vehicle said

they had been falsely implicated in the case and urged the tribunal to dismiss the claim petition.

The insurer of the car offered a compensation of ₹14 lakh but the petitioners turned it down.

Rash driving

Evidence by the two-wheeler driver as an eyewitness proved the involvement of the vehicle in the accident, and rashness and negligence on the part of the driver.

"The eyewitness has been cross-examined by the respondents in detail but to my mind, even in the cross examination, so far as the ma-

terial particulars of the accident in question are concerned, he has stuck to the point that the accident in question was caused on account of the rash and negligent driving of the offending vehicle by the driver," MACT Presiding Officer Raj Kumar said in his order.

"Keeping in view the entirety of the facts and circumstances involved in the present case, and the guidelines laid down by the Delhi High Court, the insurance company is directed to deposit the amount of ₹29,25,468 with State Bank of India, Tis Hazari courts," the Presiding Officer added.

NIA hands over case documents to Andrabi

The separatist is lodged in Tihar jail

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Thursday handed over copies of electronic and documentary evidence to pro-Pakistani separatist and Dukhtaran-e-Millat head Asiya Andrabi in a case against her for allegedly waging war against the country.

The NIA supplied the documents, filed along with the chargesheet, to Andrabi and her accomplices – Sofi Fehmeeda and Naheeda

Nasreen – on the court's directions.

The agency also informed Special Judge Rakesh Syal that a report from the Central Forensic Science Laboratory (CFSL), Chandigarh, was awaited and will be handed over to her later.

The accused, who were produced before the court, are currently lodged in Tihar jail under judicial custody. The court has now put up the matter for further hearing on March 5 for scrutiny of documents.

Aqua Line corridor likely to open on Jan 25

May be inaugurated by the UP CM

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Noida-Greater Noida metro line is likely to be inaugurated by Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on January 25, said officials of the Noida Metro Rail Corporation (NMRC) on Thursday.

The Aqua Line corridor, most likely on January 25. He is likely to travel on the metro till Sector 142 station after the inauguration," said a NMRC official.

The Aqua Line corridor has 21 stations and connects Greater Noida's Depot Station and Noida Sector 51.

However, the Aqua Line is not yet directly connected with the Delhi Metro network.

Last mile connectivity

The NMRC will provide facilities for last mile connectivity between Aqua Line and the Delhi Metro's Blue Line, NMRC officials had said earlier.



An Aqua Line metro station in Noida. ■ FILE PHOTO

POOCH CAFE



PEANUTS



HAGAR THE HORRIBLE



CALVIN AND HOBBES



TIGER



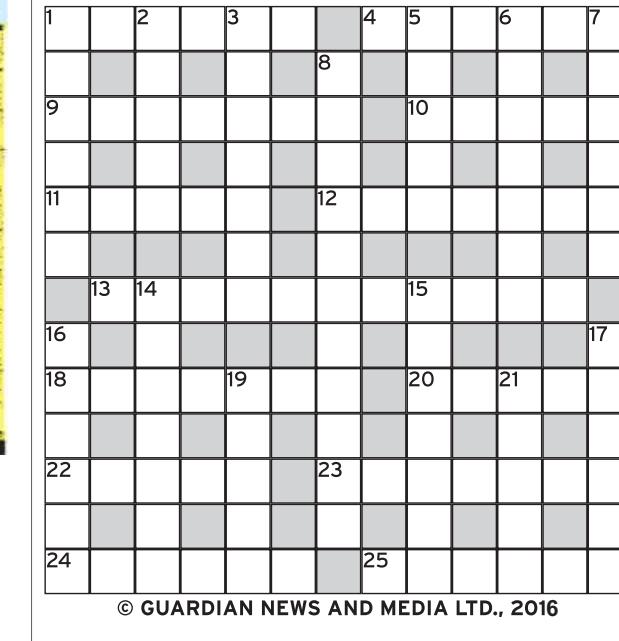
WUMO



PEARLS BEFORE SWINE



THE GUARDIAN QUICK CROSSWORD-12970



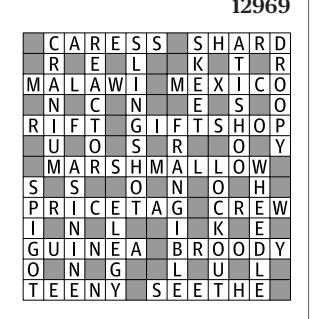
- 3 Painkilling (medicine) (7)
- 5 Message received and understood! (5)
- 6 Move up – market (7)
- 7 Property (6)
- 8 Renewal of an interest (11)
- 14 Pragmatic person (7)
- 15 Request earnestly (7)
- 16 Watercourse (6)
- 17 Altogether (6)
- 19 Country ruled by Cleopatra (5)
- 21 Deduce (5)

Solution will appear in Delhi Metro dated January 19, 2019.

Solution No. 12969

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- 18 Part exchange (5-2)
- 20 Upper leg (5)
- 22 One of the Brontë sisters (5)
- 23 Requisite (7)
- 24 Undergo genetic change (6)
- 25 Pepestuous (6)
- Down
- 1 Lower in status (6)
- 4 Italian brandy (6)
- 9 Nod once (anag) – make allowances for (7)
- 10 Twelve dozen (5)
- 11 Ready (anag) – pet (5)
- 12 Exhausted (4,3)
- 13 One looking after a golf course (11)
- 2 Large ray (5)



'You can make a good film in quick time'

Emraan Hashmi on what he learnt from Danis Tanovic and his shift towards character-driven films

ATIF KHAN

"Believe me, in creative arts, you never reach the goal post." Emraan Hashmi has come a long way from his *Footpath* days. Once known for his rakish charm, these days he is impressing with his acting prowess. After getting international attention with Danis Tanovic's *Tigers*, Emraan is once again headlining a concept-driven film where he plays the kingpin of a cheating mafia. "Films like *Murder* and *Jannat* reflect a certain time in my life when I could do those films. Then came a time when I realised that I have given the audience what I had in that space. I had enough of those experiences and it was time to move on and do something different. That is why I shifted to more character-based films. Each has its value, and you need to strike a balance."

Edited excerpts:

How different was the shooting experience of *Why Cheat India*?

It was a quick shoot of 38 days. I liked it because we kept things realistic. It is an eye-opener because in the last 50 odd years we haven't seen any substantial change in the education system. We have cheating mafia in most parts of the country. The film will be a big revelation for parents. A lot of parents don't know how they operate and they will be shocked to see their modus operandi.

Is it relevant?

I think it is very relevant to our times. As a parent, I would like to watch it for my son. Education system affects everybody. Children suffer because rote learning has become the norm. They tend to believe that what they learn in school/ college days will not have any application in real world. It is because they mug up concepts



Shifting gears: Emraan Hashmi enjoying the Delhi winter ■ PTI

without understanding them.

Were you a good student?

I would say I was an average student and was not a

distinction holder and I didn't like the stress that tests and exams bring.

Of late, your selection of films has changed dramatically

When I started, a young actor couldn't experiment much and had to follow a pattern set by stars. They made the entry in a certain way, they danced and

punched the villain. But now it is a good time to sink your teeth into the character and even the audiences want to watch the evolution of the character. They want their star to become a character. It is a great time to be in the industry, at least for me. Ten years back, *Why Cheat India* would have been perceived as an offbeat film, but today it is a mainstream film.

Recently when Shah Rukh Khan tried to play an ordinary character, the film didn't work.

I can't say it for all but those which didn't work were very low concept films. They didn't have anything engaging to offer as far as content was concerned. I am not saying that the star system is going to be abolished overnight but it has become important for a star to be backed by good writing. It is crucial to fueling their stardom.

Tigers has received international attention. How is Danis Tanovic as a director?

After spending time with him, I realised the importance of pre-production work. Of course, we have started giving attention to research but not like him. He worked on the film for five years before the shoot. As he communicates well with actors, invariably, one take is enough. He doesn't ask for multiple takes for choice. He edits the footage simultaneously and the film was ready

We had reservations and we didn't accept OTT platforms with open arms. A section felt that it will eat into the film business but slowly people realised that both can coexist.

Each has its own value. If you love the platform, the platform will give you what you intend. It is definitely a huge market and it is bigger than our film market as it is present in 190 countries. There is a tendency in our industry that we fear something new. We had reservations and we didn't accept OTT platforms with open arms. A section felt that it will eat into the film business but slowly people realised that both can coexist.

in 40 days. There is a myth that great things need time but I found there is no relationship between the number of days spent on making a film and its greatness. You can make a good film in quick time. He edited *No Man's Land*, the Oscar winner, in seven days. We take months to edit our films. I learnt that you have to be clear about your subject and be very professional.

What is your process?

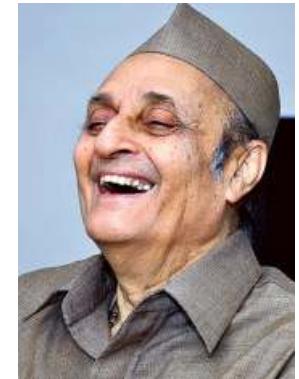
I go prepared. I have processed my scenes in my head space but I am always open to debate and discuss with the director. At times, you follow the director's vision and sometimes you convince the director to tweak something. Earlier it was only the directors but now we realise that including the writer in such discussions is also very important because it is crucial to fueling their stardom.

Speaking on the occasion, Trisha De Nyogi, CEO of Niyogi Books, said, "Even though India is the third largest publisher of English books and despite the pre-

SHORT TAKES

For the love of Hindi

Celebrating Hindi, Niyogi Books has launched its new imprint 'Bahuvachan'. The publication house released the first batch of 12 Hindi books at an event in New Delhi. The books include translations of popular titles such as "M F Husain: A Pictorial Tribute", "Kumbh Mela: Mapping the Ephemeral Megacity", "Dagars & Dhruvapad: Divine legacy", "Historical Gurudwaras of Delhi" and "Bismillah Khan: The Maestro from Benares".



sence of strong publishers in Indian languages, multi-national publishers as well as the publishing start-ups are focussing on Indian languages.

We too have joined the pursuit. We seek to hold up the banner for the multilingual nation that India is. Hindi, being one of the most spoken languages in the country, Bahuvachan endeavours to further consolidate our ethos of bringing fine publishing within reach."

Carnival is here

Zomaland

Zomaland, a three-day food and entertainment carnival, will be held at Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium in Delhi, beginning this Friday. Eataries from across the country, a line-up of musicians, comedians will be the highlights of the first edition of the festival.



A zone will be dedicated to the Flavours of India with restaurants like Biryani By Kilo, Nukkadwala, Amma Haus, Sassy Begum, Roomali Garh and Indian Republic Canteen by Veda. The Oriental Trail will include Setz, Guppy, Ping's Cafe Orient, Enoki, Wanchai by Kylin, Namaste Asia and Wok to Walk.

misogynist Babban Hussain (*Ishqya*). *Fraud Saiyyan*'s con-man Bholा, who is "completely wrong" in his way of life, presented a similar problem. Warsi's approach was to play him with utmost sincerity and honesty. He believes, what the audience will find incredulously fascinating is Bholा's honesty when lying, "with each woman he behaves like how she would want her [ideal] husband to be". Only in his solitude does one witness the true depth of the character's crookedness, and ultimately its origins, providing an organic dash of emotion, which for Warsi is integral to any good comedy.

Remixes and #MeToo

Doesn't the film sound a tad out of joint in the times of #MeToo? Both Warsi and Jha feel that this film is not part of that conversation. "The poor guy gets thrashed all the time", says Warsi and

there's nothing that "anyone would take seriously" from this film.

Speaking about the iconic 'Chamma, Chamma' song, remixed for this film (with over 64 million YouTube views), Warsi says that is one of the rare "good remixes" and is full of praise for Elli Avram, calling her "stunning" and "one of the best dancers I have ever seen". He does concede that it's impossible to get the original out of one's head. At the same time, he feels one shouldn't get too preachy about item numbers. "Whatever is iconic always returns in a new form.

Even the Ramayana is iconic but people keep using it, so is the Mahabharata, which I use all the time. So what's the harm?" asks Jha rhetorically.

For the actor, going to the movies is "an experience: go with your friends, watch a few item numbers, cars being blown-up, things flying" and the most important thing is to "have a good time". Films are finally an "escape", a medium of "entertainment and fun", so one shouldn't get "too technical". Warsi emphasises that, "not every filmmaker has to be Nietzsche".

Whatever is iconic always returns in a new form.

ARSHAD WARI

Actor

+ The man who married 13 women

Arshad Warsi on making bad guys likeable and playing a conman in his latest film *Fraud Saiyyan* produced by Prakash Jha

RUTWI NAKHWA

When producer-director Prakash Jha called about a new film, Arshad Warsi's knee-jerk response was that the prospect of doing a political drama was very boring. When Jha told him that it was a comedy, his perplexed reaction was, "political comedy"? *Fraud Saiyyan* is a markedly different film from Jha's previous productions, specially the last one – *Lipstick Under My Burkha*. "It's more Indian, set in the Hindi heartland and based on a real-life person who was having multiple affairs at the same time," says Jha. Warsi gets the chance to play a conman, ironically named Bhola Prasad Tripathi, who ends up marrying 13 women and living off their money.



Lights, camera, action: Arshad Warsi teams up with Saurabh Shukla in "Fraud Saiyyan" ■ PRASHANT WAYDANE

For the love of acting

Over the years, Warsi's reasons for choosing a project haven't changed, which he feels are a bit "weird" compared to most actors. A good script, production house and director are all important but if they come attached with bad temperaments and other

such annoyances then it is not worth it. Being lazy, he cannot force himself to work, neither is he after extreme wealth – so enjoying the entire process becomes vital, and has to make leaving the comfort of his home worthwhile. Although he admits doing a few past pro-

jects for "friends", and out of "respect", Warsi insists that one "doesn't need to sell their soul to the devil."

An important reason for Warsi accepting *Fraud Saiyyan* is his trust in Jha's experience and judgement. Although director Sourabh Shrivastava is only two films

old (*Oh, My God!*, 2008; *Tyapcaste*, 2017), Warsi relied on Jha's production house to have made the right choice. Despite being "obviously a newcomer", the actor credits Shrivastava for a job well done and believes that plenty of work will come his way in the future. However, the fi-

old over the years, Warsi has been making bad guys likeable. And he has arguably lived up to it in performances such as the now-iconic 'Tapiro' character, *Circuit* (*Munna Bhai MBBS*), and the uncouth,

overly honest *Babban Hussain* (*Ishqya*).

Shrivastava has now distanced himself from the project.

Comfortable collaborations

Speaking of co-actors, Warsi maintains that personal relationships certainly help the on-screen dynamic but cannot be a substitute for the prerequisite – good acting. Otherwise, the co-actor "may be your brother or girlfriend" but if they aren't good actors, there will be no chemistry. In *Fraud Saiyyan*, Warsi teams up with his friend and past collaborator Saurabh Shukla, who he calls "a brilliant actor" and modestly refers to himself as "not too bad". Their friendship and lack of egos on set make

"a world of difference", a naturalness and comfort in the performances, which Warsi believes the audiences will witness in the film.

Over the years, a recurring challenge for Warsi has been

making bad guys likeable.

And he has arguably lived up to it in performances such as the now-iconic 'Tapiro' character, *Circuit* (*Munna Bhai MBBS*), and the uncouth,

5 EVENTS WORTH-YOUR-WHILE



EXHIBITION

The ongoing solo show of paintings "Marred Reality", features the recent works of Jyotiprakash Sethy, is on display at Triveni Gallery. The artist through his art, talks about fundamental rights of children. The exhibition highlights the artist's distinct style and the choice of media.

VENUE: Triveni Kala Sangam, Mandi House

TIME: 11 a.m. - 8 p.m.



DESIGN FAIR

The ongoing Design Fair at Dastakar Nature Bazaar is a confluence of more than 50 designers and artists across the country. With a variety of products to choose from, it is a treat for craft lovers and design enthusiasts. In addition, the fair features workshops on crafts, cultural performances and delicious cuisines.

VENUE: Nature Bazaar, Andheria Modh

TIME: 11 a.m. - 7 p.m.



DANCE

This evening will witness "Abhisar", a Kathak musical ballet, conceptualized by Moumala Nayak at Triveni Auditorium. Abhisar is a blend of classical Kathak with the special movement and the absolute control on Laya. Moumala is an artiste of the Lucknow gharana of Kathak, and disciple of Kathak maestro Pt. Birju Maharaj.

VENUE: Triveni Kala Sangam, Mandi House

TIME: 6.30 p.m.



MUSIC

Anthony B Live

A multi-cuisine restaurant, Raasta, is hosting 'Anthony B', a Jamaican Ragga, Dancehall singer this evening. He has released a large number of albums, such as "Tribute to Legends", an album of cover versions of songs by artists like Bob Marley, The Maytals, John Lennon, Ray Charles, Elvis Presley and Ini Kamoze.

VENUE: Raasta, Aurobindo Marg, Green Park

TIME: 9 p.m. onwards

THEATRE

The White Saree

Vayam, the performing arts society, presents 'The White Saree', a Hindustani musical drama this evening. The play lays primary emphasis on the prevalent sexual and gender oppression in the present scenario and how they actively repress them to lead suffocating lives.

VENUE: The Little Theatre Group Auditorium, Copernicus Marg, Mandi House

TIME: 6 p.m.



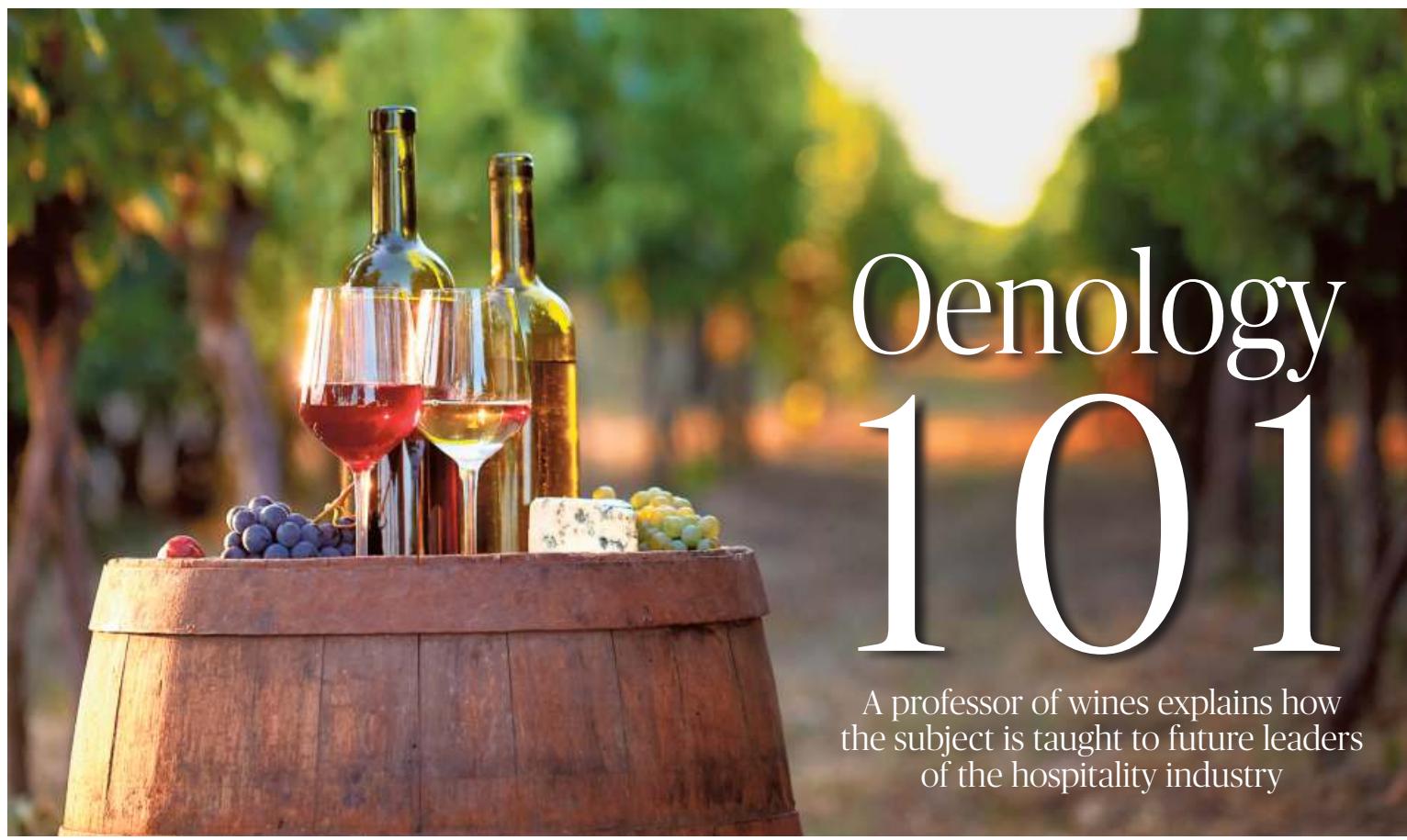
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Oenology 101

A professor of wines explains how the subject is taught to future leaders of the hospitality industry

VINCENZO AIOSI

Wine can yield a profit margin of around 70% in restaurants, making oenology an important area of expertise for future food and beverage managers. So it is no surprise that wine forms part of the curriculum at specialised hospitality management institutions.

Les Roches Global Hospitality Education in Switzerland is one such institution. Here, first-semester students of both undergraduate and postgraduate programmes attend the 'World of Oenology' course, studying the history of winemaking, viticulture, grape varieties, vinification, wine regions and appellations for four weeks.

As part of the course, there are several tasting and pairing sessions, focusing on the world's major wine regions and grapes, but also discovering the autochthonous varieties of the Swiss Valais region surrounding our cam-

pus, including visits to local producers. At the end of the course, students deliver a group presentation on a certain region and complete a written assignment.

Far and wide
With a diverse student body of over 90 different nationalities, the level of their previous wine knowledge differs drastically. While some European students, especially French, Italian and Spanish, already bring a solid understanding of wine, others might be tasting it for the first time.

In the Asia-Pacific region, where wine is not necessarily part of the tradition and culture, interest and consumption have risen dramatically, with China poised to become the second-largest market after the US. Another non-traditional wine market is Dubai, where sales are rising due to a soaring hospitality industry.

Despite different cultures and backgrounds, the course



objective is to bring all students to the same level of wine knowledge.

However, there are always some students with interest in wine that exceeds the scope of a four-week course. Hence, the Les Roches Wine Club, a student-led forum for wine enthusiasts to deepen their knowledge, discover new regions and varieties, and discuss new trends at weekly meetings, often in collaboration with producers, appellations and export promoters.

Since 2016, the Wine Club has been organising an annual Wine Expo on campus, where students and the general public can sample regional wines, meet local producers and participate in educational workshops.

Students get the opportunity to attain a certificate issued by the Association of Swiss Professional Sommeliers (ASSP) through extra-curricular coursework and individual study.

With a diverse student body of over 90 different nationalities, the level of their previous wine knowledge differs drastically



The writer is a service instructor and sommelier at Les Roches Global Hospitality Education, Switzerland. He is a holder of the 'Brevet fédéral de sommelier' qualification, and also heads the Valais chapter of the Association of Swiss Professional Sommeliers (ASSP).

Hidden gems of the Valais region
Selection Excelsus Johannisberg 2015, Jean-Claude Favre

The Swiss designation for the ancient grape variety Eastern European Sylvaner, is Johannisberg, an aromatic wine with a typical hint of almond. On an area of six hectares in an alluvial cone of the Rhône valley, the Favre family produces a racy, powerful Johannisberg with a slight bitterness, ideally paired with fish and asparagus. www.selectionexcelsus.ch

L'Enfer du Calcaire 2014, Pinot Noir, Histoire d'Enfer

Founded in 2007, the Histoire d'Enfer produces great terroir wines from low yields, combining elegance, texture, finesse, depth and taste. Their Pinot Noir 'L'Enfer du Calcaire' is a wine full of charm, with a fresh raspberry note and soft elegant tannins, built for ageing.

Mitis 2011, Amigne de Vétroz Réserve, Jean-René Germanier

Amigne is an indigenous white grape variety of Valais mainly found in Vétroz, home of the Jean-René Germanier winery. It is an expressive varietal used to produce dry wines as well as sweet wines. A highly rated sweet wine (93 Parker Points), Mitis has aromas of honey, raisins, white chocolate and apricot marmalade. A rich and complex wine, it shows a perfect freshness in the finish.



Dig in: Chicken mofongo with a side of garlic and Creole sauces and (below) platanos maduros or plantain fritters ■ GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

Mofongo is one of the mainstays of native Puerto Rican diets, and is often referred to as the king of Puerto Rican food. Every restaurant has its own variation

lorca is a thing of beauty. It is served at almost every Puerto Rican eatery, from hole-in-the-wall shops to some of the island's most refined restaurants. Usually, a *mallorca* is sliced and pressed between hot steel griddles, and is served with powdered sugar, or with eggs, ham and cheese.

● **Arroz con leche:** This traditional Puerto Rican breakfast dish literally means, 'rice with milk' or 'milk rice'. This creamy, sweet and appetising breakfast dessert is eaten through the year in Puerto Rico, and is particularly served during Christmas, the holiday season and on special occasions. *Arroz con leche* is a lip-smacking, coconut-milk sticky rice pudding, cooked with raisins, and spices, such as cinnamon sticks, nutmeg, fresh ginger and cloves. This tasty breakfast dessert is garnished with fresh coconut flakes, cinnamon powder and raisins. Another variant of *arroz con leche* is made with orange extract and dried cranberries instead of raisins.

● **Asopao:** This dish is best described as a Puerto Rican stew. It is a fragrant, yummy bowl of thick soup, prepared with *sofrito* (sauce made with cilantro, onions, peppers, and tomatoes), rice, peppers, pigeon peas, olives, meat or seafood, and an assortment of flavourings. While *asopao* is always made with rice, vegetables and *sofrito*, each Puerto Rican cook adds their own touch to the recipe. In some eateries in Puerto Rico, you can even create your own version of *asopao*, by picking your preferred protein and seasoning.

● **Mofongo:** This is one of the mainstays of native Puerto Rican diets, and is often referred to as the king of Puerto Rican food. Every restaurant has its own variation of *mofongo*. To make *mofongo*, plantains are squashed into a tight ball with salt, garlic and oil. Thereafter, fillings such as vegetables, chicken, shrimp, pork, or octopus are added inside and around the plantain orb. Puerto Ricans eat *mofongo* for any meal of the day.

Soul food in Puerto Rico

From mashed plantain to sweet sticky rice, breakfast on this Caribbean island is the perfect way to experience its melting pot of culinary traditions

PALLAVI MEHRA

The tranquil island of Puerto Rico (Spanish for 'Rich Port') in the Caribbean Sea is home to endless beaches, lively nightlife, a thriving art scene, hospitable people and delicious local cuisine.

Locally, Puerto Rican cuisine is known as 'cocina criolla', which translates to Creole cooking or Caribbean cooking. Puerto Rican food is heavily influenced by the cooking traditions of Spain, the United States and the native Taínos. As you wander through the island's rambling lanes, you will stumble onto vibrant street fairs, food markets, shacks and sophisticated restaurants serving vibrant flavours of generations past.

Puerto Ricans begin their day by devouring hearty dishes such as *arroz con leche* (sweet sticky rice),



FOR THE BEST
Mallorca, visit Cafeteria Mallorca in Old San Juan
Mofongo, head to Cafeteria Los Yeyos
Asopao and uninterrupted views of the Caribbean Sea, visit Punto de Vista Rooftop Restaurant
Caficultura, Kasalta, Edith's Cafe and Cafe del Angel are also good options



Year's first fad: The (below) Instagram post shows just an egg, and has garnered over 46 million likes ■ V RAJU

Egg is the peg

This Instagram post became an overnight Internet sensation

PRABALIKA M BORAH

Cooking up other news, the mysterious egg gang continues to grow. It's only motive is to make a world record with one ordinary photo: an egg. It's not a rare egg, free range, organic or exotic: just an everyday brown egg.

The post has 46 million likes and more than 2.6 million comments. Plus, the account @world_record_egg – now sporting a verified blue tick – has garnered over 7.3 million followers. Even Ellen DeGeneres made an appeal to the egg to be on her show.

The hashtag #egggang has reached more than 78k posts.

How does a post of an egg get such a landmark number of likes?

Clearly, there is a lot of sentiment attached to the egg. Especially in the Indian context, land of the 'eggertarians' who go all out when they see a burji. The humble egg finds a place in Chef Mandaar Sukhtankar's team as well. Mandaar is with Windmills Craftworks, and to work with him you have to pass the omelette test.

"I give them the fluffy omelette challenge. If they manage to make one without leaving it uncooked, I know they have it in them to make it to the chef level," he says.

Many 'likers' have no egg politics at all. They say they liked the post because it was the easiest and most effortless way to contribute to a post with the potential to set a record.

Umang Daga, a young design professional who comes from a vegetarian family, says he completely understands the strong sentiment that eggs trigger. "Born into a Marwari family, I have taken an unusual liking to the egg. I have been eating eggs since childhood. Now, since I work out and like to maintain my muscle mass, my coach – Bilon Aristotle – makes me eat



world_record_egg
Like 46,661,696 others
world_record_egg Let's set a world record together and get the most liked post on Instagram. Beating the current world record held by Kylie Jenner (18 million). We got this! #

about 23 eggs a day. That's my protein fix," he explains, flexing his biceps jokingly. But... what about pimples and flatulence as the common notion goes? "Every six eggs I eat, I drink a litre of water and it keeps my system clean and cool," he says. Umang isn't the only one. Alay Razvi, a lawyer, says he sometimes doesn't know how to get through his quota of 21 eggs.

"Initially, it is fun. Then it begins to become a task to eat that many. Twenty-one on a daily basis is no joke. But the coach knows best. So I just listen. Eat now... crib later," he smiles.

Meanwhile, egg lovers who insist the post deserves more attention, are going all out to support their favourite egg. Especially because the post 'appears' selfless with the handle owner choosing to remain anonymous.

Despite having just a single post, the handle has even inspired a line of merchandise, including \$40 hoodies that simply state "I liked the egg."

FRIDAY REVIEW

 www.thehindu.com
 <https://www.facebook.com/thehindu>
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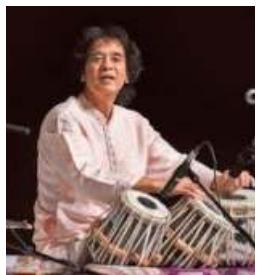


■ SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

The art of Ashwath Bhatt

From a menacing villain on the big screen to a beguiling clown on the stage, the versatile actor knows how to master a medium **Pages 6 & 7**

INSIDE



The spell of Zakir
At the birth centenary celebrations of Lala Charat Ram, a well-conceived ensemble led by Ustad Zakir Hussain mesmerised the Delhi audience
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'Enough to script a soap-opera'
Sitar maestro Partha Bose looks back at his dramatic musical journey
P9



The progressive churn
"Many Summers Apart: Gems from Contemporary Urdu Literature" opens a window to the remarkable creative dexterity of authors and poets, who swam against the tide **P11**

2 REVIEW

TIME OUT



Shabana Azmi stars in Mrinal Sen's iconic film "Ek Din Achanak"

INDIA HABITAT CENTRE

JANUARY 18

CASUARINA

A workshop titled Discourse on 37 Bodhisattva Practices by Geshe Lakhedor Continues will be conducted. This will be in collaboration with Foundation for Universal Responsibility of the Dalai Lama.

INDIA HABITAT CENTRE

JANUARY 18

STEIN AUDITORIUM

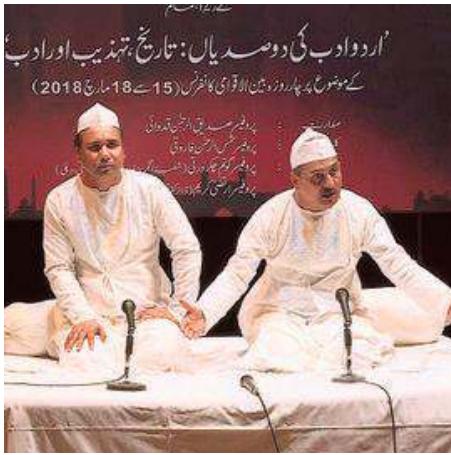
Film Club Screening "The Absence Trilogy: A Tribute to Mrinal Sen. "Ek Din Achanak", a Bengali film on a retired professor, who suddenly goes missing with no clues left behind. His family struggles to discover the reasons for his disappearance as they get back to their daily routine. This is supported by Seagull Books.

INDIA INTERNATIONAL CENTRE

JANUARY 18

CONFERENCE ROOM II

Are Print Resources Lifeline for the Libraries? will explore whether in the age of ICT the survival of print media is synonymous to survival of libraries. Panelists are Prof Neera Chandhoke; Dr Sukrita Paul Kumar; Dr. Babli Moitra Saraf; Dr. HK Kaul; and Ms Shafina Segon.



"Dastan-e-Raag Darbari" will be directed and performed by Mahmood Farooqui

INDIA HABITAT CENTRE

JANUARY 19

atrium

The Pulitzer Center, Washington DC, presents a group exhibition of Photos, Videos & Audios by Aarti Singh & Jake Naughton Both Sides of the Veil: Living and Loving in Queer India

INDIA HABITAT CENTRE

JANUARY 19

STEIN AUDITORIUM

"Dastan-e-Raag Darbari", a Hindustani play, performed by Mahmood Farooqui and Darain Shahidi. Adapted and directed by Mahmood Farooqui, this is an adaptation of Shrilal Shukla's landmark novel and is a satirical take on the politics and society of a fictional village in the post Independent era.

In "Veerbala", the feats of four female historical figures were encapsulated in an interesting way

RANEE KUMAR

The epoch-making queens of yesteryears - Kittoor Chennamma, Rudrama Devi, Rani Lakshmi Bai and Razia Sultan - were played out in geographical pattern starting from south of India to the north, chiefly through two dance forms of Bharatanatyam and Kathak, though four different forms would have been more welcome from the audience point of view.

Historical events like the queens' defence in protecting their chosen regent and defiance to British 'Doctrine of Lapse' were the crowning glory that brought these women to the forefront of history, barring Razia Sultan, who had other political issues to tackle. Trying to recreate history, especially that of constant protest and war, in a solo dance format within a short time-frame is no cakewalk for any artiste, but how the four dancers managed to do so in their medium is something to write home about.

Vidha Lal as Razia Sultan came out in flying colours in

Crowning glory



In step with history Vidha Lal as Razia Sultan; (below) Shivarajanji Harish as Kittoor Chennamma ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

more than one aspect. Her costume and change of headgear in accordance to the tone and tenor of the sequence of events was admirable. Kathak being more a show of virtuosity and less of drama, the artiste struck a

fine balance of the two without ever allowing it to be an appliquéd work. The lyrics and the abhinaya with sanchari were given equal importance and moulded beautifully within the confines of footwork presentations. She was able to capture the various facets of queen Razia's persona - the delicate beauty of her physical being (*phool kamal si komal kaya...*), her fiery tiger-like spring when confronted with a combat and her love story. Certain details like emulating Razia riding a horse and bringing it to a halt cannot be missed - they underlined Vidha's artistic creativity.

Young and energetic Dakshina Vaidyanathan Baghel fit the role of Rudrama Devi to a T. She very cleverly customised the martial dance of Telangana (Prerini Shiva tandavam) to suit her medium of Bharatanatyam which gave her a larger scope to use her footwork and gestures with rigour to suit the warring queen. Through brilliant footwork patterns to jatis (mnemonics) the dancer showcased the martial skills of queen Rudramma of Kakatiya dynasty, from horse-riding to sharp-shooting to sword and spear fights. Her mime to rhythmic utterances was eloquent. So was her (the fierce queen) changed demeanour as the affectionate queen and guardian grandmother watching her heir apparent wielding the sword, through a small window slit



of her tent. The most memorable and touching sequence was Dakshina's convincing abhinaya to the queen being attacked by a weapon in her abdomen region; her changing expressions of wrath, followed by valiant and then an expression of shooting pain and spontaneous tears as she holds her bleeding chest and struggles to draw out the weapon before she falls to the ground was superb even as it fulfilled the artistic norm of the navrasa (here it was raudra, veera, karunya, shanta respectively). The artiste was able to draw a complete personality of the queen Rudramma as a young heroic warrior, an able administrator who ushered a number of social welfare schemes for her people; a maternal mentor to her grandson, the would-be king of Kakatiyas. The regent succession issue as opposed to the British doctrine also figured here, very briefly.

Subadrakumari Chauhan's lilting poem on Jhansi-ki-rani went for a toss with being adapted to a slow music and rendition as Kathak artiste Poorna Acharya tried to portray Manikarnika (queen Lakshmi Bai's maiden name) through her childhood, marriage, widowhood and later taking up reigns of Jhansi with her minor son, refusing to yield her kingdom to the British. Poorna's attire and her change of scene like marriage denoted with a red chunri are worth a mention. The stick dance where she literally took a prop (stick) to show a fight was impressive just like the abhinaya of tying her child to her back before mounting her horse! The mime of riding her horse looked rather ridiculous as was the dancer's Kung-Fu stances adopted by the warring queen as she takes on her enemies! The optimum footwork to dance was good in bits and pieces.

Kittoor Chennamma, a popular queen of Karnataka who also fought tooth and nail for her adopted regent opposing the Doctrine of Lapse was depicted by Bharatanatyam dancer Shivarajanji Harish. The artiste had more to convey in abhinaya rather than dance per se. The nadai (gait) she adopted was the only Bharatanatyam element without props, that was prominently displayed and striking too like emulating the slow trot of a horse to mnemonics. The martial exercises (la Kalaripayattu) she adopted in the format of her dance seemed theatrical. The live orchestra with Vasudevan on the vocal was excellent. Curated by Usha RK, 'Veerbala' was hosted at India Habitat Centre.

The spell of Zakir

At the birth centenary celebrations of Lala Charat Ram, a well-conceived ensemble led by Ustad Zakir Hussain mesmerised the Delhi audience

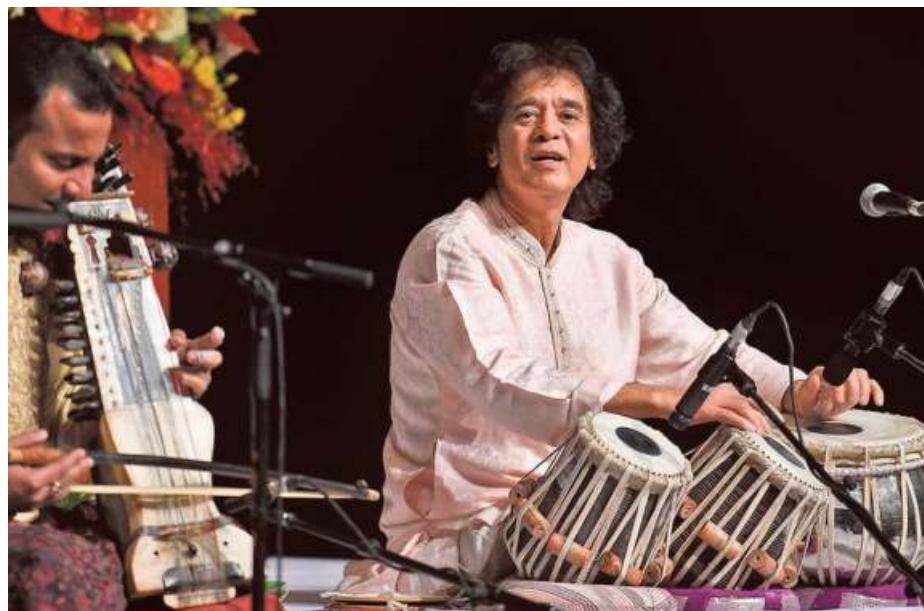
MANJARI SINHA

No piece of music can be considered complete without the able accompaniment of a right percussion instrument. The Indian musical landscape has been enriched with percussion instruments like tabla, dhol, pakhawaj, mridangam, khol, ghatam, khanjira et al. Unfortunately, the percussionist was relegated to the background in past. Musicians like Pt. Ravi Shankar and the artistry of percussionists like Ud. Alla Rakha reached the percussion support to its deserved status and the spotlight is now shining bright on the percussionists. So much so that to celebrate the birth centenary of its founder chairman Lala Charat Ram, Shriram Bharatiya Kala Kendra (SBKK) presented one of his favourite artistes, Ustad Zakir Hussain in concert at the Kamani auditorium.

The special concert had a special floral décor on the stage to greet Zakir who entered most unassumingly amongst thunderous applause. "This concert is not just mine. The transmission of knowledge now is not confined to the family only but

The most significant feature of the concert was of course Zakir's tabla solo with a clear air-brushed tone and technical flair that was striking in its training and innate understanding of rhythm and phrasing. Sabir Khan had played a quality delicate and detailed alaap of raga Saraswati in which he played the

The most significant feature of the concert was of course Zakir's tabla solo with a clear air-brushed tone and technical flair that was striking in its training and innate understanding of rhythm and phrasing.



Memorable performance Ustad Zakir Hussain in accompaniment with Sabir Khan on sarangi ■ SANDEEP SAXENA

lehera (the musical refrain) for the tabla solo by Zakir in Teentala. The pregnant pauses of Sabir's sarangi had meanings that evoked a lot of expectations from Zakir who opened with a detailed alaap like peshkara that started in *barabar ki laya*, that is at the same pace and tempo in which Sabir provided the lehera, with a kind of taut tension and *vazan* that reciprocated even the pauses of sarangi. The elongated initial round of the peshkara itself heralded a loud round of applause.

Then came the Dilli ka Quayeda, which was reversed by Ud. Habibuddin Khan of Meerut keeping the Tir kit ahead. It was followed by the "Dhir Dhir kit tak..." of Benaras and the delicacies of ma-

ny different styles. The technical virtuosity of Zakir kept the scale and proportion with strikingly intricate layakaris that pirouetted on the rhythm with quiet aplomb.

Zakir gradually turned his concert into an ensemble of remarkable appeal. The well-conceived and competently-coordinated ensemble comprised Ananth R Krishnan, the grandson and disciple of Vidwan Palghat Raghu on the mridangam, Nitin Sharma on dholak and Sabir Khan on sarangi. Nitin has studied under Ud. Allah Rakha Khan and has played with diverse genres from Jazz, Pop, Rock and Fusion to Ghazal and Bhajan ensembles. Sabir is the son and disciple of Ud. Sultan Khan, the real sultan of sarangi. When Zakir

reached the medium tempo in Teentala, he was joined by Nitin on Dholak. Nitin could reciprocate with effortless ease to all the rela-paltas of Zakir since they both learnt from the same Guru Ud. Alla Rakha Khan. They played alternately and together, when they came on a thunderous 'sam' after a chakkardar tihai.

Soothing sarangi

Ananth Krishnan joined them last with his totally tuneful and lyrical mridangam. His expertise was best showcased in the intricate work of Misra Jati.

All three of them took turns gradually going faster in drut laya (faster tempo) and played the choicest of farmaishi tihai comprising one Dha, two Dha and three Dhas

Rare ragas, rich tribute

Pt Ulhas Kashalkar and Pt Tejendra Narayan Majumdar explored the contours of Dhanasri and Gaur Sarang respectively at the birth anniversary celebrations of Swami Vivekananda in Ramakrishna Mission

SHAILAJA KHANNA

Swami Vivekananda formed the Ramakrishna Mission in 1897; today there are 201 branches all over the world. The saint was also very fond of music. A fine singer himself, he had learnt classical Indian music and enjoyed dhruvapad and kirtan. For the last 30 years or so, the Ramakrishna Mission has celebrated his birth anniversary, January 12th, with music concerts at their Delhi and Kolkata centres. This year the Delhi branch, with financial and logistic support from the Sangeet Na-

tak Akademi, had a full day-long celebration of music.

Starting with bhajans by two young prodigies, Rahul Vellal and Aryya Banik, the afternoon session commenced with a sterling sarod recital by Pt Tejendra Narayan Majumdar, accompanied by his son Indrayudh. The raga was Gaud Sarang, a combination of Gaur, which may have been conceived by the Gaur Brahmins of East India, and Sarang. Sarangs are traditionally sung at noon and post noon; appropriately Tejendra's recital started at 1.30 p.m.

Gaur Sarang is a "vakra"



Pt Ulhas Kashalkar; Pt Tejendra Narayan Majumdar

raga (the notes are not played consecutively in a vakra Raga), it can lapse very easily into Bilaval if it is not handled with care; it is regarded as being a raga of great musicianship. Tejendra handled it for a full hour and 20 minutes, with finesse; keeping to the complex chalan (rules of progression) of the raga. He

did not need to keep repeating the "Pa Re" catch phrase to establish the correct "shakal" of the raga, which he had already established with just a few masterly strokes. Laudably this recital of his had a longer 'jhala' section than usual; 'jhala' finds full expression only in sarod, sitar, veena or guitar because of their 'chikaari' strings. On flute, santoor and violin, the movement is merely a simulation.

As such one wonders why so many sarod and sitar practitioners today simply touch on the jhala, playing just a few moments of four "bol" "seedha" (three strokes on the chikaari wire) or "ulta jhala" (three strokes on the baaj wire). The three Teen talal compositions included an adaptation of the khayal, "Tore dekhe bina jiya ghabaraaye".

On the tabla was Punjab gharana stalwart Pt Yogesh Samsi, an artist who has over the years repeatedly demonstrated his erudition and dexterity. In his solo expositions

during his accompaniment, he did not need to display tabla craft but limited himself to embellishing what the sarod was doing, thus enhancing the recital immeasurably. Ably aiding his father was Indrayudh whose deep sonorous "meends" spoke of his musicality. His father shared that this was Indrayudh's first concert in Delhi, and it was an honour to perform in memory of the iconic Swami Vivekanand. The recital ended with raga Zila Kafi, a raga peculiar to the Senia gharana; here the vintage of the "gats"



respectively in the three repetitions of the same mnemonics or bols that form the tihai and the bedum tihai that doesn't even leave space for a breath, before reaching together the ultimate Sam. Although all three percussionists were masters of their specific instruments, the only problem was with the dholak, that did not sound as accurately drenched in 'sur' as the tabla and mridangam did.

The melodious interludes of sarangi came as a cooling respite in between the fireworks ignited by the percussion ensemble. Sabir, in fact, was the soul of the whole ensemble and Zakir utilised his full potential right from the beginning, even before he opened his tabla Solo, when he invited him to play the initial alaap in raga Saraswati, establishing the musical refrain for his solo in Teentala.

The ensemble's climax was a riot of wit and virtuosity. They should have stopped at this zenith only, because the following ghoomar, the Rajasthani folk song sung by Sabir Khan could not match and maintain the total tunefulness of his sarangi and marred the well built climax. Singing does not come with sarangi as 'buy one get one free'. You have to work on your voice as you do on sarangi.

Ultimately, it was not just the charisma but also the command of Zakir's hypnotising art, that the jam-packed hall sat rapt and absorbed throughout the mesmerising evening.

was over 100 years.

Pt Ulhas Kashalkar, who performed next chose the obscure raga Dhanasri in its "shuddha" form. This has become a very rare raga as it is today rendered only in conjunction with other ragas. The extant Dhanasri in the Sikh tradition is totally different from what classical artists perform, which confuses things further. The master said with a smile from the stage, that he was singing Dhanasri for another vidwan in the audience, Pt Madhup Mudgal who delights in collecting rare ragas and rare vocal compositions. The next raga was Multani, followed by a very detailed rendering of raga Sindhura, again another raga which tends to be depicted merely through its "pakar" (key phrase), and needs the treatment of an expert like Pt Ulhas Kashalkar to bring forth all facets.

Pt Ulhas Kashalkar was accompanied vocally by Dr Ojesh Pratap Singh, Pt Yogesh Samsi on tabla and Dr Vinay Mishra on harmonium.

4 VOICEOVER

The West Wind

The X and Y of it

Every generation has felt misunderstood and also compelled to explain itself through music

PRINCE FREDERICK

 Timelines about generations usually lack clarity. Compare HR-related surveys about multi-generational workforces, and you will know how confusing they can get. Definitions about Millennials are the trickiest of all.

I have heard Millennials defined as those born after the early 1990s, which marks the dawn of what we call the Information Age. Then, "babies" from early 1980s to early-2000s are sometimes lumped together as Millennials. They are also alternatively called Gen Y.

Now, the term Gen Z crops up often, representing those born between the mid-1990s and mid-2005s. And that leaves me in helpless and unlabelled territory, as I raise two individuals who missed the 2005 cutoff mark. Are they Post Gen-Zers? Or, Post Millennials? Please help.

On a serious note, efforts to understand generations, let alone define them, have always been mired in confusion and misunderstanding. Every generation feels misunderstood and also feels compelled to define itself, and they have used music to do so.

Millennial verse

Towards the end of 2018, The 1975 - don't let the name mislead you; they are not a bunch of Gen Xers, but Millennials by one of the widely-accepted definitions, and wear this fact proudly - released 'An Inquiry Into Online Relationships.' The title is self-explanatory and it couldn't have come from anyone other than a Millennial.

The video of the song 'TooTimeTooTimeTooTime' from the album especially illustrates the stratosphere they inhabit. It shows faces and people representative of all parts of the world, evoking a sense of 'Facebooking'. In words too, the song presents the almost parallel universe they inhabit. Agreed, other generations are now occupying a universe that is getting more and more online; but the Millennials occupy it as their natural habitat.

Look at the refrain of the song:

'I only called her one time, maybe it was two times?/ Don't think it was three times, can't be more than four times/ Think we need to rewind, you text that boy'



Matthew Healy of The 1975 ■ PHOTO: GETTY

sometimes/ Must be more than three times.'

Pete Townshend has been a torch-bearer for his generation, thanks to 'My Generation', which he wrote for his band The Who. Released in 1965, the song, which is structured beautifully, musically, is an apology for the Mod subculture. It is packed with the angst and anger at being misunderstood: 'People try to put us down/ (Talkin' about my generation)/ Just because we get around (Talkin' about my generation/ Things they do look awful c-cold/ (Talking about my generation)/ I hope I die before I get old/ (Talking about my generation)'

Hathes Khazvini, vocalist and lead-guitarist and frontman of the 1960s-70s band Chewing Gum Tombstone from Bangalore, which regrouped as Mara in Mumbai, says this song was one of the anthems of that generation.

"As a band, we performed 'My Generation' many a time and every time, it would be greeted with rapturous reception. The song would be extended and played for 45 minutes, with jamming, and it would still sustain audience's interest, because it was aligned with the spirit of the times. Youngsters then thought the older generation was materialistic. Every generation may be inclined to feel that way. But now, there is no counter-culture. In contrast, we were leading a revolution. We were trying to change the world. At least, we thought we were doing that." In 1971, there was Snea Yatra, a three-day Indian Woodstock in Malavli near Bombay, where Mara was one of the performing bands.

Now, let me close with a thought from Millennials:

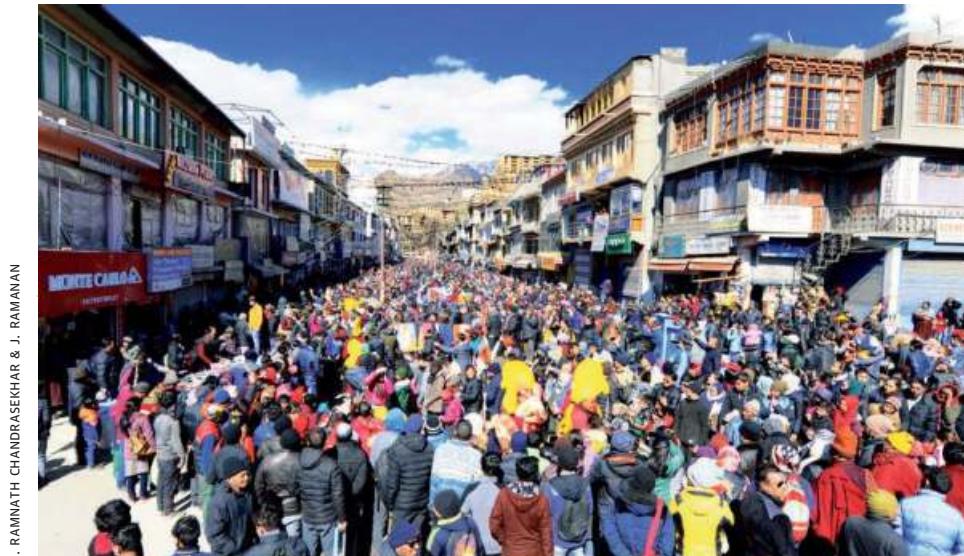
'Cause we are the helpless, selfish, one of a kind/ Millennium kids, that all wanna die...We get into trouble and lose our minds/ Something that I've heard a million times in my life/ Generation Why.'

This is the refrain of the song 'Generation Why' by Kisschasy, an alt-rock band from Down Under.

**Hidden in the Himalayas**

The Skeleton Trail

The famous Silk Route was also dangerous for the caravans

**■ Tracking a route** Diskit Monastery and Leh Bazaar

J. RAMANAN AND VRINDA RAMANAN



The world's first international cultural phenomenon took place through the 'Silk Route' that connected the Yellow River Valley of China, India and Persia, going beyond Turkey to culminate in Rome and Syria in the West. This 6,500 km-long trade route had many trails from interior destinations joining the main highway. One important branch that joined at Yarkhand, the Gateway of Central Asia, was located at the trijunction of China, India and Pakistan. This was the Southern route from the Himalayan towns of Leh and Srinagar. The six Passes from Uttarakhand Himalaya and those from Lahul and Spiti met at the Leh-Lhasa Road.

It was an arduous passage as the Ladakhi traders had to cross over the Khardung La at 5,359 metres. They journeyed

from the head of the Nubra valley through the Sasser La at 5,411 metres across the Depsang Plains at 5,376 metres to reach the cold desert of Daulat Beg Oldie (DBO) at the easternmost point of the Karakoram range and finally over the Karakoram Pass at 5,540 metres before they could reach Yarkhand.

Lack of vegetation

In spite of the harsh climate and the inhospitable terrain of the Himalayas, apart from the fear of being looted by bandits and dacoits, every year, hundreds of caravans embarked on this long journey that took several months. This Pass is still strewn with bones and skeletons of pack animals that died due to lack of vegetation. It is popularly known as the Skeleton Trail. The notorious peaks of the Karakoram, the Momosthang Kangri and the Padmanabha group of peaks tower around this trail.

The caravans carried shawls, indigo, tea, muslin, food grains, cotton, silk, saffron, dry fruits, hashish, opium and works of art from the

Western Himalaya. Precious and semi precious stones, gold dust, herbs, musk, salt and pack animals came from Tibet. Countries lying on the Silk Route have influenced the economic and cultural fabric of each other. Greek, Roman and Persian influence is evident in the Indian crafts of carpet weaving, calligraphy and cuisine.

Islam made its foray through the sufis into this Hindu kingdom and went as far as China while Buddhism travelled into Central Asia establishing itself, impacting the religious, social and ethnic culture of the trading countries. Arabs took the knowledge of mathematics and medicine from India and China and gave us Algebra. The Bactrian Camel still roams around the Nubra Valley reminding us of this past age.

The Silk Road that began in the second century, thrived for 1,600 years until the Ottoman Empire closed trade with China in the 14th Century.

The writers are ace photographers known for their travelogues

Mind Your Yoga

Breathe, to strike a balance

Control the air for that right temperature

A.G. MOHAN AND DR. GANESH
MOHAN

This is about the vital role that breath plays in

maintaining and restoring our state of well-being and Inner Ecological Balance or *Svastha*. In the ancient texts, breath was given a special status because it was understood as the link between the body, mind and the external world. In fact, we know from modern Western medicine that breath is the meeting point between the autonomic and the voluntary nervous systems. Thus, most people can hold their breath at will, for example, to dive into a swimming pool. This conscious, wilful control is a characteristic of the voluntary nervous system. But if someone does hold their breath too long, at that point, the autonomic nervous system will reassert itself and initiate breathing automatically.

In contrast, most of us cannot stop our heartbeat at will, because that is under the control of the autonomic nervous system. Thus, the conscious and voluntary meets the unconscious and involuntary in our every breath. The ancient yogic seers were the first to discover and explore this very important feature of breath, and they transmitted their discoveries through the Vedas, various Upanishads and, of course, Yogasutras.

Our state of the mind also affects our breathing as we can testify from our own experience. Fear or tension makes us breathe faster, while a calm mind is associated with slow and relaxed breathing. Since our breath alters with the fluctuations of our mind, it is possible to utilise this link and regulate the breath in order to change our state of mind.

Three Pillars of Existence

The Vedas declare that life exists in this world because of the balance of heat and cold brought about by air. Ayurveda says that the sun (heat) and the moon (cold) sustain the world, with the air acting as the link. Yoga texts figuratively represent these same forces by the three most important nadis of the subtle human physiology, called ida, pingala and sushumna. Ida represents the moon (Kapha or cold), pingala represents the sun (Pitta or heat) and sushumna represents the air (Vata). *Svastha*, then, is the state of balance between these three forces, however they are named.

The strong similarity between these different views is quite striking. But this similarity is no accident. It is so because each system created by the ancient Vedic seers represents the same – the natural, universal laws governing both the macrocosm and the microcosm but using different terms. Just as heat and cold are balanced by air in the physical world, Vata balances Pitta and Kapha in the world of a human body. Therefore, the fundamental Ayurvedic texts say that Vata is mobile and balances Pitta and Kapha. Hence, the importance of proper breathing in the health of a person. In fact, since the balance between heat and cold in a physical or physiological system is maintained by air, Vata is generally considered to be the most important factor in Ayurveda as well as in Yoga.

It is interesting to note that, by itself, air does not have the characteristic of 'hot' or 'cold.' When Air is associated with heat it becomes hot air, and when it is associated with cold it becomes cold air. Thus air, though being neither 'hot' nor 'cold' in itself, can bring about a change of temperature. In the human body, Vata (or breath) can play a similar role and bring about changes in the heat and cold within our body. In fact, in the practice of Pranayama, we use this characteristic of Vata to our benefit. The balance between heat and cold in a human body is vital for its proper functioning. Bear in mind that decrease of heat is spoken of as "cold" and that the term, cold, is relative because it refers to a reduction of heat and not to any absolute value.

The human body needs to maintain different temperatures in different parts, both internal and external. This can be compared to the earth's different temperature zones, from tropic to temperate and arctic, all of which must be in balance for a healthy world ecology. Likewise in the human body, these temperature zones must be maintained for health and to permit the normal functioning of the body. As you can see, Vata plays a major role in all of this. Therefore, the question is: Can we use this same vata, intelligently and to our own advantage, in order to balance heat (Pitta) and cold (Kapha) in our bodies?

This goal can indeed be achieved – through the right practice of pranayama.

The writers are yoga practitioners and authors of several books

Theatre Talk

Playing multiple roles

Padma Damodaran is as active behind the stage as on it

DEEPA GAHLOT



Padma Damodaran, whose recent plays as an actor include 'Chuhal', 'Jhoom Jhoom Jhumpa', 'Menghaobi: The Fair One', 'Qissebaazi' and 'The Unexpected Man', which she also co-produced and directed, makes her one of the most prolific, all-round theatre practitioners in Mumbai.

When she turned 30, Padma gave up her job as a business journalist and plunged full-time into theatre. "I thought, if I did not do it now, I never would."

The Mumbai-bred Padma, with a Masters in Economics and trained in classical dance and music, was in Delhi when she made this decision. "I entered theatre rather late in life. I had some money put away for a couple of years, but I did not have any work on hand. I had started attending some dance classes, and through that, I came to know of auditions. I was lucky, because that was the time Delhi theatre was on the upswing. I worked with many good directors like Robin Das, Kusum Haider, Bapi Bose, Amitesh Grover – new plays as well as classics – and I trained in theatre movement with Rashid Ansari. Of course, you can't make a living doing theatre in Delhi, so I did corporate workshops, a TV serial for children (Galli Galli Sim Sim) and medical exams for the Royal College, Edinburgh, you know, they get actors to play patients for their oral exams. I worked in schools, training kids in acting and movement. At some point I felt the need to either join a

repertory or study acting. I went to the U.K. to do my Masters in Acting



at East 15. I got a visa to stay on for two years, so I did a lot of theatre there too."

All this was leading to her return to Mumbai. She started working with Jehan Maneckshaw's Theatre Professionals, that was doing theatre training in schools and helped co-found the Drama School, Mumbai with him. "Then I started doing plays with Jaimini Pathak and others and reduced my work at the Drama School. I needed to focus."

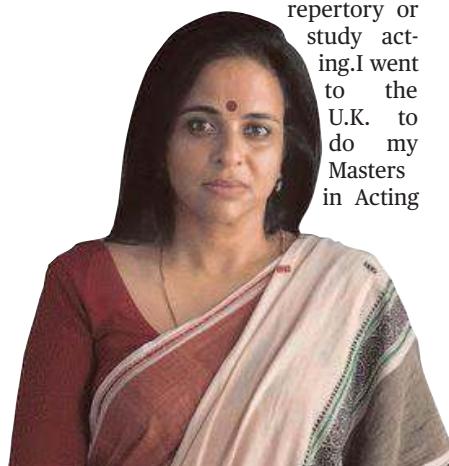
The age constraint

Once she was out there, Padma found she was not short of work in theatre. "As I continued to work, relationships developed with theatre people. At my age, though, roles are restricted. Yes, even in theatre that is a problem."

The other thing that hampers consistent work, according to her is that no group has continuous work. "There are always long gaps between shows, because getting dates at venues is so tough."

Having experienced the travails of theatre, Padma still decided to go ahead and form a group called Red Earth Stories with fellow actor Sadiya Siddiqui. "We had worked together in a play called *Ambu And Rajalakshmi*; it had only two shows, but we remained good friends. Every time we met, we talked about theatre and film, and we found that we were similar in many ways, so it just seemed natural to join hands. I always wanted to set up something of my own and it's easier if you are with someone. It gets lonely if you are working on your own and just pushing yourself all the time. We complement each other, and doing 'An Unexpected Man' was also a way of finding out if we work well together and we did."

'An Unexpected Man', by French playwright Yasmina Reza, was the second full-length play Padma directed. "I had directed Shivan Sharma's 'Given' for the Writers' Bloc Festival and enjoyed the process. A lot of people complimented me, so I was confident about directing 'An Unexpected Man'. What I was concerned about



Padma Damodaran. (Top) A scene from her play

is that it is a play strong on text, and the audience's attention span is low these days. I wanted to do something that people would want to stay and watch."

One of the reasons she is able to work on multiple projects is that she has just moved from her parents' home in a distant eastern suburb, to Versova, in west Mumbai. "It saves much time and energy; I do have a lot of energy, but I didn't want to waste it stuck in traffic jams. Now that I live close to where the rehearsals are, I have the mental focus required to rehearse two or more plays at a time. I find that the young teams that I am working with have energy and are eager to create."

Of the many plays offered to her, Padma says, she picks the ones that are good, even if her role is not great. "It's because these plays also say something; I don't mind doing an outright commercial play, but it should connect with people. When I was doing a workshop with actors some years ago, the Shakti Mills rape had just happened (in which a young journalist was raped in a derelict mill compound) and it disturbed me immensely. On my way to the venue, I found people queuing up outside a temple at seven in the morning and causing a traffic jam. I thought, do they not care about what happens in their own backyard? So, if you don't have *ras* (emotion) in your life, how can there be *ras* in theatre?"

She is in the midst of writing a play based on the caste inquisition of a woman that took place in Kerala in 1905. "It is a well-known case, books and theses have been written about it. A woman was accused of adultery and after the inquisition by Brahmin men, she and the sixty-four men she named were threatened with ex-communication. It's a fascinating story; the Raja of Cochin stopped the trial, and nobody knows what happened to the woman afterwards."

Padma has worked in nearly every aspect of theatre, she has also done production work and operated sound; Is there anything she has not tried her hands yet? "I can't operate lights," she replies.

The writer is a critic and columnist

ANUJ KUMAR

When I first saw him, Ashwath Bhatt was playing Manto on the stage of Stein Auditorium for the camera of a news website. It was a strange situation and Ashwath knew it. Because here was an act that he had prepared for stage but the camera required economy of emotions. With no director around, he was asking the cameraperson to tell him if the performance was loud. It was just a glimpse of his performance but Ashwath wanted it to be in sync with the medium. One doesn't know whether he got the desired help but it gave me a window into the process of an actor who has mastered different mediums through sheer practice. In films, he could devour anybody through his eyes without uttering a word; on the stage, he is a chameleon as exemplified by his solo act in "Ek Mulaqat Manto Se" where his seamless transformation from the writer to the characters enthralled a packed house. And in hospitals, he turns up as the veritable clown, who is committed to provide relief to cancer patients.

Beyond the limelight, the theatre has proved therapeutic for the artist whose family faced exodus from the Kashmir Valley in 1989.

Edited excerpts:**On playing Manto**

Manto is the flavour of the world but I was doing Manto even when not many were interested in his works. Manto will be relevant forever because human beings will never learn their lessons. People read Manto's stories but nobody knows about Manto's life. Nandita Das' film has opened a window but one film is not enough and can't reach everywhere. Recently, I was performing in Jalandhar and people said that the film was released in one theatre with one show. I also played a small part in the film as a tribute to the great writer.

Interestingly, costume designer Sheetal Sharma told me that at one point of time Nandita was considering me for the title role. She showed my photographs to Nandita and she said that five years back I was her Manto!

Like most of us, I got introduced to Manto through his short stories, particularly "Thanda Gosht". When I read it, I lost my sleep. It was the time when we had just left Kashmir. I felt like it is my story. Later, when I performed it on stage in 1997, my father came to watch it. Even today when he watches any of my plays, he says, it was good but not like the way you performed in "Thanda Gosht". It is not my performance, it is the stamp of Manto's writing that is etched on his mind.

In 2002, when it was staged at The Nehru Centre, London, Girish Karnad advised me that Manto cannot be staged without his stories and that I should add "Khol Do". Over the years, the play has taken different forms according to the stage it was performed on. In comparison to Stein, Odd Bird theatre is a completely different stage. During the Khoj workshop at Khrik extension, it became a site-specific work. The audience used to walk with me. I am adding a lot of text related to Manto's experience in film industry. Also what happened to him after his son died. I have done an English version of the play as well and I am planning an international tour later this year.

On theatre as therapy
We were displaced from the Valley when I was 14. It takes time to understand the trauma, at that time, a lot of anger was



A man of many parts

Ashwath Bhatt on what keeps Manto relevant, the art of red nose clowning and the therapeutic value of theatre

there. Somewhere, at some places, it still emerges. I am fortunate that theatre happened in my life because in theatre you go do an exercise and it becomes a therapy. It gives you an outlet which, unfortunately, a lot of people don't get. I don't feel like a victim, nowadays, because I work in conflict zones and know that there is so much going on in the world. I have started working on 'The Djinns of Eidgah'. It is a totally different perspective as I want to understand the other person's point of view. That's what theatre teaches you. However, it hasn't come in one day. It has been 30 years when we left our home and we didn't leave for leaving, we just left for 15-20 days, and never went back. Everybody, including our neighbours, thought that it was temporary and that it would end in five-six months. Had it been clear to the Hindus and Muslims, our histories would have been different.

On understanding the other

We didn't give up on education. We would not eat one meal but I was going to school, a proper school. I get a lot of criticism from my community (for not taking an aggressive stance) but my firm belief is that we should work on ourselves. Don't live with hatred because it affects you more than anybody else. I go to Kashmir regularly and I run theatre projects there. When a child patient sees the parent smiling, he feels relaxed. You need training for this craft. You have to save yourself as well. You should remain emotionally detached. It doesn't mean that you don't

to focus on saving our language and culture. Hating a Muslim will not save my community. It is very easy to create frictions but it is very difficult to bring people together.

On the art of red nose clowning

In India, we call them jokers but clowning is a proper art form. India needs a lot of clowns, as hospitals can become death holes. It needs to be used for public good as it liberates you from pain for sometime. Many clown practitioners are coming to India. Some people call it a European concept, but my point is if you are sick, your are sick irrespective of which part of the world you are in. I teach red nose clowning in Germany, where it is a thriving art form. Scientific research has found that clowning sessions lead to secretion of feel good hormones. It connects you to your inner child. There is a difference between being childlike and childish. I go to government hospitals to perform before young cancer patients. Their mind is not developed enough to take so much pain. But I have observed that after or during the session, they take food and medicines.

It brings huge relief to parents as well. Sometimes, it works the other way round. When a child patient sees the parent smiling, he feels relaxed. You need training for this craft. You have to save yourself as well. You should remain emotionally detached. It doesn't mean that you don't

have empathy for the patient. When my mother was suffering from cancer, I could not bring a smile to her face but my friend from Austria could.

On being the new face of Bollywood villain

I am playing Gul Badshah Khan, the chief of Orakzai tribesmen in Anurag Singh's Kesari which is based on the Battle of Saragarhi. I am pitted against Akshay Kumar who is playing the leader of Sikh soldiers of the British Army. It is a powerful role for which I had to learn horse riding and Pashto. I had to put on weight but the challenge was to wear fur-laced costumes in the 45-degree heat of Wye where a part of the film was shot.

The film industry is not aware of my clowning skills. They find my eyes intense. Vicky Kaushal told me that when I look into the camera, I am highly intimidating. Anurag felt that I get villainous roles because my eyes are intense. He reminded him that I could roll them well. And he is known for his romantic comedies as well! Having said that I am not the first one. In the past, the likes of Amrit Puri, Ajay Devgn and Kadar Khan have successfully moved from dark shades to comedy.

On dangers of typecasting

I don't want to repeat myself unless the part offered is really challenging for me as an actor. I don't mind playing General Zia-

ul-Haq. I don't carried away by frills easily - like shooting in London for seven days - as I have lived in Europe for 5-7 years. I am doing Manto; I can't be a hypocrite. So either give me enough money that could enhance my creativity or a powerful role.

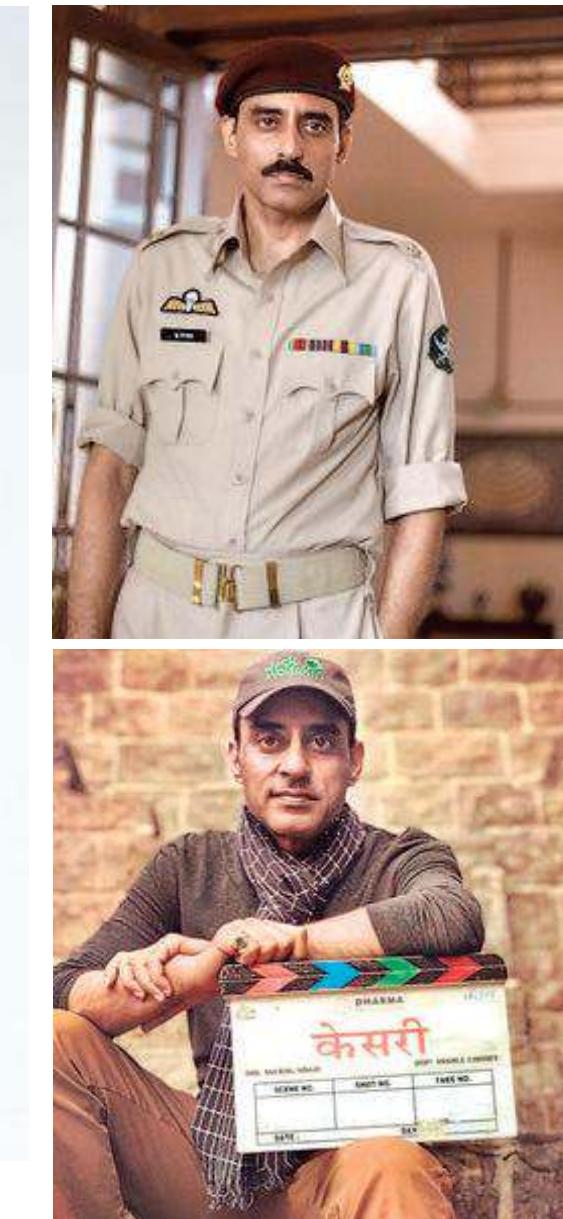
Problem is audience's patience level has come down. They get tired of watching the same faces very easily. Certain actors who were getting a lot of roles have suddenly vanished. You really have to reinvent yourself constantly for yourself and for the public. I am fearless. If I don't get substantial roles in films, I will do theatre. I have trust in stagcraft.

On acting for camera

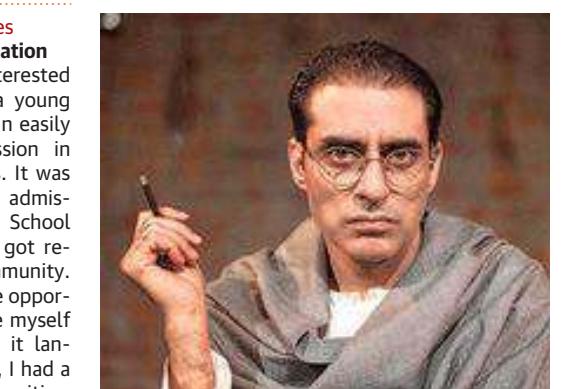
Cinema is about economy of emotions. You can't be loud here. And the actor should surrender oneself to the director. During the shoot of Raazi, I had many sleepless nights as it was a deeply layered film. I was not supposed to get any attention in the first half because it would have given away that the character is pedantic and persistent. It gets triggered by Abdul's death. So director had a vision and I had to trust her.

On working with Mira Nair

I have worked with her in Reluctant Fundamentalist. Now she is making a web series Laila. It is set in a dystopian future and is a cautionary tale that says that we should mend our ways as soon as possible.



Different shades (clockwise from left) Ashwath Bhatt as a clown; in a still from Raazi; on the sets of Kesari ■ NEELUPAL DAS

**Between the lines****On theatre education**

Though I was interested in acting from a young age, it was not an easily accepted profession in my surroundings. It was only after I got admission in National School of Drama that I got respect in my community. NSD gave me the opportunity to explore myself as a person. Be it language or diction, I had a lot of latent insecurities, NSD brought them to the surface.

I was not from the Hindi belt and when somebody pointed out it is phir and not fir and that it is not gar but ghar, it was for good. Among the teachers, it was Vibha Joshi who gave us an understanding of aesthetics. She was an institution in herself. I am also indebted to Satyadev Dubey who came to teach us in the third year. I used to lose my voice after 10 days of rehearsals. He figured out that my octave was wrong and taught me a simple exercise. Slowly, I discovered what Bharat Muni that acting is first a skill and only after years of practice that it becomes a craft.

On learning at London Academy of Music and Dramatic Arts

I am the first recipient of prestigious Inlaks foundation scholarship for Theatre/Acting. If NSD gave me the questions, LAMBDA provided me the answers. Their approach to work is very professional. I learnt voice modulation, understood Shakespeare - details like feminine endings and iambic pentameter. Gradually, I found acting is not about manipulation. It's like breathing. It is about managing your breathe, the pranashakti. Like musician and dancer, it requires years of practice but actors are usually lazy! It took me a long time to understand but I got a sense of it when I was playing Shylock in "Merchant of Venice". I took motivation from his Jew background and related it to my minority status in Kashmir Valley.

Tale that pricks the conscience

While Ashwath Bhatt credibly brings out the character of Saadat Hasan Manto in "Ek Mulaqat Manto Se", it is his dramatic narration of the writer's short story "Khol Do" which leaves a lasting impression

DIWAN SINGH BAJELI

"Ek Mulaqat Manto Se", enacted by Ashwath Bhatt as a solo act play, at Stein auditorium, India Habitat Centre, recently offered us an opportunity to watch Saadat Hasan Manto's turbulent times, his traumatic life and images of his hard-hitting fictional themes that evoked a sense of disquiet, shock and anguish. In fact, contemporary Indian stage directors have been greatly fascinated by Manto's short stories like "Toba Tek Singh", "Thanda Gosht", "Khol Do" and "Kali Salvar". As far as audiences are concerned, they have displayed an earnest desire to watch the stage version of his stories. No wonder we watch every now and again Manto's stories on the stage. His fictional works have also provided creative impulse to some playwrights. The late highly promising playwright Shahid Anwar's "Ghair Zaroori Log" with a long introduction by Habib Tanvir is based on Manto's stories which was directed by Mustaq Kak, a recipient of the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award. It was staged in most of the Indian theatre festivals held in different cities. Eminent Punjabi playwright Atamjeet Singh was inspired by Manto's "Toba Tek Singh" and wrote his own play "Rishtian Da Ki Rakhiye Na" which was staged at 8th Theatre Olympics to a jam-packed hall. Another Manto's story was the focus of attention at the 8th Theatre Olympics. "Khol Do" was created and performed by eminent theatre actor-director Maya Krishna Rao.

Myriad situations

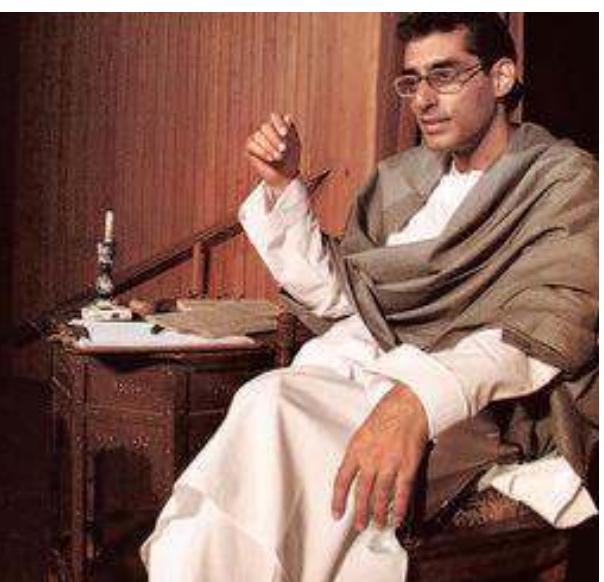
Ashwath's "Manto" and his characters are brought alive vividly on the stage, giving a new dimension to the contemporary relevance of the noted writer. The multiple situations, characters and heart-rending human situations are watched with keen interest. "Ek Mulaqat Manto Se" opens with Ashwath as Manto, smoking cigarette, pacing the floor and then introducing himself to the audience as Manto. Then he sits on the chair in his typical style and starts writing. A prolific writer, he announces that the pockets of his shirt are stuffed with stories and whenever he needs one, he brings it out in a jiffy. He tells us about his family and about his brothers who were in London whom he was able to meet late in life. His addiction to booze is

also revealed.

Talking about his commitment to stark realism and his strong defence against the charge of depicting obscenity, he says, "I don't write faith! I don't write obscenity! I only write what is there in your society!" Ashwath has ingeniously created, with weird and grotesque background sounds, expressionistic imagery to show the Partition of India. Manto is tormented with horrifying sounds, signalling his painful decision to migrate to Pakistan. In this part, the performer gives us the observation of Manto of the newly formed Pakistan. What he observes is that even business establishments of little consequence have displayed their signboards beginning with Pakistan Zindabad. This observation is replete with wit and irony.

While designing "Ek Mulaqat", Ashwath has created the right ambience, using sparingly properties-a chair, a table and diwan with pillow, placing them on the downstage in full view of the audience. He acts in an unaffected manner, pacing the

Talking about his commitment to stark realism and his strong defence against the charge of depicting obscenity, he says, "I don't write faith! I don't write obscenity! I only write what is there in your society!" These heart-breaking lines are delivered by the performer with tremendous inner force bringing to the fore what lies beneath the surface, shattering the conscience of the audience - this severe indictment of man's savagery explains director's fascination for Manto and his contemporary relevance.



IN SHORT



Sufi in spirit

"Sufiana Rang - Season 5", a three day event filled with divine music, was a message of peace and tranquillity.

Conceptualized by Ali Zaidi, the star studded event with bright hues of Lohri celebrations and enchantment of Sufi music was inaugurated by singer Dr Satinder Sartaaj.

The evening was full of scintillating songs sung by Satinder Sartaaj. He also sang his latest and one of the most loved sound track, "Udaarian!" This is the fifth song of his album, 'Seasons of Sartaaj' and has gained lot of popularity as soon as it got released.

The second day of the event was opened by Ali Zaidi along with Rajesh Khanna. This event was full of energy and passion and witnessed the most thrilling voices of Sabri Sufi brothers and Kanwar Grewal. The famous Sabri Sufi brothers inspired the audience with their majestic numbers like 'Bhar do Jholi' and "Tu Kuja Man Kuja". Kanwar Grewal regaled music lovers with his rich Sufi music.

Sufiana Rang -Season 5 was emotional and vibrant at the same time. The vivaciousness shown by the Sufi Hayat brothers made it an impeccable end of the show along with our very own Sabri brothers.



Connecting with children

School students lapped up stories written specifically for them when storyteller Kamal Kabuliwala did a dramatised reading of German literature in Hindi at the recently concluded World Book Fair in Delhi.

Interestingly, Kamal Kamal, who also teaches German at the Max Mueller Bhavan, also read from German to Hindi and English translations of the Grips theatre plays "Machhandar" and "Maggi with Ketchup" and from stories "Bagh Ka Bachcha" and "Bruno Bahadur" at the Bookaroo Litfest at Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts recently.

A picture book titled "Tum ruko, hum Afrika hokar aate hain" and other contemporary German literature, written by German authors, were also read at this festival.

Push to children's classic
A scene from the musical
SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT



The cusp of adulthood

Marked by artistic ingenuity and simple plotlines, "Emil and the Detectives" engaged the young at heart in all age groups

SHRINKHLA SAHAI

Australian theatre company Slingsby's acclaimed production *Emil and the Detectives*, premiered in India with an enthusiastic response in Delhi. Reviving a German children's classic from the last century, the play was anchored in stunning stagecraft, vivid storytelling and competent performances. Artistic ingenuity and simple plotlines blended to present a family entertainment that was captivating for children and appealed to adult sensibilities.

Once upon a time

The 1929 novel penned by Erich Kästner has been a favourite for stage and cinema adaptations, the first one dating back to 1931. *Emil and the Detectives* was a path-breaking literary classic in pre-Nazi Germany for multiple reasons. It was also the only book by Kästner that eluded censorship while the rest of his books were banned in the Nazi era due to their radical politics. A book for and about children, the work circumvents direct dissent. But it also wraps the adventures of young people around the subtle yet strong undercurrent of conflicts that remain equally relevant today. It touches upon seemingly simple yet organically complex questions like - "What makes a town home?" It was one of the earliest children's literature to position the trusting, innocent world of a child against the cunning, nefarious adult world.

While the original text is rather dark and dystopian, Slingsby's stage adaptation by Nicki Bloom sways between the comic and the dreadful.

Primarily a detective thriller, the story gently swerves into the themes of friendship, community, courage and compassion.

A boy from a small town, Emil, is entrusted with money by his mother as she sends him to visit his grandmother in the city. Tricked and robbed in the train, little Emil vows to get the money back. He is soon overwhelmed by the vast city and outsmarted by the elusive and experienced thief. As he is about to give in to helplessness, a gang of children offer to help him get justice.

Light and shadow

The production design heightens the sense of intrigue and mystery in the play. True to its signature style of immersive theatre, Slingsby uses intricate lighting and miniature cutouts, to play with scale, distance, figures and perspective. Often tipping its hat to the expressionist visuals that contextualised the original German work, dark and grand cityscapes are created through this interplay between light and shadow.

As young audience members come in to watch the show, they are invited to craft cutouts that would create the city in the play. This is an inventive device that draws the children into the theatrical world as co-creators of an imagined city.

Another striking visual is the train ride, where colourful animation gives the effect of a moving landscape. Geoff Cobham's lighting and Wendy Todd's set design transform the scenography seamlessly from dark cityscapes to vivacious playgrounds. The linear plot and layered design

come together to generate theatre anchored in magical realism.

Sound and the city

The musical score by Quincy Grant is nuanced and versatile. It complements the stage action and gives the production a neat, rhythmic quality. In an extensive chase sequence through the city, the score is layered with city sounds and racy music, punctuated by a horn that also becomes the audio cue for the children's group to communicate without raising any suspicion. While the movements get repetitive and predictable in this long scene, the music holds it together by intensifying the suspense and speed. The recorded score features 10 musicians and a choir of 40 children.

Another ingenious use of sound is the depiction of the other children apart from Emil. There is no actor to play these characters. The other children roles are created through painted portraits and voices of the children. An evocative moment emerges when each of these child-characters talk about the first time they stayed away from home. The scene is built around these vignettes as brief interview bytes and makes these invisible characters real through voice and emotion.

Morphing into multiple roles

The two-actor play features Elizabeth Hay as Emil and Tim Overton as all the other characters, including the narrator. Hay carries off the role with grace and wonder. She carves a child who is neither very childish or cute, nor wiser than his age. It's a child who takes himself se-

riously. Largely a devised production, Hay says, she got in touch with her inner child during the making of the play, "I realised I was such an anxious child, I would just want to tell my child-self to relax a bit."

The play opens with Overton's interaction with the audience in a town with 'a unicorn without a horn'. The clown-like narrator gradually transforms into Emil's mother, the wicked thief, Emil's helper and sometimes just a powerful narrating voice. Overton transitions easily into characters, giving each one a unique posture, vocal flair and identity. "It is challenging to play different characters with swift shifts," says Overton, "so I started with picking out a characteristic for each and building deeper into that."

Hay and Overton share a fascinating stage chemistry and they execute the choreography delightfully. They mime, move, dance and run with agility, precision, in coordination with each other and the music (which was developed alongside the movements during the rehearsals).

Growing up is no child's play

Slingsby's Artistic Director, Andy Packer said, "The play is about growing up, it is a journey of discovery and self-discovery, the value of friendships and learning about trust and taking risks." Navigating the adult world is every child's greatest adventure. *Emil and the Detectives* takes us to the cusp of the two worlds where adults reminisce about their childhood and children look ahead at the action that awaits them.

A meaningful exchange

Guru Ratikant Mohapatra and Sujata Mohapatra impressed with their immersive performance at Antardrishti

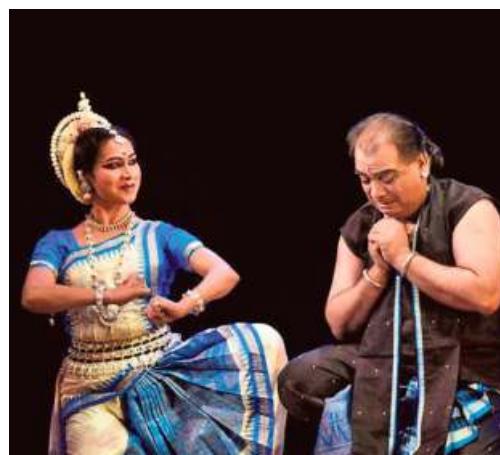
NITA VIDYARTHI

After a gap of several years, Srjan, Guru Kelucharan Mohapatra Odissi Nrityabasa from Bhubaneswar, brought to Kolkata an exclusive evening of scintillating Odissi performances. The occasion was to celebrate the 93rd birth anniversary of the legendary Guru Kelucharan Mohapatra. The programme in collaboration with UNC Charlotte, Department of Dance, USA, mounted at Uttam Mancha, offered three solo recitals - composed by Guru Kelucharan Mohapatra - in the first part by dancers in order of increasing seniority, followed by a deeply emotive and gripping mythological dance-drama "Bali Badha" (slaying of the Monkey King Bali) from the "Kishkindha Kanda" of the Ramayana.

The evening opened with "Ardhanareeswar" by Ustad Bismillah Khan Purashkar Awardee, Rajashree Prahari, a senior disciple of Guru Kelucharan Mohapatra. The petite dancer has already established herself as a competent teacher and an excellent performer. She excelled in the elegant composition set to Laxmikant Palit's music in Raag Mallika, Taal Malika, exhibiting with ease, a fine balance of tandava and lasya while infusing the entire presentation with an insightful interpretation of the spirit of the stotram. This earned her a special designation.

Especially admirable were the "Parshwashuktimandala" and bhramas in the lines "Mandaramala Kalitaalakayai" and "Prapanchashrusty-un Mukhalasyakayai". Bhakta poet Salabeg's famous composition, "Ahe Neela Shailo", a popular abhinaya in raga Arabhi, taal jati was presented with sensitivity and understanding by Guru Ratikant's student Kaustavi Sarkar.

A well-trained dancer



Fascinating coordination Guru Ratikant Mohapatra and Sujata Mohapatra as Ram and Bali

■ COURTESY SRJAN

Kaustavi, now a faculty and the collaborator of "Antardrishti", stood out for her fine abhinaya with skilful combination of Nritya using her expressive eyes to an advantage. The Draupadi's Chirharan and the Prahlad-Hiranyakashipu episodes were highly evocative and received well by the audience. It was heartening to watch young Prachi Hota from Delhi perform Saveri Pallavi, a pure dance in Ektali, raag saveri and confidently share the stage with seasoned dancers. She was able to grip the rhythmic variations that the Nritta demanded and gave a reasonably good account of herself.

The piece-de-resistance of Antardrishti was the three-character "Bali Badha" based on Tulsidas' Ramcharitmanas by leading Odissi dancers of the country. The dance-drama began with the prologue "Sri Ramanamamritam", a "Ram Bandana" in classical Odissi by Rajashree Prahari, and moved on to the backdrop of Kishkindha forest where Ram and Lakshman were hunting for Sita with the help of Sugriva and Hanuman.

Rajib Bhattacharya, a seasoned dancer could not have been a better choice for Sugriva for his dexterity in portraying myriad emotions apart from his understanding of the dance form and bringing glow to his refined execution. But the rare moments of the production (which are also memorable) are attributed to Ratikant both as the outrageous king Bali and the questioning, repenting and dying one, coalescing his technical precision with the aesthetic contents creating his own idiom of soul-stirring performance.

Wonderful dramaturgy

The production boasts of brilliant dancing, marvellous abhinaya and wonderful dramaturgy without props and character costumes-a striking and successful

signature feature of the choreographer, dancer and ace mardala player Guru Ratikant Mohapatra. The dramatisation of the narrative was set to Laxmikant Pali's music and was predominantly linear and the ambivalence between drama and theatre overpowered that of classical Odissi.

Nevertheless, the classicism and texture of Odissi movements were intelligently interwoven into the choreographic framework while focussing attention and understanding the special qualities of the individual dancers.

Sujata Mohapatra as the dignified Ram danced majestically with her stunning poised authority, providing the production few moments of meaningful exchange with Sugriva and Bali.

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'Enough to script a soap-opera'

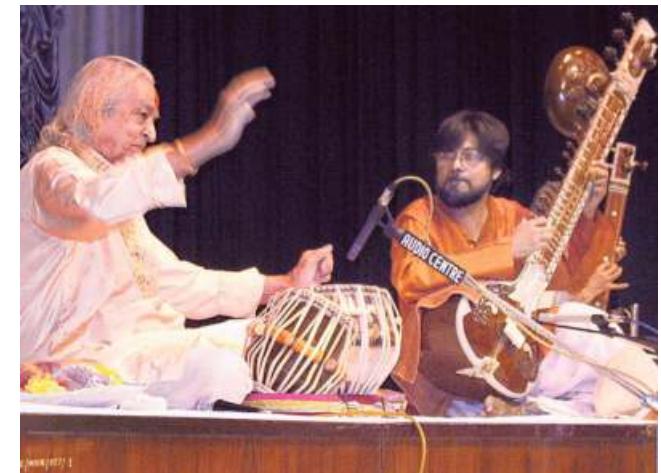
Spanning 50 years, Sitar maestro Partha Bose looks back at his dramatic musical journey

MEENA BANERJEE

Arriving at the 'Golden Milestone' of one's musical journey, that too at 56, calls for celebrations. The fans and friends of sitar virtuoso Partha Bose have been doing just that. The grand finale of the year-long celebration, packed with several musical events, was organised by Nadd, a reputed Delhi-based organisation, in association with Sanskriti Sagar, at Kolkata's GD Birla Sabhagar recently with a star-cast that saw Pandit Rajan and Sajan Mishra's soulful vocal recital, Ustad Sabir Khan's scintillating 'Forty fingers of Farukhabad' with his two sons and one disciple on four pairs of tabla and of course Partha Bose's sitar recital blessed by tabla legend Swapan Chaudhuri's edifying accompaniment.

'Yes,' said an articulate Bose, "there are numerous such instances treasured in my memory. I was destined to get opportunities to perform in the house-baithaks organised by musical greats like Pandit Bhimsen Joshi, Pandit Kishan Maharaj and the likes. On another occasion, pleased by my devotion, Maharajji himself declared, 'Mai tumhare saath tumhare shahar mein bajaunga' and accompanied me on the tabla. I knew I am blessed even as a little boy; ever since I came under the wings of my Guruji who continues to guide me till date. This 'golden milestone' is his gift to me albeit my musical journey, spanning 50 years, has seen some insurmountable rough and dramatic patches - enough to script a juicy soap-opera."

This statement was intriguing, coming from someone who hails from a business family dealing with timber and steel for generations. With an emancipated elder sister as his protector, Bose is the only son of his parents, and, apparently, was born with a golden-spoon in his mouth! Under the circumstan-



Uplifting music Partha Bose With Pandit Kishan Maharaj

es one finds it difficult to imagine any problem; because money is a great leveller and even seers had admitted eons ago that dharma is governed by artha (money). In Bose's case, music was, and is, his dharma.

"Ironically, I was introduced to this melodious way of life, accidentally. Once, my father, a hardcore businessman, fell ill. Apart from medicines, his physician advised him to pursue some hobby to help combat his ailment. He decided to learn music from scratch, at home! A well-wisher approached his close friend Pandit Monoj Shankar, an aristocrat, erudite sitar maestro, belonging to Maihar gharana, who, as a music-obsessed zamindar, had patronised musicians and big soirées once before the fateful migration from the erstwhile East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) to Kolkata. Fortunately, he decided to entertain this bizarre request and teach; as he wished to try out a sort of music therapy.

Branded sitar

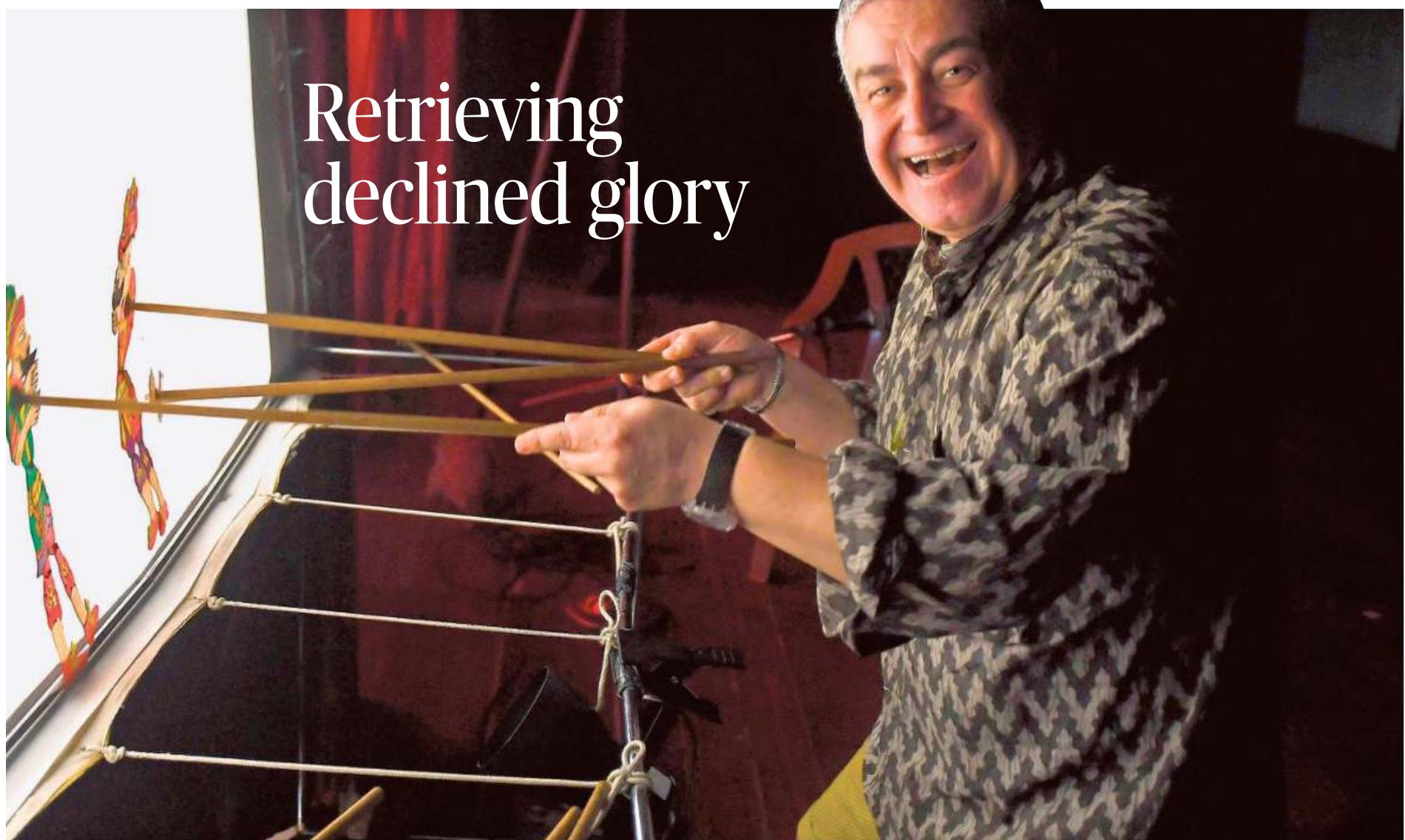
"The lessons began after procuring a branded sitar by the famed Hiren-babu which found a secure place on top of a chest of drawers after each lesson. But there was my uncle's grand piano which stood neglected in one of the rooms of our joint family's sprawling house. One day the guru was waiting for his disciple; suddenly he heard a piano which rattled the subject matter of the entire sitar lessons he had imparted so far. The culprit was summoned."

This was none but a six-year-old boy who was not allowed to do anything except eat, sleep and study. Mortally afraid of his father, Partha expected severe punishment; instead he was praised sky-high by a very fair, handsome gentleman who convinced an unwilling father to allow his son to learn music. A baby sitar was acquired; a few years later it was replaced by

another bigger branded sitar. Finally his father's precious possession, which lay in its resting place once the owner recuperated, began to sing in the hands of the Guru-Shishya. Within a 'quota system', riyaz and listening to concerts was allowed. But this was a crucial period of the erring adolescent's life who was supposed to devote most of his time to academics to procure engineering and MBA degrees because he was the heir apparent of the family business.

"By this time I was completely besotted by music and Esha Bandyopadhyay, a vocalist. Both were a great cause of concern in our conservative household where music as a full-time occupation and inter-caste marriages were unthinkable! I had a hunch that I will have to leave the cushy life. A friend narrated the inspiring life-story of Pandit Bhimsen Joshi to help take the plunge with this conviction that without the hurdles one cannot scale the peaks of melody! So, I left home in 1983; drifted from place to place before finding shelter with a loving couple as their paying guest, started giving music tuitions to survive and continue with my graduation." All this while, Guruji kept trying for truce between the warring father and son; but in vain.

"Guruji remained as the Pole Star of my musical journey's new-found sky that offered the vast expanses of listening, learning, practising, innovating, setting goals, teaching and, yes, performing - initially as my Guruji's supporting artiste, then, with his blessings, going solo. The latter took me all over the globe, in the haloed company of almost all the legendary musicians; moreover validated me to win 'Nikhil Banerjee Memorial Award.' Much later, my dying father had conceded that he was proud of his 'sitarist' son! I cherish all these memories with humility," Bose reiterated with satisfaction.



Retrieving declined glory

Turkish puppeteer Cengiz Ozek says that to rekindle interest in the art of puppetry among youngsters is to bring in themes they like

MANASA KAMBANNA

The fights between Karagoz and his learned friend Hacivat - the lead characters in Turkish shadow puppet theatre -- never seem to have an end. They like to interact with each other, but they can't resist poking, kicking and thumping each other in the face. Watching the duo ridicule one another and get into endless fights, one bursts out laughing. Situational

goes behind the shadow screen and master puppeteer Cengiz Ozek handles everything with not just ease, but also unending enthusiasm. Ozek with his colleague presented *Magic Tree*, a play based on shamanistic sources of Karagoz tradition. A practitioner of Turkish shadow theatre (regarded as an intangible cultural heritage of humanity by UNESCO in 2009) for more than three decades, Cengiz Ozek is one among the senior-most puppeteers of this form. He speaks with *The Hindu* on his improvisations of traditional Karagoz plays and the purpose of holding International puppet festivals. Excerpts from the interview:

You founded *Kukla Festivali*, the Istanbul International puppet festival in 1998. What were its founding objectives?

I conceptualised this festival in 1996 to provide a platform for a variety of puppet performances and also to reinvent Karagoz theatre in a big manner.

You see, when the rule of Ottoman Turks ceased and Turkey became a republic in the early 20th century, the art of puppetry lost patronage and was neglected. The art form had to be rescued and reinvented. For this purpose I instituted Cengiz Ozek Shadow Puppet Theatre in 1986 and ever since I have been single-mindedly making puppetry interesting and popular among the current generation, especially the youth.

I used to wonder: 'What if the popularity of puppetry had not faded? Then how Karagoz theatre would have been today?' I have not

only tried to address these questions through the Centre, festival and my productions but this thought has forced me to keep up its bygone charm and constantly reinvent.

After so much of efforts, what is the scenario in Turkey?

There are about 100 puppeteers and 200 puppet makers in Turkey. But the problem is we do not know how many of them are professionals and how many are amateurs. I am hoping that festivals motivate them to improvise and become better at their art. Rejuvenation of an art form takes time and I am optimistic that the situation will soon change for better.

Most of your plays are on current themes. Be it Love the Earth, Protect the Green or Garbage Monster.

After mastering all the traditional plays of Karagoz, a puppeteer needs to look for themes that are relevant to the age. For instance, as the globe is witnessing an environmental crisis grosser than ever, I have based some of my plays on environment.

This, however, should not be regarded as a new trend. Tradi-

tional Karagoz theatre has always been sensitive to contemporary developments and integrated them into its scripts. For example, a puppet train belonging to 19th century shows that shadow puppet theatre of Turkey showcased contemporary stories even in the past.

What are other themes that you have worked on?

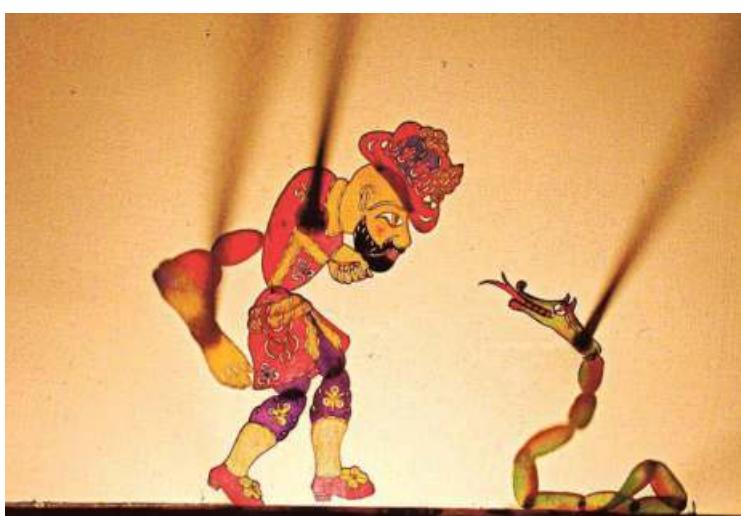
I am currently working on 'friendship' for my production -- '*The Magic Lamp*'. There are several improvisations from the traditional Karagoz theatre. The screen for this production is circular and the characters enter from all sides. Another interesting experiment in this is that the upper and lower body parts of the puppets can move independently.

Children here enjoyed the most and some of them even considered it superior to their favourite cartoons on TV.

(Laughing) True, the technique is same in both puppetry and animation. In the age of technology when everybody is accustomed to things working in a certain manner, one has to pay attention to it. One way is to engage them by showing things that they are familiar with. In one of my plays, a scene begins by pressing a button first. As we are used to playing computer games, I have tried to mimic the way we use gadgets.

Here is the key: Attract youngsters towards these neglected art forms by bringing things that they are interested in into the plays. It will bring wonders.

For me it has.



Taking authentic tradition forward A scene from *Magic Tree*; (above) Cengiz Ozek manipulating the puppets
■ PHOTO: SUDHAKARA JAIN

humour is the USP of Karagoz plays. Children fell off their seats, jumped and laughed their hearts out, as they watched this show as part of the Dhaatu International Puppet Festival.

Managing the tiny puppets and instruments on one side, and creating a variety of sounds and delivering dialogues on the other, is no doubt a mammoth task. So much



Going Native

The progressive churn

"Many Summers Apart: Gems from Contemporary Urdu Literature" opens a window to the remarkable creative dexterity of authors and poets who found it easier to swim against the tide

SHAFY KIDWAI

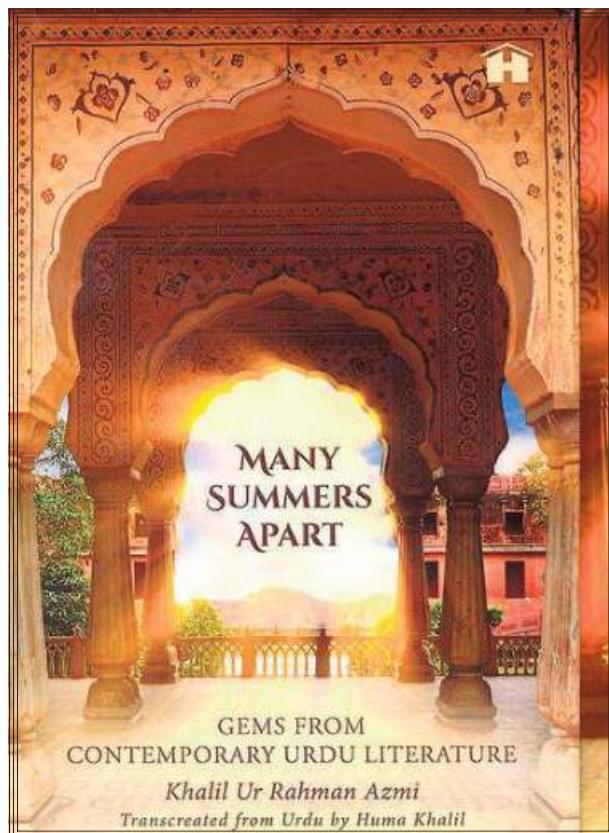
The hatred-inducing stories dished out by interactive social media with vehemence make the situation of "being lied too" socially and culturally acceptable. When facts are replaced by 'factoids', it simply means that the facts are presented with an agenda or spin. Amidst the deafening din, it is time for a pause. One ought to look for texts that take us away from depravity to decency. Who could expose us to the intriguing and creative possibility of the universe we live in? They are the poets who produce awe-inspiring spectacle to thwart the approaching horizon of turbulence and uncertainty and two of such poets are widely acclaimed Urdu poets Kaifi Azmi and Majrooh Sultanpuri whose birth centenary falls in 2019. Their oeuvre is unparalleled in its portrayal of human suffering and their poetry, etched deeply in the collective mind of India and it is analysed with a marked sense of critical acuity by a renowned Urdu critic and poet Khalilur Rahman Azmi in his trailblazing thesis on "Progressive Writers' Movement in Urdu".

New perspective

His seminal book is astutely and perceptively transcreated by a promising translator and his daughter Huma Mirza and her book titled "Many Summers Apart: Gems from



Kaifi Azmi's poetry despite being mired in social consciousness provides a unique perspective on various shades of human replete witty aphorisms, vivid metaphors, and fertile expressions make his poems quite readable



Contemporary Urdu Literature", is recently published by Hay House Publishing, Delhi. It is certainly more than a translation as Huma meticulously updated to unravel never-before told layered story of Manto, Firaq Gorakhpuri, Majaz, Faiz, Majrooh, Sardar Jafri, Akhtarul Iman, Kaifi Azmi, Sahir Ludhianvi and Ismat Chughtai, etc.

Celebrating two stalwarts
The book, skilfully divided into six parts, delves deep into remarkable creative dexterity of the authors and poets who found it easier to swim against the tide. They had the power to mobilise thousands in a single stroke and persuaded people to go beyond the desire to escape from familiar surroundings. The book does zero in on political allegiance of the authors that somewhat made them insensitive to literary parameters and convictions. Khalilur Rahman Azmi (1927-1978) was the first critic who analysed the awe-inspiring contribution of the Progressive Writers' Movement with remarkable thoroughness and his magnum opus, "Urdu Mein Taraqqi Pasand Tehreek", according to Professor Gopichand Narang, is a dynamic encyclopedic work without which no account of progress-

sives can be written in the future. The most powerful literary movement of the century, "Progressive Movement" had created waves in Urdu and other Indian language and Khalilur Rahman's book, first published in 1972, gives a graphic and candid account with an occasional rhetorical flourish.

Since it is the birth centenary year of Kaifi Azmi and Majrooh Sultanpuri, it looks pertinent to see whether Khalilur Rahman's assessment, made about half a century ago, still withstand the assumptions of the post-modern critical theory. Majrooh's ghazals and the songs, he wrote for innumerable films, are a cherished part of our living memory. Taking a cue from Qazi Abdul Ghaffar who described Majrooh as the brightest burning ember in the house of fire emanating from the younger generation of India, Khalilur Rahman Azmi asserts: "Majrooh Sultanpuri bared his soul in the most euphoric style of ghazal writing and was one of those progressives who wrote less and probably because it was excellent".

Great communicator

Yes, Majrooh wrote less than one hundred ghazals. How could this nuanced but

palty output reinvigorate ghazal? This question escapes the attention but the author fully alive to critical theories aptly remarks: "All this poetry revolves around prism, cage, chains, and gallows and he indulged himself in various narratives of this nature." Notwithstanding widespread popularity that Majrooh still enjoys, his ghazals do not acquaint us with a wide spectrum of human predicaments. Khalil Sahab sounds convincing when he concludes that Majrooh was born as a lyricist and a hugely successful one, apart from being known for creating one of the best-known verses in Urdu poetry.

Kaifi Azmi's poetry despite being mired in social consciousness provides a unique perspective on various shades of human replete witty aphorisms, vivid metaphors, and fertile expressions make his poems quite readable. Sometimes he becomes too loud and many highbrow critics describe him as a rhymester. Contrary to this, the author cogently argues, "Kaifi's tone is melodious and passionate with the breadth of vision and a complete grasp of the contemporary situation. His voice also has preaching elements like Jafri (Ali Sardar Jafri) but marvelously communicates his feelings without being unpleasant and discordant."

Sahir Ludhianvi's enormous popularity did not deter him from asserting that his poetry is generally devoid of depth of thought but certainly has a distinctive brilliance. Faiz, Makhdoom, Ali Sardar Jafri, Jaan Nisar Akhtar, Jazbi and a couple of other prominent progressive poets have been made the object of a single pristine look.

Insightful book

The third and fourth part discusses the short story and novel committed to social realism and the criticism drawing its sustenance from Marxist critical insights forms the last part of the book

A careful sifting of the book makes it clear that it does pick up gems from the contemporary Urdu literature. It is a thoroughly enjoyable and insightful book and Huma's updates enlivens the discussion.

Telling Voices

Connecting with children

Bill Martin junior, the late children's storyteller, explained lucidly how writing can help little ones understand who they are

SUDHAMAHI REGUNATHAN

"The satisfaction of writing is that it deals with the chaos of the world and gives it order. And that's all a paragraph does. That's all a story does. The reason that I keep writing year after year after year is because I believe in children. It's a wonderful thing to observe how children cope, deal with the realities and develop selfhood. I would like to think that these books help kids know who they are. That's a pretty big order, but that's what I hope for," are the words of Bill Martin Junior, who was a great story teller for children. Bill Martin who died in 2004, has many books to his credit but the one which is an evergreen hit is titled "Brown Bear Brown Bear"....Animated in several ways on the net, this book continues to offer teachers and workshops endless resource material.

Martin has said in an interview about this book, "Ideas for books come in many ways.



Most of them are just sudden insights. I remember when I wrote 'Brown Bear', I was riding on a train. I heard, "Brown bear, brown bear, what do you see?" And I grabbed my pen. I didn't have anything to write on, but I did have a newspaper. I folded the newspaper and wrote crosswise, "Brown bear, brown bear, what do you see?" I thought for a minute, and I either heard or imagined, "I see a red bird looking at me. Red bird, red bird, what do you see? I see a yellow duck looking at me." The pattern is there. The book was broken. All I had to do was write it out. It was finished in 15 minutes."

Rich legacy

This author whose books have sold in millions and continue to sell, has left his legacy for aspiring writers," I had a professor who one day came to me carrying six books and said, "Bill, I want you to read these books. If you're going to be a writer, you've got to be a reader...One of the books was Northwest Passage by Kenneth Roberts. I figured if he really wanted me to be a writer - which had never occurred to me - that I would read one book. So, I started on Northwest Passage and read week after week after week after week after week. And one night, I was reading, still, at midnight. I was getting near the end of the book. Maybe it wasn't so much the story that I was trying to ingest; it was the fact that I was about to complete my first book. At four o'clock in the morning, I remember, I finished reading the book. I was so overjoyed, I couldn't sleep and was up early. I went to school to tell Mr. Rowan that I had read the book.

From that time on, reading books became easier. I knew it could be done. I still am a very slow reader, but I'm an avid reader...,

Looking back

'I follow a simple belief: next is the best'

Shaad Ali on the art of making remakes and how romance is a tricky genre

MURTAZA ALI KHAN

Shaad Ali was in Delhi on the second day of the ongoing Diorama International Film Festival where his 2018 film *Soorma*, a sport biopic on the life of India's hockey star Sandeep Singh starring Diljit Dosanjh and Taapsee Pannu, was screened. Son of the legendary Indian filmmaker Muzaffar Ali, he started his career as an assistant director to Mani Ratnam on *Dil Se* (1998). He subsequently made his directorial debut with the 2002 film *Saathiya*. Since then he has gone on to make films like *Bunty Aur Babli*, *Jhoom Barabar Jhoom*, *Kill Dil*, and *Ok Jaanu*.

Here, Shaad Ali talks about his two-decade long journey in the Hindi film industry, his influences, and the challenges of making remakes.

Excerpts:

What are your thoughts on the Diorama International Film Festival? Also tell us about your association.

I love Delhi and so a fresh new film festival being held in Delhi is a big enough excuse to bring me here. I think it is important to encourage new film festivals so that we can further boost the film viewing culture in the country. I am grateful that my film *Soorma* is also getting screened here. I remember while shooting *Dil Se* with Mani sir I used to come very often to Siri Fort. In those days they used to



Leap of faith (Clockwise from above) Shaad Ali has fond memories of watching films at Siri Fort auditorium with his mentor Mani Ratnam; stills from "Dil Se" and "Saathiya" ■ SOUBIR GHOSH

host the International Film Festival of India (IFFI) here in Delhi. I think Siri Fort is a wonderful venue for film enthusiasts.

If one looks at your body of work there are a couple of very interesting remakes viz. *Saathiya* and *Ok Jaanu*. What are the challenges associated with such remakes?

Actually both are remakes of Mani sir's films. Of course, he is like family and so it is always very special for me. Also, I don't really see them as remakes but more like a different trip of sorts. While working on such projects the biggest challenge is at the writing front. You have to find the right cultural milieu and get the characterisation sorted.

Next challenge is of course that of casting. At the end it is all about setting up the stage and directing the actors so as to elicit just the right kind of emotions needed for the different scenes.

As someone who started his career working under an influential filmmaker like Mani Ratnam how difficult it is to come out of one's mentor's shadow and create one's own identity?

Well, to tell you the truth right from the very beginning

I never allowed myself to get bothered by that. So even when I was doing *Saathiya* I was pretty clear in my head. If I look back now, then it may sound a bit intimidating. But back then it was like taking a leap of faith without much giving a thought to anything but the challenge of making my first film that I was completely preoccupied with. So, in a way, I have been really lucky in that regard.

Mani Ratnam has a very distinctive style of capturing romance. You too in your films have managed to find a very unique language of romance. What is that makes it tick?

Romance can be a bit tricky. I think it works on many different levels. It depends on how romantic you yourself are as a person and if you are not romantic, then what is your idea of romance. Second, it depends on the kind of characters that you have written. Third, it depends on the world that these characters inhabit. Four, it depends on the kind of romance that the characters are involved in.

But these are just the ingredients and unless they are all mixed up in the right proportions you won't be able to see the result. But once you have

the right result you can't really tell for sure which ingredient was mixed in what quantity. Of course, you get better at it with time but you can just never be too certain.

What was it like to start your career under Mani Ratnam? How do you reflect upon your journey as a filmmaker so far?

Dil Se was a very different experience for me. I was fresh in the business and Mani sir doesn't keep many assistants and likes to operate with a small team. Also, I was the only assistant who could speak Hindi and so even at that young age I was assigned many important responsibilities which allowed me to mature very early in terms of work. *Dil Se* was really a complete experience for me.

Regarding my journey as a filmmaker, I have even forgotten that *Saathiya* was my first film. I find it difficult to believe when people remind me that nearly 18 years have passed since *Saathiya*.

I still approach my films with the same level of energy. With my each project I try to move on and never look back. I follow a simple belief: 'next is the best'.

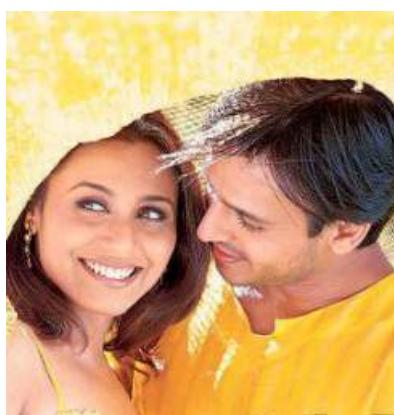
Tell us about your influences and inspirations. Also tell us about your up-



coming projects.

There have been so many influences. I may not have seen the world but I like to absorb what I see around me. Mostly it has been my grandparents and the people around me that have influenced me the most, whether from my childhood spent in Kanpur or from my boarding school days. As far as filmmakers are concerned my inspirations include my father Muzaffar Ali, Sergio Leone, Ramesh Sippy, and of course Mani sir, among others.

At this point in time I am working on so many things but I don't know which ones will materialise and which ones won't. I don't really have any names to give away. Right now I am like a clean slate and anything can pop up from anywhere. A lot of interesting and exciting things are going on and anything can happen.



I have even forgotten that *Saathiya* was my first film. I find it difficult to believe when people remind me that nearly 18 years have passed since *Saathiya*. I still approach my films with the same level of energy