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**IAS 2020**

**IAS FOUNDATION 2019-20**  
WEEKDAY BATCH STARTS  
**19<sup>th</sup> AUGUST 2019**  
MORNING : 7:00 AM TO 9:30 AM | AFTERNOON : 2:00 PM TO 4:30 PM  
EVENING : 5:00 PM TO 7:30 PM

**WEEKEND BATCH STARTS**  
**24<sup>th</sup> AUGUST 2019**  
SATURDAY : 3:00 PM TO 8:00 PM | SUNDAY : 9:00 AM TO 8:00 PM

**FREE WORKSHOP IAS 2019-20**  
**4<sup>th</sup> AUGUST (Sunday)**  
at 4.30 PM  
Apsara Arcade, Near Karol Bagh  
Metro Station Gate #7

**FREE IAS DEMO CLASSES**  
**SUBJECT**  
7:00 AM TO 9:30 AM  
**INDIAN ECONOMY**  
**GEOGRAPHY**  
**CURRENT AFFAIRS**  
**INDIAN POLITY**  
**MODERN HISTORY**

**SUBJECT**  
5:00 PM TO 7:30 PM  
**MODERN HISTORY**  
**CURRENT AFFAIRS**  
**GEOGRAPHY**  
**INDIAN ECONOMY**  
**INDIAN POLITY**

Office : Apsara Arcade,  
Near Karol Bagh Metro Station Gate #7



Count me out for top post, says Priyanka

Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra is believed to have told a meeting of party general secretaries on Thursday that she shouldn't be considered as a replacement for her brother and outgoing party chief Rahul Gandhi. Ms. Vadra's remarks are important in the backdrop of a growing chorus among a section of the senior leaders like Captain Amarinder Singh and Shashi Tharoor asking her to take over the reins.

NEWS ▶ PAGE 12



FRIDAY REVIEW ▶ 8 PAGES  
(TABLOID)

## SC transfers Unnao cases to Delhi court

Court also orders ₹25 lakh interim compensation and CRPF protection to the rape survivor

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday transferred five cases of crimes committed against the Unnao rape survivor and her family from a CBI court in Lucknow to its counterpart in Delhi and ordered the Uttar Pradesh government to pay her ₹25 lakh in interim compensation.

A Bench, led by Chief Justice of India (CJI) Ranjan Gogoi, ordered that the trial in the Unnao cases be held on a day-to-day basis and completed within 45 days.

### Judge named

The court went the extra mile to zero in on District Judge Dinesh Sharma as the trial judge.

Four of these cases are the rape of the minor in 2017; a false case foisted on her father under the Arms Act by conniving police officers; the custodial death of the survivor's father after he was arrested in the Arms case; and a second instance of gang

### Case history

A summary of five cases of crimes, allegedly committed against the Unnao rape survivor and her family, which were transferred to a Delhi court

**CASE 1** The rape of a 7-year-old, allegedly by BJP MLA Kuldeep Singh Sengar (in pic), on June 4, 2017, in Unnao

**CASE 2** The alleged false case foisted against the father of the victim. Police officers responsible for framing the case are the accused. The

rape of the survivor.

Though the CBI has filed chargesheets in the four cases, the Lucknow court is yet to frame charges against the accused persons.

### Probe into 'accident'

The fifth case concerns the 'accident' on July 28 when a truck rammed into a car carrying the now 19-year-old rape survivor.

Days before the accident,

victim's father was booked under the Arms Act on April 3, 2018

**CASE 3** The case of custodial death of the father. He was beaten up allegedly by those conniving with Sengar, the main accused. The father died on April 9, 2018

**CASE 4** The gangrape of the victim within a week after she named Sengar

**CASE 5** The case of conspiracy and murder, after a speeding truck rammed the car in which the victim, her lawyer and two of her aunts were travelling, on July 28, 2019. The two aunts were killed while the victim and her lawyer are in a critical condition

she had reached out to the CJI in a letter. But her cry for help largely remained unnoticed in the court's Registry for almost a fortnight.

Her letter, dated July 12, had spelt out threats to her life and her family from the accused persons, including Kuldeep Singh Sengar, four-time BJP MLA from Bangarmau. The letter landed at the Registry on July 17, but did not reach the CJI's table till

July 30 – well after the 'accident' on Sunday.

### Cheque handed over

In compliance with the court order, Lucknow District Magistrate K.R. Sharma and SSP K. Naithani later in the day handed over a cheque for ₹25 lakh to the survivor's family, PTI reports.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 12  
GENDER JUSTICE ▶ EDITORIAL

## Three guards suspended

Three police guards deployed for the protection of the Unnao rape survivor were suspended on Thursday for negligence. DGP O.P. Singh said the three guards were not travelling with the family on the day their car collided with a truck. ▶ PAGE 13

## Sengar expelled from BJP

Faced with the anger against Kuldeep Singh Sengar, who is in jail on the charge of raping the Unnao woman, the BJP expelled the four-time MLA. BJP Uttar Pradesh president Swatantra Dev Singh said Sengar, also accused of being allegedly behind a collision with the survivor's car, was expelled by the central leadership.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 13



The Amarnath Yatra for the time being. Even many langars (community kitchens) operating in south Kashmir were vacated on Thursday.

Over 40 companies were deployed for the Yatra. A general high alert has been sounded in the State.

There is speculation around the Centre's move to take "significant measures" ahead of the Assembly election and fear of immediate repercussions in the Muslim pockets across the State.

(With PTI inputs)

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 12

## Free electricity for Delhiites using up to 200 units

Move will encourage power saving, says Kejriwal; BJP, Cong. call announcement 'election gimmick'

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Thursday announced free electricity for people consuming up to 200 units under a domestic connection. The decision, which came into effect from August 1, has been taken barely six months before Delhi Assembly elections due in February 2020.

"In Delhi, people who consume up to 200 units will not have to pay electricity bills. Their bills [will be] waived," Mr. Kejriwal said while addressing a press con-

ference. Those consuming 201-400 units of electricity will get about 50% subsidy, he added.

"Now people using 210 or 300 units will think that if they use under 200 units, their bill will be zero. We believe this will encourage them to save electricity," the Chief Minister said.

Attacking the move, both the BJP and the Congress termed it an "election gimmick". Delhi BJP chief Manoj Tiwari said the Delhi government has "looted" ₹8,500 crore from the people as fixed charge and load charge



Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal at a press conference in New Delhi on Thursday.

• SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

and demanded that Mr. Kejriwal refund it or else his party will "initiate a movement" against it.

The Chief Minister said

around 35% of the total consumers use less than 200 units during summer and in winter, the percentage goes up to around 70. Terming the move "historic", he claimed Delhi has the cheapest electricity rate in the country.

The Delhi Congress, however, claimed that the Aam Aadmi Party government was misleading the people on power tariff. "It is a lie that Delhi has the cheapest rates of electricity and I challenge Arvind Kejriwal and other AAP leaders who are misguiding people. When

Mr. Adeeb was convicted by a Maldivian court in a plot to assassinate former President Abdulla Yameen, but the country's Supreme Court had quashed the sentence and ordered a fresh trial.

The police said he was on board a Mongolian-flagged tugboat, Virgo-9, that set sail from the Maldives on July 27 on its way back to Thoothukudi after delivering bulk cargo. Besides Mr. Adeeb, the boat had nine workers – eight Indonesian nationals and a man from Thoothukudi.

While Coast Guard sources in Thoothukudi told *The Hindu* that the boat was intercepted in the sea near Mappad, the Coast Guard IG (Eastern Region), Paramesh, denied that the agency had any role in the detention of Mr. Adeeb.

Tamil Nadu Director General of Police J.K. Tripathy (With inputs from Delhi and Chennai)

Congress was in power, even then power tariff in Delhi was lowest in the country," senior Congress leader Haroun Yusuf said.

Asked about the timing of the move, Mr. Kejriwal said:

"When we took over, the power sector was in a bad state. We worked and slowly improved it. Since then, the DERC has been reducing rates... It was not possible earlier, as power companies' financial state was bad. At that point, there was no question of making it free."

(With PTI inputs)

SEE ALSO ▶ PAGE 3

## Vadodara flooded



**Crippled by torrents:** Four persons were killed and 5,000 evacuated from Vadodara in Gujarat, which was battered by nearly 500 mm of rain in 24 hours till Thursday morning. The Vishwamitri river burst its banks and entered several areas. ▶ PTI (PAGE 9)

## U.S. imposes sanctions on Iran Minister

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
WASHINGTON

The U.S. on Wednesday imposed sanctions on Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, effectively slamming the door on the country's top diplomat.

The sanctions freeze any of Mr. Zarif's assets in the U.S. or that are controlled by U.S. entities, the government said, saying it would also curtail his international

travel.

"Zarif implements the reckless agenda of Iran's Supreme Leader, and is the regime's primary spokesperson around the world. The U.S. is sending a clear message to the Iranian regime that its recent behaviour is completely unacceptable," Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said in a statement.

President Hassan Rouhani said the measure showed Washington was "afraid" of Mr. Zarif.

Mr. Zarif has been at the

heart of the complex talks with foreign capitals over Iran's nuclear power industry, which Tehran says is peaceful, but Washington and regional allies, including Israel, insist is a cover for a secret weapons programme.

President Hassan Rouhani said the measure showed Washington was "afraid" of Mr. Zarif.

PATH TO TALKS ▶ PAGE 14

## Fleeing Maldives leader held off Tamil Nadu

Ahmed Adeeb was on a tugboat

HARIKRISHNAN  
THOOTUKUDI

Former Vice President of Maldives Ahmed Adeeb Abdul Ghafoor, who secretly fled the Maldives on a boat to India, was held by Indian authorities near the coast of Thoothukudi in southern Tamil Nadu on Thursday.

Mr. Adeeb was convicted by a Maldivian court in a plot to assassinate former President Abdulla Yameen, but the country's Supreme Court had quashed the sentence and ordered a fresh trial.

The police said he was on board a Mongolian-flagged tugboat, Virgo-9, that set sail from the Maldives on July 27 on its way back to Thoothukudi after delivering bulk cargo. Besides Mr. Adeeb, the boat had nine workers – eight Indonesian nationals and a man from Thoothukudi.

While Coast Guard sources in Thoothukudi told *The Hindu* that the boat was intercepted in the sea near Mappad, the Coast Guard IG (Eastern Region), Paramesh, denied that the agency had any role in the detention of Mr. Adeeb.

(With inputs from Delhi and Chennai)

said the issue was being dealt with by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) and other central agencies.

MEA official spokesperson Raveesh Kumar said, "There are designated entry points through which foreigners are allowed entry into India. The entry is facilitated on the basis of appropriate valid travel documents. In the instant case, since he was not entering through a designated entry point and did not possess the valid document, he has not been permitted entry."

(With inputs from Delhi and Chennai)

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 12

## India evaluating Pak. proposal for consular access to Jadhav

Response will be sent through diplomatic channels: MEA

KALLOL BHATTACHERJEE  
NEW DELHI

India is examining Pakistan's proposal to grant consular access to Kulbhushan Jadhav, a former Navy officer, who was sentenced to death by a Pakistan military court on espionage and terrorism charges in 2017.

Raveesh Kumar, spokesperson of the Ministry of External Affairs, said the established channels were being used to convey India's response. "We have received a proposal from Pakistan. We



Kulbhushan Jadhav

are evaluating the proposal in the light of the judgment of the International Court of Justice (ICJ)," he said, without spelling out the modalities.

## Pakistan arrests 'Indian spy'

Pakistan has said its border military police arrested Raju Lakshman, 30, an "Indian spy", in Dera Ghazi Khan in Punjab province on Wednesday. ▶ PAGE 13

Nor did he say whether conditions were attached to the proposal.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 12

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## IN BRIEF

## AUD conducts orientation programme

NEW DELHI  
Ambedkar University Delhi conducted an orientation programme for freshers to all undergraduate programmes on Thursday. V-C Anu Singh Lather told students that the university strongly believes that no knowledge becomes socially productive unless it spreads across society, transcending barriers of caste, creed and class.

Air quality of Delhi-NCR		
	Delhi	Gurugram
Good	89	50
Satisfactory	87	57
Poor	82	110
Very poor	201-300	301-400
Severe		>401
(AVERAGE OF PAST 24 HOURS)		
SOURCE: CPCB		

## DEHLI TODAY

**Dance:** "Bhajgovindam", a Odissi recital by Monalisa Ghosh and her senior disciples, Arunima Ghosh, Raju Mishra and Tanusree Mukul at The Stein Auditorium, India Habitat Centre (IHC), 7 p.m.

**Exhibition:** Image-In-Side-Out, an exhibition of paintings and drawings by Sayam Bharat and Yamini Mohan at Triveni Gallery, Triveni Kala Sangam, 205, Tansen Marg, 11 a.m. - 8 p.m.

**Exhibition:** "Liminal spaces", a solo art show by Kanwal Singh at Open Palm Court Gallery, IHC, 11 a.m. - 7 p.m.

**Exhibition:** "Zenith" a solo painting exhibition by Bhavana Sanon at Experimental Art Gallery, IHC, 11 a.m. - 7 p.m.

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

# RTI activists detained on way to deliver petition to President

Protesters launch mass RTI campaign, raise questions on controversial issues

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Right to Information activists attempting to deliver a petition against the RTI Amendments Bill to the President via his Secretariat were detained outside Rashtrapati Bhavan on Thursday.

Later, they launched a new campaign to bombard the government with a mass RTI campaign raising queries on prickly issues of public interest, from the Unnao rape case and the Rafale defence deal to alleged discrepancies in tax revenue data and the impact of Aadhaar.

#### No permission

The city police said a total of 59 persons were detained, including 45 women and 14 men. "The group did not have any permission. They were detained at Mandir Marg police station for an hour and then were released," a police spokesperson said.

According to the National Campaign for People's Right to Information (NCPRI), the police detained 66 activists gathered outside Gate No. 38



Police detain RTI activists at Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi on Thursday. ■ SANDEEP SAXENA

of Rashtrapati Bhavan which has a facility for accepting memorandums from the public. Three of them were later allowed to submit their plea, urging President Ram Nath Kovind not to sign the Bill passed by Parliament last week.

#### Attack on rights

"This is an absolute attack on our democratic rights to free speech and expression," said Anjali Bhadrawaj, NC PRI co-convenor who was

among those detained by the police. "There were no slogans, no banners, no posters. It was simply a group of citizens who brought their own signed petitions to the President of the country. If we cannot even do that, it is a joke to call this a democracy," she said.

The petition to the President had almost two lakh signatures, including 1.27 lakh people who joined an online campaign on the Change.org platform.

"The Centre has not allowed this legislation to be publicly discussed anywhere. It was not sent to the parliamentary standing committee or any select committee, there was no information about the Bill on the website, no pre-legislative consultation, or public stakeholders consultation," noted NC PRI founder Nikhil Dey.

"We believe this is because they have information to hide... Maybe they can steamroll Parliament, but they cannot steamroll the people."

In conjunction with social movements across the country, NC PRI activists have drafted and filed 100 RTI queries on high-profile issues of public interest as part of a new campaign called "Use RTI to Save RTI".

On top of the list is an RTI request about the Unnao rape case, asking for details and copies of the FIRs and chargesheets against the accused BJP MLA Kuldeep Singh Sengar, and also seeking details of the police protection given to the victim.

# Plea in HC challenges triple talaq Bill

Huge possibility of it being misused, says petitioner

SOIBAM ROCKY SINGH  
NEW DELHI

Within a day of President Ram Nath Kovind giving assent to the Triple Talaq Bill, a petition was filed in the Delhi High Court challenging provisions in the new law that made giving instant oral triple talaq a criminal offence punishable with jail term of up to three years.

Social activist and advocate Shahid Ali, in his public interest litigation petition, has claimed that the Muslim Women (protection of rights on marriage) Act, 2019 was against both men and women and "amounts to institutionalised discrimination against the largest minority of India."



made out at all," the petition argued.

"However, the government went many steps further... [and] has made it a criminal offence, however, without making any arrangement in the said Act for reconciliation between the Muslim husband pronouncing the triple talaq and his wife."

**PETITION**  
The government went many steps further... [and] has made it a criminal offence, however, without making any arrangement in the said Act for reconciliation between the Muslim husband pronouncing the triple talaq and his wife

there are "high chances" of misuse of some Sections of the Act, since, nothing had been provided in the Act to ascertain the truthfulness of the allegations of pronouncement of triple talaq.

#### False complaint

"In the absence of any safeguards even if there is a minor discord in the marital affairs, the wife may file a false complaint that the husband has pronounced Triple Talaq upon her by oral pronunciation," the plea said.

This, Mr. Ali, said would result in increasing number of desertions instead of dissolution of marriage in the matter of those who are forced to live under unhappy marriages.

#### Shayara Bano case

Mr. Ali said there is "huge possibility of it being misused, whenever, there is minor matrimonial discourse or claim for maintenance."

The petition pointed out that the Supreme Court in the Shayara Bano case had already declared the pronouncement of triple talaq as invalid and unconstitutional.

"Once it is declared that the marriage shall not be dissolved by pronouncement of triple talaq, no offence is

# 'Illegal constructions in Haridwar forest division to be removed'

ing violation of forest laws in Haridwar.

The committee, in its report, informed a Bench headed by NGT Chairperson Justice A.K. Goel that the delay in proceedings pertaining to the eviction of encroachers was due to the model code of conduct that

came into force due to the general election held earlier this year.

#### Eviction proceedings

"No new encroachment has now taken place and some encroachments have been removed. In some cases, orders of eviction have been

tus of action taken and recommendations made, by November 30. The directions came when the NGT was hearing a plea moved by environmental activist Gauri Maulekhi who sought action against illegal constructions in the Shyamprabha range of Haridwar's forest division.

# JNUTA against collecting biometrics for smart card

'Violation of constitutional rights'

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

The Jawaharlal Nehru University Teachers' Association (JNUTA) on Thursday opposed the introduction of smart cards for marking attendance, calling the administration move a "draconian measure to coerce employees, faculty and students to give their biometric data in violation of their fundamental right to privacy."

consent of the person. This is a gross violation of the right to privacy," the teachers said.

**'Coercively imposed'**  
The JNUTA said that the biometric system was currently being coercively imposed in the first phase of implementation on the most vulnerable employees of the university — outsourced, temporary and contractual — who face the risk of losing their livelihood if they were to refuse to give their biometric data or raise concerns of privacy.

The teachers' body said that the matter is sub judice in the High Court of Delhi and that the court has also issued a stay on collection of biometric data for the purpose of attendance.

"The JNUTA demands that the process of coercing its employees to give information as a condition of employment must immediately be stopped," the statement read.

# e-bike-sharing services launched in Gurugram

It will provide last-mile connectivity

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
GURUGRAM

To provide last-mile connectivity to commuters in the Millennium City, Gurugram Metropolitan City Bus Limited (GMCL) in collaboration with Mobycy launched e-bike-sharing services on Thursday. The GMCL joint chief executive officer Ashok Bansal inaugurated the facility at a function at HUDA City metro station.

The Mobycy will make its electric scooters and e-bikes available across key Gurugram bus stops, including HUDA City Centre metro station, IFFCO Chowk, Sohna Road, Golf Course Road, for one year under the arrangement. It will allow bus commuters to opt for an environment-friendly mode of last-mile commute.

The commuter will have to pay ₹2 per minute ride or can avail a day plan at ₹149. The monthly subscription plan will cost ₹499 for two half hours rides a day.

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1	21/PR/JBVNL/2019-20 Procurement of Power procurement cost optimization solution Design, Supply and Installation	14/08/2019 upto 12:30 Hrs.	14/08/2019 upto 01:30 Hrs	14/08/2019 at 16.00 Hrs.

Note:  
(i) Submission of tender fee/ EMD will not be accepted by courier/ Regd. Post.

(ii) Further details can be seen on website <http://www.jharkhandtenders.gov.in> and may be contacted on Mobile No. 9431708984, NIC Helpline No. 0651-2400178

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प्रत्येक वर्ष में अन्तिम तिथि को 1 अगस्त को तारीख पर उपरिलिखित तिथि से बढ़ावा दिया जाता है।

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AIKMS plans protest from August 9

## STAFF REPORTER

BERHAMPUR

The All India Kisan Mazdoor Sabha has planned a two-week-long nationwide protest on August 9 against the alleged drive of the ruling class to evict the poor from their livelihood and habitat.

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THE HINDU

# BJP leader's remark on triple talaq victims sparks row in Odisha House

What is wrong in quoting survey reports in Assembly, asks Bishnu Charan Sethi

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

BHUBANESWAR

The Odisha Assembly witnessed pandemonium on Thursday after Bishnu Charan Sethi, deputy leader of the Bharatiya Janata Party, stoked a controversy when he said that triple talaq victims were being forced into prostitution.

The BJP MLA was replying to the Congress members who had on Wednesday criticised the BJP-led government at the Centre for pushing through the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Bill in Parliament.

Mr. Sethi claimed that some political parties had been opposing the Bill with an eye on minority votes. Those opposing it should keep in mind that the legislation was passed to protect

**G**ill has nothing to do with religion and is aimed at eradicating a social evil.

BISHNU CHARAN SETHI  
Deputy leader of the BJP

the interests of women, he said, while adding that he had only quoted findings of some survey reports.

"What is wrong in quoting survey reports in the House? I have not made any adverse remark against any community, but quoted survey reports that say Muslim women dominate the red light areas in Mumbai and Kolkata," Mr. Sethi said.

The practice of "triple talaq" was abolished in 38 countries including Pakistan and Bangladesh, the BJP leader maintained.

"The Bill has nothing to do with religion and is aimed at eradicating a social evil. Now, one cannot divorce his wife just by uttering 'talaq-talaq-talaq' in an inebriated state or via a mobile phone message," he added.

## BJD protests

Mr. Sethi's statement soon evoked strong opposition from members of both opposition Congress and ruling BJD members. The Congress MLAs rushed to the well of the House to disrupt the proceedings, while some BJD members protested by standing on their seats.

Senior Congress MLA Narasingha Mishra countered Mr. Sethi by saying that the BJP leader should not make statements against a particular community that would incite communal tension.

Speaker Surjya Narayan Patro had to adjourn the proceedings after he failed to restore normalcy in the House. Similar scenes were created by Congress MLAs in the post-lunch session, forcing adjournments.

The Speaker had to adjourn the House five times and finally for the day after transacting some normal business amid uproarious scenes.

Meanwhile, Odisha Pradesh Congress Committee president Niranjan Patnaik demanded that Mr. Sethi apologise for making derogatory statements about Muslim women. The party will protest if Mr. Sethi did not apologise, Mr. Patnaik said at a press conference.

(With PTI inputs)

THE HINDU

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## STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Thursday granted protection to BJP leader Mukul Roy from coercive action for 10 days to enable him to move a trial court in Kolkata for anticipatory bail in connection with a cash recovery case there.

Justice A.K. Chawla also

asked Mr. Roy to join the investigation and to be available for questioning on Friday.

The BJP leader had challenged the notices issued to him by the Kolkata police to appear before it for questioning in the case. Mr. Roy had claimed that the notices were issued to him on a West Bengal address when he was

actually residing in Delhi. The claim was opposed by the police.

The case pertains to the recovery of ₹19 lakh from a person in Burrabazar area of Kolkata on July 31, 2018, leading to his arrest along with a few others. Mr. Roy's phone number allegedly figured in one of the arrested persons' call list.

## Man arrested for Cuttack killings

## CORRESPONDENT

CUTTACK

The Cuttack city police on Thursday arrested Narayan Sahu, a 35-year-old mentally disturbed youth of Nayagarh district, implicating him in two of the three murder cases that were reported here within 24 hours last week.

DCP Akhileshwar Singh said Sahu, who was picked

up from his Nayagarh house on Monday, has confessed to his involvement in the killing of two homeless persons at Cuttack's OMP square on July 22 and July 23.

"The police will take him in remand for further questioning and establish his involvement in the third murder in which another homeless person was killed,"

Mr. Singh said.

Refuting the claims made by his family and acquaintances that Sahu was in Nayagarh from July 22 evening till the time he was picked up by the Cuttack city police on July 29 morning, the DCP said the arrest was made on the basis of confession statements made by the accused and circumstantial evidence.

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## IN BRIEF



## Poll officials seal marriage hall in T.N.

**VELLORE** Citing violation of the model code of conduct, election officials sealed a marriage hall where DMK president M.K. Stalin held a meeting with leaders of the Muslim community. The model code is in force as the constituency will go to polls on August 5.

## Rakesh Asthana takes charge as NCB DG

**NEW DELHI** IPS officer Rakesh Asthana Thursday took charge as the chief of the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB), officials said. The 1984-batch Gujarat cadre officer is already serving as the DG of the Bureau of Civil Aviation Security. PTI

## Man beaten to death by villagers in Jharkhand

**DUMKA** A man was beaten to death by villagers when he along with three others was allegedly trying to escape after stealing goods and valuables from a house at Chihudia in Dumka district. Bhola Hazra, who died on the spot, was a history sheeter. PTI

## ED attaches REI Agro's assets worth ₹481 crore

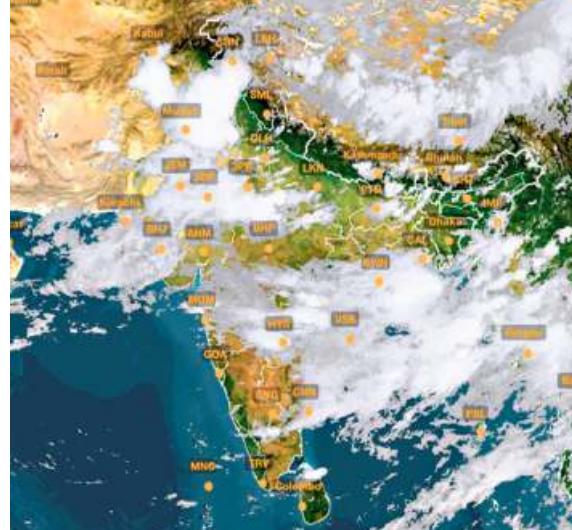
**NEW DELHI** The ED on Thursday attached assets worth ₹481.04 crore of REI Agro Limited in a bank fraud case. It is alleged that REI Agro and its directors, availed of credit facilities to the tune of ₹3,871.71 crore from 14 banks under a consortium arrangement and diverted funds.

## Premises of Malvinder, Shivinder Singh raided

**NEW DELHI** The Enforcement Directorate on Thursday conducted searches on the premises linked to former Religare promoters, Malvinder Singh and Shivinder Singh, and others in connection with an FIR registered by the Delhi police's EOW. The police case alleges misappropriation of ₹740 crore.

## WEATHER WATCH

RAINFALL, TEMPERATURE & AIR QUALITY IN SELECT METROS YESTERDAY



**Forecast for Friday:** Heavy to very heavy rainfall likely over east Rajasthan, west Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Goa, Jammu & Kashmir, Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh, Delhi, western Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan, Odisha, Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura, central Maharashtra and coastal Karnataka.

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	29.5	35.5	25.7
Ahmedabad	40.5	28.6	25.1
Aizawl	—	27.3	20.7
Allahabad	—	34.7	27.6
Bengaluru	—	30.4	20.5
Bhopal	21.2	27.3	23.3
Bhubaneswar	—	31.7	26.6
Hubballi	—	26.0	21.0
Hyderabad	1.9	29.9	23.0
Imphal	—	28.3	22.4
Jaipur	—	33.2	27.2
Kochi	3.2	31.2	25.4
Kohima	14.6	26.6	16.4
Kolkata	1.8	33.6	26.6

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

## Pollutants in the air you are breathing

**CITIES** SO<sub>2</sub> NO<sub>x</sub> CO PM2.5 PM10 CODE Yesterday

CITIES	SO <sub>2</sub>	NO <sub>x</sub>	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	65	45	.85	.66	—	■■■■■
Bengaluru	.4	.22	.38	.87	—	■■■■■
Chennai	.6	.28	.59	.126	—	■■■■■
Delhi	16	31	.14	.59	.210	■■■■■
Kolkata	.3	.45	—	.27	—	■■■■■
Lucknow	.4	.26	.50	.113	—	■■■■■
Mumbai	11	.17	.104	.15	.44	■■■■■
Pune	.74	.8	.67	.25	.25	■■■■■
Visakhapatnam	11	.47	.53	.50	.101	■■■■■

Air Quality Code: ■ Poor ■ Moderate ■ Good (Readings indicate average AQI, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.)

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

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

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

# 4 persons die in wall collapse, life hit in flooded Vadodara

Nearly 5,000 people were shifted by NDRF

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

AHMEDABAD Incessant rainfall has caused the death of four people in a wall collapse in Vadodara, besides causing floods and affecting life in the city.

Nearly 5,000 people from over two dozen low-lying areas were shifted by the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF). Most of the roads were completely inundated.

The government has deployed nine teams of the NDRF, besides the Army and the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) to evacuate people from areas along the Vishwamitri river that is flowing to the danger level mark.

According to the State Emergency Operation Centre (SEOC), a total of five



**Helping hand:** Personnel of the National Disaster Response Force rescuing an elderly man in Vadodara on Thursday. Large parts of Gujarat have been flooded due to incessant rain. ■ PTI

NDRF and four SDRF teams have been involved in rescue operations in addition to two columns of the Army and as many companies of the State Reserve Police (SRP).

Additionally, district pol-

ice and teams of fire brigade of Vadodara and Surat Municipal Corporations have been deployed for a major rescue operation in the city which had seen an extremely heavy downpour of 499

mm on Wednesday.

The district authorities ordered the closure of all schools and colleges on Friday. The operations at the city airport were shut on Thursday.

## Normal rains likely in August, September

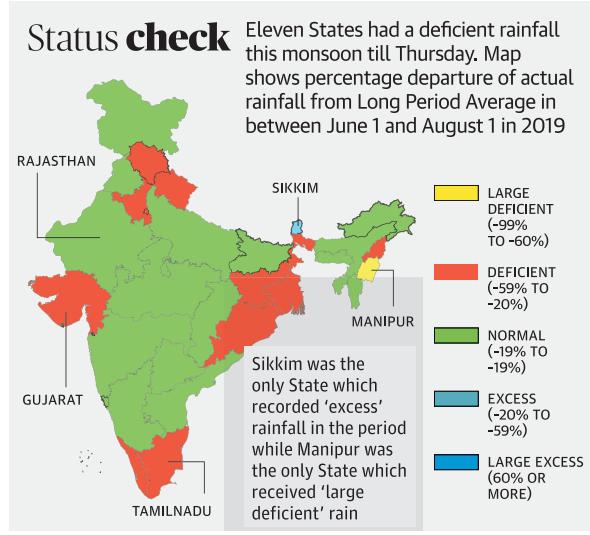
IMD expects 100% of LPA rainfall across the country

## PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI The monsoon is expected to be normal in August and September, the India Meteorological Department said on Thursday in its forecast for the second half of the four-month rainfall season.

Quantitatively, the rainfall across the country as a whole during the two-month period is likely to be 100% of the Long Period Average (LPA) with a model error of plus or minus 8%, the IMD said.

The rainfall in August is



likely to be 99% of the LPA with an error margin of plus or minus 9%, it said.

The LPA of the rainfall over the country as a whole for the second half of the mon-

soon season (August to September) based on the 1961-2010 period is 42.83 cm.

"The probabilistic forecast suggests that the rainfall across the country during the second half of the Southwest Monsoon season is most likely to be normal (94-106% of LPA) with a probability of 45%," the IMD said.

In April, the IMD had made the forecast of a normal monsoon.

Mritunjay Mohapatra, Director General of IMD, said the next two weeks are expected to bring good rainfall due to formation of a low pressure area in the north Bay of Bengal.

The official rainfall season in India starts from June to September.

It says quality of research is linked to academic leadership

## Culture Ministry comes up with a 100-day agenda

Big screens for *aarti* at 24 spots, 25 science museum vans

## DAMINI NATH

NEW DELHI

Installing big screens and audio systems at two dozen spots where a large number of devotees gather for prayers or *aarti*, rolling out 25 science museums on wheels to reach out to rural students, and digging rainwater harvesting pits at over 100 major monuments across the country are all on the Union Culture Ministry's 100-day agenda.

As a part of the Narendra Modi government's plan for its first 100 days after returning to power in May, Union Culture and Tourism Minister of State (Independent Charge) Prahlad Singh Patel told *The Hindu* that the Ministry would be focusing on constructing three pits each at 123 sites, including the 100 monuments covered under the Adarsh Smarak scheme. He added that greening would also be carried out at these sites, with a focus on planting trees that have long lives and won't have to be shifted for any fu-

ture works. Also on the 100-day plan was the development of places for *aarti* in order to facilitate the large number of people who visit daily, Mr. Patel said.

"Right now, there are many places where *aarti* takes place and a large number of people participate, but it is unplanned. We are in the process of providing some screens, audio systems and software," he said.

A total of 24 spots, including Har ki Pauri in Haridwar and sites in Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh and Gujarat among others, would

have large screens and audio systems.

## Expanding reach

In order to expand the reach of its science centres, Mr. Patel said the Ministry would deploy 25 mobile vans that will house science museums. So far, the Ministry operates 23 such vans, but they tend to visit State capitals and metropolitan areas only, a Ministry official said.

The 25 new vans would be deployed in the 115 "aspirational districts", as identified by the Centre, the official added.

## UGC panel urges review of process to appoint V-Cs

In West Bengal, a peaceful election is conducted – by sex workers

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

A panel set up by the University Grants Commission (UGC) to promote and improve the quality of research in Indian universities, has called for a review of the way Vice-Chancellors (V-Cs) are appointed. The panel emphasised that the quality of research culture depended on good academic leadership.

ly those who declared themselves as "sex workers" could contest and vote.

"We have not been allowed to access our mobile phones. We cannot talk to any of the voters, not even wave or smile to them," said Bishakha Laskar, contesting for the post of the president of DMSMC. Three sets of ballot papers were printed for the voters to decide the top three office-bearers of the DMSMC.

Mamata Mukherjee, an office-bearer at the Chetna branch of DMSMC, said she was a first-time voter. "There is not much difference between voting in this election and in the general election. The only difference is that there is no violence or fear here," she said.

Others involved in the process said the elections had been free and fair. Bansi Badan Chattopadhyay, a retired school teacher, functioned as one of three observers in the poll process. "We are checking for false voters and ensuring that everything goes on as per rules," Mr. Chattopadhyay said even as the polling was on.

## In West Bengal, a peaceful election is conducted – by sex workers

The polls were held for 45 branch committees spread across the State in a process which began in June



180 elected representatives gathered at a community hall to elect the office-bearers.

Elections in West Bengal are invariably a violent affair. But in this election, the eight contestants sat in a row holding the symbols allotted to them, laughing and joking with each other.

This unique election, held last Wednesday in the city's Salt Lake area, was restricted to the community of sex workers who elected the office-bearers of Durbar Mahila Samanaway Committee (DMSMC), the largest sex workers' collective in the country

with 50,000 members.

Smarajit Jana, an advisor of the DMSMC who oversaw the elections, said the process started in June this year with elections to its 45 branch committees spread across West Bengal. On Wednesday, as many as 180 elected representatives from the 45 branch committees gathered at a community hall in Salt Lake to elect the office-bearers. There were a strict set of guidelines for holding the polls and observers were appointed to ensure that the process was free and fair. On-

## Man faces action for cancelling food order

## STAFF REPORTER

BHOPAL Two days after a man in Jabalpur cancelled an order on food aggregator Zomato for being assigned a non-Hindu delivery executive, the local police on Thursday decided to make him sign a bond stating he would not post incendiary messages on social media that were against secularism and could disturb harmony.

The police had warned him that if he made such statements again, he would be charged under Section 122 and sent to jail for the remaining bond period.

"His tweets ended up dividing Twitter users on reli-

gious lines and could stoke communal disharmony. Therefore, we are taking preventive measures and taking him to the SDM court where he will be asked to sign a bond and a notice would be served on him," said Amit Singh, Jabalpur Superintendent of Police.

The police had warned him that if he made such statements again, he would be charged under Section 122 and sent to jail for the remaining bond period.

"His tweets ended up dividing Twitter users on reli-

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## Gender justice

Poor women are even more disadvantaged as supplicants before powerful men

Nearly seven years after the Nirbhaya tragedy shocked India and the world at large, a 19-year-old, who was allegedly raped in 2017 by a local MLA in Uttar Pradesh's Unnao district, is battling for her life. Hooked to a ventilator, the girl's latest trauma began on Sunday. She was travelling by car with two aunts and a lawyer from Unnao to Rae Bareli when a truck with a "blackened number plate" rammed into the vehicle. Whether it is an accident or not is now a subject matter of official investigation, but India has had a history of rogue trucks silencing those questioning the system. Since 2017, it's been a long, difficult road to justice for the family. Two years ago, the girl had gone to Kuldeep Singh Sengar, a four-time BJP legislator from Bangermau, for a job. The teenager accused him of sexually assaulting her, but the family's cry for help went unheard till April 2018, when Sengar was arrested, days after the girl threatened to immolate herself outside Uttar Pradesh (U.P.) Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's residence in Lucknow. In the meantime, her father was arrested in an arms case and died in police custody. Helpless in the face of such brazen show of power, the family wrote to the Chief Justice of India on July 12, alleging grave danger from the accused. Ranjan Gogoi got to know of the letter only on July 30 and expressed displeasure about the delay.

The family did not get any relief from State government agencies, which appear to have been complicit in the cover-up, with the MLA belonging to the ruling party. The BJP has come under pressure from the Opposition to expel Sengar. In the Unnao case, muscle, money power and the right political alignment weighed heavily against the girl. As for crimes against women, U.P. has a high rate, not least because many are reported, unlike in some other States. According to National Crime Records Bureau figures, released in 2016 - the last time data were uploaded - of the 38,947 cases of rape reported, the second highest was from U.P. (4,816). As for all crimes against women, Uttar Pradesh reported 14.5% (49,262 out of 3,38,954 cases) of the total. The Supreme Court has ruled that five cases relating to the issue will be transferred from U.P. to Delhi, and ordered the State government to pay a ₹25 lakh compensation to the family. This may bring some relief, even though justice has been inordinately delayed. Despite the increased focus on women's rights, nothing changes on the ground. Till such crimes continue with impunity and patriarchal mindsets don't change, as a diverse and plural society, India would have failed the girl, and every woman.

## Fed's insurance policy

The rate cut is aimed at insuring against global risks to favourable U.S. economic outlook

The U.S. Federal Reserve on Wednesday announced its first reduction in the funds rate since 2008, a move that was widely expected. Elaborating on the Federal Open Market Committee's rationale in deciding policy action, Chairman Jerome Powell was emphatic that the aim was to provide a measure of insurance, especially given that the outlook for the U.S. economy remains favourable. The quarter percentage point interest rate cut, he said, was designed to support economic growth by ensuring that confidence was kept intact and "intended to insure against downside risks from weak global growth and trade policy uncertainty." In the space of less than three quarters, the Fed has pivoted from talking of further rate increases, to being on hold, to finally cutting interest rates as a global economic slowdown is exacerbated by trade tensions unleashed by U.S. President Donald Trump's aggressively insular approach to trade ties. The U.S. economy, which expanded by 2.9% in 2018 and posted a 3.1% expansion in the first quarter, slowed to a 2.1% pace in the second quarter, with the ongoing trade war with China blamed for a manufacturing slowdown as well as a decline in business investment. Just last week, the IMF pared its forecast for global growth in 2019 by 0.1 percentage point to 3.2%, warning that "risks to the forecast are mainly to the downside". The IMF cautioned that further trade tensions could dent sentiment and slow investment, a theme that Mr. Powell too referred to, when he said the rate cut was intended "to help offset the effects these factors are currently having on the economy."

The Fed Chairman, however, finds himself in an unenviable situation with the rate reduction satisfying neither the sharply critical President who appointed him in 2018, nor the markets where investors fretted that Mr. Powell had failed to signal the start of a protracted easing cycle. A fair part of the problem appears to be of his own making as the central bank chief muddled his messaging, speaking at one point during the post policy press conference of a "somewhat more accommodative stance", and at another emphasising that the move was not the start of a long series of rate cuts. Central bankers at the best of times have a delicate balancing act to perform to ensure that policies to support growth do not lead to a dilution of focus on price stability. In the Fed's case, Chairman Powell is clearly concerned that with inflation in the U.S. stubbornly refusing to move toward the central bank's 2% objective, there is a risk that persistent global disinflationary pressures could at some point feed into the domestic economy, undermining its efforts to spur wage and price gains. For the RBI, the Fed's move signals that, for now at least, it can stay on its accommodative path in the confidence that U.S. investors seeking rate arbitrage may hit the pause button on plans to head home.

# Marking Tipu's legacy to foster historical temper

Developing an understanding of our conflictual pasts, and not retribution, is the way to deal with 'historical wounds'



JANAKI NAIR

**O**n a recent visit to the University of Leicester, I had the opportunity of visiting the newly established memorial to Britain's controversial King Richard III, the last of the Plantagenet Kings, and also the last British King to die in battle in the War of Roses against the Tudors. Richard III (r. 1483-1485) also has the distinction of being the only British King whose remains, found under a parking lot in Leicester close to the Cathedral, were identified by mitochondrial DNA in 2012.

In 2015, he was reburied in the Leicester Cathedral, under a simple yet beautiful gravestone, unadorned except for a coat of arms in pietra dura. The 'rediscovery' of his remains became the basis of a controversy that was finally settled in court, and the city of Leicester has been the beneficiary, raking in money from tourists who wish to discover for themselves the legacy of this controversial King.

### Shakespeare's portrait

Why controversial? Richard III's ascent to the throne, after his brother's children were declared illegitimate, has been under a cloud: did he 'disappear' his brother's son? Shakespeare, loyal to his Tudor masters (the victors of the Battle of Bosworth) fostered the portrait of Richard III as a malevolent ruler in his celebrated play of the same name, from the very first scene.

Shakespeare's Richard III is wracked by self-hate and doubt, ("I am determined to prove a villain") and invites the harshest words from others: like "foul defacer of God's handiwork"; "hell's black intelligencer"; "carnal cur"; "bloody dog"; and "bloody wretch". Richard III was not spared the ignominy of being described as a hideously deformed,

"foul bunch-back'd toad" though we now know he only had a 'crooked' spine. But it is what the Leicester Cathedral has done to this legacy that has interested me the most: the display called for a contemporary reconciliation with the conflicting aspects of the memory of this King, emphasising the necessity of commemorating a brave and remarkable soldier, despite many popular memories to the contrary. Richard III is no unblemished hero, and there is no attempt to varnish that legacy.

The previous Karnataka government had introduced a 'Tipu Jayanti', which was scrapped by the recently sworn-in Yediyurappa regime in one of its first actions in power. I wish the previous regime had installed a 'Museum to Our Conflicting Pasts', which would allow all visitors to come to terms with the most controversial figure of Mysore history, Tipu Sultan. Such a museum would have allowed both those who malign his memory and those who celebrate it to learn how to come to terms with historical controversies – and the Indian past is replete with many such examples. Tipu Sultan for long emblematized the valiant struggle of Mysore against the British and, like Richard III, was the only one to die on the battlefield (all others were defeated by, collaborated or made their peace with, the emerging British power).

Over the last few decades in Karnataka, there has been a steady inflation of shrill debates about Tipu's legacy. There are of course those who focus on his undoubted virtues, as the first early modern ruler to put in place a form of *étatisme* in the absence of a social class which could undertake radical economic change; whose lust for knowledge bequeathed to us a marvellous library of books; whose spectacular military successes stunned the British, and whose technological inventions – particularly the rocket – were pillaged by the West; whose penchant for restless innovation made him try his hand at transformations that would only much later



bear fruit (for instance his experiments with silk production and his interest in large scale irrigation). The list is endless.

There is equally the memory, particularly in South Canara, Kodagu and Malabar, of Tipu's real and imagined excesses: his zeal for conversion; his massacre of populations he considered hostile; and his introduction of Persian as the state language at the expense of Kannada.

### Reading multiple sources

Our 'Museum of Conflicting Pasts' would not stage Tipu's brief and embattled rule (17 years) as something requiring condemnation or celebration, but present it as an opportunity to develop a historical temper, a new sense of the past. It would urge the visitor, and especially the young visitor, to think historically: to read a variety of conflicting sources – including the words of the man himself – from the vantage point of his times. The museum would make the visitor ask why colonial accounts of this indefatigable foe, which necessarily cast him as a tyrant and a villain, enjoy such an enduring influence up to the present day; or to ask why the early

19th century Jain historian, Devachandra, saw Tipu and Haider Ali (his father) as just one moment in a long Mysore past peppered with desecrations, thefts, and destructions – particularly of Jain temples.

Visitors could come to understand why Tipu supported some non-Muslim religious people and institutions and not others and why one temple was attacked but another, located 700 metres away, was left alone, as in Kodungallur Kerala. They could equally ask why he commandeered some Muslim communities and not others – the Navayat traders of Bhatkal recalled, in the richly textured *kaifiyats* collected by Colin Mackenzie and magnificently annotated by M.M. Kalburgi, that they were made to perform Tipu's government work under duress.

Visitors to the museum could ask why the Dewan of Mysore, Puranah, when asked by the British in June 1799 about who they should install after Tipu's defeat, replied that the memory of the Wodeyars had all but been forgotten, and then went on to serve the British faithfully as a placeholder for Krishnaraja Wodeyar III. What does the rich symbolism of Tipu's court – his obsessive use of the tig-

er stripe for instance – and indeed his adoption of Persian as the official language tell us about the quest for legitimacy? Moreover, was the religious zeal of Tipu, the son of a usurper, politically pioneering since his kingship had to be seen as deriving directly from god (hence *Khodadadi* – or god-given – *sarkar*)?

Why is it that indisputable facts – such as Tipu's protection of Srinivari Math following the Maratha attack in 1791, and his continued donations to the place – equally serve as testimony to his 'secularism' and as an example of his political chicanery?

**Coming to terms with the past**  
Tipu Sultan, in short, provides us with mind-boggling opportunities to fulfil one of the most urgent tasks of our times: to help people, and young people in particular, to come to terms with India's many conflictual pasts, to teach people that understanding and appreciation, rather than revenge or retribution, are the ways in which we may deal with real and perceived 'historical wounds'.

Karnataka's pasts offer limitless possibilities for such instruction, and for refashioning the relationship between history and memory. Such a 'Museum of Our Conflicting Pasts' will help us to deal with the inconveniences of the past, and perhaps heal and reconcile, instead of staging afresh the battles of history.

In a gigantic edifice dedicated to the memory of the 'Battle of the Nations', the city of Leipzig commemorates the successful battle involving 6,00,000 people in 1813 against Napoleonic forces. The adjoining museum, however, acknowledges the many achievements of Napoleon, and is free of the vituperative celebrations of victors. We too must find the resources to develop a historical temper that acknowledges the inconvenient truths of our past.

*Janaki Nair is Professor, Centre for Historical Studies, School of Social Sciences, Jawaharlal Nehru University*

## Finding the data on missing girls

The figure quoted by the government fails to completely take into consideration deliveries in private hospitals



SABU M. GEORGE

**F**emale foeticide continues to increase at an alarming rate, as per the Sample Registration System (SRS) data released in July for the period 2015-2017. The sex ratio at birth (SRB) has been dropping continuously since Census 2011, coming down from 909 girls per thousand boys in 2013 to 896 girls in 2017, to quote the yearly Statistical Reports. In the 2014-2016 period, of the 21 large States, only two – Kerala and Chhattisgarh – had an SRB of above 950 girls per 1000 boys. Thus at present, at least 5% of girls are 'eliminated' before they are born, despite the promises of the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao scheme.

Taking into consideration the SRS estimates, the Niti Aayog acknowledged the seriousness of the problem in its latest report. However, despite all the officially acknowledged facts, Women and Child Development Minister Smriti Irani claimed in the Lok Sabha that SRB has improved from 923 to 931 girls. She was quoting data

from the Health Management Information System (HMIS), a fundamentally flawed source that largely considers home deliveries and births in government institutions. Data from the HMIS are incomplete and not representative of the country as a whole as births happening in private institutions are under-reported. The HMIS report itself acknowledges that based on the estimated number of births, the number of reported births is much less in both the years considered – 2015-16 and 2018-19.

**Points of delivery**  
The differences among the three points of delivery become evident when SRB is calculated using data from National Family Health Survey-4 (NFHS-4). Of the 2.5 lakh reported births in the 2010-2014 period, the distribution of births at home, government hospitals and private hospitals was 21%, 52% and 27% respectively and the corresponding SRB figures were 969, 930 and 851.

Thus, private hospitals had a disproportionate excess of male children births, which the HMIS sample excludes. It is to be noted here that sources in the Niti Aayog confirmed that they did consider HMIS data but found after statistical examination that it was unre-



liable and therefore used SRS.

Further, even when we only consider institutional deliveries in government hospitals, the SRB is falling. The worst regional SRB for government sector was for Northern India (885 girls per thousand boys). The picture was somewhat better for Central India (926) and Southern India (940) while the performance of Eastern India (965) and Western India (959) was even better.

In the Northeast, where the government is the dominant health-care provider, the government sector SRB rivaled that of the private sector (both are 900).

For too long, institutional births have been the goal of the government. That data for the private sector are more skewed has not been articulated in the NFHS re-

ports or adequately dealt with by the Health Ministry. For two decades, in visits to hospitals, particularly private, too often we observed more male children even when the total number of births were small in number. So, we used NFHS 4 data to quantify this bias. It is criminal to use public funds to privilege boy births and facilitate discrimination against girls right from birth. However, for years, in the special neonatal care units (SNCUs) set up by the government, there was an excess of about 8% male children in several States.

Regrettably, the government has prioritised an expansion of SNCUs rather than deal with the issue of the 'missing girls'. Protecting the integrity of birth statistics will help the people, governments and health professionals to focus on ameliorating the known gender gaps at birth rather than be complacent with dubious claims.

**Bias over first-born child**  
An analysis of the NFHS-4 data also revealed a bias when it comes to the first-born child – the SRB among first-born children was 927, meaning that 2.5% of first-born girls are eliminated before birth. This was not the case historically. Our field visits to various parts of India in the past five years, par-

ticularly in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, where one in every three Indians is born, revealed a massive expansion of ultrasound clinics even in remote corners. And in the absence of a stringent implementation of the Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (Prohibition Of Sex Selection) Act (PCPNDT Act), practically anyone who wants to determine the sex of the foetus was able to get it done illegally. We are disappointed that the Central Supervisory Board established under the PCPNDT Act has not met for over one-and-a-half years. It should have ideally met at least thrice during this period. We hope the new Health Minister restores the regularity of the meetings.

The Supreme Court has been continuously reminding medical associations since 2002 of their obligation to follow the law, its latest reminder being the formidable 92-page judgment against the Federation of Obstetrics and Gynaecological Societies of India (FOGSI) earlier this year. The Indian Medical Association (IMA) has to ensure that private hospitals don't profit from discrimination against girls before birth.

*Sabu M. George has been a researcher on girl children for 34 years*

## 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.

### A wake-up call?

The death of billionaire entrepreneur and the founder of Café Coffee Day, V.G. Siddhartha, is extremely saddening. The market capitalisation of the company has taken a nosedive in the last few days, which would force the creditors to take a serious haircut. Had he been part of the U.S. system, there is a very high chance that he would have found a way to deal with the creditors and, most importantly, he would have been alive. His death just shows how nascent the corporate debt markets are in India, and how private equity firms operate in the country. Access to capital

markets is key for entrepreneurship and for businesses to thrive and grow. Hence, this should be a wake-up call for the government to see that capital is made available to the firms with good growth prospects, if it is serious about making India's GDP reach \$5 trillion and beyond (Front page, "Siddhartha cremated in family estate," August 1). VARAD SESHADRI, Sunnyvale, California, U.S.

**Criminalising talaq**  
Marriage is a civil contract and criminalising what is obviously a civil issue is a step in the wrong direction. The Centre's logic that the

Triple Talaq Bill will act as deterrent to the abhorrent practice of instant talaq is hard to digest. However, the fact that Muslims take recourse to this detested form of divorce, even after the 2017 Supreme Court verdict, is a worrying development and one cannot but share the government's concerns over this. Religion should not be a factor when it comes to the irresponsible desertion of spouses and children. Herein lies the need for a common divorce law, which the Bill fails to address (Editorial, "Beyond talaq," August 1).

ABDUL ASSIS P.A., Thrissur, Kerala

Rather than addressing a social issue, the passage of the Triple Talaq Bill through both the Houses of Parliament gives rise to questions. The government's reasoning that it was giving effect to the Supreme Court verdict declaring it unconstitutional is absurd, considering that the Bharatiya Janata Party was opposed to the same court's verdict when it came to allowing entry to women in the Sabarimala shrine. The Centre's claim that it is a step towards gender justice also sounds false. The Act may not be of much benefit as it expects the victim or someone from her family, in most cases women who

come from the poorest sections of the society, to take up the issue against her husband with the concerned authority. A.G. RAJMOHAN, Anantapur

**Unnao case**  
The Unnao case appears to be a tragedy from the medieval ages – a poor girl is raped by the local strongman, the state machinery doesn't help and even the judiciary fails to protect her family. (Front page, "SC takes note of complaint by rape survivor's family," August 1). Instead, her alleged tormentors keep openly threatening her and get her family members and

witnesses in the case eliminated. This is a fit occasion for the Supreme Court to step in. A thorough inquiry must be held under its aegis, all culprits arrested immediately and the trial conducted on a day-to-day basis. The victim and her family must be provided strong security. Let people like her tormentors know that rule of law does prevail. In this regard, the fact that the CBI has taken over investigation in the case surely comes as a welcome development.

HARJAS BAINS, Bassi Pathana, Punjab

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# Is banning cryptocurrencies the solution?

PARLEY

A blanket ban will push the currency into the black market and stifle innovation

Recently, a government panel headed by senior bureaucrat Subhash Chandra Garg placed in the public domain a draft bill calling for a complete ban on private cryptocurrencies in India. The panel recommended a fine of up to ₹25 crore and a jail term of up to 10 years for anyone found to be owning or handling private cryptocurrencies. As an alternative to private cryptocurrencies, the panel recommended the introduction of a single cryptocurrency for the whole country that is backed by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). Parag Waknis and Anil Antony examine the soundness of the panel's recommendations in a conversation moderated by Prashant Perumal. Edited excerpts:

**What do you think about the Garg panel's overall guidelines? The volatility of private cryptocurrencies is one of the reasons being given to ban them.**

**Parag Waknis:** Volatility doesn't sound like a good rationale to ban cryptocurrencies because if cryptocurrencies are volatile, so are many other asset classes. We do not ban investments in any other asset class just because it is volatile. The decision of whether to invest in an asset or not should be left to the investor. The risk return calculation should be done by the investor, not the government.

Also, banning the consumption of a good or service doesn't really mean that people will stop consuming it. The market for the good or service simply goes underground and becomes hard to track. The market continues to exist, but the government cannot track it or tax it to gain revenue. This applies to cryptocurrencies as well.

It is true that the price of cryptocurrencies, especially bitcoin, has been volatile. And that's primarily because of their design. Bitcoin, for example, is designed in such a way that its supply rises rapidly first, but later very slowly, before stopping at a certain point.

**You said that banning a currency would push it into the black market. That would also**

**make it much harder for the government to regulate it, right?**

**PW:** Yes, exactly. In most cases, if the government feels that there is enough rationale to regulate the consumption of a commodity or a service or investments in a crypto asset, the best way forward is to come up with a regulatory framework that has incentives set right for the users. Maybe you can have a tax on capital gains from investing in crypto assets, just like you have taxes on investments in other assets.

The Garg panel, while being opposed to the idea of private cryptocurrencies, still seems to be a fan of the blockchain technology. It has called for a national cryptocurrency backed by the RBI, which would probably be based on the blockchain.

**Anil Antony:** The Garg panel opposing cryptocurrencies seems like yet another case of a group of people not really understanding a concept and hence trying to ban it. Most people equate cryptocurrencies with blockchain, but there is a huge difference between them. The cryptocurrency is just one application of the underlying blockchain technology. The blockchain technology has a lot more potential beyond cryptocurrencies.

**An issue raised against cryptocurrencies is that they aren't really backed by an underlying commodity or a sovereign government. But do you think it's absolutely essential that a currency needs to be backed by a commodity or an institution for it to be widely accepted in the market?**

**PW:** No. The way we define money is that it is a generally accepted medium of exchange. So, it's just trust that basically drives the value of money. There is nothing to back it, except trust. When two strangers have no other way of transacting with each other, when there's no way they can verify the creditworthiness of each other, money helps. That's all that we basically need. We need trust for that.



Now, what does a crypto asset or a cryptocurrency offer? It is right that it is not backed by anything. But it doesn't really require any backing in the sense that, as long as people hold the expectation that a particular asset will have value, it is sufficient.

**So is it the value that people think the currency will possess in the future that really drives its value?**

**PW:** Exactly. Yes. Cryptocurrencies allow people to conduct anonymous transactions. The price of bitcoin, for example, is driven by the access to the anonymity that it offers its users. People may also want to keep their wealth in some asset that gains in value over a period of time. So that is the worth or the "right" that people are paying for when they're buying cryptocurrencies.

There are also cases where fiat money has retained value even when the bank has ceased to exist. For example, in Somalia, the central bank and all the concerned institutions had ceased to work at some point. But people still continued to value the Somalian currency. So there was no backing at all for the currency, but people still believed that it had value and they continued to use the currency in transactions. So the strength of a particular asset boils down to what people think about it.

**When talking about anonymity, the common objection to cryptocurrencies is that they**

**A digital currency issued by the RBI that gets misused by criminals can affect trust in the existing fiat currency protocol.**

**can be used to finance various criminal activities. So, do we require government regulations to prevent their misuse, or are there other market mechanisms to deal with the problem?**

**PW:** I have done some research linked to this using money search models, where there is a set of competing monies, which could also be cryptocurrencies, and I basically show that there is a certain equilibrium where competing suppliers of cryptocurrencies would behave in a disciplined way. Theoretically, cryptocurrency providers could issue an unlimited amount of their money. But they're competing against each other, so the competition forces them to restrict their supply to a minimal amount that would help maintain the value of their currency. Thus the discipline imposed by market competition can prevent cryptocurrency providers from overissuing their currencies. We can also think about discipline in terms of reputation effects. For example, if there is a paper currency, and it turns out that it can be used to finance, let's say, crime, terrorism, or anything similar, there is the reputation of the supplier at stake.

So there are some ways by which

the market can discipline cryptocurrencies. But I think regulation, in terms of having the right rewards and punishments in place, would help. Not actions like banning stuff.

**AA:** Just to add to this... right now, one of the most comprehensive sets of regulations surrounding this debate on cryptocurrencies being used for various nefarious activities is being discussed across the world. It is one of the biggest concerns everywhere. One of the most comprehensive sets of regulations for cryptocurrencies is being brought in by the European Union. The EU is putting in a bunch of regulations to tackle money laundering, and it is called the AMLD-5. It is a bunch of norms to make crypto transactions more secure. It has a lot of very stringent KYC regulations and self-declaration laws which every holder of a crypto wallet or user needs to adhere to. Crypto exchanges are all expected to maintain a database that is transparently shared between countries. It is not foolproof, but the EU has started creating a bunch of regulations that could become stronger over time. This could be the best way to go forward rather than putting a blanket ban on cryptocurrencies, because the presence of cryptocurrencies is very important for the further development of the blockchain.

**When you impose a blanket ban on private currencies, thus effectively nationalising the market for cryptocurrencies, what exactly are the implications for innovation?**

**AA:** In 2018, in the Silicon Valley alone, almost \$2.9 billion worth of private venture funds have gone into blockchain start-ups. In tech hubs across the world, we are seeing billions plumped into the blockchain technology. In this scenario, if we decide to put a blanket ban on all cryptocurrencies, then our technology entrepreneurs will suddenly lose the incentive to work in the sector. You simply can't just build blockchain applications out of thin air. Right now, currencies are the only viable practical application of the blockchain technology even though it can be extrapolated to a lot of other sectors. So, for the sake of innovation, I think even if the government is bringing in a state-

backed currency, it will be better if the other currencies are also allowed to operate with sufficient regulations.

Also, when we are speaking about a country like India, in terms of size, cryptocurrencies constitute a very, very minor share of the total amount of money that is already being used to carry out various activities in the black economy. But the potential rewards that could come out of the blockchain technology are big.

**If cryptocurrencies form such a minuscule part of the black economy, why are policymakers so concerned about cryptocurrencies being used to finance criminal activities?**

**AA:** I would say nobody really expected cryptocurrencies to become such a big factor in such a short period of time. Right now, the global market capitalisation of cryptocurrencies is almost \$120 billion. And that's just the tip of the iceberg, it could get way bigger over time.

**What impact will cryptocurrencies have on the central bank's control over monetary policy? Is there a good case for a national cryptocurrency issued by the central bank, as proposed by the Garg Panel?**

**PW:** People will move to alternative assets and seek more anonymity only if they lose trust in government institutions. So, as long as the trust is maintained, monetary policy doesn't face any particular threat from cryptocurrencies.

When it comes to a central bank-issued digital currency, there is a loose consensus, especially among monetary economists from the New Monetary School, that there is no case for governments issuing cryptocurrencies because it would create a lot of problems in the form of contradictions in existing regulations and the government will have to deal with severe mismatches in regulations. Secondly, there are reputation effects. A digital currency issued by the RBI that gets misused by criminals can affect trust in the existing fiat currency protocol. I don't think a central bank would want to take that risk.



Parag Waknis  
teaches monetary economics at the Ambedkar University, Delhi



Anil Antony  
is the convenor of the digital media cell of the Kerala wing of the Indian National Congress



Scan the QR code to listen to the full interview online

## Conscience-keepers at the helm

The Congress cannot wish for democratisation of the party while continuing to rely on the Gandhis

MOHAMMED AYOOB

Congress MP Shashi Tharoor is an eloquent and articulate member of the Lok Sabha. He is one of the few independent-minded parliamentarians of the Congress. He might have been the obvious choice for the position of the leader of the party in the Lok Sabha but was denied the position because the "conscience-keepers" (his term) of the Congress were afraid that he would outshine them and exhibit their mediocrity.

**Change in election process**  
His recent interview published in *The Hindu* demonstrated his independent streak. In it, he argued that the Congress could not afford to drift aimlessly without a functioning president, adding, "There is a difference between a nominal leadership...and an active leadership. An active leadership would be far more engaged, far more outspoken and far more visible than Rahul Gandhi has chosen himself to be."

More important, Mr. Tharoor contended that the process of electing the president of the Congress should not be left to the Congress Working Committee (CWC), itself a coterie of appointed members most of whom are unelected and unelectable. Instead, he said, it should be an open process with party workers and functionaries from across the country voting for a new leader to replace Mr. Gandhi as well as the CWC.

This, Mr. Tharoor argued, will provide the president and the party greater legitimacy and, therefore, greater credibility with the voters both in the forthcoming Assembly elections and in the 2024 general election. Mr. Tharoor's stance has found great resonance among party members across the board but has rattled the senior leaders and members of the CWC who continue to hang on to their positions despite the party's abysmal performance in the Lok Sabha election.

It was a surprise, therefore, that in the same interview Mr. Tharoor referred to the Gandhi family as the "conscience-keepers" of the Congress and went on to say, "Whoever takes the position, he or she has to have the cooperation of the Gandhi

parivar because the DNA of the party is inextricably tied up to them." He believes that if a Congress president was ever to take a position that was inimical to the party's ethos, the conscience-keepers will speak out.

This position stands in stark contrast to the rest of the views that Mr. Tharoor expressed about reforming the party and holding open, democratic elections for the president and the CWC. He appeared to underscore this contrast when he said that the current scenario resembled the "old days, before Independence," when, if the Congress president did something and Mahatma Gandhi conveyed disapproval, that would have been enough for the president to understand and presumably apply corrective action.

### A contradiction

There are two major concerns regarding this formulation. First, comparing the Gandhi parivar, which thrives on sycophancy and trades on its increasingly remote ideological and even biological relationship with Jawaharlal Nehru, to the Mahatma is a brazen insult to the tallest leader of the freedom movement. Second, the notion that during the struggle for independence the Congress needed a "conscience keeper" even one of the stature of Mahatma Gandhi, is questionable. Conscience keepers detract immeasurably from the democratic spirit of movements and parties. The Mahatma's machinations as the super boss of the party that led to the forced resignation of the democratically elected president of the Congress, Subhas Chandra Bose, in 1939, are a testimony to this fact. Bose's alienation had major implications for the freedom movement that have not been adequately analysed so far.

I would contend that Mr. Tharoor should seriously think through the contradiction in his reasoning on the issue of "conscience keepers". It is quite inconsistent with the rest of his sensible argument regarding the need to democratise the Congress in order to rejuvenate it.

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



### NOTEBOOK

## The village advantage over a Michelin starred restaurant

Respecting water, soil and forests is the only way to get wholesome food

SHONALI MUTHALALY

I'm powered by curiosity, fried grasshoppers and a wizened old lady. The route to Pryda village, set deep within the West Khasi hills of Meghalaya, involves a gruelling one hour trek. Fortunately Spermon Kharaior has volunteered to guide me. The sprightly village matriarch, probably in her late 70s, skips from rock to shaky rock as we climb uphill, with an impressively firm grip on my wrist to haul me past the more challenging portions.

A few hours ago we were at a dramatic meeting of the tribes in Shillong helmed by the International eco-gastronomic movement Slow Food. The meeting brought together about 600 delegates representing 140 tribes from over 58 countries. Spending three days among pastoralists, honey gatherers, yak herders, reindeer breeders, fishermen and farmers made me develop a new

respect for ingredients and the people who bring them to our dining tables.

As a food writer, I spend time learning from chefs and mixologists, who use complicated, impressive techniques to tease and pimp ingredients into flamboyant menus and sophisticated cocktails. It is humbling to be reminded that ultimately everything depends on ingredients. And the only way to get quality ingredients is by respecting water, soil and forests, just like the indigenous people do.

Admittedly, it is easier said than done in a world that bristles with processed food, and in which taste buds have been trained to crave the addictive alchemy of fat, salt and sugar that comes in every bagged snack. I try. I gingerly sample crunchy Eri silk worms, reputed to taste like crisps. (They don't!) Eat lunch with a surprisingly tasty and tangy ant chutney. And snack on salted deep-fried



grasshoppers.

Then, I head to Pryda for lunch. A pig has been killed, and every part of it has been sensibly used, so nothing goes to waste. A sturdy table in the village schoolhouse is laden with food, much of it unfamiliar. There are bowls filled with fresh green herbs and a hefty pot fragrant with sautéed mustard leaves. At the centre of the banquet is the pork curry – rich, spicy and delicious.

There isn't a sauce bottle or plastic packet in sight: none of these flavours have come out of a factory. There are no chefs in the kitchen; the community has cooked together, between cups of tea and gossip. The vegetables were

harvested in the morning from a garden behind the school. The flavours are uncomplicated and alluring in a way no Michelin starred restaurant can compete with.

As the sun dims, I jump up realising I must leave immediately if I am to reach the main road before the path is plunged into darkness. Spermon presses a cool package into my hands as she hugs me goodbye. It's shophlang, a local tuber, deftly wrapped in banana leaves. I snack on it thoughtfully as I walk back: it is crisp, juicy and refreshing.

Environmentalists warn us incessantly that we are marching towards a precipice, propelled by competitive consumerism. Can looking towards the villages save us? It may sound naïve but it is a seductive idea. And I would rather learn lessons from Spermon and her ilk than be disappointed again, by yet another Facebook warrior.

The Hindu

FROM THE ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO AUGUST 2, 1969

P.M. and Nixon's discussion

In her final round of talks with President Nixon on to-day [August 1, New Delhi], the Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, got the distinct impression that in its new thinking of Asia, the United States was attaching great importance to better Indo-American relations in the larger interests of peace and stability in the region. The two Heads of Government, who met for over three hours yesterday and to-day [August 1] and discussed almost all aspects of the Asian situation, agreed in principle to explore the possibilities of a new pattern of Asian security to ensure respect for the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and neutrality of the smaller countries of South-East Asia which were vulnerable to both internal subversion and external threats. Mrs. Gandhi is reported to have pointed out that the Indian proposal for a Regional Security Convention did not envisage any military guarantees but only political assurances by the Big Powers and the major countries of Asia, which were prepared to subscribe to the Geneva principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of these small nations. India was not thinking in terms of any political or military condominium in Asia, under the auspices of the U.S. and the Soviet Union, to protest the Asian countries from possible dangers of Chinese aggression.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO AUGUST 2, 1919.

Race Riots in America.

A further rerudescence of racial rioting last night [July 28 in Chicago], resulted in five Negroes and two white men being killed, and forty persons wounded. Racial rioting was renewed this morning. One Negro was killed and two others wounded. It is now known that there were at least ten fatalities last night. It is estimated that up to the present twenty-five have been killed and five hundred injured, and many of the latter are not expected to recover. The authorities have stopped tramcar and elevated railway traffic in the disturbed area owing to the rioters wrecking trams. Troops are in readiness. The riots to-day [July 29], assumed the character of a veritable battle. A hundred thousand Negroes and an equal number of whites participated in the fighting in the streets with knives, razors and revolvers. A semblance of order was restored by the Mounted Police riding over the dead and wounded, and scattering the combatants, but sniping, knifing and incendiaryism continued in outlying streets.

CM YK

AN-ND-E

# Rivals clash with front runner Biden

Sharp exchanges centred around his campaign issue of health care, climate change and past record

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

DDETROIT

Democratic front runner Joe Biden went on the offensive on Wednesday against his main 2020 opponents, but was rapidly assailed on the debate stage over key issues such as health care, race and immigration.

Tensions rose between the former Vice-President and Senator Kamala Harris, the most prominent African American in the field, as the two reprised their clash from a month earlier at the debut debate. But while Mr. Biden aimed aggressive attacks at Ms. Harris and her health care plan, other rivals in the second night of the two-night, 20-candidate debate sought to undercut him on a host of issues.

Mr. Biden is leading polls for the nod to take on President Donald Trump in 2020, and nearly all of the other nine Democrats on stage attacked him at some point.

He found himself in a series of sharp exchanges on the central campaign issue of health care along with his stance on climate change



**Hard talk:** (From left) Senator Cory Booker, former Vice-President Joe Biden and Senator Kamala Harris during the Democratic Presidential Debate in Detroit. ■ NY

and his past legislative record, in particular his failure to take decisive action against illegal immigration.

When Mr. Biden jostled with Ms. Harris about her "double talk" on her own modified Medicare for All plan, which he noted would take 10 years to kick in, Ms. Harris shot back: "You're simply inaccurate in what you're describing."

She said Mr. Biden's proposal for government-backed health insurance for those who want it "leaves

out almost 10 million Americans" from coverage.

Mr. Biden's advisers had urged him to be more aggressive after his lackluster first debate performance, but the 76-year-old struck a curious opening note on Wednesday.

As the debate began, Mr. Biden greeted Harris, a 54-year-old former California attorney general, by shaking her hand and saying, "Go easy on me, kid."

She did not. Ms. Harris rebuked the criticism that gave her a viral moment in the

first debate by accusing Mr. Biden of making light of his work with segregationists in the Senate in the 1970s.

"The Vice-President has still failed to acknowledge that it was wrong to take the position that he took at that time," Ms. Harris said.

## Rare unity

The squabbling came after deep fault lines between the party's centrist and progressive wings were exposed on the first debate night, which featured leading liberals Ber-

nie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren.

In one of the few moments of broad unity onstage, several candidates joined Mr. Biden in condemning Mr. Trump.

Congresswoman Tulsi Gabbard said the President "is not behaving like a patriot," while Julian Castro, the only Latino in the field, branded Mr. Trump an outright "racist." But much of the night was consumed with clashes between candidates. "Middle ground approaches are not enough," said Washington Governor Jay Inslee, who has released a plan to tackle climate change. "We must confront the fossil fuel industry."

Senior administration officials described the Foreign Minister, Mohammad Javad Zarif – an American-educated diplomat who is well connected throughout the U.S. – as the "propaganda arm" of Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

In withdrawing last year from the nuclear accord, the administration argued that the move was intended to open negotiations. But with Mr. Zarif sidelined, it was unclear who else might serve as an experienced intermediary for Tehran in any potential talks. The administration has already imposed sanctions on the country's remaining power centres, Mr. Khamenei and the elite military organisation, the Revolutionary Guard.

Low-polling candidates like Mr. de Blasio, Mr. Inslee, Senator Kirsten Gillibrand and entrepreneur Andrew Yang were desperate for standout moments to justify staying in the race.

# Punishing Zarif, Trump muddies a path to talks

It's unclear whether he will be barred from visiting UN

DAVID E. SANGER  
MICHAEL CROWLEY  
WASHINGTON



A file photo of Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif. ■ AP

## EU to work with Iran despite U.S. sanctions

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

BRUSSELS

The European Union said on Thursday it regrets the U.S. decision to impose sanctions against Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif and vowed to continue working with him.

The decision was the latest blow by President Donald Trump to the 2015 deal to curb Iran's nuclear programme, which Brussels has been trying to salvage. "We regret this decision," said Carlos Martin Ruiz De Gordejuela, a spokesman for EU diplomatic chief.

targeted strikes against Iran to retaliate for its downing of a U.S. drone. Mr. Trump offered a muted response to Iran's seizure of a British-flagged oil tanker in the Gulf. When Iran tested a medium-range ballistic missile last week, Trump officials played down the episode.

And even as administration officials imposed sanctions on Mr. Zarif, they extended waivers on separate sanctions, related to Iran's nuclear programme.

Appearing on Fox Business Network on Wednesday, National Security Adviser John Bolton said a waiver would be extended for 90 days. ■ NY TIMES

## 51 killed in multiple attacks in Yemen

ASSOCIATED PRESS

ADEN

Rebels in Yemen fired a ballistic missile on Thursday at a military parade in the southern port city of Aden and coordinated suicide bombings targeted a police station in another part of the city. The attacks killed at least 51 people and wounded dozens, officials said.

The missile hit a military

parade of forces loyal to the UAE, a member of the Saudi-led coalition that has been fighting the Iran-backed Houthi rebels since 2015 in support of Yemen's government. The missile attack killed at least 40, a health official said.

Earlier, 11 people were killed and at least 29 wounded in multiple blasts in the city.

## TTP diktat on polio drops, music

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

PESHAWAR

The Pakistani Taliban has warned people in the tribal district of North Waziristan not to play loud music and administer polio vaccination to their children, according to a media report on Thursday.

The one-page message on a pamphlet in Urdu issued by banned Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) in Miranshah, the headquarters of Pakistan's North Waziristan

district, on Wednesday also directed women not to venture out without a male company, the Dawn newspaper reported.

"We remind you [residents] that similar statements issued by the Taliban several times in the past had fallen on deaf ears, but this time we are going to take to task those who violate the order," it stated.

There will be no use of DJs either inside the house or in open fields and those ignor-

ing the warning will face consequences, the message said. The pamphlet prohibited the people from playing loud music on computer and other shops with a warning that any place from where songs were heard could be blown up any time, the report said.

Polio workers have been asked to do finger-marking of children during the vaccination campaign but without administering polio drops to them.

Mr. Zarif welcomed the news in his signature combative form on Twitter. "The US' reason for designating me is that I am Iran's primary spokesperson around the world. Is the truth really that painful? It has no effect on me or my family, as I have no property or interests outside of Iran. Thank you for considering me such a huge threat to your agenda."

Trump administration officials did not indicate whether they would seek to bar Mr. Zarif from visiting

## Dutch ban on burqas in public places takes effect

The law was passed in June 2018

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

THE HAGUE

The Netherlands banned the wearing of a face-covering veil, such as a burqa or niqab, in public buildings and on transport from Thursday as a contentious law on the garment worn by some Muslim women came into force.

Between 200 and 400 women are estimated to wear a burqa or niqab in the country of 17 million people.

The legislation was passed in June 2018 after a decade of political debate on the subject. The far-right politician Geert Wilders had proposed the veil ban back in 2005. "From now on the wearing of clothing which covers the face is banned in educational facilities, public



Between 200 to 400 women wear a burqa or a niqab in the country. ■ AP

institutions and buildings, as well as hospitals and public transport," the Dutch Interior Ministry said.

The law also bans face-covering helmet or hood. A person could be fined €150 (\$165). However, the public transport sector said it would not stop to make a woman in a burqa get off as it would cause delays.

## 'Bin Laden's son Hamza killed'

U.S. media report says he was killed 'during the last two years'

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

WASHINGTON

Osama bin Laden's son Hamza, chosen heir to the leadership of al-Qaeda, has been killed, U.S. media reported on Wednesday citing American officials.

NBC News said three U.S. officials had confirmed they had information of Hamza bin Laden's death, but gave no details of the place or date.

The New York Times subsequently cited two U.S. officials as saying they had confirmation that he was killed during the last two years in an operation that involved the U.S.

Questioned by reporters in the Oval Office, President Donald Trump did not confirm or deny the NBC report. "I don't want to comment on

it," he said.

Both reports suggested that Hamza may have been killed well before the State Department announced a \$1 million bounty on his head in February 2019.

The 15th of Osama bin Laden's 20 children and a son of his third wife, Hamza, thought to be about 30 years old, was "emerging as a leader in the al-Qaeda fran-

chise," the State Department said in announcing the reward.

## 'Crown prince'

Sometimes dubbed the "crown prince of jihad", he had put out audio and video messages calling for attacks on the U.S. and other countries, especially to avenge his father's killing by U.S. forces in Pakistan in May 2011, the department said.

Documents seized in the raid on his father's house in Abbottabad suggested Hamza was being groomed as heir to the al-Qaeda leadership.

U.S. forces also found a video of the wedding of Hamza to the daughter of another senior al-Qaeda official that is believed to have taken place in Iran.

## Bin Laden family's aide arrested in Philippines

Abdeljalil was living with a fake identity

DANIEL VICTOR

A Jordanian man once considered a financier for al-Qaeda and a "henchman" of Osama bin Laden's brother-in-law was arrested in the Philippines in July, officials said on Thursday, reinforcing concerns that Islamic militants are making a base in the country.

Mahmoud Afif Abdeljalil, 51, was arrested on July 4 in Zamboanga, a coastal city at the southwestern tip of Mindanao, the nation's second-largest island. Abdeljalil had false documents under an assumed name, Jaime Morente, the chief of the Bureau of Immigration, said in a statement.

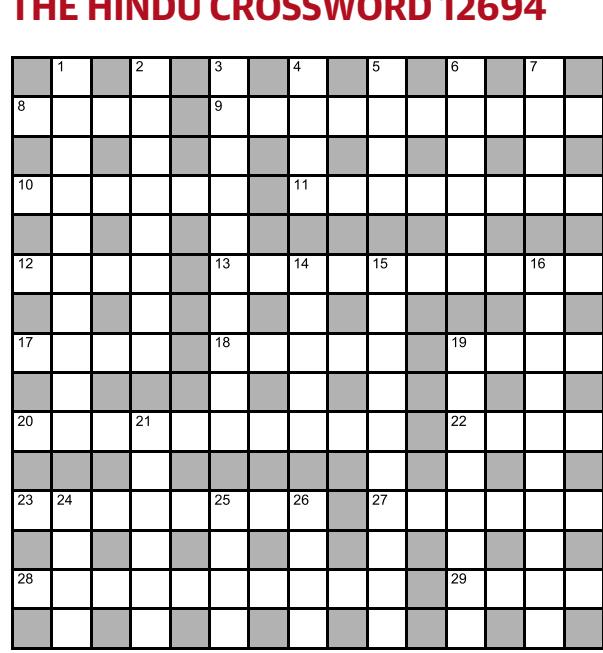
Abdeljalil, whom the authorities called "a former henchman" connected to

the bin Laden family, has been in government custody since the arrest. "We are going to deport him for being an illegal entrant as he has no record of arrival, after he was arrested and deported in 2003 for being an undesirable alien," Mr. Morente said.

In 2003, the authorities said that Abdeljalil was a close associate of Mohammed Khalifa, bin Laden's brother-in-law, and that the two were involved in financing the Qaida network through charity organisations.

Officials said they began monitoring Abdeljalil after he and an Algerian companion were flagged at a military checkpoint in Zamboanga last year. ■ NY TIMES

## THE HINDU CROSSWORD 12694



### ACROSS

- 8 Fall: a story (4)
- 9 Engagement of son in the middle of probation – that's outrageous! (10)
- 10 Oppose what's bloody right (6)
- 11 Cooking aid say to take grime off around bottom of skillet (3,5)
- 12 Skill to flip end of gravy on dish (4)

### DOWN

- 1 Paternal and prosperous... girl's preference (10)
- 2 Chemical agent obtained from household pet's salty when analysed (8)
- 13 Termination of prices to enter drinking establishment (6,4)
- 17 A feeling of remorse, having stolen University's gold (4)
- 18 Region surrounding new sports stadium... (5)
- 19 ... has planes circling over mountains (4)
- 20 Lapse in street security? (4,6)
- 22 Dam' topless bird (4)
- 23 Cruel abuse led a fat husband to leave (8)
- 27 Menace of crowd, perhaps shortly approaching a joint (6)
- 28 Plan B is to get cooked okra and a little radish wrapped around (10)
- 29 Another enlistee oddly remained (4)
- 30 Call aunty on vacation – middle-school's boring! (4)
- 25 Uncommon ultrarealistic heart (4)
- 26 Partners leaving the French uprising (4)

(set by Bruno)

## SUDOKU

						3	6	
5						9		2
	3	2	9			1		
	8			4			7	
9	1	7	5				3	
3	8			2				
	9	2	5	8				
2	6						1	
5	4							

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★☆

Solution to puzzle 12693

S	T	R	O	B	E	W	E	A	L	T	H

## MARKET WATCH

	01-08-2019	% CHANGE
Sensex	37,018	-1.23
US Dollar	69.06	-0.39
Gold	35,795	0.04
Brent oil	63.42	-2.59

## NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	371.10	-6.45
Asian Paints	1504.70	-16.40
Axis Bank	669.30	-4.80
Bajaj Auto	2537.65	21.15
Bajaj Finserv	7082.00	-15.85
Bajaj Finance	3222.10	-29.95
Bharti Airtel	323.90	-13.70
BPCL	343.65	-1.85
Britannia Ind	2600.90	-4.10
Cipla	512.45	-8.65
Coal India	202.45	-2.00
Dr Reddy's Lab	2533.75	-40.85
Eicher Motors	16562.80	214.75
GAIL (India)	128.60	-0.25
Grasim Ind	774.55	-13.80
HCL Tech	1021.55	-13.00
HDFC	2086.80	-35.00
HDFC Bank	2221.80	-29.85
Hero MotoCorp	2368.55	12.45
Hindalco	182.75	-7.80
Hind Unilever	1731.30	4.65
Indiabulls HFL	521.95	-13.65
ICICI Bank	417.05	-7.55
IndusInd Bank	1398.65	-14.20
Bharti Infratel	250.95	5.20
Infosys	768.85	-24.80
Indian Oil Corp	136.95	-2.35
ITC	267.55	-2.65
JSW Steel	225.25	-12.20
Kotak Bank	1495.80	-23.75
L&T	1358.05	-29.25
M&M	548.55	-1.45
Maruti Suzuki	5572.60	102.90
NTPC	126.85	0.30
ONGC	136.90	-1.95
PowerGrid Corp	214.00	3.20
Reliance Ind	1180.25	14.00
State Bank	317.15	-15.05
Sun Pharma	425.10	-1.65
Tata Motors	129.55	-6.05
Tata Steel	420.00	-12.05
TCS	2180.05	-25.65
Tech Mahindra	625.65	-10.60
Titan	1057.30	0.95
UltraTech Cement	4231.70	-115.20
UPL	576.80	-18.45
Vedanta	145.45	-8.65
Wipro	270.40	5.10
YES Bank	88.40	-2.80
Zee Entertainment	346.85	-14.75

	EXCHANGE RATES	TT BUY	TT SELL
Indicative direct rates in rupees a unit except yen at 4 p.m. on August 01			
CURRENCY			
US Dollar	68.86	69.18	
Euro	76.01	76.36	
British Pound	83.42	83.82	
Japanese Yen (100)	63.22	63.52	
Chinese Yuan	9.98	10.02	
Swiss Franc	69.20	69.53	
Singapore Dollar	50.07	50.31	
Canadian Dollar	52.08	52.32	
Malaysian Ringgit	16.61	16.70	

Source: Indian Bank

## + 'Siddhartha tried to sell real estate assets'

'However, prices offered were too low'

MINI TEJASWI  
BENGALURU

Mounting liquidity crisis forced coffee entrepreneur V.G. Siddhartha to reach out to at least three companies – including two builders and a foreign realty advisory firm – to sell some of his personal real estate assets in Bengaluru and Mysuru.

"Soon after the sale of his Mindtree shares, he started exploring liquidity for some of his realty assets. However, he was very upset with the prices he was offered by them. The offer prices were too low as the potential buyers were well aware that he was on a distress sale mode," said a person who was close to Mr. Siddhartha.

Mr. Siddhartha was sitting on a time bomb in the last few years, said a planter who was also a friend of the entrepreneur.

"Most of his personal shares, shares of his wife Malavika and stake in some of his companies, including Coffee Day Enterprises Day were pledged. Debt was mounting on a daily

## Nifty below 11,000 first time since Mar.

Maximum losses in auto, banking, metal and technology stocks; Sensex crashes 463 points

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
MUMBAI

A day after the U.S. Federal Reserve reduced interest rate for the first time since 2008, global equity markets, including India, lost heavy ground as the U.S. central bank did not take a dovish stance as was widely expected by markets across the globe.

The Indian benchmarks lost more than 1% on Wednesday, with the 50-share Nifty falling below the psychological 11,000-mark for the first time since March.

While investors sold shares across sectors, the maximum losses were in auto, banking, metal and technology stocks.

The 30-share Sensex, which fell 787 points during intra-day trades to touch a



Fed factor: Markets were expecting a more dovish stance by the U.S. central bank. ■ PAUL NORONHA

low of 36,694.18, managed to recoup some of the losses to close at 37,018.32, down 462.80 points, or 1.23%.

As many as 23 of the Sensex constituents ended in the red with Infosys, HDFC Bank, HDFC, State Bank of India, ICICI Bank, TCS and Bajaj Auto contributing the

maximum to the day's losses.

The broader Nifty closed at 10,980, shedding 105.40 points, or 1.24%. This was the lowest close for the index since March 1. Meanwhile, the India VIX index shot up 7% on Wednesday, pegging its total surge to nearly 20%

in the last three trading sessions.

Vivek Ranjan Misra, Head – Fundamental Research, Karvy Stock Broking, attributed the fall to the 'mid-cycle adjustment' by the U.S. Federal Reserve as markets were expecting a more dovish stance by the U.S. central bank.

"For Indian equities, this is on top of the headwinds it has faced recently, like FII selling on account of tax proposals. There are other reasons as well, firstly the weakness in economy has not abated, as evident by the core sector data and auto sales. Secondly while some companies have reported good numbers, the vast number have been disappointing and commentary has not been encouraging," Mr. Misra said.

The weakness in equity markets spilled over to the currency markets with rupee weakening 27 paisa against the dollar.

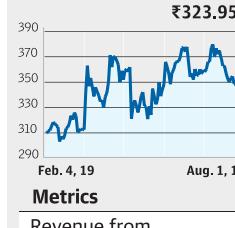
ra said. While the U.S. Fed announced a 25 basis points cut in interest rate, it also hinted that it was not the first of more cuts to come.

The statement led to equity markets tumbling globally with the benchmarks of Hong Kong, South Korea, Indonesia and Taiwan all ending in the red. Some of the European markets were also in the red on Wednesday.

Back in India, nearly 1,700 stocks lost ground on BSE, as against 778 gainers. Foreign investors were net sellers at more than ₹1,000 crore on Wednesday, having sold shares worth nearly ₹12,500 crore in July.

The weakness in equity markets spilled over to the currency markets with rupee weakening 27 paisa against the dollar.

## Call drop



Q1 has begun with a healthy and equitable growth across all our lines of businesses. Headline pricing remained stable, albeit at low levels

GOPAL VITTAL,  
MD and CEO (India and South Asia), Bharti Airtel

Metrics	Q1 FY20	Q1 FY19	Growth (%)
Revenue from operations (₹cr.)	20,738	19,799	4.7
Net profit (₹cr.)	(2,866)	97	
EPS (₹)	(6.2)	0.2	

## Bharti Airtel logs first quarterly loss in 14 years

Telco posts ₹2,866 crore loss in Q1

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI

Bharti Airtel on Thursday posted a staggering ₹2,866 crore loss for the June quarter, its first consolidated loss in 14 years, as the telco lost

ground to rival Reliance Jio and took a hit from exceptional items such as charges towards accelerated depreciation of 3G network gear.

The revenue rose 4.7% to ₹20,738 crore during the first quarter ended June 2019.

"After accounting for hit of ₹14,454 million (₹1,445.4 crore) towards exceptional items (net of tax), the resultant net loss for the quarter ended June 30, 2019 came in at ₹28,660 million (₹2,866 crore), compared to profit of ₹973 million (₹97.3 crore) in the corresponding quarter last year and ₹1,072 million (₹107.2 crore) in the previous quarter," the company said in its quarterly report.

Similarly, Toyota Kirloskar Motor (TKM) said its domestic sales declined 24% to 10,423 unit.

In the two-wheeler space,

Bajaj Auto saw its domestic sales dip 13% per cent last month to 2,05,470 units.

TVS Motor Company re-

ported a 12.98% dip in its July

2019 sales to 2.79 lakh unit

on weaker volumes.

In the domestic market,

two-wheeler sales dropped

to 2.08 lakh units from 2.47

lakh units.

Truck major Ashok Ley-

land reported a 39% contrac-

tion in the sales of its med-

ium and heavy commercial

vehicles (M&HCV) in the

domestic and export

markets.

Truck sales dipped 48%

for July 2019 to 4,858 units.

(With inputs by N. Anand)

tive liabilities pertaining to customary indemnities provided to a clutch of investors of Airtel Africa and expenses relating to its recent listing. Airtel's revenue from India mobile services increased 4.1% year-on-year to ₹10,724 crore.

In revenue terms, Reliance Jio is now comfortably placed on top of the telco stack given that its topline stood at ₹11,679 crore in June quarter (just three years into its commercial operations) against ₹11,269.9 crore of Vodafone Idea.

Airtel, though, registered an improvement in many of the operational parameters. For instance, for the June quarter, Airtel's India Average Revenue Per User stood at ₹129 against ₹123 in the March quarter. Also, mobile data traffic on its network grew 94% year on year.

Commenting on the earnings, Gopal Vittal, MD and CEO (India and South Asia), Bharti Airtel, said the first quarter of the year has begun with a "healthy and equitable growth across all our lines of businesses. Headline pricing remained stable, albeit at low levels," he said.



Applying brakes: The automotive industry continues to face headwinds as sales continue to contract. ■ REUTERS

units last month.

Mahindra & Mahindra reported a 16% decline in domestic market to 37,474 units.

The company's passenger vehicle segment reported a sales of 16,831 vehicles last month as against 19,781 units in the same period of 2018.

The headwinds faced by the automotive industry continue as a result of subdued consumer sentiment, triggered by various factors," M&M chief of sales and marketing, automotive division, Veejay Ram Nakra said.

The industry needs stimu-

## IN BRIEF



## RBI invites applications for Dy. Governor's post

MUMBAI The Centre has invited applications for RBI Deputy Governor's post that fell vacant after Viral Acharya resigned. Candidates with at least 25 years of work experience, including experience at the level of Secretary or equivalent in the Government of India or candidates having at least 25 years of work experience in an Indian or international public financial institution can apply.

## Chola Financial profit rises to ₹2.56 crore

CHENNAI Cholamandalam Financial Holdings Ltd.'s standalone net profit for the first quarter ended June 2019 rose to ₹2.56 crore against ₹2.43 crore in the year-earlier period. Total income rose to ₹4.06 crore against ₹3.89 crore. Cholamandalam Investment & Finance Co. Ltd., in which the firm has 46.5% stake, disbursed ₹8,572 crore against ₹7,014 crore. It's standalone profit rose 10% to ₹314 crore on a consolidated basis.

## Colgate-Palmolive (India) has new MD

NEW DELHI Oral care major Colgate-Palmolive (India) Ltd. on Thursday said Ram Raghavan has been appointed as its managing director. Mr. Raghavan replaces Issam Bachaani, who will move to another role within the company, the firm said in a statement. "Prior to this role, Mr. Raghavan served as vice-president, marketing, Asia-Pacific division of Colgate-Palmolive," the company said. PTI

# Global gold demand touches 3-year high

Continued central bank buying, sustained growth in gold-backed ETFs were the key drivers: WGC

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
MUMBAI

Global gold demand in the first half of 2019 jumped to a three-year high on the back of robust demand by central banks and gold-backed exchange-traded funds (ETFs).

Gold demand was pegged at 2,181.7 tonnes in the first six months of the current calendar year, reflecting an 8% rise compared with the first half of 2018, as per the latest report by the World Gold Council (WGC).

"Continued central bank buying and sustained growth in gold-backed exchange-traded funds [ETFs] were the key drivers of this increase," the report stated.

"Central banks bought 224.4 tonnes of gold in Q2 2019. This took H1 [first six months] buying to 374.1



**Metal craze:** A strong recovery in India's jewellery market pushed overall demand in Q2 by 12% to 168.8 tonnes. ■ V.RAJU

tonnes, the largest net H1 increase in global gold reserves in our data series. In a continuation of recent trends, buying was spread across a diverse range of largely emerging market countries," it added.

from central banks and the rallying gold price in June were the main factors driving inflows into the sector.

Incidentally, a strong recovery in India's jewellery market pushed the overall jewellery demand in the second quarter by 12% to 168.8 tonnes. A busy wedding season and healthy festival sales boosted demand, before the June price rise brought it to a virtual standstill, the report stated.

## Bar and coin

Bar and coin investment in the second quarter dipped 12% to 218.6 tonnes and combined with the soft first quarter number, took the first half total to a six-year low of 476.9 tonnes. A 29% year-on-year drop in China accounted for much of the global se-

cond quarter decline, according to WGC.

On the other hand, gold supply grew 6% in the second quarter to 1,186.7 tonnes. A record Q2 gold mine production and a 9% jump in recycling, boosted by the sharp June gold price rally, led the growth in supply. On an overall half yearly basis, the supply touched 2,323.9 tonnes, the highest level since 2016.

In terms of price, the yellow metal touched multi-year highs, breaching \$1,400/oz for the first time since 2013.

Among the factors driving this rally were expectations of lower interest rates, political uncertainty, with further support coming from strong central bank buying, the report said.

"Companies scaled up production in response to a quicker upturn in factory or-

# Manufacturing expands faster on fresh orders

Consumer goods lead upturn

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Manufacturing activity expanded at a quicker rate in July due to an increase in new orders and the resultant scaling up of production by companies, according to a private sector survey.

"Rising from 52.1 in June to 52.5 in July, the IHS Markit India Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index was consistent with a further strengthening in the health of the sector," the report added. "The latest reading was slightly higher than the average for calendar year 2018 (52.3), but below its long-run trend (53.9)."

The report said consumer goods producers led the upturn in July, adding that even the intermediate goods makers saw a stronger improvement in business conditions in July.

ders. This, coupled with optimistic growth projections, underpinned job creation and an uptick in input purchasing."

"Rising from 52.1 in June to 52.5 in July, the IHS Markit India Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index was consistent with a further strengthening in the health of the sector," the report added. "The latest reading was slightly higher than the average for calendar year 2018 (52.3), but below its long-run trend (53.9)."

The report said consumer goods producers led the upturn in July, adding that even the intermediate goods makers saw a stronger improvement in business conditions in July.

## Ashok Leyland to save up to ₹500 cr. via cost reduction measures

Firm to incur ₹1,700 to ₹2,000 cr. capex for BS-VI vehicles

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI

Ashok Leyland Ltd., the flagship company of the Hinduja Group, is expecting to save about ₹400-500 crore during the current fiscal through cost reduction measures, said a top official.

"We want to take ₹400-500 crore of operating costs out of the system," said Gopal Mahadevan, whole-time director and chief financial officer, Ashok Leyland Ltd.

According to him, this would be done by having a relook at expenditure under heads such as administration, sales and manufacturing, distribution and productivity costs and analysing how the cost-cutting could be done in the most effective



Gopal Mahadevan

manner.

While classifying the costs as vital, essential and desirable, he said: "Costs that are vital and essential will be incurred and those under the desirable head will be spent on need basis."

To a question, Mr. Mahadevan said that the reduction in administrative over-

heads would not amount to a reduction in head count. On the other hand, the firm would focus on increasing the productivity of each employee.

During the current fiscal, Ashok Leyland would invest about ₹1,700 crore to ₹2,000 crore in capital expenditure for making BS-VI vehicles, on modular vehicle platform and on Project Phoenix.

Talking about production cuts at Panthagar unit, he said it was done during June and July 2019 to produce vehicles based on demand projections and reduce inventories. On electric-powered buses, he said the firm was in discussions with State governments and private bus operators.

## McLeod Russel to sell more estates by Sept.

INDRANI DUTTA  
KOLKATA

McLeod Russel India Ltd. is planning to sell at least three more tea estates in West Bengal's Dooars and in Assam by September 2019.

In a bid to pare its debt, the company has been on a selling spree since mid-2018, months after it set up a committee in May to identify the assets which could be put on the block.

"We may sell a garden in Dooars and at least two in Assam," a source said on the condition of anonymity.

The company's debt stood at around ₹1,000 crore at end June 2019 and has also suffered rating downgrades.

China is the main market for Indian cotton yarn exports. But, exports to China have dropped nearly 50%. Besides, exports to Bangla-

## Sharp decline in cotton yarn exports worries industry

'Shipments to main market China have almost halved'

M. SOUNDARIYA PREETHA  
COIMBATORE

India's cotton yarn exports between April and June this year was 33% lower compared to the same period last year, leading to concern among textile mills.

The Cotton Textiles Export Promotion Council (Texprocil) has pointed out that cotton yarn exports from April to June 2019 was 226 million kg as against 338 million kg during the same period last year. In June, the exports were just 59 million kg, which is 50.74% less compared to June 2018.

India used to export 32% of its cotton yarn production three years ago. This has fallen to 27% now.

"Considering the large-scale investment in the spin-

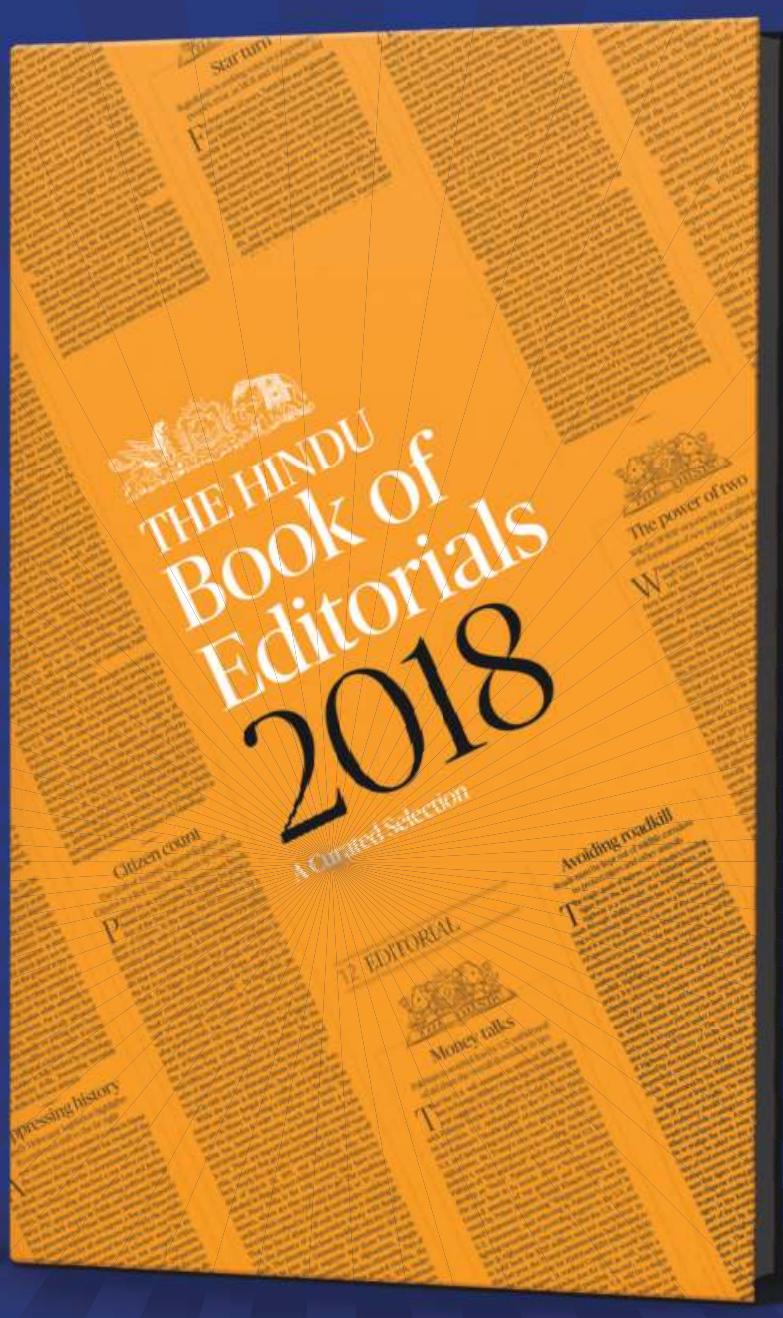


ning sector and sluggish demand in the domestic market, exports are the only avenue to ensure uninterrupted production and capacity utilisation," K.V. Srinivasan, chairman of the council, said in a press release.

Since 2014, all benefits extended for yarn exports were withdrawn.

Cotton yarn from Pakistan and Vietnam get duty free access to China. If the domestic textile mills are supported through interest subvention or refund of State taxes and levies, there will be some relief and the industry will become price competitive to explore new markets, Mr. Rajagopal added.

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# Around the world in a flurry of flavour

One of the youngest chefs to earn a Michelin for her restaurant in Germany, Julia Komp is now blazing a trail across India with meticulously plated food and carrot sharks

SHONALI MUTHALALY

Julia Komp has no time to waste on niceties.

One of the world's youngest chefs to earn a Michelin for her restaurant, Schloss Loersfeld (Germany), in 2016 she's been on a mission all year. Quitting her high profile job, she has spent the last seven months travelling through 19 countries.

Julia is cooking intricate multi-course meals in most of these countries. She signed up for her first internship at the age of 14, then worked her way through a set of high-pressure kitchens, till she snagged the Michelin and a flurry of press in 2016, when she was 27 years old.

"In China, when I arrived they threw me a banquet," she says, shaking her head. She's sitting in Ottimo – the Italian restaurant at the ITC Grand Chola in Chennai, where she'd cooked a multi-course dinner for 50 guests. "I kept saying I have to start work, because I was cooking dinner for their guests the next day. They kept telling me to relax. Finally, by midnight, I could not bear it any more. I stood up and said, 'Enough!'" She went to the kitchen and cooked till 4 am. "Even then, I just managed to serve dinner on time."

Her discipline and attention to detail was evident through the six course dinner: from cheeky little sharks cut out of thin carrot slices swimming in the soup to the careful uniformity of every plate. Flavours were bright, light and refreshing, with the chef relying more on quality ingredients and skill, than butter and bombastic technique. One course, for example, featured just tomatoes:



**Behind the scenes** Julia Komp plating one of the first few courses of her multi-course meal at Ottimo, ITC Grand Chola

■ R RAVINDRAN AND SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

three varieties, with a quenelle of minty-fresh ice cream, crunchy dehydrated vegetable and quivering puddles of spherified green tomato. Every spoonful tasted different, yet the flavours united seamlessly. Julia's technique has evidently been honed by multiple kitchens: she uses many of the skills of molecular gastronomy, in addition to weaving in unexpected flavours from her journey.

The hotel's senior executive chef Ajit Bangera smiles as he says, "The deal is she cooks, and we teach her about Indian food in return." Julia nods seriously, explaining that she will be learning about regional food in each city she is travelling to, for this festival: Mumbai, Bengaluru, Kolkata, and Delhi. "I already have three books filled with notes," she adds.



Growing up, Julia says wanted to be a "police woman". However, her internship at a countryside hotel changed things. "I chose it because all the good looking boys would go to the gym there. The service was rubbish though, with chefs fighting all day." During the weekends, she ran a catering service, with her grandmother's help. "We made finger food... stuffed tomatoes, pork fillet with Gorgonzola cream... I feel ashamed of that food now," she states with a gentle shudder. "I will not cook any of it again."

Her grandmother has a house in Tunisia, which is how Julia developed a fascination for Arabic flavours. "People there are friendly, and often when we returned from the beach there would be a plate of couscous or shorba placed in front

of our door." Living and cooking in Tunisia taught her that it was important to travel. "It doesn't matter how focussed I am with chicken curry; it will taste better if I come to India and learn how it is cooked."

Julia studied the Arabic kitchen by travelling through Dubai and Abu Dhabi, then went on to work in Bangkok, before moving to Indonesia.

"I take notes everywhere, even if I know I will not be able to replicate the recipe later. With traditional Indonesian food, for example, it is hard to find all the ingredients. It is also very rich and heavy." Then came Vietnam, the Philippines, Japan and Korea. "The food is just totally different in each region," she says, adding, "People should not say something is 'Asian'. It is so

wrong. There are so many different kinds of food in Asia."

Cooking multi-course dinners in many of these countries quickly taught her to be self-sufficient. "My food is light and fruity. So when a recipe uses lemon, I use passion fruit. When it calls for cream, I use coconut milk... Ingredients are rarely a problem. You get everything everywhere now. I cooked in Ethiopia, and I found everything I needed. If I have micro leeks, coriander cress or edible flowers, I will use them. But when I don't have them, I will not die," she says wryly, shaking her head.

By the end of the year, Julia plans to take everything she has learnt and start her own restaurant in Cologne. "My food will have Indian and Arabic flavours," she says, adding that she plans to distil everything she has learnt from her travels into the menu. "I'm gunning for two Michelin stars," she smiles, her eyes lighting up.

As for her biggest learning from cooking her way through multiple food cultures? She leans forward, dead serious, and says, "Always use enough salt."

*Julia Komp was also at ITC Maratha, Mumbai. She will be cooking at ITC Royal Bengal, Kolkata, August 3; ITC Gardenia, Bengaluru, August 7; and ITC Maurya, New Delhi on August 10.*

## ART

### A moment with trees

A month-long show, urges us to dwell on the beauty of trees, and think about the many lives that they nurture



The big banyan tree at the Ojas Art @1AQ in Mehrauli is a big part of the gallery's life. They host Under The Banyan Tree, a music series here, and director Anubhav Nath can swear that there's a great, positive energy around that tree.

It is in keeping with the gallery's larger spirit then, that they're bringing together close to 50 works of art, by six artists, in an exhibit called A Message from the Trees.

"Also because it's monsoon and with the levels of concrete on our roads, so many trees get uprooted after even one heavy rain," says Nath, who's also the show's curator, adding that this made him want to think of an "artistic way to do something about this".

Five Gond artists are participating in this show - and it isn't new that a city gallery would bring together this school of work for an exhibit about trees. The "folk" form has only been gaining popularity in art circles and beyond, given its simple, yet colourful appeal - each work also brims with powerful stories of the Gond community's age-old social practices, which are intrinsically tied in with the flora and fauna around them.

The one exception, Abhishek Singh, is a graphic artist whose work, Vrikshadootam, inspired Nath to put together A Message from the Trees - the title too, a translation of the title.

Singh's work, an arresting visual of ink on canvas, is 144" by 72" inches. The forest-like scene has various creatures whose horns and antlers grow into long tree-branch-like lines, a style that's popular in Gond art. It's almost a small endearing moment of commonality, especially given the masculine monochrome of Singh's work, in stark contrast to the colourful liveliness of the Gond works. "Also, as a gallery, it's an objective for us to bridge these gaps between tribal and urban contemporary art," says Nath.

The show brings together some of the biggest, most recognisable names in Gond practice today, including Bhajju Shyam, Durga Bai, and Ram Singh Urveti.

The youngest Gond artist of this lot, 32-year-old artist Mayank Shyam's work is interesting - there's a distinct presence of buses and plumes of pollution, which are otherwise minimal presences in the canvases of older Gond artists. Mayank is also the son of the famous Gond painter Jangar Singh Shyam, who died in 2001.

*A Message from the Trees, August 2 - September 1, Ojas Art@1AQ, Near Qutab Minar, Mehrauli*

VANGMAYI PARAKALA

## FOOD SPOT

# Let's hear it for STEAMED LENTILS

Every culture has a variety, but there's nothing quite like the Bengali version



ziabadi. Probashi is a word used for Bengalis living outside Bengal, though I suppose it refers to the diaspora at large.

Probashi, like most other Bengali eateries, has fish fries, curries, veggies, the typical Bengali dals and dishes like Mutton Curry, Kalka-

ta Biryani. We asked for a plate of yes, the Dhokar Dalna, Fish Lalia, Lau Chingri and Kosha Chicken. Kalia is a curry of onions and garlic,

and the fish was a plump piece of rohu. Lau Chingri is chopped bottle gourd cooked with small shrimps, and Kosha Chicken is a variation of Kosha Mangsho, a rich dish of meat cooked with either tomatoes or curd and tempered with spices.

I ordered the food through Swiggy. The rates were reasonable: the fish was priced at ₹135 for one large piece, the chicken at ₹315 a plate, the Dhokar Dalna at ₹205 and Lau Chingri at ₹245.

I didn't have the fish but I



**Bengali fare** Dishes on offer at Probashi.

■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

was told it was rather good. The curry was rich, the piece was large and had been fried well and then cooked in the gravy. I enjoyed the Kosha Chicken - it didn't have much of a gravy, and it's not meant to, but it had absorbed the flavour of the spices.

I ordered the food through Swiggy. The rates were reasonable: the fish was priced at ₹135 for one large piece, the chicken at ₹315 a plate, the Dhokar Dalna at ₹205 and Lau Chingri at ₹245.

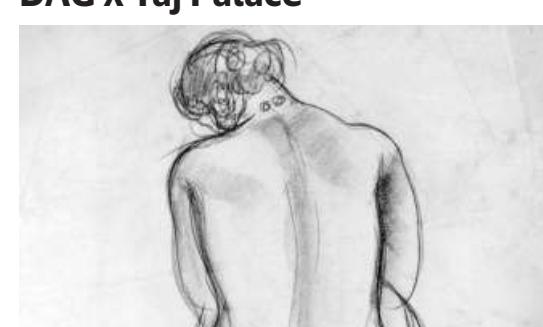
I liked the food, especially the dhokar. I had thought the family would focus on the other dishes, and there would be some of it left for my breakfast. Sadly, they all enjoyed it as much as I did, and I had to make do with poha the next morning.

Note to self: Next time, order two plates. Or, better still, hide some of the dhokar dalna in the fridge when no one is looking.

*The writer is a seasoned food critic*

## PREVIEW

### DAG x Taj Palace



After its first edition in Mumbai, the 115 Years Charity Gala of the Taj hotels is announcing its second edition, in Delhi, with a gala tonight. On preview are 25 works from DAG's twentieth-century collection, including those by Amrita Sher-Gil, S.H. Raza, Jamini Roy, and F.N. Souza. A part of the proceeds from the auction will go to the Taj Public Service Welfare Trust.

*Preview on till August 8; for reservations at the Gala, contact +91-9999620193; at the Taj Palace, 2, Sardar Patel Marg*

*For a listing or to be featured here, email us at delhimetro@thehindu.co.in*



RAHUL VERMA

I have come to the conclusion that there is something about ground and steamed lentil cakes that truly appeals to my palate. I first discovered this when I had some Gatte Ki Sabzi - a Rajasthan preparation of lentil strips in a curry - many years ago. Then, years later, when I tasted the Bengali Dhokar Dalna, I knew I was a card-carrying member of the steamed-lentil lovers' club.

That is why, when folks at home want to order some Bengali food, I never demur. Because, along with the fish curry, there is always some Dhokar Dalna coming in. I eat it with rice, and, if there is any left, I have it the next morning for breakfast with a soft roti. Bliss.

I just had some a few days ago. I was looking for Bengali delivery outlets in my neighbourhood and came across a place called Probashi in Gha-

## 5 EVENTS WORTH YOUR WHILE



EXHIBITION

**Wedding couture** Fashion designer Kiran Sharma is hosting her annual wedding and lifestyle exhibition titled *The Bride & Groom*, which will showcase wedding couture. This three-day event will feature previews by designers and jewellers like Kiara, Renu Kakkar, Chhabra Sarees, Glitter Jewels, Ritu Kumar, Anju Modi, and more.

**VENUE:** The Ashoka Hotel, Chanakyapuri

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



ART

**On societal behaviour** Tomorrow Belongs to Me, a solo show of paintings by 29-year-old artist Pallav Chander. Through this show, the artist focuses on contemporary societal psychology and behaviour, and paints it as abstract expression. The works also see the artist accepting his dyslexia, and dealing with personal loss.

**VENUE:** Alliance Française de Delhi, Lodhi Road

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



MUSIC

**Malhar festival** Pracheen Kala Kendra is presenting its annual dance event, the Malhar Festival, a celebration of rain. The event will feature a Hindustani classical vocal recital by Aditya Sharma, accompanied by Kharak Singh on tabla, and Chetan Nigam on harmonium. Later, a vocal recital by Jui Dhaigude Pandé will be held.

**VENUE:** Triveni Kala Sangam, Mandi House

**TIME:** 6:30 p.m. onwards



FOOD

**Street food festival** Food Exchange is hosting a 10-day long Mohammed Ali Street Food Festival. The dishes on the special menu are made with the recipes from street kitchens on Mohammed Ali Road in Mumbai. The menu offers Lamb Galouti, Nalli Nihari, Raan Changezi, Mutton Awadhi Biryani, and more.

**VENUE:** Food Exchange, Novotel Aerocity

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



FOOD

**Tamil documentary** IIC will screen *Koothu*, a Tamil documentary film, directed by Sandhya Kumar. *Koothu* is a living theatre tradition of Tamil Nadu, performed by practitioners.

**VENUE:** C.D. Deshmukh Auditorium, IIC

**TIME:** 6:30 p.m.



FILM

**Tamil documentary** IIC will screen *Koothu*, a Tamil documentary film, directed by Sandhya Kumar. *Koothu* is a living theatre tradition of Tamil Nadu, performed by practitioners.

**VENUE:** C.D. Deshmukh Auditorium, IIC

**TIME:** 6:30 p.m.

A ND-NDE

# TABLE SIDE STORIES

Meals with narratives are a new platform for chefs to showcase their creativity and a great way for diners to connect with their food

RUTH DSOUZA PRABHU

I sat down at a table that had 23 other guests for a curated dinner titled Circle of Life by Lore, at The Courtyard in Bengaluru. I knew no one there and came in as ignorant of what to expect, as a baby. Which was befitting, considering the meal was inspired by our life cycle, from infancy to adulthood.

There was muted conversation among those who knew each other, but it was only when the first course was served that across-the-table banter erupted. Indicative of babyhood, we were served umami milk in a feeding bottle, Farex biscuits and a trio of mashed vegetables. This course had strangers break the ice to discuss childhood memories. From eating baby cereal straight from the box even as adults, to abhorring certain vegetables; and secretly still loving plain milk, old memories found kindred spirits across the table. Each of the next six courses triggered several such memories and had us trying to guess how the next plate would be presented from the picture cards we were given.

#### Creating narratives

Such meals with a narrative are increasingly giving chefs a platform to be uninhibitedly creative and a way for diners to experience and connect with their food.

"Creating a narrative for a meal helps people make a connection with their food," believes chef and consultant Anumitra, who has worked in Japan, and with brands like Diva in Delhi. Social media today dictates the good and the bad, and eating choices are determined by the market. "Why are people interested in food facts they see online?" she asks. "Because it is intriguing, but often you don't know the context. I usually take five to six months to

work on the concept, read up on the history and then come up with dishes based on ingredients and their availability."

Anumitra has showcased in Delhi. Another showcase in Bengaluru, was of the seven Northeastern states – not by specific dishes, but by blending together key ingredients and flavours, making the discovery of the region's cuisine all the more intriguing.

#### All about the discovery

"The prospect of discovery, is the oldest way to grab attention," says Kanishka Sharma, founder, The Tenth Muse and Supper Club in Bengaluru. And many a stimulating conversation has come off her tables with themes like Japanese bodega-style dining and a nose-to-tail pork dinner.

"Food that has meaning, where the flavours stimulate your imagination and provide information, is what keeps Supper Club alive."

Speaking of imagination, Ujwala Bhat, owner of The Latin Mess, in Mumbai, has been a regular at The Literary Table, which has had meals centred on Harry Potter, Haruki Murakami, and more recently, *Game of Thrones*. "As a diner, if I like a theme and follow it closely, then it makes sense to relive the memories through food. At A Feast For The Throne, based

on the GoT series and books, we had a dessert that was set afire at the table. It was inspired by the sequence where Drogon burns down King's Landing and the Iron Throne. To see all those dishes you read about or associate with stories, be translated into a plate of food, is a wonderful way to relive the magic and the entire experience," says Bhat.

Putting that imagination on a plate is what works for co-founders of The Literary Table, Chef Shriya Shetty and travel and food writer, Shirin Mehrotra. With these tables, Shriya found the creative freedom to cook what she loved, without sticking to the theme of a restaurant. For Shirin, working on every aspect of the pop-up, from finalising a theme, finding the right venue, to the DIY menus and setting up the table, satisfied her creative urge.

Bhavisha Dave, co-founder, Capsul Collective, says, "After attending my first table, I realised that I couldn't remember the last time I had a meal that lasted three hours, filled with stimulating conversation, during which I barely touched my

phone! And that's when I decided to keep attending them."

Priya Bala, food writer and author, who has created tables around Sri Lankan conflict regions and its regional cuisine, says, "A drink and a meal is the usual, but if someone wants to come to grips with a cuisine, a story helps. The experience is soulful – from interacting with the chef, to how and where the food presented is rooted. As a chef, to do it in a small format is hugely gratifying."

#### Memories of flavour

"Food can transport a person, especially through memories. We have

**HAND IN HAND**  
Umami can only really be tasted in the presence of salt. Low-salt foods are deemed better-tasting when there's a lot of umami.

**It's all in the theme** Snapshots from The Literary Table and Navu Supper Club • VARUN SHETTY AND NISHANT RATNAKAR



seen guests react to these stories," says Johnson Ebenezer, chef patron of Lore.

"My biggest interest is meeting new people, and that's been my takeaway from all the previous tables I have attended. Apart from food enthusiasts, I've met such an interesting group of new people which has been tremendously enriching," says Dhruv Mullick, partner, Zlat Sports.

"Curating an experience from start to finish is at the core of it all," says Kanishka.

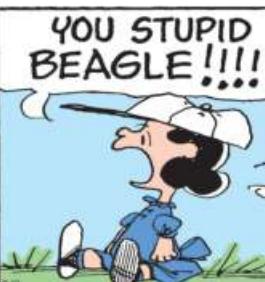
The planning that goes into every meal, begins weeks – sometimes months – in advance, because that's what it takes for each one to be unique. There is a thrill that comes with the pressure, and satisfaction that comes with the sheer amount of work. The story, the chefs, the serve-ware, the libations, decor, table, menu design – all weave themselves around the food. The relationship between all these aspects of the meal is evident to the perceptive diner, and I believe that is what keeps them coming back."



## POOCH CAFE



## PEANUTS



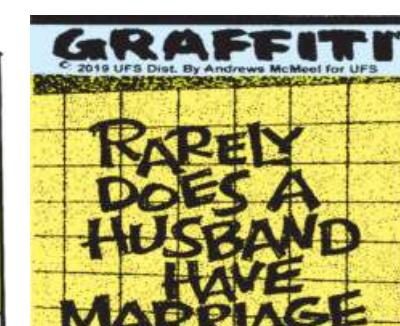
## HAGAR THE HORRIBLE



## CALVIN AND HOBBES



## TIGER



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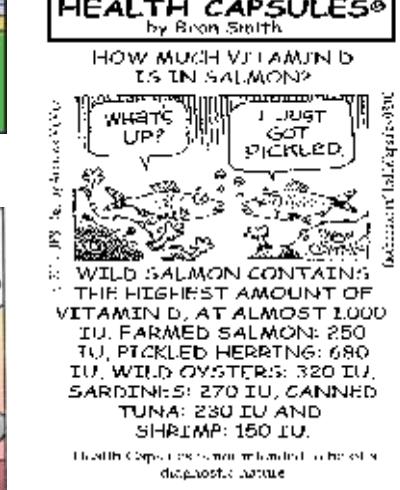
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country, formerly Dahomey (5)  
6 Deference (7)  
7 Paradise (4)  
11 Foregoing (8)  
13 Breach of social conventions (3,4)  
14 Adviser (7)  
16 Recce (5)  
17 Body language of indifference (5)  
18 Eat (4)

Solution will appear in The Hindu dated August 3, 2019.  
Solution No. 13137

## WUMO



## PEARLS BEFORE SWINE



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CM YK

AND-NDE

## IN BRIEF



Sahitya Akademi invites entries for Yuva Puraskar

NEW DELHI  
The Sahitya Akademi has invited entries for the Yuva Puraskar 2020 award from publishers and young Indian authors in 24 languages. The award comprises a prize of ₹50,000, a plaque and a citation. The last date to apply is August 30. IANS



Google announces doodle contest

NEW DELHI  
Students can sketch or paint or use graphic art to create unique entries for Google's Children's Day contest. The winner gets a scholarship worth ₹5 lakh. This year's theme is 'When I grow up, I hope...' PTI



A\$AP Rocky says he tried to avoid fight

STOCKHOLM  
American rapper A\$AP Rocky testified on Thursday at his assault trial in Sweden that he did everything possible to avoid a confrontation with two men he said were persistently following his entourage in Stockholm, but one of those men picked a fight with one of his bodyguards. AP



Thailand set to deliver medical marijuana

BANGKOK  
Thailand plans to distribute about 10,000 bottles of cannabis oil next week for hospital patients, a government official said on Thursday, the first official use of medical marijuana since a law legalising it came into effect this year. REUTERS

# Indus Valley seals carried meaning like modern coins do, shows study

So far, inscriptions from the ancient civilisation have remained an enigma

SHIV SAHAY SINGH  
KOLKATA

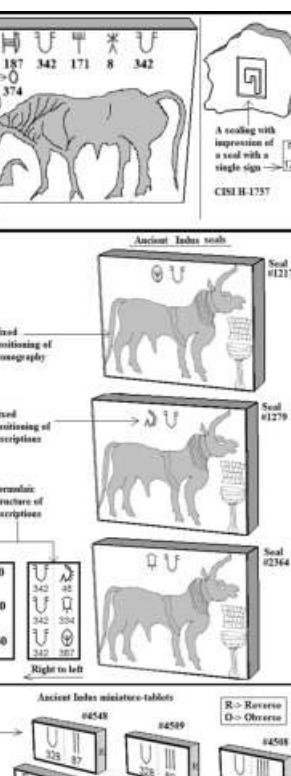
A majority of the Indus Valley inscriptions were written logographically (by using word signs) and not by using phonograms (speech sounds units), claims a recent research paper published in *Palgrave Communications*, a Nature group journal.

The paper, titled *Interrogating Indus inscription to unravel their mechanism of meaning conveyance*, points out that the inscriptions can be compared to the structured messages found on stamps, coupons, tokens and currency coins of modern times.

#### Epigraphic analysis

Discovered from nearly 4,000 ancient inscribed objects, including seals, tablets, ivory rods, pottery shards, etc., the Indus inscriptions are one of the most enigmatic legacies of the Indus Valley civilisation which have not been deciphered due to the absence of bilingual texts, extreme brevity of the inscriptions, and ignorance about the language(s) encoded by the Indus script.

Analysing the brevity of the inscriptions, the rigid positional preferences maintained by the signs of the inscriptions, and the co-occurrence of restriction patterns demonstrated by certain classes of Indus signs, she infers that such patterns can never be phonological co-occurrence restrictions. Phonological co-occurrence restrictions refers to two or more sound units that cannot be pronounced together. "A very compelling, nearly unassailable proof of the lo-



**Practical use:** Structural similarities between some Indus artefacts and modern coins and stamps. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

and various interdisciplinary measures.

graphic nature of Indus inscriptions comes from the co-occurrence restriction patterns maintained within them," the paper states.

#### Ancient tokens

In the publication that runs into 37 pages, Ms. Mukhopadhyay classifies the signs into nine functional classes. Based on archaeological evidence, she says, "The inscribed seals and tablets were used in some administrative operation that controlled the commercial transactions prevalent in the trade-savvy settlements of

the ancient Indus Valley civilisation. These inscriptions can be compared to the messages found on stamps, coupons, tokens and currency coins of modern times, where we expect formulaic texts that encode certain type of information in some pre-defined ways, rather than freely composed narrative."

A common perception among some scholars is that the Indus script is logo-syllabic, where one symbol can be used as a word sign at one time and as a syllable sign at another. This method, where a word symbol also gets sometimes used only for its sound value, is called the rebus principle. For example, you can combine the pictures of a honey bee and a leaf to signify the word "believe". According to Ms. Mukhopadhyay, though many ancient scripts use rebus methods to generate new words, the inscriptions found on the Indus seals and tablets have not used rebus as the mechanism to convey meaning.

The researcher said that the popular hypothesis that the seals were inscribed with Proto-Dravidian or Proto-Indo-European names of the seal-owners does not hold water. It is not that no other Indus scholar has proposed the logo-graphic theory before.

Mr. Mahadevan himself tried to read these inscriptions logo-graphically for decades, just that the logo-graphic theory was not articulated well enough. Ms. Mukhopadhyay said her current work could serve as a basis in future for the deciphering of the script.

# Edward Snowden's memoir to reveal whistleblower's secrets

*Permanent Record* will go on sale on September 17

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
WASHINGTON

Edward Snowden, the former National Security Agency contractor who fled to Russia after leaking information about the U.S. government's mass surveillance program, is publishing a memoir.

The book, *Permanent Record*, will go on sale on September 17. It is being published globally by Macmillan Publishers.



Edward Snowden

his entire future for the good of his country," John Sargent, the CEO of Macmillan Publishers USA, said in a statement.

"He displayed enormous courage in doing so, and like him or not, his is an incredible American story," Mr. Sargent said. "There is no doubt that the world is a better and more private place for his actions."

On his Twitter account, Mr. Snowden announced "I wrote a book", and included a link to a video of himself.

"Everything that we do now lasts forever, not because we want to remember but because we're no longer allowed to forget," he says in the video. "Helping to create that system is my greatest regret."

Praised as a whistleblower and a privacy advocate by

## YouTube star killed in paragliding accident

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
LOS ANGELES

YouTube star Grant Thompson, who rose to fame as host of the popular channel "The King of Random", has died in a paragliding accident, his family announced.



Grant Thompson

Authorities said the 38-year-old, who had 11 million subscribers on his channel and billions of views, was reported missing after he didn't return on Monday from a paragliding trip in Utah.

A GPS device that he had on him was used to locate his body late on Tuesday.

The Washington County Sheriff's office said in a Facebook post that rescuers

## In EU, Google to pause audio transcription

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
BERLIN

A German data protection official says Google has given reassurances that it will not make transcripts of speech data picked up by its artificial intelligence system in the European Union for at least the next three months.

Johannes Caspar, who as Hamburg's Commissioner for Data Protection acts as Germany's lead regulator on privacy issues, said on Thursday that he received the assurance after opening proceedings against Google.

He said EU data protection law allows national authorities to take action for a maximum of three months. Google acknowledged last month its contractors are able to listen to recordings of what people tell Google Assistant after some Dutch-language recordings were leaked.

Mr. Caspar urged other authorities to consider action against artificial intelligence systems from rival companies such as Apple and Amazon that also make smart devices.

# Japan approves growing human organs in animals for the first time

Modified embryos are implanted with human cells

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
TOKYO

Scientists in Japan will begin trying to grow human organs in animals after receiving government permission for the

first study of its kind in the country.

The cutting-edge – but controversial – research involves implanting modified animal embryos with human "induced pluripotent stem" (iPS) cells that can be coaxed into forming the building blocks of any part of the body.

The research led by Hiro-mitsu Nakauchi, a professor of genetics at Stanford University, is the first of its kind to receive government ap-

proval after Japan changed its rules on implanting human cells into animals.

Japan had previously required researchers to terminate animal embryos implanted with human cells after 14 days and prevented the embryos from being placed into animal wombs to develop.

But in March those restrictions were dropped, allowing researchers to seek individual permits for research projects. "It took nearly 10 years, but we are now able to start the experiment," Mr. Nakauchi said.

The research involves generating animal embryos – mice, rats or pigs – that lack

a particular organ such as a pancreas.

The modified embryos are then implanted with human iPS cells that can grow into the missing pancreas. The embryos would be transplanted into womb where they could theoretically be carried to term with a functioning human pancreas.

# North Korean champions find memory games full of fun

Techniques are taught right from middle school

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
PYONGYANG

In silence, Pang Un Sim stares down at the jumbled-up playing cards for one minute, slowly shuffling through them.

Putting the pile aside, she takes a second pack and arranges them in order. One by one, the two sets are turned over. They match perfectly.

Behind her stand four trophies and a collection of medals, the North Korean haul from the World Memory Championships in December – the first time the country had entered.

Despite fielding a team of just three contestants, led by Ms. Pang, they collected seven gold medals, seven silvers and five bronze.

"When you are having fun memorising, it is not as hard as people think," 22-year-old Ms. Pang said.

At the championships, Ms. Pang came second overall, her feats including memorising 5,187 binary numbers in order and 1,772 cards in an hour, while her fastest time memorising a pack of playing cards was 17.67 seconds.

Her teammate Ri Song Mi – who came 7th overall – set a world record by recalling 302 words in 15 minutes.

And in the hour numbers event, when competitors have 60 minutes to memorise as many digits as possible, all three North Koreans



Pang Un Sim arranging a deck of cards. ■ AFP

came in the top five. Two of them beat the previous world record, with Ms. Pang scoring 3,240.

Organisers had no idea until the last minute that a North Korean team was entering the contest in Hong Kong.

They arrived and registered just before registration closed," said the championships' founder Tony Buzan.

"It was like a battering ram of surprises because every one of the ten events featured a North Korean in the top three," Mr. Buzan, who has since died, wrote in the magazine of his Brain Trust charity earlier this year.

"Out of nowhere came this meteorite and shooting star and it was shocking in the most delightful sense."

Every January, North Koreans are required to study leader Kim Jong Un's annual

New Year speech extensively, and the team's coach Cha Yong Ho said that memorisation techniques are taught as standard during middle school.

Mr. Cha heads the speed reading research department at the Kim Hyong Jik university of education in Pyongyang, where all three teammates were students – and Pang, whose subject was mathematics, has now joined the faculty.

Many memory competitors use a technique known as the Dominic System that replaces numbers with letters and represents them as images and actions that they connect by making up a story. By re-telling the story to themselves, they decipher the items to be recalled.

"For example, this is an ox and the next one is a bed," Ms. Pang said. "The ox is sleeping on the bed and the bed is wobbly and because an ox is sleeping in the bed instead of a person, the bed breaks in the end. That's the scene I see... I use my imagination."

But the North Koreans have broadened the standard method to bring in other variables, enabling them to memorise faster and remember more, said Mr. Cha.

"We use all the senses for association," he explained. "Feeling, taste, movement, imagination, rhyme and everything you could do in your brain."

Atish Dabholkar to lead the Abdus Salam International Centre for Theoretical Physics in Italy

Be my friend



**Say cheese:** Yi Yi, a 19-month-old panda cub during her naming ceremony at the National Zoo in Kuala Lumpur on Thursday. "Yi Yi" means friendship in Chinese. ■ AP

# Singapore mansion sets record with \$167 mn sale

REUTERS  
SINGAPORE

A Singapore mansion sitting on a sprawling plot of land has been sold for a record \$167 million, the latest in a string of eye-catching property deals in the wealthy city-state.

The home was sold by Winright Investment, whose listed shareholders are tycoon Cheng Wai Keung – chairman of developer Wing Tai Holdings, and his wife, according to business and property records.

The sale has set a record for a Singapore home in terms of the total transacted price, said Christine Li, head of Singapore and Southeast Asia research at property services firm Cushman and Wakefield.

The deal comes close on the heels of British inventor James Dyson's recent purchase of Singapore's priciest penthouse.

Princeton University, followed by postdoctoral and research positions at Rutgers University, Harvard University and California Institute of Technology. Until 2010, he was a professor of theoretical physics at the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research in Mumbai, and has been a visiting professor at Stanford University and a visiting scientist at CERN.

Mr. Dabholkar is well-known for his research on string theory and quantum black holes. "Research at these new frontiers is an ongoing quest for a more complete and unified formulation of the laws of nature," he said.

school education at Gargoti in Kolhapur district. He is a graduate of the Indian Institute of Technology - Kanpur.

He earned a Ph.D. in theoretical physics from

the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). He will succeed Fernando Quevedo, who has led the centre since 2009.

"It's an honour and a great responsibility to be chosen as ICTP's next director. ICTP is a one-of-a-kind institution with a very high level of research and a unique global mission for international cooperation through science. It was envisioned as an international hub for excellence in science and as an anchor to build scientific capacity and a culture of science around the globe. This vision remains valid today even after five

decades, but needs to be implemented keeping in mind changing realities and priorities," he said in a statement.

Born in 1963, Mr. Dabholkar completed his

CM YK