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Hailstorm, heavy rain lash Capital

NEW DELHI
 A hailstorm accompanied by heavy rain lashed the Capital on Thursday evening, leaving the city clad in an icy blanket. The hailstorm caused traffic jams and delays in air and rail networks.

DELI METRO ▶ PAGE 1, 2

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

RBI cuts rates to spur growth

Repo rate reduced by 25 basis points; EMIs to come down

MANOJ SAHA
 MUMBAI

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Thursday cut the policy repo rate by 25 basis points to 6.25% in a bid to revive economic growth as it projected retail inflation to remain below its target of 4% for the next 12 months. The rate reduction was the first since August 2017.

The RBI also simultaneously changed the stance of the policy to 'neutral' from 'calibrated tightening,' which indicates that the central bank remains ready to move in either direction based on incoming data.

The move will enable

MoD protested against PMO undermining Rafale negotiations

The French side took advantage of parallel parleys by the PMO that weakened Indian team's position

N. RAM

At the height of the negotiations over the controversial €7.87 billion Rafale deal between India and France, the Defence Ministry raised strong objections to "parallel negotiations" conducted by the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) with the French side. Stating that it was clear that such parallel discussions by the PMO had "weakened the negotiating position of MoD and Indian Negotiating Team," a Defence Ministry note dated November 24, 2015 brought this to the attention of the then Defence Minister, Manohar Parrikar.

Stating that "we may advise PMO that any Officers who are not part of Indian Negotiating Team may re-

frain from having parallel parleys [parleys] with the officers of French Government," it suggested that "in case the PMO is not confident about the outcome of negotiations being carried out by the MoD, a revised modality of negotiations to be led by PMO at appropriate level may be adopted in the case."

According to the government's submission to the Supreme Court of India in October 2018, the negotiations over the Rafale deal were conducted by a seven-member team headed by the Deputy Chief of Air Staff. There was no mention of any role for the PMO in these negotiations.

Official documents available to *The Hindu* reveal, ho-

wever, that the Defence Ministry protested that the position taken by the PMO was "contradictory to the stand taken by MoD and the negotiating team." The then

EXCLUSIVE

Defence Secretary, G. Mohan Kumar, made this official notation in his own hand: "RM may pl. see. It is desirable that such discussions be avoided by the PMO as it undermines our negotiating position seriously."

Firm opposition

The Defence Secretary's firm opposition was recorded on November 24, 2015 on a note prepared by S. K. Sharma, Deputy Secretary (Air-II), and endorsed by the

Joint Secretary & Acquisition Manager (Air) and the Director General (Acquisition) in the Ministry.

The new Rafale deal, which bore little resemblance to the original deal under prolonged negotiation, was announced in Paris by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in April 2015. This was followed by the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between India and France when President Francois Hollande visited Delhi on the occasion of the Republic Day in 2016. The inter-governmental agreement for 36 Rafale fighter jets was eventually signed on September 23, 2016.

According to the Defence Ministry note, the details of the parallel negotiations

conducted by the PMO came to the Ministry's notice only from a letter of October 23, 2015 from General Stephen Reb, the head of the French Negotiating Team. The letter "made mention of a telephonic conversation between Shri Jawed Ashraf, Joint Secretary in the Prime Minister's Office and Mr. Luis Vassy, Diplomatic Adviser to the French Minister of Defence, which took place on 20.10.2015."

General Reb's letter was brought to the notice of the PMO by the Defence Ministry. The head of the Indian Negotiating Team, Air Marshal S. B. P. Sinha, AVSM VM, Deputy Chief of Air Staff, also wrote to Mr. Ashraf, Joint Secretary to Prime Minister.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 11

It is, therefore, clear that such parallel discussions by the PMO has weakened the negotiating position of MoD and Indian Negotiating Team. We may advise PMO that any Officers who are not part of Indian Negotiating Team may re-frain from having parallel parleys with the officers of French Negotiating Team. In case the PMO is not confident about the outcome of negotiations being carried out by the MoD, a revised modality of negotiations to be led by PMO at appropriate level may be adopted in the case.

(S.K. Sharma)
 Deputy Secretary (Air-II)
 November 24, 2015

IS & AM (air)
 submitted for approval
 as proposed in Para 5 above II
 (R)
 24/11
 Dr. (A.R. Sinha)
 DG (Acquisition)
 Def Secy
 RM may pl. see. It is
 desirable that such discussions be avoided
 by the PMO as it undermines our negotiating
 position seriously.

The Defence Ministry's internal note dated November 24, 2015, in facsimile.

5 IPS officers in Mamata protest face action

May not get Central deputation

VIJAYA SINGH
 NEW DELHI

The Centre is likely to strip the IPS officers, who participated in a protest by West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, of medals and debar them from being empanelled for Central deputation, a senior government official said on Thursday.

The Central government has taken a dim view of serving officers of uniformed forces taking part in sit-ins and dharnas. With respect to the officers who had participated in a dharna in Kolkata on 4th February, MHA is reported to have asked the W.B. government to take action as per All India Service conduct rules," the official said.

The officers had participated in a sit-in by Ms. Banerjee against the CBI's attempt to question Kolkata police chief Rajeev Kumar.

Ms. Banerjee had sat on a dharna after a team of CBI of-

Stepping on the gas

In his maiden monetary policy review, RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das announced a surprise 25 bps lending rate cut

- The rate cut follows tempered expectation on inflation
- CPI inflation expected at 2.8% in Q4 of FY19, 3.2-3.4% in H1 of FY20 and 3.9% in Q3 of FY20
- Stance of policy changed to 'neutral' from 'calibrated tightening'
- This is the first time since October 2016, when the Monetary Policy Committee was born, that a Governor and Deputy Governor have voted differently

banks to lower their lending rates. While all six members of the monetary policy committee voted for a change in the stance, the vote for a rate cut saw two members break-

ing with the majority view by backing the status quo.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 10

DAS TO MEET CEOS ▶ PAGE 13

GROWTH PROP ▶ EDITORIAL

Only 50% of PAN linked to Aadhaar

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
 NEW DELHI

With less than two months to go for the deadline to link Permanent Account Number (PAN) and Aadhaar, only a little more than half of PAN holders have linked them, Central Board of Direct Taxes Chairman Sushil Chandra said here on Wednesday.

Mr. Chandra was speaking at an Assomach event.

Only 23 crore of the total 42 crore PAN holders have linked them, he said.

DETAILS ON ▶ PAGE 7

Bihar shelter home abuse case shifted to Delhi

Supreme Court asks Nageswara Rao why the probe officer was transferred

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday transferred the trial of the Muzaffarpur shelter home abuse case to Delhi, besides ordering the presence of the former Interim Director of the CBI, M. Nageswara Rao, in connection with the transfer of the lead CBI officer investigating the case in violation of an embargo from the court.

It's contempt: CJI

A Bench, led by Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi, ordered Mr. Rao and other officials concerned to be present on February 12 to

explain the transfer of A.K. Sharma to the Central Reserve Police Force in January without the court's permission. The Chief Justice said the transfer amounted to *prima facie* contempt of court. "We are going to take this very seriously... You have played with the orders of this court, now God help you," the Chief Justice observed.

"Did you not apprise the Cabinet Appointments Committee of our order?"

Chief Justice of India RANJAN GOGOI

"Did you not apprise the Cabinet Appointments Committee of our order?"

Chief Justice of India RANJAN GOGOI

affidavit was filed by an officer in the afternoon. But the court expressed dissatisfaction, saying the officer was not competent to submit it.

"Never file an affidavit without your personal satisfaction on anyone's orders. The law is your only master. Not any politician, not any official," Chief Justice Gogoi told the officer.

Meanwhile, the Bench, comprising Justices Deepak Gupta and Sanjeev Khanna, directed the POCSO court at Saket in the national capital to complete the Muzaffarpur case trial in six months.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 10

Plant trees, HC tells 2G case accused

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Thursday directed Swan Telecom promoter Shahid Usman Balwa and four others accused in the 2G case to each plant 3,000 trees here as penalty for not fulfilling their responses on the ED and CBI appeals against their acquittal in the 2G case. Justice Najmi Waziri ordered that the plantation drive be carried out in Delhi's South Ridge forest area.

DETAILS ▶ PAGE 7

'Modi's talktime over, won't get a recharge'

JAIDEEP DEO BHANJ

NEW DELHI

Former JNU Students' Union president Kanhaiya Kumar, addressing thousands of participants at the 'Young India Adhikar March' on Thursday, said that PM Narendra Modi for the last four and a half years has only been talking and making false promises, but in 2019 his "talktime" will get over as the youth of the nation would not let him get another "recharge".

DETAILS ▶ DELHI METRO PAGE 1

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RISE 07:05 SET 18:06
RISE 09:11 SET 21:07
SATURDAY, FEB. 09
RISE 07:05 SET 18:06
RISE 09:43 SET 22:00
SUNDAY, FEB. 10
RISE 07:04 SET 18:07
RISE 10:15 SET 22:53

Delhi Weather	max	min
Delhi City	19	15
Safdarjung	19	15
Palam	19	16

Delhi Palam Today
20°C A pleasant morning is expected. Pollution levels will remain on the lower side.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow
21°C Fog may occur during morning with drop in night temperature. Sunny sky is likely.

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IN BRIEF



Dinkar Gupta new DGP of Punjab

CHANDIGARH Senior IPS officer Dinkar Gupta was on Thursday appointed as the Punjab Director General of Police. He succeeds Suresh Arora, who was on an extension after his retirement on September 30 last year. PTI

Himachal Speaker down with swine flu

The Speaker of Himachal Pradesh Assembly Rajeev Bindal has tested positive for swine flu. At the end of the ongoing budget session proceedings on Thursday, Mr. Bindal informed the State Assembly that he has tested positive for H1N1 virus. PTI

Yogi govt. presents ₹4.79 lakh crore budget

Allocates ₹1,200 cr. for girls, ₹612 cr. for cattle in biggest-ever budget for the State; Opposition terms it 'populist'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

LUCKNOW

The Uttar Pradesh government on Thursday allocated ₹1,200 crore for a scheme for girls and ₹612 crore for stray cattle and construction of cow shelters in its budget for 2019-20 financial year ahead of the Lok Sabha polls.

The Yogi Adityanath government presented a ₹4.79 lakh crore budget, which is 12% higher than ₹4,28,384.52 crore earmarked for the current financial year ending March 2019.

After the presentation of his government's third budget, Mr. Adityanath said it is the biggest one in the history of Uttar Pradesh.

"The budget should be 'lok kalyankari' (welfare-oriented) rather than 'lok lubhawan' (populist)," he said even as the Opposition parties described it as a "populist budget".

In his speech, punctuated with Urdu couplets, State Finance Minister Rajesh Agarwal informed the State Assembly that he has tested positive for H1N1 virus. PTI

wal announced new schemes worth ₹21,212.95 crore, including the 'Kanya Sumangali Yojana' to improve health and educational facilities for girls and bring in a positive change in the thinking towards women.

An allocation of ₹612.6 crore has been made for maintenance of stray cattle and constructing "gaushalas" (cowsheds). The announcement comes against the backdrop of reports claiming that farmers are locking up bovines in schools and public health centres following instances of stray cattle damaging crops.

Scheme for minorities

The government would provide ₹942 crore towards scholarship scheme for students belonging to minority communities and ₹459 crore proposed for modernisation of Arabi-Farsi madrasas.

Ahead of the upcoming Lok Sabha polls, the Uttar



Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and Finance Minister Rajesh Agarwal at the Assembly in Lucknow on Thursday to present the budget. ■ RAJEEV BHATT

Pradesh government has earmarked ₹3,194 crore for construction of expressways and ₹3,135 crore for laying of roads in the State. It has also allocated ₹3,522 crore for the maintenance of roads and expressways by the Public Works Department.

A budgetary provision of ₹2,100 crore would be made for construction and main-

nance of bridges apart from ₹850 crore to connect the villages and settlements through concrete link roads under various schemes. Also, ₹1,174 crore would be earmarked for widening and strengthening of important roads on the inter-State and international border.

Another ₹500 crore would be provided for acquiring

Lok Sabha constituency of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

He said ₹207 crore has been pegged for the expansion and beautification of the road from the Ganga bank to Vishwanath Temple in Varanasi.

The Opposition parties lashed out at the government for presenting a "populist" budget.

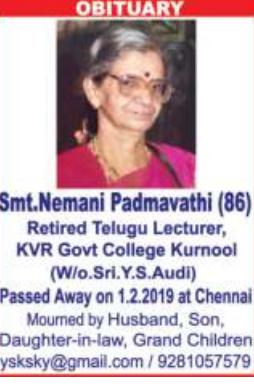
"However populist the budget might be in an election year, the works all through the year relating to people's welfare and interest and control over law and order are important for the common people," BSP president Mayawati said in a tweet.

Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav said the budget is a betrayal of the people in the name of "Sab ka Saath, Sab ka Vikas".

Congress spokesman Ashok Singh said the budget was aimed at befooling the people of the State.

OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE

DEATH



Smt. Nenami Padmavathi (86)
Retired Telugu Lecturer,
KVR Govt College Kurnool
(W/o. Sri. Y.S. Audi)
Passed away on 1.2.2019 at Chennai
Mourned by Husband, Son,
Daughter-in-Law, Grand Children
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After U.P., NGT lens on Bihar hospitals

Report sought on biomedical waste

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

The National Green Tribunal on Thursday directed the Bihar government to submit within two weeks the total number of hospitals and medical health care centres which generate biomedical waste.

A Bench headed by Justice Raghuvendra S. Rathore also directed the principal secretary of health to remain present before it on February 25.

The green panel passed the order after noting that despite its January 10 order to submit the total number of government and private hospitals, the State government only filed an incomplete affidavit which is "abstract" in nature.

"The order clearly speaks that the details which are being sought from State of Bihar, since the year 2017, should be complete and authentic in all respect to be

submitted through an affidavit. But the needful has not been done as per the direction. "Therefore, last opportunity is granted to Principal Secretary (Health), State of Bihar, to comply with the order dated January 10, 2019 in letter and spirit, within two weeks from today," the Bench said.

NGO petition
The tribunal was hearing a plea filed by NGO Veterans Forum for Transparency in Public Life seeking execution of October 24, 2017 order of the NGT which had directed the State government to prepare a complete inventory of the units generating biomedical waste.

"The Central Pollution Control Board shall ensure execution of this order. The State of Bihar and the Bihar Pollution Control Board shall file compliance report within three months," the NGT had said in its order.

Conserving the environment, one step at a time

Meet Mr. Umesh Chandra from Hyderabad, cardiologist by profession and an environmentally conscious citizen. From installing solar panels to growing his own vegetables, Dr. Umesh does it all.

"This started as a hobby around four years ago. I could afford to switch to environmentally conscious practices and this helps me save the government's resources, which can be distributed to the less privileged," says Dr.

heater he installed provides him with hot water for the entire day. He even has his own kitchen garden that supplies fresh, organic vegetables.

"My garden provides me with enough vegetables for two people which is a healthier alternative. I also have a rainwater harvesting system with the help of a tank that can hold up to 12,000 litres of water," adds Dr. Umesh. Once the tank is full, the water lasts him for fifteen days.

"I think it is important that



Umesh when asked about what sparked his interest in this hobby.

Initially, Dr. Umesh installed solar panels that generates a round

500 units of electricity per month and this helped him save

nearly Rs. 5,000 from his electricity bill. The solar water

is important that we support people who contribute to the welfare of the

environment and the nation in small ways," says Dr. Umesh.

Under My Watch is an initiative by The Hindu that celebrates conscious and responsible citizens who make India better, one small act at a time. Tell us your story and get a chance to be featured in The Hindu

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Snow brings life to a standstill in Kashmir

Roads closed, flights suspended



A huge traffic jam in Srinagar due to heavy snowfall on Thursday. ■ NISSAR AHMAD

PEERZADA ASHIQ
SRINAGAR

Life in Kashmir was brought to a standstill by a fresh spell of heavy snowfall on Thursday, forcing closure of both air and surface traffic. Traffic in capital Srinagar was also suspended "due to poor visibility".

Kashmir witnessed a night-long snowfall that continued all day on Thursday. According to officials, 5 to 31 cm of snowfall was recorded in various areas. South Kashmir's Banjali recorded 23 cm, while Kokernag witnessed 31 cm of snow.

An official said a rescue operation was on to reach around 15 families hit by avalanche in Baramulla's Rafiabad area.

An avalanche also

blocked one of the two tubes of the strategic Jawahar Tunnel, connecting the Valley with the country, closing traffic. Air traffic was also suspended "due to poor visibility".

Ambulances stuck

Locals posted videos of people carrying pregnant women on cots due to blockades on the inter-district roads. Many ambulances were also caught in the snow.

"A pregnant woman stuck in snowbound Arizal village in Budgam was rescued. Villagers trapped in an avalanche at Kokerbagh were shifted to safer locations in central Kashmir," said the police.



Farmers carrying loan waiver certificates at a camp near Jaipur on Thursday. *

Cooperative Minister Uday Lal Anjana, who attended two camps in Chittorgarh and Rajsamand districts, said the lists of eligible farmers had been displayed at the notice boards of village cooperative societies. He said the grievance committees had been formed in the villages to deal with the instances of non-inclusion of farmers or wrong calculation of the amount of loans.

Deputy Chief Minister Sachin Pilot inaugurated a camp at Sirsi village, near here, and distributed the loan waiver certificates to the farmers. While accusing the previous BJP regime of neglecting the interests of farmers, Mr. Pilot said the Congress was committed to fulfilling the promises made in its election manifesto. "The decision of loan waiver was taken within two days of the government's formation," he said.

The entire short-term loans taken by small and medium farmers from cooperative and land development banks and the debts up to ₹2 lakh due on November 30, 2018, for the defaulter farmers will be waived in the scheme's first phase.

The camps will be held for three days till Saturday.

Rajasthan rolls out farm loan waiver

Certificates given at special camps

MOHAMMED IQBAL
JAIPUR

The farm loan waiver, announced by the Congress government in Rajasthan shortly after it came to power in December last year, was rolled out on Thursday through special camps organised in all the 33 districts of the State. About 40,000 farmers are set to benefit in the first phase, which will cover the loans obtained from the cooperative banks.

Deputy Chief Minister Sachin Pilot inaugurated a camp at Sirsi village, near here, and distributed the loan waiver certificates to the farmers. While accusing the previous BJP regime of neglecting the interests of farmers, Mr. Pilot said the Congress was committed to fulfilling the promises made in its election manifesto. "The decision of loan waiver was taken within two days of the government's formation," he said.

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Protest against citizenship Bill hits train movement in Assam

Youth group members squat on tracks, demand scrapping of Bill, introduction of ILP

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
GUWAHATI

Movement of trains was affected in Assam on Thursday morning as members of a youth organisation blocked rail tracks, demanding immediate revocation of the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2016 and introduction of Inner Line Permit in the State.

With banners and placards in hand, the members of Asom Jatiyatabadi Yuba Chatra Parishad squatted on the tracks for about an hour in several districts, including Guwahati, Sivasagar, Charaideo, Dibrugarh, Tinsukia, Nalbari and Udaguri, police sources said.

Slogans raised

Slogans such as 'Jai Aai Asom', 'scrap Citizenship Bill' and 'introduce Inner Line Permit' rent the air as agitators sought measures to re-



Police personnel detain AJYCP members protesting near Kamakhya station in Guwahati on Thursday. • PTI

peal the contentious Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2016, which was recently passed by the Lok Sabha.

The legislation, which is currently waiting for Rajya Sabha approval, seeks to provide citizenship to non-Muslims from Bangladesh, Pakistan and Afghanistan af-

ter six years of residence in India.

In Guwahati, the AJYCP picketers blocked the railway level crossing near Kamakhya station, preventing movement of Shatabdi Express, a senior police officer said. It was only after the police dispersed the crowd

and cleared the tracks, that the train could resume its service, he added.

In Udaguri, the agitators staged a semi-nude protest against the Bill and blocked train tracks for about 30 minutes, official sources said.

The AJYCP units of twin districts of Sivasagar and Charaideo halted the Awadh-Assam Express at Simaluguri railway junction.

Similar protests were witnessed at Biswanath Chariali and Tinsukia districts.

At Numaligarh oil town in Golaghat, the agitators came out in large numbers to block National Highway-39 at Rongbong, Letekuan and Panka areas.

A massive protest meeting was organised by All Assam Students Union and 30 allied ethnic groups on Thursday at Naharkatia in Dibrugarh, demanding the withdrawal of the legislation.

Naveen unveils statue of Guru Padmasambhava

Dedicates it to Tibetan settlers in Jirang

STAFF REPORTER
BERHAMPUR

Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik unveiled a 19-foot-high statue of Guru Padmasambhava, the founder of Tibetan Buddhism, at Jirang in Gajapati district on Thursday.

This 29 tonne stone statue is placed in the middle of 'Padma Sarovar', a large tank near Padmasambhava Mahavihara, the largest Buddhist monastery in eastern India. The Dalai Lama had inaugurated this monastery in 2010. Tibetan refugees settled in this region over six decades ago.

Historians claim that Guru Padmasambhava, also known as second Buddha, was born and brought up in Odisha before he left for Tibet.

A large gathering of Tibetan settlers along with their religious and administrative leaders were present at the function. The statue of Guru Padmasambhava has been sculpted by noted sculptor Padmasri Prabhakar Mohanra.

Addressing the gathering,



The 19-foot-high statue of Guru Padmasambhava in Jirang. • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Odisha cops end protest

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
BHUBANESWAR

A confederation of Odisha police personnel on Thursday withdrew its protest after it was assured by the State government that its demands would be fulfilled.

The agitation, called by the Odisha Police Havildar, Constable and Sepoy Maha-

sangha, was withdrawn after discussions with DGP R.P. Sharma. "The DGP assured us that our demands would be fulfilled by Thursday evening," Mahasangha president Santosh Satpathy said. Their demands included abolition of contractual appointment, and medical insurance benefits.

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BJP leader fails to appear before cops in murder case

SIBKUMAR DAS
BERHAMPUR

Citing health reasons, Odisha BJP spokesperson Golak Mohapatra did not appear on Thursday at Chhattrapur police station in Ganjam district for interrogation in connection with the murder of youth BJD leader Laxmidutta Pradhan in 2017.

Sub-Divisional Police Officer, Chhattrapur, Ramesh Sethi said Mr. Mohapatra sought one-month time for his appearance. "His lawyer informed us that his doctor had advised him one-month bed rest," Mr. Sethi said.

On January 29, two prominent BJP leaders of Odisha – Mr. Mohapatra and Bhrugu Buxipatra – were issued notices by the police to appear at the Chhattrapur police station in connection with the murder of the youth BJD leader. Mr. Buxipatra has been asked to appear at the police station on February 9.

Laxmidutta, who also happened to be a councilor of Chhattrapur Notified Area Council, was murdered on September 16, 2017 by a group of armed assailants. Mr. Mohapatra is suspected to have helped two prime accused in fleeing to Uttarakhand and also arranged for their stay there, said police sources.



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E-Tenders are invited from eligible firms/contractors for the following jobs against which bids can be uploaded and same shall be opened/downloaded as per schedule mentioned. The details and conditions of all tenders are available on Noida Authority's official website: www.noidaauthorityonline.com & <https://etender.up.nic.in>. Please ensure to see these websites for any changes/ amendments & corrigendum etc.

A) The above tenders can be uploaded by dated 21.02.2019 upto 5.00 PM. shall be opened/downloaded on dated 22.02.2019 at 11.00 AM.

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1.	133/Sr.M(E/M)-III/2018-19	M/o Street Light in EWS Apartment in Sector-99, Noida.	8.37
2.	134/Sr.M(E/M)-III/2018-19	M/o Street Light on DCS road from Atta Peer to sector-14, Noida.	9.63
3.	135/Sr.M(E/M)-III/2018-19	M/o Street Light in Century Appartament (MIG Flats) in sector-100, Noida	7.53
4.	42/Sr.M(E/M)-II/2018-19	M/o Street Light (Double wing road), sector-10, Noida.	5.73
5.	43/Sr.M(E/M)-II/2018-19	M/o Street Light (Road between sector- 4 and 9, Sector-5 and 9, sector 8 and 10), Noida.	7.73
6.	60/AO/Sr.M/E/M-IV/2018-19	Strengthening at Street light Golden Plan Group Housing 30.00 mtr wide road, sector-168, Noida	9.23

B) The above tenders can be uploaded by dated 14.02.2019 upto 5.00 PM. shall be opened/downloaded on dated 15.02.2019 at 11.00 AM.

S.N.	Job No.	Name of Work	Cost (Rs. Lacs)
1.	115/Sr.M(E/M)-III/2018-19	M/o Electrical works for different Officers in Main Administrative Building in sector-6, Noida.	15.90

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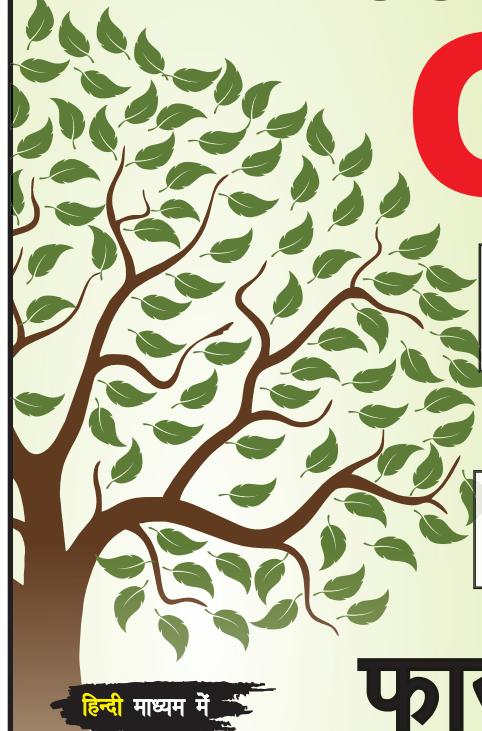
- ARROW ColorPlus
- PUNCHKUAN ROAD, Garwal Bhawan, (Near Jhandewalan, Gole Chkr.)
- WAZIRPUR A-5, Near Richi Rich Banquet (Opp. Shalimar Bagh)
- JANAKPUR B-1/2, Main Najafgarh Road, Opp. Metro Pillar 543
- NOIDA, Nirula's Sec-2, Near Metro Station, Sec-15, Noida, UP
- LAJPAT NAGAR, 49, Main Ring Road, Adj. Haldi Ram, Near Moolchand Crossing

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IN BRIEF



Bellandur lake: NGT dismisses review petition

The National Green Tribunal has come down heavily on the government while dismissing its petition to review the order directing Karnataka to deposit ₹500 crore for development of the severely-polluted Bellandur and Varthur lakes.

Save Our Sisters warns of another wave of protests

In view of the alleged attempts to escalate the pressure on the six nuns who were part of a public protest against Bishop Franco Mulakkal, accused of raping a nun, the Save Our Sisters (SOS) group has warned of another wave of public protests against the church.

A.P. Assembly clears Bill on Kapu reservation

The A.P. Assembly on Thursday passed the Bills for 5% reservation each for the Kapus (Kapus, Telaga, Ontari and Balija sub-castes) and other Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) in the general category on Thursday.

Shivakumar gets more time to appear before ED

The Karnataka High Court on Thursday gave liberty to Water Resources Minister D.K. Shivakumar to seek an extension to appear before the Enforcement Directorate in connection with a money laundering case.

Minor attacked by stalker in Hyderabad still critical

The 17-year-old girl, who was attacked by a stalker with sickle in Hyderabad on Wednesday, continues to remain critical. The victim, an intermediate student, was allegedly attacked by her neighbour.

No plan to make changes at TDB

Kerala govt. 'does not propose to replace' Board president after SC review of case

N.J. NAIR
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The government has no plans to ease out Travancore Devaswom Board (TDB) president A. Padmakumar or make any changes to the Kerala State Devaswom Recruitment Board, a top government source said.

Reports were doing the rounds on Thursday that Mr. Padmakumar would be replaced by Devaswom Recruitment Board Chairman M. Rajagopal Nair and that Mr. Padmakumar had sought an explanation from TDB Commissioner N. Vasu for failing to abide by the board's line when the Supreme Court heard a clutch of review and writ petitions on its Sabarimala verdict on Wednesday.

Mr. Rajagopal Nair and Mr. Vasu were away in New Delhi. Mr. Nair told *The Hindu* after arriving in the capital that the TDB had never



Twists and turns: Devotees waiting to offer prayers at the Ayyappa Temple in Sabarimala, in this file photo. •PTI

rejected the Supreme Court verdict on women's entry to Sabarimala.

Earlier stand

In fact, it had resolved in November last year to file a petition seeking more time to shore up the infrastructure facilities at Pampa, Nilackal and en route to Sabarimala. The entire region was battered by the floods in August

2018 and the board did not get adequate time before the Mandalam-Makaravilakku festivals to improve the facilities, he said.

The Supreme Court hearing on Wednesday was confined to the legal sustainability of the review and writ petitions and nothing else was considered. Moreover, the petition of the board seeking time to upgrade the

facilities had become infructuous since both the festivals were over. "It is only a question of common sense that one cannot raise any argument on a petition that has become infructuous in any court, least of all the Supreme Court," Mr. Nair said, and brushed aside rumours and news reports.

Board's view prevailed

Mr. Vasu said he had not acted in isolation and was functioning completely in line with the decisions of the board.

"The board's standing counsel was there with us. I am in constant contact with the president. Such rumours and reports are unfounded," he said.

Both Mr. Rajagopal Nair and Mr. Vasu later called on CPI(M) State secretary Kodiyeri Balakrishnan and apprised him of the developments.

CUSAT allows 'pooja' after students' stir

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
KOCHI

Authorities of the Cochin University of Science and Technology (CUSAT) on Thursday granted permission to a section of students on its Alappuzha campus to conduct 'pooja' for Goddess Saraswati in a peaceful manner, following a protest by them.

The permission was granted after north Indian students studying in the Cochin University College of Engineering, Kuttanad (CUCEK) protested against the CUSAT authorities' decision not to grant permission to organise the religious function in the institution, college authorities said.

Considering the protest of students, a high-power committee comprising the Vice-Chancellor and the Registrar met and decided to grant permission.

Tunneled rail link

Vizhinjam seaport-Balarapupuram rail link

10.7 km

9.02 km of the rail link through tunnel

- The single line can ply nine rakes a day
- New rail link by May 2022

It's second longest rail tunnel in the country

To Kanyakumari

BALARAPUPURAM

9.02 km

10.7 km

Estimate cost ₹1,069 cr.

Land to be acquired 6.57 hectares

KRCL, experts in tunnel construction, submits DPR

Thiruvananthapuram

10.7 km

Longest rail tunnels in India

• 11.26-km Pir Panjal tunnel, connecting Banjhal and Hilla Shahabad

• 7.2-km Sangaldan tunnel in Katra-Banhal section of Jammu-Baramulla line

S. ANIL RADHAKRISHNAN

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

A 10.7-km railway line, including a 9.02-km tunnel, has been proposed to connect the upcoming Vizhinjam International Multipurpose Deepwater Seaport to the railway network.

The 9.02-km tunnel, mooted by Konkan Railway Corporation Ltd (KRCL) from near the Balaramapuram station on the Kanyakumari-Thiruvananthapuram railway line, will be the second longest railway tunnel in the country.

The 11.26-km Pir Panjal rail tunnel, connecting Banjhal and Hilla Shahabad, is the longest.

The KRCL, in its draft Detailed Project Report (DPR) submitted to Vizhinjam International Seaport Limited (VISL) – a special purpose company supervising the execution of the seaport project – has favoured the railway tunnel from Balaramapuram in view of the 35-metre level difference between the port and the highest ground level, undulating terrain, and local population.

The plan is to establish the railway link by May 2022. The development of the Balaramapuram railway station is being explored as part of the rail link to the seaport.

Vizhinjam will be a single line and will be sufficient for the movement of 9 to 10 rakes daily through the corridor for the next 20 years, according to KRCL.

₹1,069 crore project

As much as 6.57 hectares will have to be acquired on the Balaramapuram-Vizhinjam stretch for laying the line. The cost of the rail connectivity, including land acquisition, has been put at ₹1,069 crore.

The government has decided to set up a high-level committee to look into the DPR submitted by the KRCL, official sources told *The Hindu* on Thursday. Fine-tuning of the alignment will be taken up after the evaluation.

The KRCL, experts in constructing tunnels, was roped in after Rail Vikas Ni-gam Ltd under the Union Ministry of Railways backed out from the seaport connectivity project.

The plan is to establish the railway link by May 2022.

The development of the Balaramapuram railway station is being explored as part of the rail link to the seaport.

Four arrested for vandalism at Hampi

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BALLARI

Within a week of the video footage on the vandalism at Hampi going viral, the district police have arrested four persons.

Arun Rangarajan, Superintendent of Police, gave their names as Ayush Sahu, 24, Raja Babu, 21, Raj Aryan, 22, and Rajesh Choudhary, 24. It was Sahu who had posted the video footage on Instagram.

Speaking to presspersons on Thursday, he said the accused had voluntarily given a statement that they dislodged the pillar at Vishnu temple, behind Elephant Stables, at Hampi.

The youths, Mr. Rangarajan said, had informed that they indulged in the act without knowing the historical importance of the temple and were now repenting.

Of the four, one is a software engineer, the second one is employed as a casual labourer in a private company, the third had come to Karnataka to appear for the Railway Recruitment Board exam, and the fourth was a student.

The accused are said to have told the police that they received threat calls after the video of the vandalism was posted by them on social media.

MPs accuse BJP of keeping some Cong. MLAs in custody

₹30-₹40 cr. being offered to party members to cross over'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Reacting to the events in the Karnataka Assembly and the absence of several ruling coalition MLAs at Governor Vajubhai Vala's address to a joint sitting of the House, Congress and Janata Dal(S) MPs in New Delhi, in a joint presser on Thursday, alleged that the BJP had taken some Congress MLAs in custody and was offering up to ₹30-₹40 crore for party MLAs to cross over.

The MPs urged President Ramnath Kovind to intervene in the matter. "The BJP has taken Congress MLAs into custody and is offering them ₹30-40 crore to defect," said Congress MP D.K. Suresh. Congress leader V.S. Ugrappa added that there was a "threat to Indian democracy because of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the BJP. We are demanding the President's intervention in the matter."

Janata Dal(S) MPs Upendra Reddy and Shivram Gowda also attended the presser in solidarity.

The joint presser followed after nine Congress MLAs ignored the whip issued by the

party and skipped the legislature session on Wednesday, keeping the ruling coalition on tenterhooks on the opening day of the Budget session.

The nine Congress MLAs included the four – Ramesh Jarkiholi, Umesh G Jadhav, B. Nagendra and Mahesh Kumarhalli – who had skipped the January 18 Congress Legislature Party meeting.

MLA J.N. Ganesh, who has been declared absconding after an alleged brawl with a colleague lawmaker at a resort recently, was among the absentees.



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IN BRIEF



Freedom fighters' pension to be hiked: Gehlot

JAIPUR
Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot on Thursday announced that the pension for freedom fighters would be increased to ₹25,000 and the medical allowance to ₹5,000 per month. He said the pension for soldiers and war widows of World War-II would be more than doubled, from ₹4,000 per month to ₹10,000. PTI

Two youth killed as car falls into gorge in Shimla

SHIMLA
Two youths died after their car fell into a gorge in Shimla district, the police said on Thursday. Nitish Raval (26) and Vivek Deshta (24) were on their way to Sanjauli when their car fell into the gorge in Kelti on Wednesday night, Shimla DSP Pramod Shukla said. PTI

Lightning damages three houses in Kangra

SHIMLA
Three houses were damaged in lightning in Himachal Pradesh's Kangra district, an official said on Thursday. Nobody was injured in the incident in the district's Palampur tehsil on Wednesday night, the official said.

19 IAS officers shifted in Rajasthan

JAIPUR
Nineteen IAS officers were on Thursday transferred or assigned additional charge of other departments in Rajasthan. Bhaskar A. Sawant was shifted to Urban Development and Housing Department as Principal Secretary. Hemant Gera, Navin Jain, Shuchi Sharma are among other officers who were transferred. PTI

White blanket



People enjoying snowfall at the Ridge in Shimla on Thursday • PTI

Vote-on-account of ₹56,921 cr. presented in Odisha Assembly

State's economy expected to grow at 8.35%, says Finance Minister Behera

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BHUBANESWAR

Odisha Finance Minister Shashi Bhusan Behera on Thursday presented a vote-on-account budget of ₹56,921 crore for the first four months of 2019-20 in the State Assembly out of a total of ₹1,32,660 crore for the whole fiscal.

Keeping in the view the populist schemes announced by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik ahead of the simultaneous Lok Sabha and Assembly polls in the State, Mr. Behera said the proposed expenses for the first four months (April to July, 2019) would cover 100% budget es-

In his speech, Mr. Behera informed that a total outlay of ₹1,32,660 crore for 2019-20 is about 10.4% more than the annual budget for 2018-19.

He said he presented a vote-on-account on existing establishment and ongoing schemes and projects instead of a full-fledged budget since the term of the current Assembly will expire within a few months and general elections will be held in the State.

The Finance Minister informed that Odisha's economy is expected to grow at the rate of 8.35% in 2019-20 surpassing the all-India growth rate of 7.2%. "This comes on

top of a robust average growth of more than 8% in the last six years compared to national average of 7.1%.

"Going by the trends in the external and domestic economic environment, the State economy can be expected to grow in the range of 8% to 8.5% during 2019-20," said Mr. Behera.

As the government's focus was on farmers' welfare, the Finance Minister proposed an allocation of ₹19,557 crore for agriculture and allied activities – a rise of 173% from the first separate agriculture budget that was presented in 2013-14 with an outlay of ₹7,162 crore.

NHRC seeks report on witch-hunt incidents

STAFF REPORTER
BHUBANESWAR

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has issued notices to the Odisha Chief Secretary and the Director-General of Police over the State's alleged inaction to prevent witch-hunt incidents which often result in murders.

The NHRC has asked the two top officers to submit a report within four weeks. Radhakanta Tripathy, a human rights lawyer, had drawn the attention of the NHRC over the recent murder of five persons, including a mother and her four children, in the Koida block of Sundargarh district.

The rights panel has warned that it would invoke coercive process under Section 13 of the Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993, for personal appearance of the concerned authority if the report was not submitted within the stipulated time.

Mr. Tripathy had moved the NHRC in 2013, pointing out that three women and one elderly man were paraded naked by villagers, branding them black magicians in Amapada village in Sundargarh district. Despite the NHRC recommendations, the situation has not improved in the district, he said.

According to him, over 500 persons have been killed on suspicion of practising witchcraft in Odisha during the last 14 years.

"Of these, 274 murders have taken place in the last five years alone. It suggests that the incidents of witch-hunting have not come down despite increase in access to education," he said.

WEATHER WATCH

RAINFALL, TEMPERATURE & AIR QUALITY IN SELECT METROS YESTERDAY



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

Forecast for Friday: Heavy rain/snow likely at isolated places over Sikkim and Jharkhand. Thunderstorm accompanied with hailstorm likely at isolated places over Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Assam, Meghalaya and Arunachal Pradesh

CITY RAIN MAX MIN CITY RAIN MAX MIN

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	... 29.6...	11.2	...	Kozhikode	... 35.2...	26.0	...
Ahmedabad	... 24.6...	12.4	...	Kurnool	... 34.6...	21.5	...
Aizawl	... 29.7...	14.0	...	Lucknow	... 20.7...	13.2	...
Allahabad	... 24.8...	16.0	...	Madurai	... 35.0...	22.7	...
Bengaluru	... 31.8...	18.3	...	Mangaluru	... 33.7...	24.0	...
Bhopal	... 26.4...	15.7	...	Mumbai	... 27.3...	17.6	...
Bhubaneswar	... 30.9...	14.5	...	Mysoor	... 31.9...	18.8	...
Chandigarh	... 5.6...	17.2	14.0	New Delhi	... 0.1...	19.1	15.0
Chennai	... 31.1...	23.0	...	Patna	... 27.6...	13.4	...
Coimbatore	... 33.4...	22.4	...	Port Blair	... 30.2...	23.3	...
Dehradun	... 18.7...	12.4	...	Puducherry	... 31.4...	21.5	...
Gangtok	... 15.1...	7.7	...	Pune	... 27.3...	10.5	...
Goa	... 32.3...	20.0	...	Raipur	... 31.2...	17.5	...
Guwahati	... 28.9...	12.8	...	Ranchi	... 30.0...	14.4	...
Hubballi	... 32.0...	19.0	...	Shillong	... 19.0...	7.0	...
Hyderabad	... 33.4...	19.3	...	Shimla	... 7.9...	4.3	...
Imphal	... 26.0...	4.1	...	Srinagar	... 24.2...	1.6	-0.5
Jaipur	... 26.0...	13.2	...	Trivandrum	... 33.9...	24.0	...
Kochi	... 31.8...	25.6	...	Tiruchi	... 33.9...	22.4	...
Kohima	... 20.2...	5.0	...	Vijayawada	... 31.5...	19.4	...
Kolkata	... 31.0...	16.4	...	Visakhapatnam	... 31.0...	18.6	...

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

Yesterday

CITIES	SO ₂	NO ₂	CO	PM _{2.5}	PM ₁₀	CODE
Ahmedabad	62	62	23	.172	... 10...	...
Bengaluru	4	56	79	.110	.134	...
Chennai	15	14	52	.183
Delhi	19	66	52	.233	.204	...
Hyderabad	3	89	28	.118	.118	...
Kolkata	23	156	37	.370	.304	...
Lucknow	6	45	35	.198
Mumbai	16	30	71	.34	.91	...
Pune	31	15	14	.70	.80	...
Visakhapatnam	32	106	48	.254	.246	...

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Muzaffarpur, Bihar recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 53.

Contrast, Rupnagar, Punjab recorded a healthy AQI score of 53.

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

SO₂: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

NO₂: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

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

PM_{2.5} & 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

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION



General public is hereby informed that an unidentified body of a male namely Unknown, S/o: Unknown, R/o: Unknown, was found from 02.12.2018 at 04:00 PM from Gate No. 3, Naveditya Kunj, Sec.-10, R.K. Puram, New Delhi.

In this regard DD No. 33A, dated 02.12.2018 has been lodged at Police Station, R.K. Puram, New Delhi. Identification of unidentified dead body of male is as under:

Name: Unknown, Age: 55 Years, Height: 5'7", Complexion: Wheatish, Face: Round, Wearing: Red Jacket and without Footwear.

If anyone have any information or clue about this male deceased may kindly be inform undersigned.

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SI.No.-1, N/539/2/OT/18-19/50: Name of Work: Provision of Automatic media change over for UFSB in Aurnihar-Bharti & Aurnihar-Chhaphra Section of Varanasi Division and BPAC on E1 in Aurnihar (Ex)-Chhaphra (Ex) section.	Approx. Value ₹ 50,61,066.80 Earnest Money ₹ 1,01,230.00 Cost of Tender Form ₹ 5,000.00 Completion Period 180 Days
Tender Closing Date & Time: 12-03-2019 up to 15:00 Hrs.	
(1) Tender online will be submitted up to 15:00 Hrs. on date 12-03-2019.	
(2) For full details and submission of bid kindly visit the official website of Indian Railways i.e. www.reps.gov.in	
CPRD/Signal-49	Divl. Rly. Manager (S&T), Varanasi
About any passenger amenity complaint SMS on Mob. No.: 09794845955	

IN BRIEF



Mamata is ruling 'Best Bengal': Mukesh Ambani

KOLKATA
Reliance Industries chairman and managing director Mukesh D. Ambani lauded Ms. Banerjee's leadership, saying that West Bengal was now "marching ahead to claim its rightful place in the nation's progress once again." "Your leadership is taking Bengal to greater heights. West Bengal has now become Best Bengal," Mr. Ambani said at the Bengal Business Summit on Thursday.

10 Naxals killed in Chhattisgarh encounter

RAIPUR
Ten Maoists were killed in an encounter with security forces in Chhattisgarh on Thursday, the police said. The face-off took place in forests under the Bhaigargh police station area of Bijapur district, when a joint team of security personnel was out on an anti-Naxal operation, State Director General of Police D.M. Awasthi told reporters here.

Gadkari to launch projects in Ayodhya

NEW DELHI
Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari will inaugurate five national highway projects worth ₹7,195 crore in Ayodhya on Friday. These projects include a 262-km stretch connecting Ayodhya to Chitrakoot, which will be developed at a cost of ₹2,020 crore. Another project, called Kosi Parikrama Marg, will be launched to facilitate the movement of pilgrims around Ayodhya, the government said in a statement.

Wanted Maoist leader surrenders in Jharkhand

JHARKHAND
A Maoist leader, carrying a reward of ₹25 lakh on his head, laid down arms on Thursday in Jharkhand's Giridih district, a police officer said. Balbir Mahato turned himself in before Deputy Inspector-General of Police (Hazaribagh range) Pankaj Kamboj, Giridih Superintendent of Police Surendra Jha, CRPF officer Anil Sharma and other officers. PTI

T.N. Deputy CM to present Budget today

CHENNAI
Amid expectations of populist announcements by the AIADMK government ahead of the Lok Sabha election and fears of a rising financial crunch, Tamil Nadu Deputy Chief Minister O. Panneerselvam, who is also holding the Finance portfolio, will present the State Budget for 2019-20 in the Assembly on Friday.

NGOs call for funds to eliminate TB

Plea for person-centred approach

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI
Non-governmental organisations (NGO) working to eliminate tuberculosis have urged the government to ensure that the National Strategic Plan for 2017-2025 is fully funded and effectively implemented to eliminate tuberculosis.

'Invest substantially'
Several NGOs and stakeholders, including TB survivors, have urged the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria, and donor countries to invest substantially in communities to create a person-centred, rights-based and gender-sensitive response to TB.

The signatories to these appeals are touched by TB, TB Mukt Vahini-Bihar and REACH (Resource Group for Education and Advocacy on Community Health). These organisations are supported by the Stop TB Partnership, Geneva; Global Coalition of TB Activists; Rainbow TB Forum, Tamil Nadu; and

Medical journals' publisher under fire

Doctor-run IJCP Group is 'unethically' partnering with e-cigarette maker Juul: public health experts

PRIYANKA PULLA

BENGALURU

The Indian Journal of Clinical Practice (IJCP) Group, a doctor-run publisher of medical journals, has come under flak from public health experts for partnering with American e-cigarette maker Juul Labs Inc. Juul, which is evaluating an entry into India, has retained the Group to "better understand the India market," a spokesperson from the company told *The Hindu*.

Public health experts say it is unethical for journal editors to have financial ties with an e-cigarette maker, especially since the U.S.-based tobacco firm Altria Group is an investor in Juul. "An editor can have personal opinion... But a scientific journal cannot. Therefore, it is highly unethical for a scientific journal to align itself to any side of a scientific debate," Prakash Gupta, managing director of the Mumbai-based Healis Sekhsaria Institute for Public Health said.

E-cigarettes, which disperse nicotine by heating a liquid, are a controversial subject. Even though their aerosols are thought to contain fewer carcinogens than

Tricky question

Can vaping help with harm reduction? Experts are divided. A look at some of the arguments

FOR E-CIGARETTES

- Fewer carcinogens
- Flavours increase appeal as cigarette-alternative

AGAINST E-CIGARETTES

- Can be addictive
- No long-term toxicity data
- Can act as gateway drug
- Levels of nicotine and harmful chemicals unregulated in aerosols

cigarette smoke, experts are divided about their safety. India's Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare favours a ban, and has advised all States to clamp down on the sales and manufacture of these products. However, some experts say e-cigarettes can be a part of "harm reduction" policies, because they are a comparatively safe alternative to combustible cigarettes.

In January this year, a randomised trial of 886 subjects, published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* (NEJM) suggested that e-cigarettes were more effective than nicotine lozenges and patches in weaning people off smoking. Dr. K.K. Agarwal, Editor-in-Chief of the

IJCP Group cited this study and said, "We are convinced of the science and efficacy of [Juul's] product in helping adult smokers." Dr. Agarwal was previously a member of the ethics committee of the Medical Council of India and national president of the Indian Medical Association.

Far from clear

Others say that despite studies such as the one by NEJM, the benefits of e-cigarettes are far from clear. Their addictive potential is not understood, and some studies show that they can act as a gateway drug for adolescents. "Until independent large scale cohort studies among smokers and mixed tobacco users of vary-



ing intensity prove harm reduction benefits of ENDS (Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems), the introduction of any new technology is a big risk to public health," said Sonu Goel, a tobacco-control expert at the Post Graduate Institute of Medical Education and Research, Chandigarh.

Another factor muddying the evidence around e-cigarettes is that the tobacco industry funds several harm-reduction initiatives, leading to worries that it may be distorting data. For this reason, the World Health Organisation said in a statement in September 2018 that any industry-funded research "cannot be taken at face value." The organisation also

Plant trees, Delhi HC tells 2G case accused

Penalty for not responding to ED appeal

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Thursday directed Swan Telecom promoter Shahid Usman Balwa and four others accused in the 2G case to each plant 3,000 trees here as penalty for not filing their responses on the ED and CBI appeals against their acquittal in the 2G case.

and Mr. Agarwal to file responses in the CBI's case.

The court directed all the individuals and firms to report to the Deputy Conservator of Forests (South) on February 15 for this purpose.

Maintenance of trees

"The plants shall be of deciduous indigenous variety and they shall be of nursery age of three and a half years old and have a height of at least six feet. They will ensure the maintenance of trees till the rainy season," Justice Waziri said.

He said that till now he had asked litigants in various cases to plant 39,000 trees. The court had listed the case for March 26.

The court was hearing the Central probe agencies' plea challenging a special CBI court's order acquitting Mr. Raja's erstwhile private secretary R.K. Chandolia to plant 300 trees, while director of Kusegaon Fruits Asif Balwa will have to plant 500 trees. Mr. Agarwal have to plant another 500 trees over his 3,000 trees.

The direction came while granting final opportunity to Mr. Chandolia, Mr. Balwa

Two die, 10 missing in J&K avalanches

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

SRINAGAR

Two persons have died and 10 went missing in avalanches in Kashmir on Thursday. The police said the family of Bashir Ahmad Qureshi was buried under an avalanche at Sonbarie Magam in Anantnag. Police retrieved the bodies of husband and wife.

In another incident, an avalanche hit an installation near Jawahar Tunnel, housing police personnel. Ten persons, including 8 policemen and two detainees, have gone missing.

Girl gang-raped in front of father in Bihar's Kishanganj

Survivor names six persons as accused; police on their trail

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

PATNA

A teenage girl was allegedly gang-raped by six youths after tying her father to a tree nearby in Kishanganj district of Bihar.

The girl, in a complaint filed on Wednesday, said six youths of her village Pathargatti, under the Kodhobari police station, 350 km from Patna, knocked on her door on Monday night asking for water. They then forcibly entered the house and dragged

her outside. They took her to a deserted field near her house and gang-raped her in front of her father, she said in her complaint. The victim told the police that the accused warned them not to report the incident.

Arrests soon, says SP

"She has named six persons... the police are conducting raids to nab them as they are absconding," Kishanganj Superintendent of Police Kumar Ashish told

journalists. He said he was personally monitoring the case and "all the accused will be arrested soon."

The police said the villagers initially tried to hush-up the incident. They asked the girl and her father to agree to a "settlement" through the village panchayat. But the two decided to lodge an FIR. The police records say 1,400 cases of rape were registered in Bihar till November last year, 39 in Kishanganj district alone.

PM to inaugurate DD Arunaprabha

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

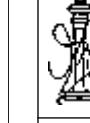
GUWAHATI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is scheduled to launch DD Arunaprabha, India's public service broadcaster Doordarshan's exclusive channel based in Arunachal Pradesh, at Itanagar on Saturday. This will be Doordarshan's 24th channel.

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU CENTRE FOR ADVANCED SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

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Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research invites applications for its Project Oriented Chemistry Education and Project Oriented Biology Education Programmes - 2019. Detailed information and relevant application forms can be downloaded from [www.jncasr.ac.in/fe](http://www.jncasr.ac.in/)

GOVERNMENT OF PUDUCHERRY CHIEF SECRETARIAT (PORTS) WALK-IN-INTERVIEW

Applications are invited from the interested candidates for one post of Director of Ports on contract basis for one year (consolidated remuneration Rs.89,876/-) at Port Department, Government of Puducherry.

Eligible and willing candidates for the Walk-in-Interview are requested to report on 18.02.2019 at 2.30 PM at the office of the Under Secretary (Ports), Chief Secretariat, Puducherry, with application in prescribed form along with two passport size photograph, original and photocopies of relevant documents.

For details of education qualification, experience, age, terms and conditions and application forms etc., please see the website <https://port.py.gov.in>

CHAURE RATNAGHOSH KISHOR

UNDER SECRETARY TO GOVERNMENT (PORTS)

CHIEF SECRETARIAT, PUDUCHERRY

No. 446/DIP/Ad(Press)/2018-19

School of Planning and Architecture, Bhopal

Neelbad Road, Bhauri, Bhopal - 462030 (M.P.)

Phone: 0755-252600

No.: SPAB/RGO/Advt./2018-19/18 Date : 08.02.2019

RECRUITMENT OF OFFICE ASSISTANT (ON CONTRACT)

Applications are invited for the posts of Office Assistant (On Contract). Eligibility criteria and other details are available on Institute website www.spabopal.ac.in. Online application process will start from 8th February, 2019 at 11:00 AM.

REGISTRAR

M. P. PASCHIM KHETRA VIDYUT VITARAN Co. Ltd., GPH COMPOUND, POLOGROUND, INDORE (Ph. No. 0731-2426111, 2426204, 2426201)

(CIN:U40109MP2002SGC015121 & Email : sepurchase06@gmail.com)

No. MD/WZ/20/PUR/NIT-226/2019/278 Indore, dated: 07.02.2019

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Online tender is invited for supply of following item as per Tender Specification:-

TS No. Name of Items Approx Qty Online tender opening date

1330 ISI marked 2CX2.5 Sqmm Aluminium Conductor, Armoured PVC Cable. 7000 KM 28.02.2019

For further information visit web-site <http://www.mptenders.gov.in> or <http://www.mptenders.gov.in>

Chief Engineer (Purchase)

CPCCL

Chennai Petroleum Corporation Limited

Notice Inviting Tender (Domestic Competitive Electronic Bidding)

NIT No. CPCCL/PMC/T-094/2018-19

Name of the Work: Renovation Works in Old Technical Services Building Inside Manali Refinery of CPCCL, Chennai

Download start date : 08.02.2019 (from 10:00 AM)

Date of Submission : 01.03.2019 (upto 11:00 AM)

Contact person: Shri G. Premchand, GM (Projects-III) Ph: 044-2594 4336 / 4157 / 4285; E-mail: premchand@cpccl.co.in, nsukumar@cpccl.co.in

All further amendment(s), addendum(s), corrigendum(s), time extension, etc. with regard to this tender will be published only in Website and not through Press Advertisement.

Himachal Pradesh Power Corporation Limited

(A Government of Himachal Pradesh Undertaking)

Himed Building, BCS, New Shimla (H.P.)-770109

Tel: +91-177-2671737 CIN: U40101HP2006SGC0305591

National Competitive Bidding

INVITATION FOR BIDS

National Competitive Bids are invited for the work: "Tender for Consultancy Services for Preparation of Detailed Project Report for Grid Connected Berra Dol Solar Power Project Phase-II and Solar Power Project on Canal Tops and Canal Banks at Various Canals/ Channels of I&P Department of Government of Himachal Pradesh, India".

Deadline for Bids: 14:00 Hrs on 14-03-2019

Opening of Bids: 15:00 Hrs on 14-03-2019

Cost of Bidding Document: INR 2000 (incl. GST)



Growth prop

As the RBI cuts the benchmark repo rate, concerns over the fiscal deficit remain

Barely four months after the Reserve Bank of India switched its monetary policy stance to one of 'calibrated tightening', signalling interest rates were set to trend higher, it has reversed direction. Not only did the RBI's monetary policy committee unanimously opt to revert to a 'neutral' posture, but the rate-setting panel unexpectedly decided, by a 4-2 majority, to cut the benchmark repo rate by 25 basis points, to 6.25%. The MPC's reasoning has been fairly straightforward. With Consumer Price Index-based inflation having continued to slow and projected to stay well below the medium-term target of 4% till at least the October-December quarter, the MPC saw an opportune moment to pivot to a growth-supportive stance. That there is a need to bolster economic momentum is evident from the RBI's downward revision of the forecast for growth in the first half of the next fiscal year. The projection has been lowered to a range of 7.2-7.4%, from 7.5% posited in the RBI's December statement, as moderating global growth and slowing overseas demand add uncertainties to the prevailing domestic imbalances. Specifically, production and import of capital goods, which is a key gauge of investment demand, contracted in November/December and credit flows to industry remain muted. With an overall shortfall of 4% in rabi sowing across various crops, and storage in major reservoirs at just 44% of the full level, the slowdown in farm output growth may, worryingly, end up being more protracted.

The less-than-sanguine outlook for the rural economy is also reflected in the high-frequency indicators of the services sector. Data on sales of both motorcycles and tractors in December underscore weakening demand in the hinterland. This weakness in the farm sector is undergirding the unprecedented softness in food prices. The December CPI data showed continuing deflation in food items. While the RBI's inflation calculus clearly benefits from the ongoing trend in price gains, the MPC is justifiably cognisant of the tenuousness of the assumptions it has made for its forward projections. Importantly, while it has assumed a normal monsoon this year, the central bank acknowledges that any variation in geographic spread or uneven distribution in terms of time could roil the inflation outlook. Inexplicably, however, the RBI's policy statement fails to make any mention of its hitherto abiding concern about fiscal prudence. With the Interim Budget showing some slippage from the fiscal roadmap and projecting a budget deficit of 3.4% for both the current financial year and the next, the risk of government borrowing crowding out private investment demand remains tangibly real. One must assume that the central bank will resume normal service on providing salutary caution to the government after the coming general election.

Still partisan

Trump was restrained in his State of the Union address, but did nothing to bridge the divide

In his second State of the Union address, President Donald Trump demonstrated the capacity to step back from his polemical debating style on social media without yielding ground to his detractors on matters of domestic policy at the top of his agenda. These include immigration, jobs for Americans, and conservative values including the pro-life movement. First, Mr. Trump used the opportunity to speak before a joint session of Congress to reiterate his desire to build a wall along the Mexican border, even as he clarified this could include the use of steel slats. The worrisome thought on the minds of at least 800,000 government workers, who were furloughed without pay for 35 days during the longest federal government shutdown in U.S. history, must have been whether Mr. Trump will again insist that Congress allocate \$5.7 billion to build the wall, and precipitate another shutdown. Second, he underscored that his core agenda on job creation for Americans was proceeding apace, noting that his administration had "created 5.3 million new jobs and importantly added 600,000 new manufacturing jobs" – a claim subsequently noted to be an exaggeration. Third, the anti-abortion movement got a boost from the two whole paragraphs in the speech calling on Congress to pass legislation to prohibit late-term abortion.

On foreign policy too, Mr. Trump appeared to hold firm to the ideas and strategies his administration has espoused through his term in office, including attacking the regime of Nicolás Maduro in Venezuela, for "socialist policies have turned that nation... into a state of abject poverty and despair"; and the government of Iran as a "radical regime" that does "bad, bad things", justifying the U.S. withdrawal from the nuclear agreement with Tehran. It may have come as a pleasant surprise, or relief, to some that Mr. Trump's address did not take on the darkly foreboding undertones of his inaugural speech. But his plea for both major parties to "embrace the boundless potential of cooperation, compromise, and the common good" sounded hollow, given the ground realities of his administration's policy effects. In her response to the address, Democrat and former Georgia gubernatorial candidate Stacey Abrams decried the harsh economic pinch of the government shutdown, countering Mr. Trump's claims of working for the interest of the middle-class American. She highlighted the omission of the gun control debate in the speech, the silence over voter suppression, rising higher education fees, and so on. Unless Mr. Trump genuinely reaches across the political divide to connect meaningfully with over 65 million voters who opposed him in the 2016 election, partisan rancour will remain in the political system and threaten its foundations.

Governing India's many spaces

Ill fares the land where wealth accumulates, but the social and natural environment suffer



PULAPRE BALAKRISHNAN

As the general elections approach, it would be politic to take stock of the progress made by the incumbent party and look out for the areas that call for particular attention by the one that gains power. Without anticipating complete agreement on the indicators that ought to be used, I look at the changes since 2014 in three indices for India. These are the indices of the 'Ease of Doing Business' (EDB), 'Human Development' (HDI) and 'Environmental Performance' (EPI). They are self explanatory, and their importance unlikely to be contested, even though they may not exhaust all concerns. Published by separate international bodies, they are used to rank the world's countries according to their performance in the related sphere. Rankings by themselves do not reveal the level of attainment but they do convey how far a country is from the global frontier.

The business ecosystem

The EDB, an indicator put out by the World Bank, is meant mainly as an index of the effect of government regulations on running a business. It is also meant to reflect the extent of property rights in a society. Responses are sought from government officials, lawyers, business consultants, accountants and other professionals involved in providing advice on legal and regulatory compliance. A country's ranking is based on the

extent to which government regulations facilitate the following: starting a business, obtaining construction permits, getting an electricity connection, registering property, accessing credit, protection of investors, paying taxes, trading across borders, enforcement of contracts and resolving insolvency. The Narendra Modi government has set much at store by India's improved ranking in terms of the EDB index. Actually, the improvement is considerable. From a rank of 134 in 2014, India's rank improved to 77 in 2018. As 190 countries were ranked in 2018, India was in the top 50%. The position is not spectacular but the improvement is, as said, noteworthy.

It is important to note that the use of the EDB has not been without controversy, with the World Bank's Chief Economist, a Nobel Laureate, suggesting in an interview that in the past political bias may have crept into the ranking of countries. Let us for a moment overlook this episode and assume that in the case of India the ranking reflects reality. Perhaps a bigger problem with the EDB is that it measures the effect of government regulations alone. While it is important to take this aspect into account, in any situation the ease of doing business is dependent upon other factors too. One of these is the availability of 'producer services', with electricity, water supply and waste management coming to mind. There is little reason to believe that this infrastructure has improved in India in the last five years. The Planning Commission used to release data on infrastructural investment, but we have had none since its demise. Despite all these shortcomings, it is yet important to be concerned with the ease of doing business in India, an



REUTERS

aspect that has been given little or no importance in public policy for over 50 years, and to note that the EDB ranking for the country shows significant improvement since 2014.

A true measure

We may turn next to the better known Human Development Index. It is the result of a rare India-Pakistan collaboration in the global discourse on public policy, having been devised by Amartya Sen and Mahbub ul Haq for the United Nations Development Programme. The HDI is a combination of indicators of income, health and education in a country. Its conceptual basis has been critiqued. First, it has been pointed out that the index combines incommensurate categories, as income, health and education are not substitutes. Second, while it does go beyond purely economic measures of progress, in that it looks at the health and education achievements in a population, it can say little about the 'quality' of development. As pointed out by Selim Jahan of the UNDP, data can "[tell] us only a part of the story about people's lives. For instance, it is increasingly clear that it is not enough simply to count how many children are in school: we need also to know whether they are learning anything." He could have had

India in mind!

Nevertheless the HDI has now gained reasonable acceptance globally as indicative of the development strides a country has taken. When we turn to the HDI, we find that India's ranking has not altered since 2014. India was ranked 130 in 2014, and has remained in the same place out of 185 countries in 2018. It is of relevance here that India's HDI ranking has not improved despite it being the world's fastest growing major economy in recent years, as the government often points out in its assessments. This despite income being a component of the index. What this reveals is that an economy can grow fast without much progress in human development. Also, India's HDI position in the bottom third of countries points to how much it needs to progress to earn the label 'the world's largest democracy'.

Environmental costs

Finally, we may look at India's recent record on the Environmental Performance Index. The EPI is produced jointly by Yale and Columbia Universities in collaboration with the World Economic Forum. The index ranks countries on 24 performance indicators across several 'issue categories', each of which fit under one of two overarching objectives, namely, environmental health and eco-system vitality. The issue categories are air quality, water and sanitation, water resources, agriculture, forests, fisheries, biodiversity and habitat, and climate and energy. These metrics are meant to serve as a gauge at a national level of how close countries are to accepted environmental policy goals. In 2018 India ranked 177 out of 180 countries, having slipped from an already very low rank of 155 in

2014. The country is today among the worst performing on the environmental front and its ranking has worsened over the past five years.

We now have indicators of the progress India has made in the past five years in the three crucial spheres of business, human development and the natural environment. A clear picture emerges. The government has aggressively pursued an improvement in the business environment. This appears to have yielded fruit in terms of an improvement in the EDB index. However, at a time when it has been the fastest growing economy in the world, India's rank on human development has remained unchanged and on environmental performance has slipped close to the last place.

These outcomes would not surprise anyone familiar with public policy since 2014. The Narendra Modi government has marginally lowered health and education expenditure as a share of national income and distinctly lowered environmental standards. An instance of the latter would be the Coastal Regulation Zone Notification of 2018 which allows construction and tourism development on land earlier considered inviolable due to its ecological value. This de-regulation is a setback for India. It is only one instance of the failure to recognise the plunder of India's natural capital taking place at an accelerated pace. Political parties now fervently making a pitch to govern India must indicate how they will reverse it. Ill fares the land where wealth accumulates and nature frays.

Pulapre Balakrishnan is Professor, Ashoka University, Sonipat and Senior Fellow, IIM Kozhikode

The road to peace runs through Tehran

The Iranian card could help India enhance its role in stabilising Afghanistan



ANITA INDER SINGH

Even if an American military pullout from Afghanistan is on the cards, the U.S. will want to leave behind a stable country. And any peace settlement in Afghanistan will stand a better chance of staying on the rails if it is supported by regional powers. In other words, ties between Afghanistan and its neighbours, including Iran, will impact the security of southern and western Asia. Like India, Russia, China and the U.S., Iran would want to see a steady hand at the helm in Afghanistan. While lacking military influence, India can build on its good ties with the U.S. and Iran to secure Afghanistan.

Iranian continuity

Iran is not a newcomer to regional diplomacy in Afghanistan. First and foremost, India should try to dissuade the U.S. from dealing with Iran, Russia and China as enemies. In fact, U.S. President Donald Trump's perception of all three as foes is at odds with America's earlier engagement with

them to end its military campaign in Afghanistan. For instance, from 2014 to 2016, Washington and Moscow quietly arranged talks on the Afghan peace process. The meetings, known as the 6+1 group, included representatives from Afghanistan, China, India, Iran, Pakistan, Russia, and the U.S. The 6+1 process assumed that each of these countries was essential to the achievement of a political settlement in Afghanistan. Moreover, last November, the U.S. and the Taliban joined for the first time the Russia-hosted conference in the hope of promoting a negotiated solution to achieve peace and national reconciliation in Afghanistan.

Regional powers could put their weight behind a negotiated settlement that will ensure Afghanistan's stability. Iran, Russia and China – and the Central Asian states with which India and Afghanistan wish to cooperate in countering terrorism – fear that continued instability in Afghanistan could spill over into their countries. India will also be adversely affected if negotiations break down. In that event, extremist exports from Pakistan to Afghanistan or India would probably increase.

It could be worthwhile for India to explore the Iranian diplomatic options to secure Afghanistan. On good terms with Tehran, New Del-



CHABAHAR PORT, AFP

hi would gain by developing the Chabahar port in southern Iran. And looking beyond Chabahar, India, Iran and Russia were the founding countries of the International North-South Transport Corridor project – as long ago as 2002. The corridor is intended to increase connectivity between India, Iran, Russia, landlocked Afghanistan and Central Asia – and Europe. It would also advance their trading interests.

India could remind Washington about the past coincidence of American and Iranian interests on Afghanistan. Together with the U.S. and India, Iran supported the overthrow of the Taliban in 2001. In the international negotiations which followed in Bonn that year, Iran supported the installation of Hamid Karzai as President and favoured the exclusion of the Taliban from his government.

Admittedly, U.S.-Iran ties have often been fractious. As the U.S. imposed sanctions on Iran after

2005, Iran saw the Taliban countering American influence on its borders and gave them arms. Iran continues to oppose the U.S.'s presence in Afghanistan, largely because it fears that American troops in Afghanistan could be used against it. To allay Iranian fears, Afghanistan recently said that it would not allow the U.S. to use its bases in the country to conduct any act of aggression against Iran.

Last December, Iran also held talks with the Taliban with the knowledge of the Afghan government. But it should assure Kabul of its good intentions. In recent months Afghan officials have accused Iran, which the U.S. says is trying to extend its influence in western Afghanistan, of providing the Taliban with money, weapons and explosives. Iran denies the charge.

The U.S. and Iran could be advised of the mutual, and regional, advantages of improving ties. Such advantages could range from stability in Afghanistan, and beyond, to increased trade prospects, especially in South and West Asia.

Win-win prospects

Iran could gain by strengthening trading ties with a secure Afghanistan. In 2017 it supplanted Pakistan as Afghanistan's largest trading partner. At a time when Iran's economy is weighed down by Ameri-

can sanctions, it would want to build up trade ties with neighbouring states.

The U.S. would also gain. After all, Iran is the geopolitical hub connecting South, Central and West Asia and the Caucasus. The Strait of Hormuz, that crucial conduit, links Iran westwards to the Persian Gulf and Europe, and eastwards to the Gulf of Oman, South and East Asia. Moreover, an improvement in U.S.-Iran relations would be welcomed by America's European allies, who are opposed to Washington's unilateral sanctions on Iran.

The U.S. should not lose the chance to act in concert with Iran to improve Afghanistan's security. And, as the U.S. airs the idea of withdrawal from Afghanistan, now is the right time for India to act as the honest broker between them and to play a larger role in regional security. The status of India and Iran as regional powers as well as the stability of South, Central, and West Asia would simultaneously be enhanced. It is to be hoped that Mr. Trump's display of America's "superpower" in opposition to Iran – and Russia and China – will not block such an opportunity to stabilise Afghanistan.

Anita Inder Singh is Founding Professor, Centre for Peace and Conflict Resolution in New Delhi

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.

Crime and punishment

It is such a travesty that people who recreated the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi were booked under ordinary sections of the Indian Penal Code and students who voiced their dissent in Jawaharlal Nehru University were booked under Section 124A ("Hindu Mahasabha leader, husband held", Feb. 7). It shows how the law of the land works: the National Security Act is invoked for those who are accused of cow slaughter, sedition is invoked for those who dissent, but neither is invoked for those who denigrate the Father of the Nation.

Deepish Mani, Chennai

EVM debate
It is a well-established fact that with VVPATs, manipulation of EVMs is practically impossible

"Checks and balances" (Feb. 7). If glitches are the argument for replacing systems, we cannot trust any system in the world. The paper ballot is most susceptible to rigging. It is a closed chapter in this country. The focus should be on ending VVPAT glitches. Political parties must stop crying foul over a well functioning system.

P. MANGALACHANDRAN, Kannur

U-turn on Sabarimala
It is sad to see the Travancore Devaswom Board, which utilises public money, changing its stand in the Supreme Court, in line with the Kerala government's stand ("TDB changes stand, supports SC judgment on Sabarimala", Feb. 7). It has let down believers. How can the TDB support something that is against custom and why has

it suddenly changed its stand?

B. VEERAKUMARAN, Thiruvananthapuram

The centuries-old belief that Lord Ayyappa is a "naishikta brahmachari" is an amusing argument to be put forth in the Supreme Court ("Bench reserves orders on Sabarimala review petitions", Feb. 7). Has the Lord ever claimed that he is a "naishikta brahmachari"? Temple idols are treated as legal entities so that legal issues associated with the administration of temple property can be settled. No human being has any legal right to declare what an idol in a temple, in its human manifestation, likes or dislikes. So the argument above is not valid legally. In the matter of right to worship in a temple, the only arguments that are

relevant are those pertaining to customs and traditions that are followed in that temple with the general consensus of its devotees. But in the case of any conflict between customary practices and the Constitution, the Constitution prevails.

S.P. ASOKAN, Chennai

Unstable government
Neither is the Chief Minister willing to step down, nor is the BJP willing to bring a no-confidence motion in the House ("Karnataka Congress warns dissident MLAs", Feb. 7). Those MLAs who cannot seem to make up their minds about whom to support but are continuing to enjoy power should come out in public and end this drama once and for all. The chaos in the State is a lesson for all those who want a coalition

government. The path for such governments is never smooth.

V.S. GANESHAN, Bengaluru

Speaking out
It is undeniable that this country needs lawyers like Prashant Bhushan ("SC may curb advocates from speaking on cases", Feb. 7). Mr. Bhushan is a man of outstanding credentials and nobody can doubt his integrity of purpose in cleaning the cobwebs of power. How can one say that what Mr. Bhushan said would amount to contempt

even though he was merely conveying what the Leader of the Opposition had told him? The purpose of contempt is to preserve the dignity of the courts, which Mr. Bhushan tries to do everyday. We cannot silence such people with contempt. That would virtually amount to there being no checks and balances in the system, of which Mr. Bhushan is an integral part.

N.G.R. PRASAD & K.K. RAM SIDDHARTH, Chennai

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

CORRECTIONS & CLARIFICATIONS: >> In a Business page (Feb. 3, 2019) report, "Industrialist K. Mahesh breathes his last," Harsha Viji's designation was erroneously mentioned as *deputy chairman*, Sundaram Finance. He is actually the *deputy managing director*. It is the policy of The Hindu to correct significant errors as soon as possible. Please specify the edition (place of publication), date and page. The Readers' Editor's office can be contacted by Telephone: +91-44-28418297/28526300 (11 a.m. to 5 p.m.); Monday to Friday); Fax: +91-44-28526263; E-mail: readerseditor@thehindu.co.in; Mail: Readers' Editor, The Hindu, Kasturi Buildings,

YES, NO, IT'S COMPLICATED

Will the ₹6,000 farmer payout help?

YES



ASHISH KUMAR BHUTANI is Joint Secretary in the Department of Agriculture Cooperation and Farmers Welfare

The PM-KISAN scheme will provide farmers assured supplemental income

The Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) scheme, announced in the Interim Budget, is the biggest scheme launched by the Government of India till date for providing structured support to small and marginal farmers.

For farmers' welfare

Under the scheme, ₹6,000 per year will be provided to farmers holding cultivable land of up to two hectares. This has been done because the government is aware that the smaller the land holding, the greater

the need for financial support.

This is a Central Sector Scheme and will be funded fully by the Government of India. The guidelines of the scheme have been issued. The government has developed a portal for managing the scheme (<http://pmkisan.nic.in>), which has gone live. The States have to upload the data of the beneficiaries on the portal. The Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare will transfer the benefit directly into the accounts of the beneficiaries. The amount will be credited into the ac-

count of the beneficiary within 48 hours of its release by the government.

In the 2018-19 Budget, the government announced that minimum support price (MSP) would be 1.5 times the cost of production for all the notified commodities. The Pradhan Mantri Aay Sanrakshan Abhiyan was approved by the Cabinet last year to ensure remunerative prices to the farmers. There have been various interventions to boost the production of pulses and oilseeds. Earlier, in 2016, the government launched the Pradhan Mantri Fasal



Bima Yojana to provide insurance to farmers from all risks. Thus, in the broader framework of farmers' welfare, it is easy to understand the importance of the PM-KISAN scheme.

NO



TATHAGATA SATPATHY is a Biju Janata Dal MP

The amount is not even enough for farmers to fill diesel in their hired tractors

Earlier, we were told there was a battle cry during India's freedom struggle. It went like this: "Mujhe khao do, mein tumhey azaadi doonga" (give me blood and I will give you freedom)." When the Interim Budget was being read out by Finance Minister Piyush Goyal, it sounded more like, "Mujhe vote do, mein tumhey paisa doonga" (give me votes and I will give you money.)

Politics in India is not 'accidental' as in *Uri*, the movie. The farm crisis is real. Admittedly, it is not a recent phenomenon. It is not the

creation of this particular party in power. It is the result of policies adopted by most of the political outfits that have governed this nation and its States for the past many decades.

The explanation for politicians turning a blind eye to the crisis is simple. While solutions to the bottlenecks in business and industry could be dished out in comfortable offices in New Delhi or State capitals, agriculture, for long, had no spokesperson or lobby in India. All the so-called elites of India looked down on farmers as poor and un-

wanted citizens that the country could well do without.

No vikas for farmers

All this suddenly changed. The drastic alteration took place when three of the five States that went to polls at the end of 2018 turned hostile to the BJP. Those victories were not so much victories for the Congress as they were a resounding defeat for the BJP. The underlying message was crystal clear: All the noise about 'vikas' (development) meant nothing to the farmer. The toiling Indian in the field decided, after 71 years of utter neglect, that enough is enough. The farmers



realised that numbers favoured them. They were not willing to be pawns in the hands of those who debated whether or not the Constitution of India could be printed on a postage stamp.

Such a realisation also implied deep understanding. The farmers decided that the neo-liberal want a laissez faire economy only to help big businesses.

The past and present governments were concerned primarily with restructuring corporate laws, refunding financial institutions that were sick because of bad lending, providing subsidies to industries and attracting foreign investments.

It is important to keep in mind that the average annual income of small and marginal farmers is well below the average income of all farmers. The benefit being given to small and marginal farmers through PM-KISAN will provide them assured supplemental income and also meet their emergent expenses, especially immediately after harvest. The scheme will be implemented with an estimated expenditure of ₹1 lakh crore till 2019-20, benefiting 12.50 crore small and marginal farmer families.

Besides being unique, the scheme is also sustainable and will increase the confidence of small and marginal farmers.

fully kept vague to enable big sharks to grab large tracts? What is land settlement and why has most of the country not gone through this process? These are the questions that we need to ask.

Imagining a New India

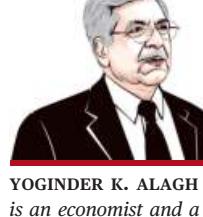
It is time for a New India. This New India requires modern irrigation facilities. It needs seeds and scientific and modern technological knowledge that can help and guide in reducing costs. It needs a rapid transition to cost-effective organic farming. It needs timely delivery of inputs and transport systems to enable commercialisation of agricultural products and activities. It does not need doles.

clues rent and interest on farm investments, as a committee I chaired on cost concepts for MSP had argued.

Direct Transfers to stay

By calling it an Interim Budget, a legal constitutional hassle has probably been avoided. But the argument that the amount that a new government can spend can be decided now is unconvincing. The new lot, even if the same party comes to power, will not be that generous in giving credit to their predecessors. The fun and games will start with the rains. Knowing our country, we can be reasonably confident that Direct Transfers have come to stay.

IT'S COMPLICATED



YOGINDER K. ALAGH is an economist and a former Union Minister

Build rural infrastructure in markets and provide tariff protection against subsidised imports

In the Interim Budget, the government has made a number of major political statements, which is understandable in an election year.

The Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) gives direct annual income support to farmers with a land holding of two hectares. This borrows from Arvind Subramanian's basic income support scheme for substantial sections of the rural workforce. Congress president Rahul Gandhi had stated this as his objective for the economy as a whole, if voted to power, despite

criticism. However, the Budget has shown an implicit appreciation of the idea and proposed it for a large part of the rural labour force. Landless labourers are a category in the Census and National Sample Survey Office, but as the Finance Secretary clarified, they cultivate at least kitchen plots, and so are marginal farmers for revenue purposes and are eligible for the scheme.

When we count the economic costs we factor in the terminal costs (for the year when the scheme is fully implemented) as a percentage

of, say, GDP or agricultural GDP, but such schemes take time to implement and the initial costs are lower.

Will it work?

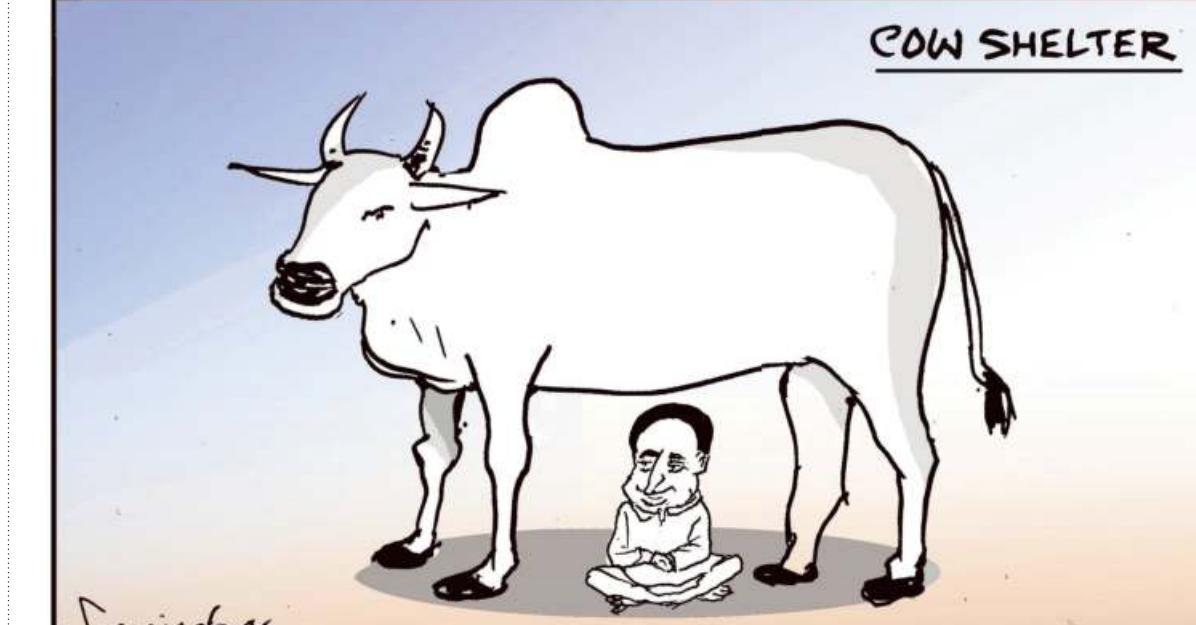
Of course, there is no way of testing if sufficient funds have been provided for the scheme. Small farmers till around two-fifths of the land but are two-thirds of the labour force, since agricultural labourers also till small plots of land. The Budget speech compares the revised estimates for this year with the Budget estimates for the next fiscal. Since Budgets get scaled down when the fiscal crunch be-

gins mid-fiscal year, this gives a false sense of expansion. Is there an economic case for the scheme in the real world? The terms of trade have been moving against agriculture (Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices reports) since 2013. So, when income in real terms goes up by, say, 6% annually, the farmer's real income in terms of what she gets for what she sells goes down. She is agitating because there is a real issue.

The answer, of course, is to build rural infrastructure in markets and give tariff protection against subsidised imports. But urban interests

become a constraint. The Interim Budget has rhetoric, but the NITI Aayog, which wrote this, does not have any fund allocation powers, unlike the reformed Chinese planning set-up where strategic plans are buttressed with funds. So, you live from day to day. Direct Transfers are then the oxygen you need.

The Budget speech also reiterates the government's stated goal of doubling farmers' income. The government is obviously sceptical of this; otherwise an additional Direct Transfer sounds rather excessive, even in the months before an election. The budgeted figure for MSP or other support will have to be based on a cost concept that in-



SINGLE FILE

Irking the Dragon

By walking out of the INF treaty, the U.S. may have dragged China and Russia into a new arms race

ATUL ANEJA



China has predictably criticised the U.S.'s decision to walk out of the landmark Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) treaty, which was signed in 1987 by U.S. President Ronald Reagan and Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev to eradicate conventional and nuclear missiles ranging from 500 to 5,500 km from their arsenals.

Of all countries following the crumbling of the major arms control treaty, China seems to be the most impacted. The Chinese expect that the Americans will now reinforce their tactical missiles, both nuclear and conventional, in Guam, a large military base in Micronesia, at the heart of the U.S. deterrent in the Pacific. It is also expected that the Americans will pack other U.S. bases in the Pacific, especially those in Okinawa – a string of islands in the East China Sea that belong to Japan – with intermediate range missiles. By doing so, the U.S. would be able to virtually box in the movement of Chinese naval ships in the West Pacific, especially by safeguarding strategic gateways to the open sea, such as the Miyako Strait in Japan.

China is aware that the post-INF missile deployments can significantly undermine its own deterrent, especially its mid-range missiles. Currently, the Americans have no answer to China's DF-21D missiles. These weapons have been tailored to destroy U.S. aircraft carriers even at a distance of 1,450 km. China recently flaunted its DF-26 ballistic missiles, which can deliver a strike on Guam.

Chinese media reports reveal Beijing's apprehension that the Americans are at some point likely to propose a fresh arms control dialogue, sharply focusing on China's mid-range missiles. The new treaty targeting China's intermediate range missiles is expected to seek termination of the Chinese challenge to Washington's military dominance in the West Pacific.

But Beijing will not be second-best by Washington in the tense ongoing tussle for equivalence, and in writing the rules, in the waters of the Pacific. A write-up published in *China Military Online*, a website affiliated with the People's Liberation Army, points out that in view of the anticipated moves by the U.S., China must rapidly reinforce its nuclear arsenal, through qualitative rather than quantitative improvements.

Besides, Beijing would have no choice but to beef up its conventional deterrence by developing hypersonic missiles, which can smash into targets at five times the speed of sound, unharmed by any existing ground-based missile defences. The next generation of strategic bombers as well as long-range air-launched cruise missiles could also be on Beijing's radar.

By taking the miscalculated step of walking out of the INF treaty, the U.S. may have dragged China, as well as Russia, into a new and unpredictable arms race, with the potential of destabilising the Indo-Pacific.

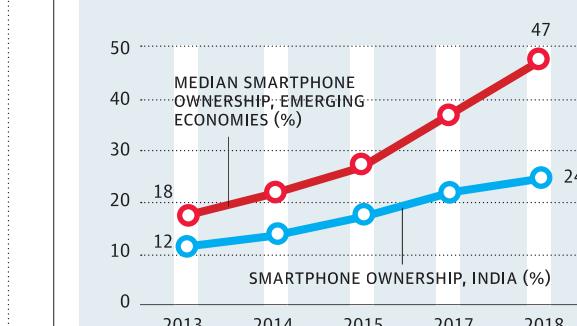
The writer is The Hindu's China correspondent

DATA POINT

Upwardly mobile

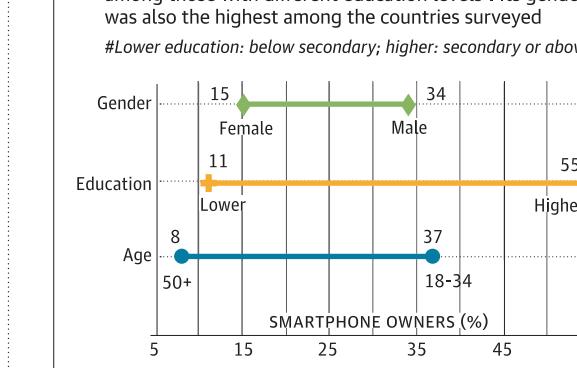
One in four have smartphones...

...but the gap between smartphone ownership in India and other emerging economies has widened over the years



Demographics change

In India, the sharpest contrast in smartphone ownership was among those with different education levels*. Its gender gap was also the highest among the countries surveyed

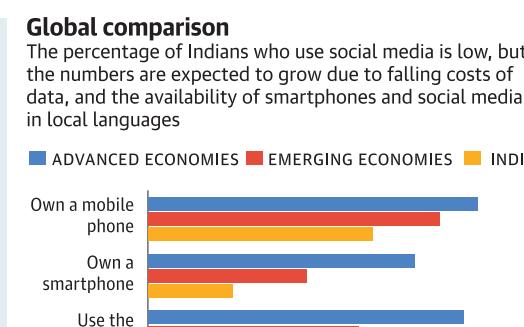


Nearly 64% of Indian respondents who were part of a global survey in 2018 owned a mobile phone and 24% owned a smartphone. While India's smartphone ownership has increased over time, the rise has been slow compared to other emerging economies*.

By Varun B. Krishnan

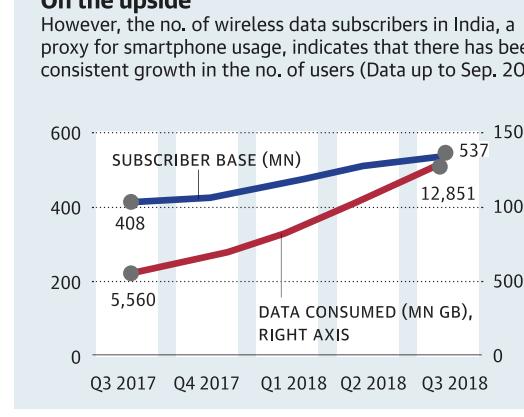
Global comparison

The percentage of Indians who use social media is low, but the numbers are expected to grow due to falling costs of data, and the availability of smartphones and social media in local languages



On the upside

However, the no. of wireless data subscribers in India, a proxy for smartphone usage, indicates that there has been consistent growth in the no. of users (Data up to Sep. 2018)



*India, South Africa, Brazil, the Philippines, Mexico, Tunisia, Indonesia, Kenya and Nigeria

Source: Pew study with 30,133 respondents in 27 countries from May-Aug. 2018

FROM The Hindu ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO FEBRUARY 8, 1969

Admission to degree courses

A proposal to abolish the age limit for admission to colleges for degree courses is under the consideration of the University Grants Commission. This step is being taken to simplify procedures for admissions. The U.G.C. has already recommended the scrapping of the cumbersome requirement regarding migration certificates. In regard to the age restriction, more than 50 universities in the country have prescribed age limits for admission to various degree courses. In Delhi, for instance, unless a student completes 16 years he is not admitted into the B.A. first year. The U.G.C. has taken the view that it is unfair to refuse admission to a student just because he has not completed the prescribed age. Even if a candidate is short by a few days, he is not eligible for higher studies now. Only last year, the student who stood first in the higher secondary examination, Delhi, with record marks, was refused admission to a college because he was under-aged.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO FEBRUARY 8, 1919

Germany's War Guilt.

At the International Socialist Conference, Eisener, head of the Bavarian Government speaking in the debate on the responsibility for the war, pleaded guilty on behalf of German Socialists, but argued that Germany could expiate her guilt by advancing on the path of Socialism [according to a Feb. 5 report from Berne]. He claimed that Germany was now the most democratic country in the world. Kantsky German Independent Socialist declared that documents proved Germany's guilt. Bethmann Hollweg's statement that France attacked first was a lie. Doctor Adler, German Majority Socialist, placed on the table a declaration that the war was due to the imperialist policy of the old German Government and recognising the need for inquiry. He admitted that attempts to justify the invasion of Belgium which was a breach of international law had been a pronounced failure. He stated that the German Republic did not wish to escape any guilt which might be established.

CONCEPTUAL

Ethical intuitionism

PHILOSOPHY

Also known as moral intuitionism, this refers to the philosophical belief that there are objective moral truths in life and that human beings can understand these truths intuitively. In other words, what is right or wrong is considered by ethical intuitionists to be self-evident in nature and cannot be known through human experience. The idea was popularised by American philosopher Michael Huemer in his 2005 book *Ethical Intuitionism*. Critics of ethical intuitionism argue that people may come to different moral conclusions even after consulting their inner intuition. Others question whether people can arrive at moral conclusions at all using their intuition.

MORE ON THE WEB

FROM PAGE ONE

SC transfers Bihar home abuse case to Delhi

RJD chief takes on Nitish

The CBI, probing the Muzafarpur case, sought its transfer out of Bihar, where it feared the accused may harass the witnesses. On November last year, the apex court had transferred to the CBI more such cases in 16 other homes for children, destitute women, beggars and senior citizens in Bihar.

The court had specifically barred the transfer of the probe team officers without taking the prior consent of the Supreme Court.

It took on record the status report filed by the CBI on the probe into the 16 shelter homes till January 31, 2019. The CBI said the investigation was on in 'right earnest.'

In November, the apex court had slammed the Nitish Kumar government in the presence of the Bihar Chief Secretary for "not doing its job properly."

The last straw was when the court realised that FIRs so far registered in these

"No one can ignore the Supreme Court's directive," Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar told journalists after the order.

Imprisoned RJD chief Lalu Prasad took pot-shots at the government. "Is there any shame left in you, Nitish Kumar?" said a tweet. Another tweet said, "Habitual protectors of rapists of Bihar will keep quiet. Chuppp."

cases mentioned only petty offences. None of the serious offences were listed in the 11 FIRs so far lodged in cases of abuse and torture in the shelter homes.

The court directed the Bihar government to fulfil any request from the CBI team for additional manpower or infrastructure.

Five more IPS officers in Bengal face action

The five officers apart from Mr. Kumar who participated in the sit-in are: Virendra (85 batch), DGP W.B.; Vineet Kumar Goel (94 batch), ADG, Director, Security; Anuj Sharma (91) ADG Law and Order; Gyanwant Singh (93), CP, Bidhannagar – he was in uniform and Supratim Sarkar (97) Additional CP.

"In addition a number of measures are also being considered to be initiated against defaulting officers such as withdrawing medals or decorations which were conferred on them like meritorious service. The Centre may also remove names of the delinquent officers from the empanelled list and bar them for a certain period from serving in the Central government," the official said.

The Centre is contemplating issuing an advisory to all the States to ensure that officers of uniformed forces adhere to the conduct rules and maintain decorum.

Out of the five officers, Mr. Virendra received the President's Police Medal for Gallantry in 2010 and Mr. Sharma got the President's Police Medal for Distinguished Service in 2016.

Prakash Singh, former Uttar Pradesh DGP, who moved the SC on police reforms said the officers violated conduct rules but it would be "vindictive and petty" to bar them from Central deputation. He said the officers were caught in the crossfire and were mere pawns in a high-voltage political drama between the Centre and the State.

RBI cuts interest rates, shifts focus to growth

Some market participants had factored in a rate cut, but there was near unanimity that the RBI would shift its stance given the softening inflation.

Interestingly, this is the first time since the MPC was set up in October 2016 that the RBI Governor and the Deputy Governor voted differently.

While Governor Shaktikanta Das backed a rate cut, Deputy Governor Viral Acharya – who oversees monetary policy – voted to stay put.

A check on inflation
Mr. Das observed that the acceleration in consumer price inflation in December was the slowest in 18 months.

He said, "It is noteworthy that the path of inflation has moved downwards significantly and over the period of the next one year headline inflation is expected to remain contained below the target of 4%. This has opened up space for policy action."

He said inflation expectations of households had softened, in December, by 80 basis points (bps) for the three-month ahead horizon and 130 bps for the 12-

month horizon.

The RBI revised downwards its inflation projection to 2.8% for Jan-March and to 3.2-3.4% for the first half of the next financial year. It also estimated inflation for the third quarter of 2019-20 at 3.9%, assuming a normal monsoon this year.

The central bank forecast GDP growth in the next financial year at 7.4%, with the pace projected to accelerate from 7.2-7.4% in the first half to 7.5% in the third quarter.

Stressing the need to boost private investment and private consumption, Mr. Das said, "The favourable macroeconomic configuration that is evolving underscores the need to act now when it is most opportune. It is vital to act decisively and in a timely manner to address the objective of growth once the objective of price stability as defined in the [RBI] Act is achieved," he added.

Market participants now expect a further rate cut in the April policy review meeting. "The sharp lowering of inflation forecasts could enable further policy easing in April," said B. Prasanna – Head Global Markets Group, ICICI Bank.

No pact with DMK: Kamal

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Makkal Needhi Maiam founder Kamal Haasan on Thursday categorically ruled out any electoral pact with the DMK and the Amma Makkal Munnetra Kazhagam.

Talking to reporters here, Mr. Haasan said: "We have taken a plunge into politics

to serve only good things to the people. Hence, we are careful not to indulge in a hasty handshake and get our hands stained".

Stating that his party was always opposed to the ruling AIADMK, Mr. Kamal said that his party would not have any truck with the DMK as well.

It's 55 months of service vs 55 years, says PM

You want the Rafale deal to be cancelled. At whose behest? For which company, Modi asks Opposition in Parliament

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

An aggressive Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday contrasted his 55 months of "seva" (service) with the 55 years of "satta bhog" (hunger for power) displayed by the Congress while replying to the motion of thanks on the President's address in the Lok Sabha.

Highlighting his government's achievements a couple of months ahead of the general elections, Mr. Modi said that it was the "arrogance of the Opposition that brought them down from 400 to four" and that "it is the 'seva bhav' of the ruling party that has brought their number up from two to 282."

"We are a government that works for the people of

India, sensitive to people's aspirations, honest, transparent, against corruption and for fast pace of development."

The Prime Minister, coining new acronyms for 'BC' and 'AD' – the two time periods – took a swipe at the Congress, saying the Opposition party had known only two phases – 'Before Congress' and 'After Dynasty'.

"I had to come and do what you [Congress] could not do," he said.

No middlemen now'

In a 100-minute speech, Mr. Modi also hit back at the Congress over the Rafale issue, stating: "I used to wonder why the Congress lied about the Rafale deal with such confidence and then I real-



Renewed attack: Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressing the Lok Sabha on Thursday. • PTI

ised... under the previous governments, defence deals had middlemen... the Opposition gets frazzled when someone works with honesty."

"The Opposition does not

want the Indian Air Force to be strong. I am levelling a serious allegation here. You want the Rafale deal to be cancelled. At whose behest? For which company?"

"The Opposition has become rotten now. When I seek a Congress-mukt Bharat, I am merely fulfilling Mahatma Gandhi's desire," Mr. Modi said.

He scaled up the attack saying that while the Opposition is accusing him of "bringing down institutions" it was the Opposition that was doing this.

"The Congress imposed Emergency, but they say Modi is destroying institutions. The Congress insults the Army, calls the Army chief a 'goonda' but they say Modi is destroying institutions. The Congress misused Article 356 to dismiss State governments several times. Indira Gandhi herself dismissed State governments 50 times and they say that I am des-

troying institutions."

"The Opposition questioned the Election Commission and electronic voting machines but is accusing me of destroying institutions. They bullied the judiciary but Modi is destroying institutions. They call the Planning Commission a bunch of jokers... but Modi is destroying institutions. The youngsters today should know this truth which is why I am stating this," said Mr. Modi, adding that this is a "case of – *ulta chor chowkidar ko dante*."

He also warned the Opposition that their attempts to cobble a grand alliance of parties for a "mahamilavat" (highly adulterated) government will not work for the country.

MPs stall Rajya Sabha yet again over roster row

Will file a review petition, Javadekar assures Opposition

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The

government failed to break the impasse in the Rajya Sabha as protests by the Opposition disrupted proceedings for the fourth day in a row.

Members of the Samajwadi Party (SP), the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) and the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) continued their protests against the new roster system for reservation in universities which has severely cut down faculty positions for SC/ST and OBC candidates. The Opposition parties raised slogans against the government calling it "anti-Dalit".

The roster system pro-

vides that number of vacancies are considered department- or wing-wise in a college or university and not the total number of posts available for recruitment in

any institution. This limits the seats available for recruitment in each department or wing under reserved categories.

Discussions held

To resolve the stalemate, two rounds of discussions were held in Rajya Sabha Chairman Venkaiah Naidu's office. The first round was held after the House was ad-

journed for 10 minutes at 11.20 a.m. Leaders from the Congress, the SP, the BSP, the RJD, the AIADMK, the CPI and the CPI (M) attended the meeting. The Chairman allowed those who gave notices for raising the roster issue in the House.

Human Resource Development Minister Prakash Javadekar failed to give concrete assurance on the issue.

The Opposition had demanded that a legislation be introduced to maintain status quo.

Replying on the issue, Mr. Javadekar said: "We are fully committed towards reservation. We will ensure it is not affected."

The Minister said the government would soon file a review petition in the apex court on this issue and expressed confidence that it would get a favourable judgment. This did not satisfy the Opposition members.

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IN BRIEF



V.K. Singh seeks probe into 2012 'coup' reports

NEW DELHI Union Minister of State for External Affairs V.K. Singh on Thursday said he had written to the Prime Minister asking for a high-level probe into the alleged planting of false stories about an attempted coup during the UPA-II government in 2012. Gen. (retd.) Singh was reacting to a media report that alleged that a few leaders of UPA-II tried to plant a false narrative that the Army in 2011-12, then headed by him, was planning a "coup" against the government. PTI

Virbhadra's son in charge of Cong. affairs in Mandi

SIMHLA The Himachal Pradesh Congress has asked former Chief Minister Virbhadra Singh's son Vikramaditya Singh to look after party affairs in Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur's home district Mandi. Former Minister and State Congress vice-president Gangu Ram Musafir has also been asked to take charge of the party affairs in Mandi along with Mr. Singh, who has recently been appointed as the State Congress general secretary. PTI

UAE deports Indian accused of murder

NEW DELHI The United Arab Emirates on Thursday deported Prabhjot Singh, who is wanted in connection with two cases of heinous crimes registered against him by the Punjab Police. This is the third deportation from the UAE in the past few days, including that of lobbyist Deepak Talwar in an Air India case and Rajiv Saxena, accused in the AgustaWestland chopper deal case. Two cases of murder have been registered against Prabhjot Singh.

FLYING FORTRESS

The security of Air India One, used by the President and the Prime Minister, may soon be on a par with that of Air Force One, used by the American President, as the United States has agreed to sell advanced missile defence systems to India

Total cost
\$190 million



SYSTEMS FOR INDIA

12 Guardian Laser Transmitter Assemblies (6 installed and as many spares)

8 Large Aircraft Infrared Countermeasures (LAIRCM) System Processor Replacements (2 installed and 6 spares)

23 Missile Warning Sensors (12 installed and 11 spares)

5 Counter-Measures Dispensing System (2 installed and 3 spares)

The aircraft

- The defence systems will be installed on two Boeing 777 ERs of Air India
- The two aircraft will not be used for commercial purposes by Air India

How will it work?

- The system will decrease false alarm rates and automatically counter advanced intermediate range missile systems

The pilot will be informed that a threat missile was detected and jammed

- U.S. DEFENCE SECURITY COOPERATION AGENCY

Source: PTI

Sky high: Air India's two Boeing 777 ER aircraft will get the upgrade (Photos for representational purpose). REUTERS & AFP

Scheduling issues likely to stall Netanyahu's India trip

Israeli PM was expected to make a short visit on February 11

SUHASINI HAIDAR
NEW DELHI



Benjamin Netanyahu

The election season in Israel and India may derail Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's plan to meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi, after an initial date for his visit on February 11 fell through, officials involved in planning the visit confirmed.

According to a senior diplomatic source, Mr. Netanyahu, who had proposed the visit as part of a big international outreach before the Israeli elections, had originally suggested he could visit New Delhi on February 11.

The Ministry of External Affairs had acknowledged last week that Mr. Netanyahu was expected for a "short working visit".

However, the date had to be postponed due to the Israeli PM's other travel plans.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Narendra Modi also has a

packed schedule and will receive the Saudi Arabian Crown Prince on February 19-20. Argentina's President Mauricio Macri is also slotted for a visit, officials confirmed. Mr. Modi will head to South Korea on February 21 to receive the Seoul Peace Prize awarded by an NGO, and to meet with President Moon Jae-in.

If cancelled, Mr. Netanyahu's visit will be the second high-profile engagement put off due to scheduling difficulties in recent weeks. A meeting of about 20 Foreign Ministers of the 22-nation Arab League for the Arab-India cooperation forum scheduled for January 31 was cancelled just a week before it was due to be held.

The ED submitted copies of emails sent by Mr. Mallya to Mr. Talwar in 2018. The agency was probing this aspect to find out the trail of illegal money, counsel submitted.

Talwar had links with Mallya: ED

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate on Thursday alleged before a Delhi court that Deepak Talwar, booked in a case of surrender of lucrative national and international air routes by Air India to foreign and domestic private airlines in lieu of illegal gratification, had links with fugitive businessman Vijay Mallya.

The ED's counsel submitted before Special Judge Santosh Sanehi Mann that investigation had revealed Mr. Talwar's links with Mr. Mallya when they were evading arrest and probe.

The ED submitted copies of emails sent by Mr. Mallya to Mr. Talwar in 2018. The agency was probing this aspect to find out the trail of illegal money, counsel submitted.

FROM PAGE ONE

MoD protested against PMO's parallel parleys

4. The discussions between Diplomatic Adviser to the French Defence Minister and Joint Secretary to PM tantamount to parallel negotiations while the Indian Negotiating Team constituted by the Ministry of Defence is undertaking the process of formal negotiations with the French side. Such parallel negotiations may be detrimental to our interests as the French side may take advantage of same by interpreting such discussions to their benefit and weakening the position taken by Indian Negotiating Team. This has precisely happened in this case. As a glaring example General Reb in his letter (*Encl. 4-B*) has stated that taking into consideration the outcome of discussions between Diplomatic Adviser to the French Defence Minister and Joint Secretary to PM, no Bank Guarantee is provisioned in the supply protocol and the letter of comfort provides sufficient assurances of the proper implementation of the supply protocol by the industrial suppliers. This is contrary to the position taken by the MoD and conveyed by Indian Negotiating Team that the commercial offer should be preferably backed by Sovereign/Government Guarantees or otherwise by Bank Guarantees. Further, General Reb has stated that as an

N. RAM

In his reply to Air Marshal Sinha on November 11, 2015, Mr. Ashraf "confirmed that he had held discussion with Mr. Luis Vassy, Diplomatic Adviser to the French Minister of Defence," adding that Mr. Vassy "spoke to him on the advice of the French President's office and the issues referred to General Reb's letter were discussed."

President Hollande had told AFP, as reported by *Le Monde* in September 2018, that "asked by Agence France-Presse on the sidelines of a conference in Montreal on Friday, Hollande said that the name of Reliance Group had appeared as part of a 'new formula' in negotiations over the Rafale deal, decided by the Modi government after it came to power." The reference was to the Anil Ambani-owned Reliance Defence.

The Defence Ministry note also stated that "the discussions between Diplomatic Adviser to the French Defence Minister and Joint Secretary to PM, no Bank Guarantee is provisioned in the supply protocol and the letter of comfort provides sufficient assurances of the prop-

er implementation of the supply protocol by the industrial suppliers."

This, the note stated, was "contrary to the position taken by the MoD and conveyed by Indian Negotiating Team that the commercial offer should be preferably backed by Sovereign/Government Guarantee or otherwise by Bank Guarantee." Another instance of a contrary stand taken in the parallel negotiations was on the arbitration arrangement, the note pointed out.

This is not the only instance of "parallel negotiations" in which the Indian side took contrary positions. It has already been reported elsewhere that the National Security Adviser, Ajit Doval, negotiated with the French side in Paris in January 2016 and *The Hindu* has access to documentation that confirms this. Mr. Doval's advice to Mr. Parrikar on doing away with a sovereign guarantee or bank guarantee for the Rafale deal was also recorded by the then Defence Minister in a file noting.

Rohingya issue dominates India-Bangladesh discussions

Abdul Momen seeks support to resolve refugee crisis

KALLOL BHATTACHERJEE
NEW DELHI

The Rohingya issue dominated meetings that the Bangladesh Foreign Minister held here on Thursday with the Indian leadership.

Interacting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, A.K. Abdul Momen, who is on his maiden trip to India, sought continued support in resolving the humanitarian disaster that has brought more than a million refugees to Chittagong.

"While thanking Prime Minister Modi for India's humanitarian assistance to the



A.K. Abdul Momen

The Minister, who arrived here on Wednesday night, will participate in the fifth round of the Joint Commission meeting with External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj on Friday.

A statement from the Ministry of External Affairs said, "The Prime Minister said that India-Bangladesh relations have been on an upward trajectory in the last few years. He reaffirmed India's commitment to work with Bangladesh to build on this momentum during the new term in office of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina."

Rohingya, Bangladesh Foreign Minister sought India's support for early repatriation of the Rohingya to the Rakhine state of Myanmar," the Foreign Ministry of Bangladesh said in a statement.

Taxpayers, MPs, MLAs can't avail farm income support

Municipal corporation, panchayat heads also excluded

T. RAMAKRISHNAN
CHENNAI

Income Tax assesses and sitting or former Members of Parliament or State legislatures are among those who have been excluded from the scope of the Centre's scheme of income support for farmers, which was announced in the Union Budget last week.

In respect of the IT assesses, those who paid the tax in the last assessment year would be ineligible under the scheme, which envisages the payment of ₹6,000 per annum to marginal and small farmers (each holding cultivable land up to 2 hectares), according to the scheme's operational guidelines.

The list of exclusions is pretty long.

It includes former and present holders of constitutional posts such as Governors or Election Commissioners; serving and retired officers and employees of

the Union government or State governments, including those in public sector enterprises and autonomous institutions, and regular employees of local bodies. Class IV or Group D employees have been exempted from the exclusion. Likewise pensioners who are getting ₹10,000 or more every month will not be covered.

As in the case of parliamentarians and legislators, former and present heads of municipal corporations and district panchayats would also not be considered for the income support.

Professionals excluded
Professionals including doctors, engineers, lawyers, chartered accountants and architects have been excluded apart from institutional landholders, the guidelines show.

The Centre has made it clear that the cut-off date for determination of eligibility of beneficiaries under the

scheme is February 1, 2019, and no subsequent changes would be considered for the eligibility of benefit for 5 years. However, the benefit would be allowed in cases where transfer of ownership of cultivable land takes place on account of succession due to death of the landowner. Also, cases where the transfer of ownership happened due to reasons such as purchase, succession, and through will or gift, between December 1, 2018, and January 31, 2019, would be eligible for coverage.

Taking cognisance of the system of community-based land ownership rights in some of the northeastern States, the Centre has stated that an alternative implementation mechanism would be developed and approved by a committee of Union Ministers in charge of Development of North East Region, Land Resources and Agriculture and State Chief Ministers concerned.

RAJASTHAN RAJYA VIDYUT PRASARAN NICAM LIMITED
(An ISO 9001:2008 Certified Company)
(Corporate Identity Number (CIN) L40109RJ2005G016485)
Office of the Superintending Engineer (Contract-I)
Old Power House Premises, Near Ram Mandir, Banipur, Jaipur-302006
Tel: (Thru PBX) 0091-141-2208919 Extn. 315 Mobile : 0091-941393565 Email: se.contract@rvpn.co.in

NOTICE INVITING E-BID

CONTRACTS-J/2018-19/BN-9018001822, BN-9018001823 & BN-9018001824
LILo from existing 132 KV S/C Sangrati Sheo Line for 132 KV GSS Jhinghyali right from survey to commissioning as per bid specification under BN-9018001822 & BN-9018001823 (UBPN-1915SL0B2692) and 132 KV S/C Sangrati Sheo Line for 132 KV GSS Dhalod to survey to commissioning as per bid specification under BN-9018001824 (UBPN-1915SL0B2693) for details about quantity bid specification cost bid processing fee, Bid Security, Date of submission and opening of bids may visit on website www.energ.rajasthan.gov.in/rvpn, http://proc.rajashtan.gov.in and http://ppb.rajashtan.gov.in. Further extension of dates, amendment, if any, will be intimated through website only, R.R.V.P.N.LTR-4407/2019
Raj-Samwad/C/5621/2018-2019

Superintending Engineer (Contracts-I)

**TIRUMALA TIRUPATI DEVASTHANAMS
SRI VENKATESWARA MUSEUM - TIRUMALA**
Invitation for EOI for 3D Photographic Documentation of Thiruvabaranams Jewellery of Lord Venkateswara Sri T.T., Tirumala.
The Sri Venkateswara Museum, hereby invites on behalf of the TTD, the Expression of interest from related and reputed companies / agencies for the work cited below with ten years of experience in field up to 3.00 p.m. on 16-02-2019.

SI. No. Name of the work Last date of submission of application EMD (Rs.)
(1) 3D Photographic Documentation (Stills & Video) of Thiruvabaranam Jewellery of Lord Venkateswara Sri T.T., Tirumala.
Email:ttd.svmuseum@gmail.com, hrd@tirumala.org. Contact:9701793210. Roc.No.PR/4/13903/Adv.No.504/PRO/2019/07-02-19. EXECUTIVE OFFICER

**SOUTHERN RAILWAY
WORKS TENDER NOTICE**
E-Tender No: TPJ-E-26-2018-2019 dt : 05.02.2019
Divisional Railway Manager (Electrical/General Services) Southern Railway, Tiruchirappalli invites E-Tenders for the under mentioned works for and on behalf of President of India.
SI. No. Name of work Approx. value of Tender (₹) Earnest Money Deposit Cost of Tender Booklet
1 1,23,16,580/- ₹ 2,11,590/- ₹ 5,600/-
Tender closing and opening date & time : 25-02-2019 at 15:00 Hrs.
For Further details refer to web portal: www.ireps.gov.in-E-Tender-Works>View tenders. Please note that only ONLINE Tenders are accepted and tenders are to be digitally signed.

DIVISIONAL RAILWAY MANAGER
(ELECTRICAL) GENERAL SERVICES

**TICEL BIO PARK LTD.
(TIDCO Centre for Life Sciences)**
INVITATION FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI) FOR OPERATION & MAINTENANCE OF BIOTECHNOLOGY CORE INSTRUMENTATION FACILITY (BTICF)
TICEL has established Biotech Park at Taramani, Chennai providing Laboratory, Infrastructure for International / National Clients. In order to provide Scientific / Analytical Support, TICEL has established BTICF with High End Pilot Scale & Analytical Equipment at a project cost of ₹ 20 Crores. TICEL invites EOIs from reputed Research & Development / Contract Research Organization for the Operation & Maintenance of Facility / Equipment at BTICF.

The Interested agencies shall submit (i) details on Financial Performance, (ii) details on Scientific Activities / Technical Services and (iii) comprehensive proposal on Operation & Maintenance of Facility / Equipment at BTICF with revenue sharing models to TICEL at the below mentioned address on or before 28-02-2019. The submission of Documents does not entitle the agency any advantage in the process of selection of operator for the Operation & Maintenance of BTICF.

TICEL Bio Park Ltd., reserves the right to accept / reject any one / all the documents / submissions without assigning any reason thereof.

MANAGING DIRECTOR,
TICEL Bio Park Limited,
CSIR Road, Taramani, Chennai - 600 113.
Ph. + 91 44 225 42061 / 62, Fax: +91 44 2254 2055
E-mail: md@ticelbiopark.com, Website: www.ticelbiopark.com

**DELHI JAL BOARD GOVT OF NCT OF DELHI
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER(EAST) I
M 16 MAYUR VIHAR PKT E PHASE II NEW DELHI 110091**
Press Notice Tender
NIT No.90/East-I/ (2018-19)
SI. No. Name of Work Estimated Contract Value (E/C) Amount put tender EMD Tender Fee Date of Release of tender in E-Procurement Solution & Tender ID No. Last Date / Time of receipt of tender E-Procurement Solution
1 Replacement of old & damaged 700 mm dia PSC/MS distribution main from West Guru Angad Nagar to Petrol Pump at Chitra Vihar road feeding Lamxi Nagar area Lamxi Nagar UGR 49,16,193/- 98,400/- 500/- 05.02.2019 2019 DJB_167605_1 20.02.2019 at 03:15 PM
Further details in this regard can be seen at https://govtprocurement.delhi.gov.in
Issued by P.R.O. (Water) Advt. No.J.S.V. 780/2018-19
Executive Engineer (East)-I

**भारत सरकार/GOVERNMENT OF INDIA, अंतरिक्ष विभाग /DEPARTMENT OF SPACE
समर्पण
विक्रम साराभाई अंतरिक्ष केंद्र/ VIKRAM SARABHAJ SPACE CENTRE
तिरुवनंतपुरम/ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM- 695 022**
No. VSSC/P/ADVT/263/2018 07.02.2019
निविदा का रद्दीकरण / CANCELLATION OF TENDER
क्रम सं. निविदा सं./Tender No. वर्णन/Description
SI.No. 10 VSSC/AVN-PUR/2018E1344401 [दो भाग / TWO PART] दो पेटाफ्लोप्स सुपरकंप्यूटिंग सुविधा Two PETAFLOPS Supercomputing Facility

त

ELSEWHERE



Yameen to be charged with money laundering

Police in the Maldives have asked the country's Prosecutor-General to charge former President Abdulla Yameen with money laundering and his former Minister with aiding him. The case stems from an allegedly shady deal to lease islands for tourist resort development and the discovery of \$1 million in his bank account. AP

EU agrees to work with U.K. on Brexit demands

British Prime Minister Theresa May came away from talks with the EU on Thursday with a pledge of renewed talks that held out some hope for a new Brexit deal, if no sign of compromise yet. Senior European Union (EU) officials urged her to grasp an olive branch from Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn that echoed EU proposals for a permanent EU-U.K. customs union. REUTERS

Trump picks a new villain – socialists

President assails Venezuela's economic policies and says the U.S. is alarmed by calls to adopt socialism

MICHAEL TACKETT
WASHINGTON

President Donald Trump has proved himself adroit at creating villains to serve as his political foils. In his State of the Union address on Tuesday, he introduced a new one: socialists.

Right after his calls to support the overthrow of Venezuela's President, Nicolás Maduro, and condemning the "socialist policies" that have reduced the country "into a state of abject poverty and despair", he made a quick segue to the home front. "Here in the United States, we are alarmed by new calls to adopt socialism in our country," the President said, adding, "Tonight, we resolve that America will never be a socialist country."

Tuesday night's speech contained more than a few suggestions of what Mr. Trump's 2020 campaign could look like. The President dwelt on the economy, pointing to the low unemployment rate, continuing growth and the tax cut passed by the last Republi-

can Congress. He spoke of trying to reduce prescription drug costs and battling HIV, perhaps with an eye to the kinds of suburban women voters, who deserted Republicans in the midterm elections. And for his hard-core followers, he argued for the border wall.

The threat of socialism was something new. But it could become the kind of rhetorical touchstone of his re-election campaign that have reduced the country "into a state of abject poverty and despair", he made a quick segue to the home front. "Here in the United States, we are alarmed by new calls to adopt socialism in our country," the President said, adding, "Tonight, we resolve that America will never be a socialist country."

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President Donald Trump, Vice-President Mike Pence and Speaker Nancy Pelosi in Washington on Tuesday. ■ REUTERS

Confronting Democrats

If it does, it could provide Mr. Trump with a potentially effective weapon in confronting an increasingly aggressive and more liberal Democratic Party, defining it through attacks on Senator Bernie Sanders of Vermont and Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez of New York, who describe themselves as democratic socialists, and other members of the party pushing progressive policies like a 70% tax

rate and "Medicare for all".

The President's economic advisers began sounding the socialist alarm in the fall in a 72-page report criticising what they described as the socialist ideas of leading Democrats. The word "socialism" appeared 144 times – on average, twice a page.

The report by the White House Council of Economic Advisers, "The Opportunity Costs of Socialism", did not prescribe any action but was meant to serve as a warning

about the destructive economic policies Mr. Trump believes Democrats would inflict on the U.S.

Invoking Lenin and Mao

Policies like tuition-free college were mentioned in the same ominous tone as the policies of Vladimir Lenin and Mao Zedong. The report suggested that Democratic policies emulating Venezuela would cause the American economy to shrink by 40%, just as Mr. Trump did on

Tuesday night. Yet, there is no evidence of any growing public angst about socialism sweeping the U.S. As a political philosophy and organising tool, it took modest root in the country in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, but never gained widespread appeal. Eugene Debs, a labour leader from Terre Haute, Indiana, was a five-time candidate for President, never to great effect, peaking at 6% of the vote in 1916.

"You really have not had a self-consciously socialist movement of any size and influence since the 1930s," said Michael Kazin, a professor of history at Georgetown University. "Clearly this is an attempt to portray Democrats as too radical for Americans..." But the supposed threat of creeping socialism have become favourite talking points for conservatives like the TV personality Sean Hannity of Fox News, who tells his viewers that far-left socialism had taken over the Democratic Party. Mr. Trump is now firmly aligned with that view. NY TIMES

'Saudi officials responsible for Khashoggi's killing'

UN rapporteur makes statement

AGENCE FRANC-PRESSE
GENEVA

A UN rapporteur probing the murder in Turkey of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi said on Thursday that the killing was planned and carried out by Saudi officials.

Khashoggi was murdered at the kingdom's consulate in Istanbul on October 2.



Agnes Callamard, UN special rapporteur. ■ AFP

operation and arrested a number of senior Saudi officials. Khashoggi's body has still not been recovered.

"The murder of Jamal Khashoggi and the sheer brutality of it has brought irreversible tragedy to his loved ones," said Ms. Callamard, the UN special rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions. "It is also raising a number of international implications which demand the urgent attention of the international community including the United Nations."

'Premeditated killing'

"Evidence collected during my mission to Turkey shows *prima facie* that Mr. Khashoggi was the victim of a brutal and premeditated killing, planned and perpetrated by officials of the state of Saudi Arabia," Agnes Callamard said at the end of a visit to Turkey, according to a UN statement.

Turkey says he was killed by a team of 15 Saudis who strangled him at the mission, and media reports have said his body was cut up and dissolved in acid.

After denying the killing for two weeks, Riyadh finally described it as a "rogue"

Trump nominates critic to lead World Bank

David Malpass is known for his critical views on multilateralism and multilateral institutions

SIRRAM LAKSHMAN
WASHINGTON

Senior U.S. Treasury official and World Bank critic David Malpass has been confirmed as the U.S.'s choice for the presidency of the Bank, President Donald Trump announced on Wednesday afternoon.

The announcement is the culmination of a search effort headed by Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin and the President's daughter, Ivanka Trump.

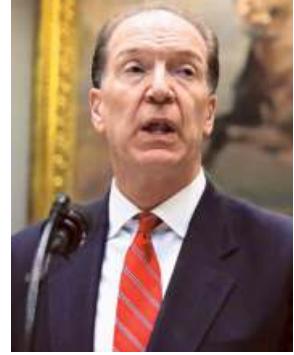
Indira Nooyi, India-born chairperson of PepsiCo, was also being considered for the top job at the Bank, which became available after Jim Yong Kim resigned abruptly, to join an investment firm, three years before his second term expired.

Mr. Malpass, currently the Undersecretary of the Treasury for International Affairs, is a controversial candidate for the job, owing to his views on multilateral or-

ganisations, including the World Bank.

"...Multilateralism has gone substantially too far – to the point where it is hurting U.S. and global growth," Mr. Malpass had told the Council on Foreign Relations in 2017. Mr. Malpass has been an advocate of a smaller, more focussed World Bank, arguing that countries can raise capital in private markets. He has also been critical of China's Belt & Road Initiative (BRI) as well as China being the largest borrower of the Bank. In his role in the Treasury, Mr. Malpass has tried to slow down the Bank's ability to raise capital, pushing the bank to adopt a new financial sustainability framework.

"This new framework is aimed at achieving financial discipline and avoiding future capital increase requests," Mr. Malpass testified before Congress last November.



David Malpass, who was named World Bank chief. ■ REUTERS

The Bank had committed over \$60 billion in financing in the 2018 fiscal year.

Senior administration officials on Wednesday defended Mr. Malpass's ability to lead the Bank despite his views on multilateralism and the Bank itself.

"David [Malpass] and the U.S. government support when we are participating in these organisations and they

are fulfilling their mission, they're working efficiently and effectively. In fact, the U.S. founded and built the World Bank... and we continue to strongly support it..." officials said on a briefing call in response to questions on Mr. Malpass's suitability for the job.

Largest shareholder
The U.S., which is the Bank's largest shareholder and has 16% of its voting power, normally picks its President, with the Europeans picking the International Monetary Fund (IMF) head.

Mr. Malpass, if elected, would be working with Ivanka Trump in his new role, officials told journalists on Wednesday.

In response to a question on how other shareholders have reacted to Mr. Malpass's name, administration officials said Mr. Mnuchin has been talking to them and would increase his outreach

over the next few weeks. Concerns are likely to be raised about his qualifications for the job.

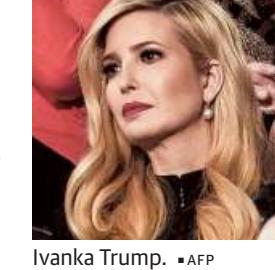
"I don't think he [Mr. Malpass] is a good choice... Mr. Malpass's attitudes towards multilateralism, which reflect his boss's or the Trump administration's, are not the sort of the owners of the Bank should accept in a world where the World Bank is one of the most successful international institutions," Paul Cadario, a former World Bank senior manager and currently a distinguished fellow at the University of Toronto's Munk School of Global Affairs and Public Policy, told *The Hindu*.

"I also think it is difficult to imagine that someone whose views about China are as explicitly negative as Mr. Malpass's could be successful as the head of an organisation where China is an important shareholder and an important borrower..."

Ivanka unveils global women initiative

Aimed at helping 50 million women in the developing world

ASSOCIATED PRESS
WASHINGTON



Ivanka Trump. ■ AFP

Security Council and other agencies. The President previewed the launch during his State of the Union address on Tuesday night, describing it as "part of our commitment to improving opportunity for women everywhere".

Ivanka Trump, who will attend the Munich Security Conference next week to promote the project, stressed that she sees this as a national security priority.

Lawmakers call for humane treatment of Indian detainees

Congressmen inquire into the arrested students' condition

SIRRAM LAKSHMAN
WASHINGTON

A group of Congressmen, including Indian American Raja Krishnamoorthi, have written to the U.S. authorities, asking that the Indian students arrested in the University of Farmington sting operation be "treated properly".

The letter, sent to the heads of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), has three other signatories – Thomas R. Suozzi, Brenda Lawrence and Rob Woodall.

"The Indian-American community and Indian Consulate have expressed concerns regarding the treatment of these detained foreign nationals," they write. "We urge DHS and ICE to ensure the detained students are treated properly and afforded all rights provided to them under the law, including access to an attorney and release on bond, if they are eligible," the letter says.

Role of Indian students
The Members of Congress highlight the numbers on Indian students in the U.S. – 17.3% of all international students or over 1,86,000 – and their role in people-to-people exchanges. "In the spirit of continuing cooperation on educational exchange programs, which benefit both countries economically and culturally, we ask that



Raja Krishnamoorthi, among those who have written the letter. ■ THE HINDU

you ensure the students involved in this case are treated fairly, humanely, and in accordance with due process," the letter says.

The lawmakers have requested that "full details and regular updates" be shared with Indian officials and that the DHS and ICE facilitate consular access to the detainees. Their own offices have also requested an update.

Indian diplomats have had consular access to all Indian nationals detained in the Farmington case, the Indian Embassy told *The Hindu* on Thursday morning.

The Hindu has learned that several students have been released on bond (ranging in amount from \$1,500 to \$5,000) and that at least three individuals will appear for their bond hearings in San Antonio, Texas, on Thursday. Some students took a flight to India before they were arrested – or

avoided arrest upon showing a departure ticket. Rahul Reddy, a partner at Reddy and Neumann, a law firm for U.S. business and immigration, told *The Hindu* that he is aware of two such cases.

Preliminary hearing
Some of those who are out on bond have 'Notices to Appear' before a judge as late as April. This is for a preliminary hearing. These individuals will have to surrender their passport – and, should they decide to depart to India, will have to show evidence of their intended departure to the U.S. authorities to collect their documents prior to travel, Mr. Reddy said. Those who choose to fight their case could do so and that would involve a process that could take two or three years, according to Mr. Reddy. Most students are expected to be released on bond but if ICE officers objected to such release, students could be held in detention as is happening in the Detroit area, according to Mr. Reddy.

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Balochistan," tweeted Mr. Ghani, himself a Pashtun.

Pakistani Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi rejected the comment. "Such irresponsible statements are only gross interference," he tweeted. The protests followed the death of PTM leader Arman Loni in Balochistan, which the group blamed on police.

The members of the Pashtun Tahafuz Movement (PTM) were detained during an Islamabad protest against police violence on Tuesday, the latest in a series of moves against the group. "The Afghan government has serious concerns about the violence perpetrated against peaceful protesters and civil activists in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and

wore blackface once. Attorney General Mark Herring – in line to become Governor if Mr. Northam and Lt. Gov. Justin Fairfax resign – issued a statement acknowledging that he wore brown make-up and a wig in 1980 to look like a rapper.

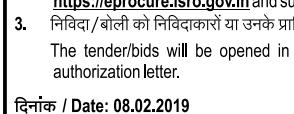
Also on Wednesday, Vanessa Tyson, the California woman whose sexual assault allegations against Lt. Gov. Justin Fairfax surfaced earlier this week, put out a detailed statement saying he forced her to perform oral sex on him in a hotel room in 2004 in Boston.

Virginia's top 3 officials engulfed in scandal

ASSOCIATED PRESS
RICHMOND

With Virginia's top three elected officials engulfed in scandal, fellow Democrats were rendered practically speechless, uncertain of how to thread their way through the allegations.

Gov. Ralph Northam's career was already hanging by a thread over a racist photo in his 1984 medical school yearbook when a woman publicly accused the Lieutenant-Governor of sexually assaulting her 15 years ago, and then the Attorney-General admitted that he too



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विज्ञापन सं./Advertisement No. LPSCB/PUR/2018/19 दिनांक/ Dated: 08.02.2019

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01	LPSCB/PUR/2018E228 01 एक भाग निविदा है / Single Part Tender</td	

MARKET WATCH

	07-02-2019	% CHANGE
Sensex	36,971	-0.01
US Dollar	71.45	0.15
Gold	34,180	-0.49
Brent oil	61.32	-2.09

NIFTY 50

	PRICE CHANGE
Adani Ports	332.35 +2.00
Asian Paints	1472.45 +3.05
Axle Bank	730.15 +4.40
Bajaj Auto	2853.60 +83.45
Bajaj Finserv	6253.10 +44.45
Bajaj Finance	2696.60 -14.65
Bharti Airtel	311.15 +2.40
BPCL	339.40 +0.10
Cipla	532.90 +2.05
Coal India	224.20 +4.25
Dr Reddy's Lab	2921.80 +32.10
Eicher Motors	21904.20 +799.95
GAIL (India)	339.95 +0.15
Grafix Ind	752.75 +19.25
HCL Tech	1062.90 +7.70
HDPC	1969.65 +18.30
HDFC Bank	2117.25 +5.40
Hero MotoCorp	2939.55 +59.00
Hindalco	209.20 +2.20
HPLC	236.85 +2.95
Hind Unilever	1839.05 +9.10
Indiabulls HFL	652.35 +1.50
ICICI Bank	358.65 +0.65
IndusInd Bank	1514.95 +11.10
Bharti Infra	305.85 +9.50
Infosys	764.00 +0.70
Indian Oil Corp	138.05 +0.20
ITC	280.30 +2.60
JSW Steel	273.10 +6.20
Kotak Bank	1284.55 +5.05
L&T	1296.05 +18.35
M&M	700.90 +5.80
Maurti Suzuki	7302.55 +119.15
NTPC	135.95 +1.15
ONGC	147.90 +1.20
PowerGrid Corp	184.60 +2.20
Reliance Ind	1290.40 +19.85
State Bank	287.40 +1.65
Sun Pharma	434.90 +18.30
Tata Motors	182.85 +4.35
Tata Steel	489.05 +3.95
TCS	2082.90 +8.10
Tech Mahindra	805.00 +6.35
Titan	1056.80 +2.25
UltraTech Cement	3570.55 +60.20
UPL	809.00 +3.75
Vedanta	163.45 +0.30
Wipro	373.60 +1.40
YES Bank	176.95 +0.50
Zee Entertainment	408.75 +20.75

EXCHANGE RATES

CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	71.25	71.57
Euro	80.72	81.09
British Pound	91.88	92.30
Japanese Yen (100)	64.86	65.15
Chinese Yuan	10.56	10.61
Swiss Franc	71.06	71.38
Singapore Dollar	52.50	52.74
Canadian Dollar	53.75	53.99
Malaysian Ringgit	17.49	17.58

BULLION RATES CHENNAI

Retail Silver (1g)	43.3...	(43.6...
22 ct gold (1 g)	3156	(3182)

IN BRIEF

RBI slaps ₹1 cr. fine on SBI for norms violation

NEW DELHI

State Bank of India (SBI) on Thursday said the Reserve Bank of India had slapped ₹1 crore penalty on the lender for violating norms. RBI "in exercise of powers conferred under Section 47 A of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949, has levied a penalty of ₹1 crore on the bank for not monitoring the end use of funds in respect of one of its borrowers," SBI said in a regulatory filing. PTI

Das to meet bank CEOs to discuss passing on rate cut to customers

In the past, lenders have not lowered rates in tandem with the regulator

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor will soon meet chief executives of public sector banks to discuss, among other things, the issue of monetary policy transmission. This follows the central bank lowering the interest rates for the first time in one-and-a-half years.

Banks have always been reluctant to reduce interest rates whenever there is a rate cut by the RBI.

"Whenever there is policy rate reduction, it would be RBI's expectation that monetary transmission does takes place," RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das said during the post monetary policy media interaction.

Banks' role

"But we have to keep in mind that fixing the rate of the interest is a function of the bank. We will be having



Whenever there is policy rate reduction, it would be RBI's expectation that monetary transmission does takes place
SHAKTIKANTA DAS, RBI Governor

an interaction in the next fortnight or so with the CEO and MDs of all banks where we will discuss these issues," he added.

Banks have been increasing lending rates since March 2018. While the RBI has proposed that banks should

move to an external benchmark for loan pricing from April 1, lenders have been opposing the move saying their funding costs were not linked to the external benchmarks proposed by the regulator.

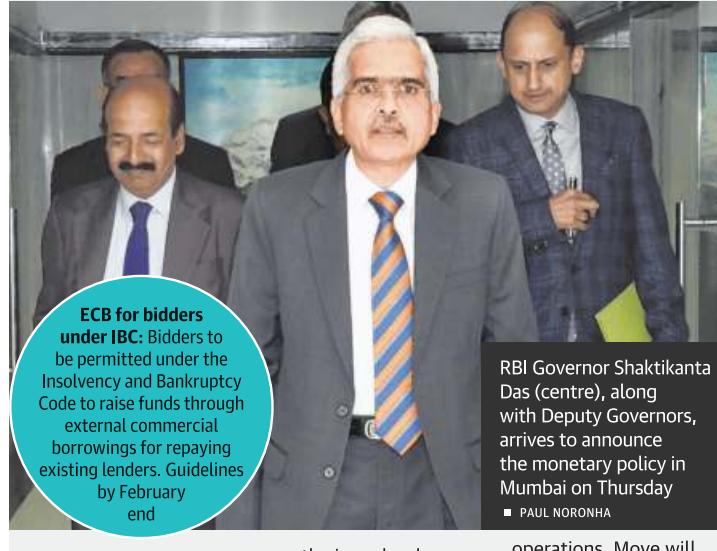
"We hope that the rate cut

will be transmitted by the financial sector to the real economy, so that economic activity could [take advantage of] the benefits and private consumption/investments may also grow faster," said Motilal Oswal, chairman & MD, MOFSL. Non-banking finance companies, which are predominantly dependent on bank funding and have seen their borrowing costs climb ever since the IL&FS crisis broke out in August, also expect the cost of funds to come down.

"RBI's decision to reduce the repo rate and changing its stance to neutral are highly positive changes to boost the sentiment of consumers and home loans. The recent steep rise in the cost of borrowing of NBFCs and HFCs is likely to moderate. EMIs are expected to come down slightly," said Deo Shankar Tripathi, MD & CEO of Aadhar Housing Finance.

More contours to the policy

Apart from repo rate cut, the Reserve Bank of India has announced a host of regulatory changes that may benefit the economy



RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das (centre), along with Deputy Governors, arrives to announce the monetary policy in Mumbai on Thursday
■ PAUL NORONHA

Circular to be issued shortly

Farm loan review: An internal working group has been set up to review issues in agricultural credit, such as regional disparity, extent of coverage, as also the issue of deepening long-term agricultural credit for capital formation

Change in bulk deposit definition: Deposits over ₹2 crore will be defined as bulk deposits, as compared with ₹1 crore now. Move aimed at enhancing operational freedom of banks in raising deposits. Guidelines expected by February end

INTERVIEW | SHAKTIKANTA DAS

'No proposal to modify February 12 circular'

Decision to remove 3 banks from PCA after considering capital infusion by Centre, says RBI Governor

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Among the various issues Reserve Bank of India Governor Shaktikanta Das touched upon during his first post-policy interaction with the media was the February 12 circular of the central bank which mandates banks to classify loans as stressed even if there is a day's default. Excerpts:

What kind of inflationary impact does MPC see due to the policies announced in the Budget? How concerned is the MPC over fiscal slippage? ■ The impact of various budget proposals and other developments have been factored into our projections. The possibility of fiscal slippage has been discussed. The government has said 3.4% fiscal deficit this year and 3.4% next year.

That has also been factored into our inflation projections.

We are working on the basis of those numbers.

Will there be an interim dividend to the government? ■ With regard to interim dividend, as when the central board takes a decision, it will be announced.

Since you said that inflation will not rise above 3.9% for this calendar year, did the MPC consider a 50 bps cut? Or do you think the space exists in 2019 itself?

■ There are several discussions that take place in the MPC. As and when the minutes are given on February 21, it will be known. The shift in stance of monetary policy also provides flexibility and the room to address challenges to sustain growth of the Indian economy over the coming months as long as inflation outlook remains benign. The MPC's decision will be data-driven and in consonance with the primary objective of the monetary policy to maintain price stability, keeping in mind the objective of growth.

What convinced you to go for growth rather than inflation?

■ In the RBI Act, price stability has been defined as 4%, plus/minus 2. Once that target is on board, and in the next 12-month horizon we see that inflation remains at a maximum of 4% or below, then I think there is room to act. And, the Act also says, 'keeping in mind the objective of growth'. So, the decision of the MPC has not gone beyond the RBI Act. And we are also saying the decision of MPC will be data-driven.

There have been demands to make certain changes in the February 12 circular. What is

your view on the issue?

■ At the moment, there is no proposal to modify the February 12 circular.

RBI has removed three banks from PCA. How soon can we expect more banks to come out from PCA?

■ We have watched the performance of the three banks and analysed in detail. We also took into account the capital infusion by the government. There is no scope for discretion.

(Deputy Governor M.K. Jain): As long as there is some improvement in the benchmark parameters, it will be

examined at the appropriate time.

There are still concerns over liquidity for the NBFCs and the SME sector. How do you plan to address the issue?

■ The Reserve Bank is constantly, continuously monitoring the liquidity situation, and based on requirements, we will ensure that there is no liquidity scarcity.

What are the big concerns about the Indian economy going ahead?

■ One is the monsoon. The second is crude oil prices and the overall external situation, for example, Brexit and how the U.S. economy is recovering.

There are trade conflicts which are expected to get resolved but we do not know how much time it will take. So, these are the risk factors which will have an impact on our domestic economy, and which we are regularly monitoring.

Debt MFs may benefit from relaxed FPI norms

Exposure to bonds were capped

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI

The Reserve Bank of India has relaxed the provision that barred foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) from having more than 20% exposure of their total corporate bond portfolio towards a single corporate entity.

"Thanks to the regulator, the short end of the curve will see greater participation from FPIs now across both corporate bonds as well as G-secs," said Gautam Kalia, head – investment products, Sharekhan. "This should translate to greater liquidity in the debt market and is overall good news for the debt mutual fund investors who have earned lower than expected returns and have been plagued with downgrades and negative news flow on securities held by some debt mutual fund schemes. With greater scope of participation by FPIs and higher liquidity, mutual funds can better cater to the needs of the retail investor now," he added.

"While the provision was aimed at incentivising FPIs to maintain a portfolio of assets, further market feedback indicates that FPIs have been constrained by this stipulation," stated the RBI release.

"In order to encourage a wider spectrum of investors to access the Indian corporate debt market, it is now proposed to withdraw this

Tata Motors net loss surges to ₹26,993 crore on JLR woes

Luxury carmaker struggles on China slowdown, Brexit

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI

Tata Motors has reported its largest-ever net loss of ₹26,992.54 crore for the December quarter, impacted by exceptional items related to asset impairment in JLR to the tune of ₹27,838 crore.

This is Tata Motors' third consecutive quarterly loss as its car unit, Jaguar Land Rover (JLR), continues to struggle from the China slowdown and Brexit woes.

The loss was reported on 4.95% growth in revenues to ₹77,000.89 crore.

Asset impairment

The company attributed the impairment of ₹27,838 crore on JLR to slowing sales in China, technological disruptions and rising cost of debt. U.K.'s largest car maker, JLR, contributes to 72% of Tata Motors' revenue.

"Domestic business continues the strong momentum and has delivered market share gains as well as profitable growth," said N. Chandrasekaran, chairman, Tata Motors, said while commenting on the results.

"In JLR, the market conditions continue to be challenging particularly in China. The company has taken decisive steps to step up competitiveness, reduce the costs and improve the cash flows while continuing to invest in exciting products and leading-edge technologies."



IN BRIEF

International IP Index:
India rises to 36th place

NEW DELHI India has jumped eight places to 36th position on the International Intellectual Property (IP) Index, which analyses the IP climate in 50 global economies, this year. India's eight-point jump in 2019 from 44th position in 2018 is the highest increase among 50 nations mapped by the index, a release said. The U.S., the U.K., Sweden, France and Germany remained the top five economies on the index. PTI

Aurobindo Pharma profit rises 20% on U.S. sales

HYDERABAD Drug maker Aurobindo Pharma has posted a ₹712.21 crore consolidated net profit for the quarter ended December or an increase of 19.72% over the year earlier period's ₹594.86 crore on the back of good growth in U.S. formulation sales. Revenue from operations increased 21.5% to ₹5,269.7 crore (₹4,336.1 crore). The board of directors has approved a second interim dividend of ₹1.25 per equity share of ₹1 each.

IRDAI slaps ₹9 lakh penalty on United India

HYDERABAD Insurance regulator IRDAI has imposed penalties totalling ₹9 lakh on United India Insurance Co. Ltd. (UIIC) after it found the general insurer had violated certain provisions. A sum of ₹5 lakh is for violation of regulations that stipulate certain timelines such as those relating to assigning of surveyors and paying the claim to the insured. The balance ₹4 lakh is for violations pertaining to four sample policies.

Domestic air traffic growth climbs

India at top of the table on robust economic expansion, says IATA

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The country's domestic aviation traffic recorded the fastest full-year growth globally for the fourth consecutive year with an 18.6% increase in annual demand in 2018, according to global aviation body IATA.

India was followed by China (11.7%), Russia (9%) and the U.S. (5.1%). The global average for growth in domestic traffic was 7%, the same as recorded in 2017.

Significantly, India was the only country besides the U.S. to record a faster growth than the year before.

"Domestic demand is underpinned by robust economic expansion and increasing numbers of city pairs," the International Air Transport Association (IATA)



Flying high: Domestic airlines ferried 1,389 lakh passengers in calendar year 2018, DGCA data show. ■ RAMESH SHARMA

said in its press statement about India, seemingly referring to the government's UDAN scheme that aims to enhance air connectivity to tier-2 and tier-3 cities.

Domestic airlines ferried a total of 1,389 lakh passen-

gers in calendar year 2018, according to the DGCA data released month.

International growth hit

A slowdown in growth was witnessed in international aviation traffic which, at

6.3%, was lower than the 8.6% recorded in 2017.

"The moderation in traffic came alongside growing signs of slowing global economic expansion in the second half of 2018," according to the IATA.

It notes that capacity, or induction of planes by airlines, grew at a slower rate than passenger demand, leading to more seats per plane being sold.

The combined growth of domestic and international air traffic was at 6.5%. The IATA has forecast that this figure is likely to be 6% in the current year.

The global body has forecast that domestic and international air traffic together would grow at 6% in 2019 compared with 6.5% last year.

Govt. forms panel on regional transport planes

Move to boost aircraft making in India

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The government has set up a committee for the development of regional transport aircraft for commercial use in the country, it said in Parliament on Thursday.

This is part of the road map being prepared by the government for domestic manufacturing of aircraft.

Currently, Hindustan Aeronautics Limited is the only entity that produces aircraft and helicopters for military and non-military purposes.

The panel is tasked with the "creation of a special purpose vehicle for the development of regional transport aircraft," Minister of State for Civil Aviation Jayant Sinha told the Lok Sabha.



Jayant Sinha

Sabha. A separate committee of experts has also been formed to explore manufacturing of aircraft, helicopters and associated equipment within the country, Mr. Sinha added.

The fleet size of domestic airlines is set to increase twofold to 1,100 planes by 2027, the government had said earlier.

Airlines owe AAI ₹2,400 crore in dues'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Various domestic and international airlines owe the state-owned Airports Authority of India (AAI) more than ₹2,400 crore in dues, the government informed Parliament on Thursday.

Airlines pay airports for navigational and other services such as landing and parking.

Low-cost carrier SpiceJet owes AAI ₹105.71 crore, including penalties, and GoAir owes ₹19.35 crore, Minister of State for Civil Aviation Jayant Sinha told Lok Sabha.

The biggest defaulter is the erstwhile Kingfisher Airlines, which owes AAI ₹294 crore. Foreign operators also owe ₹312 crore to the authority.

MRF Q3 net skids on higher raw material costs

Board declares dividend of ₹3 a share

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

CHENNAI

Tyre major MRF's net profit from continuing operations for the third quarter ended December 2018 dipped by 17.99% to ₹279.26 crore against ₹340.51 crore in the year-earlier period, on increasing raw material costs.

During the period under review, the company's revenue from operations saw a marginal increase of 6% from ₹3,799 crore to ₹4,034 crore. Total expenditure of the firm increased by 12.58% to ₹3,750.25 crore from ₹3,331.14 crore.

Raw material costs for the quarter accounted for almost 28% of the total expenditure of ₹2,712.49 crore. Compared with the corre-

sponding year-earlier period, the raw material costs for the third quarter increased up by 23.53%.

Metrics for nine months

For the nine-month period, net profit from continuing operations grew by 7.5% to ₹803 crore from ₹747 crore. Revenue from operations increased by 3.53% to ₹11,763.55 crore from ₹11,361.69 crore. Total expenditure grew by 3.77% and raw material costs by 13.33%, respectively.

The board declared a second interim dividend of ₹3 per share payable by February 25. The company also announced the appointment of Vimla Abraham as an independent director.

Givaudan opens flavours unit

The 60-mn Swiss Franc facility will also make fragrances

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

PUNE

Givaudan, one of the world's leading flavour and fragrance companies, on Thursday inaugurated a new flavours' manufacturing facility here.

This is the company's fourth facility in India after having set up plants at Bengaluru, Daman and Roha.

The plant has been set up at an investment of 60 million Swiss Francs and is the company's largest investment in India.

Incidentally, the facility, spread over 40,000 square metre, features among the company's biggest flavours' manufacturing facilities globally.

The new unit would complement the company's existing plant at Daman,

Gilles Andrier, chief executive officer, Givaudan while launching the facility.

Incidentally, the new facility is also the company's first zero-liquid discharge site, which ensures all waste water is purified and recycled at the end of the treatment cycle.

(The writer was in Pune at the invitation of Givaudan)

CIL floats global tender for mining equipment

To be funded through capex kitty

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

KOLKATA

Public sector Coal India Limited (CIL) is fast-tracking the process of procuring more than 360 high-capacity mining equipment valued at over ₹7,000 crore.

Responses have already been received for the nine global tenders floated to buy the equipment, an official said.

E-procurement process

CIL said in a statement that the global tenders had been built on a common notice inviting tender (NIT) at corporate level through a transparent e-procurement process that included a reverse auction.

The equipment would be used in open-cast mines, CIL's mainstay of op-

erations. The purchase would be funded through the company's capital expenditure kitty, it said.

The NIT aims to increase the number of proven supply sources to benefit the company by creating a competitive supply market. The list includes rear dumpers and electric rope shovels.

Tendering for very high capacity drag lines, among the costliest of heavy earth moving machinery, is also on the anvil, officials said.

CIL's eight coal-producing arms produced 469.7 million tonnes between April 2018 and January 2019, clocking a 6.6% growth, according to a regulatory filing. This year's target is about 650 million tonnes.

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Vidarbha reasserts supremacy

Sarvate's match-haul of 11 for 157 shuts out Saurashtra's comeback bid

RANJI FINALS

AMOL KARHADKAR
NAGPUR

From being a cricketing outpost just a couple of seasons ago to two-time Ranji Trophy champion, Vidarbha's transformation as a domestic powerhouse has been fast and fascinating.

Going into the final day of the Ranji Trophy summit clash, Vidarbha was overwhelming favourite to retain the title but Saurashtra, through this season, has shown resilience to overcome adversities.

In the final as well, it made several comebacks to keep itself in the hunt for a maiden Ranji title and Vidarbha couldn't afford to take the foot off the pedal.

And it didn't as Aditya Sarvate spun a web around the visiting batsmen to script Vidarbha's 78-run win here at the VCA's Jamtha Stadium on Thursday minutes before the scheduled lunch.

Dream outing

The all-rounder had a dream outing, returning match figures of 11 for 157 (five for 98 & six for 59) and playing a crucial knock of 49 in Vidarbha's second innings.

Resuming on 58 for five in pursuit of the target of 206, Saurashtra's second innings folded for 127 minutes when Dharmendrasinh Jadeja holed out to Sarvate at mid-wicket off Akshay Wakhare (three for 37).

Sarvate, whose three wickets on the fourth evening had broken the back of Saurashtra's top-order, gave Vidarbha the breakthrough, separating the overnight pair of Kamlesh Makvana and Vishvaraj Jadeja (52). Makvana misjudged the



Mission accomplished: Vidarbha players are an elated lot after retaining the title. ■ VIVEK BENDRE

Stat attack

- Vidarbha (2017-18 & 2018-19) is the sixth team to defend its Ranji title after Mumbai (21 times), Maharashtra (1, 1939-40 & 1940-41), Delhi (1, 1978-79 & 1979-80), Karnataka (2, 1997-98 & 1998-99; 2013-14 & 2014-15) and Rajasthan (1, 2010-11 & 2011-12)
- Jaffer becomes the fifth player to win 10 Ranji titles, joining the elite club of Ashok Mankad (12 titles), Ajit Wadekar (11), and Manohar Hardikar and Dilip Sardesai (10 each)
- Faiz Fazal is the 11th captain to claim two successive Ranji titles

line of the ball, left it alone and saw it crash into his off-stump.

Wakhare followed up with Prerak Mankad's wicket in the next over to leave Saurashtra reeling at 91 for seven. Needing 115 more runs with three wickets in hand, Saurashtra's slender hopes rested on Vishvaraj.

But again Sarvate ended his resistance with a full delivery that the right-hander tried to sweep.

The length wasn't quite right to execute the shot and he thus missed the ball which hit him right in front. Then it was a mere formality and Vidarbha completed it without fuss.

The scores:

Vidarbha – 1st innings: 312. **Saurashtra – 1st innings:** 307. **Vidarbha – 2nd innings:** 200. **Saurashtra – 2nd innings:** Harvik Desai c & b Sarvate 8, Snell Patel c Jaffer b Sarvate 12, Vishvaraj Singh Jadeja lbw b Sarvate 52, Cheteshwar Pujara lbw b Sarvate 0, Arip Vasavada c Wadkar b Umesh 5, Sheldon Jackson b Wakhare 7, Kamlesh Makvana b Sarvate 14, Prerak Mankad lbw b Wakhare 2, Dharmendrasinh Jadeja c Sarvate b Wakhare 17, Jaydev Unadkat lbw b Sarvate 7, Chetan Sakariya (not out) 2; Extras (w-1): 1; Total (in 58.4 overs): 127. **Fall of wickets:** 1-19, 2-22, 3-22, 4-35, 5-55, 6-88, 7-91, 8-103, 9-121. **Vidarbha bowling:** Sarvate 24-6-59-6, Umesh 10-1-31-1, Wakhare 22-4-6-37-3, Karnewar 2-2-0-0.

Sound bytes

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NAGPUR

Soon after Faiz Fazal lifted the Ranji Trophy for the second season in succession, the home team celebrated for almost an hour before the captain and coach Chandrakant Pandit settled down for an interaction. While the duo was pleased with the team's performance, even Saurashtra captain Jaydev Unadkat had every reason to be proud despite ending on the losing side. Excerpts:

It is not that easy to win the Ranji Trophy. To win a four-day tournament, that too having played 11 games is not a fluke. If anyone feels Vidarbha's first title was a fluke, we have proven them wrong. Strict discipline is a routine we are following for two years. It was not about preparing well so that an individual can perform well, but about performing because we wanted to win the trophy. That direction changed us, from individual performance to a team goal.

— **Faiz Fazal, Vidarbha captain**

When we first met with the probables before 2017-18, we could judge three types of players: one who thinks of being selected, one who is happy to be in the team and one who wants to play higher class of cricket. That study helped us. We gradually started developing the team. The mindset changed [to] the accolades, the 29-year-old was thinking of his parents, who were watching the game on TV from the confines of their home a few kilometres away.

— **Chandrakant Pandit, Vidarbha coach**

Any loss would be disappointing, but I don't think it's more painful than the last two (final losses in 2012-13 and 2015-16). The fact is we played such good type of cricket. I have been saying that the brand of cricket we played and developed this year has been special. It's this group, it's this special bunch of players that have really done so well.

— **Jaydev Unadkat, Saurashtra skipper**

'Seize the day' is Sarvate's mantra

Beats the odds to script success story

RANJI FINALS

NAGPUR

Besides his skilful left-arm spin and stylish batting lower down the order, when you sit down with Aditya Sarvate for a tête-à-tête, twin tattoos on his right hand immediately attract attention.

While the script of Gayatri Mantra, engraved on his forearm, gives him "the energy" to overcome all odds after an unusual upbringing, it's the two words on his arm "carpe diem" (seize the day) that keep reminding him of making every opportunity count.

The Vidarbha all-rounder couldn't have asked for a better occasion to live to the meaning of the Latin phrase than the biggest match of the domestic calendar. Sarvate's all-round effort turned out to be the difference between Vidarbha's title defence and Saurashtra's maiden triumph at the VCA Stadium over the last five days.

No wonder then that his 11-wicket match-haul and a crucial innings of 49 runs in the second innings earned him the 'Man-of-the-Match' award in the big final. More than revelling in the accolades, the 29-year-old was thinking of his parents, who were watching the game on TV from the confines of their home a few kilometres away.

Son of a banker couple, Anand and Anushree, Aditya has endured rarest of rare childhoods. After all, his father, a University cricketer, has been wheelchair-bound after suffering a road accident more than 25 years ago. As a result, while his teammates on the local cricket circuit would hang out or rest at home, Aditya would tend to his paralysed father along with his grandparents.

— **Aditya Sarvate, Vidarbha skipper**

Every athlete has to participate in at least one event in the each of these periods. He/ She also needs to participate in at least one gold level and either one gold level or one silver level event during the one-and-a-half year's time-frame.

A batsman who could bowl a bit, Sarvate started taking left-arm spin more seriously when he made his Ranji Trophy debut with Parashuram Mhambare as coach.

And the move worked wonders. In no time, he has played a lion's share in both of Vidarbha's triumphant seasons. The last week was a dream ride, as he twice dismissed Cheteshwar Pujara, who along with Rahul Dravid, is his favourite cricketer for their "grit and technique".

No point in asking Sarvate what next? After all, he believes in seizing the moment and living in the present.



Aditya Sarvate. ■ VIVEK BENDRE

Mirabai Chanu strikes gold

SPORTS BUREAU

CHIANG MAI (THAILAND)

Former World champion S. Mirabai Chanu won the women's 49kg gold in the EGAT Cup international weightlifting championships, an Olympic qualifying event, here on Thursday.

Mirabai lifted 82kg in snatch and 110kg in clean and jerk to total 192kg and take the gold on her return to competition after a nine-month lay-off due to an injury. She had won the gold in her last appearance, at the Gold Coast Commonwealth Games in 2018.

Mirabai got the better of Rio Olympic bronze medalist Miyake Hiromi (80kg, 103kg, 183kg) of Japan and Papua New Guinea's Loa Dika Toua (78kg, 101kg, 179kg), who finished second and third in the silver medal qualifying event.

According to the IWF Olympics qualification criteria, an athlete must participate in six eligible events in three periods — Nov. 1, 2018 to April 30, 2019; May 1, 2019 to Oct. 31, 2019 and Nov. 1, 2019 to April 30, 2020. Points gathered from these events would help a lifter improve his/ her rank for Olympics qualification.

Every athlete has to participate in at least one event in the each of these periods. He/ She also needs to participate in at least one gold level and either one gold level or one silver level event during the one-and-a-half year's time-frame.



Mirabai Chanu. ■ PTI

Dynamics holds NEUFC

PRO VOLLEYBALL

STAN RAYAN

KOCHI

A few crucial changes in the line-up did Chennai Spartans a world of good as they defeated Black Hawks Hyderabad 4-1 for their first win in the RuPay Pro Volleyball League on Thursday.

The Spartans replaced their 40-year-old setter K.J. Kapil Dev with the 25-year-old V. Hariharan early in the match and that worked wonders. They also kept their younger players on stage for a major part.

The Spartans were so good that they were able to recover from 0-5 and 5-10 deficits in the opening set. And the day's hero was Naveen Raja Jacob who came up with some telling smashes and clever serves during

Naveen sparks in Chennai Spartans' victory



Naveen Raja Jacob. ■ H. VIBHU

Rai and Rohit Kumar in spiking and blocking.

The Hawks suddenly went into a series of errors during this phase and when the Spartans won a super point with Shelton's serve troubling the rival backcourt, the Hyderabad side's lead was down to just two points at 10-8. That spurred the Spartans and Naveen and the Chennai side grew in confidence.

The Hawks put up a three-man block for Naveen but he evaded it smartly with his crosscourt smashes. The Spartans were stronger in blocking with Rudy Verhoeff, Ruslans Sorokins and G.S. Alkin often keeping the rival attackers in check.

Spartans led 7-3 in the second set and though the Hawks levelled at 11, the Chennai team's two foreign

stars – Rudy and Ruslan – came good towards the end and helped their side break away.

Naveen was at his best in the third set. When Ruslans produced a super serve, the Spartans led 7-4.

A little later, Shelton messed up his serve on a super point and the Hawks were just a point behind at 7-8. The scores were level at nine and Naveen was an inspired player after this. He got a super point spike, uncorked a super serve and then followed it up with another lovely service which took the team to 13-10. That turned out to be a match-winning lead.

The result: Chennai Spartans bt Black Hawks Hyderabad 15-12, 15-12, 15-11, 15-10, 13-15.

Friday's match: Kochi Blue Spikers vs. Black Hawks Hyderabad, 7 p.m.

It's Nanhipari vs Star Cracker

BENGALURU: Nanhipari and Star Cracker may fight out the finish of the Daria Daulat Cup (2,000m), the feature event of the races to be held here on Friday (Feb 8). False rails (width about 6m from 1,600m to the winning post) will be in position.

Jockey for Assertive Prince (in 6th race) will be declared later.

1 ARDENT KNIGHT PLATE (1,200m), maiden 3-y-o only, (Terms), 2-45 p.m.: 1. Bombix (3) 1. Chisty 55, 2. Dragon Mountain (4) Suraj 55, 3. Elite Agent (6) Irvan 55, 4. Roma Victor (2) Akshay K 55, 5. Air Force One (8) Khurshid Alam 53.5, 6. Electra (7) T.S. Jodha 53.5, 7. Emerald Green (5) Md. Asif Khan 53.5, 8. Philharmonic (1) Trevor 53.5 and 9. Shiraz (9) Dhebe 53.

1. ROMA VICTOR, 2. PHILHARMONIC, 3. DRAGON MOUNTAIN

2 CLASSIC STORY PLATE (1,200m), rated 15 to 35, 5-y-o & over, 3-15: 1. Pink Smile (12) Rathod 60, 2. Propine (7) Dhebe 59.5, 3. Streak Ahead (6) John 59.5, 4. Fantasy App (4) M. Naveen 58, 5. Alvarez (1) R. Ajinkya 57, 6. Smile Of Peace (3) Antony 56.5, 7. Bold Move (2) Anjar Alam 56, 8. Nostradamus (3) Kiran Rai 55.5, 9. Girl With Pearl (5) Vinod Shinde 55, 10. Varsha

(8) T.S. Jodha 54, 11. Bold Runner (10) Dhanu Singh 53.5 and 12. Aeroplane (9) Khurshid Alam 52.5.

1. STREAK AHEAD, 2. PROPINE, 3. BOLD MOVE

3 SHIVANASAMUDRA CUP (1,200m), rated 30 to 50, 3-45:

1. Decisive (2) T.S. Jodha 60, 2. Hajira (7) I. Chisty 60, 3. Full Bloom (1) Nazerul 58.5, 4. Wonder Blaze (1) Antony 55.5, 5. Be-dication (9) Irvan 55, 6. Aine (8) Dhanu Singh 54.5, 7. Prodigal (3) Akshay K 54.5, 8. Charmaine (12) Trevor 54, 9. Kudla Punch (10) Dhebe 54, 10. Gandharva (6) Rayan 53.5, 11. Stars In His Eyes (5) Yash 53 and 12. Turf Jaguar (4) G. Amit 52.5.

1. PRODIGAL, 2. WONDER BLAZE, 3. FULL MOON

4 DARIA DAULAT CUP (2,000m), rated 60 & above, 4-15: 1. Auriga (3) I. Chisty 61, 2. Buscadero (6) Dhanu Singh 61, 3. Sea King (7) Antony 58, 4. Star Cracker (1) A. Imran 57, 5. Dr Logan (5) Trevor 56.5, 6. Super Smart (2) Yash 52 and 7. Nanhipari (4) Akshay K 50.

1. NANHIPARI, 2. BUSCADERO

5 DAVANGERE PLATE (1,200m), rated 15 to 35, 4-45: 1. Vinod Shinde 55, 10. Varsha

(5) No. 55 Dhebe 53, 11. Asertive Prince (7) - 51.5.

1. IDO WHAT I DO, 2. SOUTH BELL,

3. TURF PROSPECTOR

Day's best: STREAK AHEAD

Double: ROMA VICTOR-PRODIGAL Jkt: 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6; Tr (i): 1, 2 and 3; (ii): 4, 5 and 6.

FAITH

Nammazhwar's vision

IN BRIEF



Warriors thumps Spurs, Harden extends scoring streak

LOS ANGELES
Golden State Warriors eased to the top of the Western Conference on Wednesday, outclassing an under-strength San Antonio Spurs 141-102. Elsewhere, James Harden extended his red-hot scoring streak as Houston Rockets overwhelmed Sacramento Kings on the road. Harden scored 36 points in a 127-101 win for the Rockets, the reigning MVP's 28th straight game where he has scored 30 points or more. AFP

Brodie does it for Panther

NEW DELHI
Tom Brodie scored six goals to guide Jindal Panther to a 7 goals to 6 1/2 victory over Garcha Group-Aravali Polo in a league match of the Cavalry Gold Cup 10-goal polo tournament at the Army Equestrian Centre, Delhi Cantonment, on Thursday. **The results (league):** Cavalry ASC 7 (Ravi Rathore 4, Vishal Chauhan, Naveen Singh, Ravindra Mang) bt APRC-Navy 3 1/2 (Angad Kalan 3, handicap 1/2); Jindal Panther 7 (Tom Brodie 6, Simran Shergill) bt Garcha Group-Aravali Polo 6 1/2 (Manuel Llorente 4, Angad Kalan, Satinder Garcha, handicap 1/2).

Punjab and Railways in last four
GWALIOR
Defending champion Punjab, along with Railways, PSPB and Punjab & Sind Bank (PSB), entered the semifinals of the ninth senior National hockey championship on Thursday.
The results: Punjab bt Haryana 3-0; PSB bt Air India Sports Promotion Board 3-2; PSPB bt Mumbai 5-0; Railways bt Karnataka 5-0. PTI

Bhatnagar to join the Ministry of Panchayati Raj

Moves on from his position as Union Sports Secretary, to be replaced by Radheyshyam Julaniya

VIJAY LOKAPALLY
NEW DELHI

Having been in office for a year and a half, Union Sports Secretary Rahul Bhatnagar will now join the Ministry of Panchayati Raj. He will be replaced by Radheyshyam Julaniya, a 1985 batch IAS officer of Madhya Pradesh cadre.

"Leave with lot of satisfaction – you can say on a high note, for many reasons,"

Bhatnagar, a former Joint Secretary in the Sports Ministry, told *The Hindu*. An officer of the 1983 batch from Uttar Pradesh cadre, Bhatnagar had served the Sports Authority of India and National Anti-Doping Agency as the director.

"A lot of good things have happened. India excelled at the Commonwealth Games and Asian Games, we assisted in the organisation of a few international events



• SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Federations are more sensitive to the needs and ambitions of the sportsmen. Sports culture is building up," he noted.

Bhatnagar, 59, believed Indian sports was in a "healthy" state. "Experts have worked hard to give Indian sport a gleaming image.

TOPS is a scheme which has shown the way forward. The process of creating a champion is far more organised and scientific. The bench strength is strong and that reflects the state of Indian sport," Bhatnagar stressed.

Key area

Support – from stakeholders, corporates and NGOs – was a key area which Bhatnagar said was a plus point of his tenure. "I am flooded with requests from all over to be associated with our programmes. I want to assure the sportsmen that there will not be any shortage of funding, equipment, coaching and competition experience. It is all very well structured now. Sky is the limit for them. I look forward to seeing India emerge as a country to contend with in international sports."

Pep's City moves to the top

A tribute to players' refusal to accept they were out of the hunt

PREMIER LEAGUE

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
LIVERPOOL

Pep Guardiola saluted Manchester City's never-say-die spirit as the champion knocked Liverpool off the top of the English Premier League with a 2-0 win over Everton on Wednesday.

Guardiola's side was in danger of being blown away by Liverpool in the title race after a damaging defeat at Newcastle last week.

But Liverpool has faltered with successive draws

goals from Aymeric Laporte and Gabriel Jesus, lifted City above Liverpool on goal difference. And boss Guardiola insisted City's return to the summit was a tribute to his players' refusal to accept they were out of the hunt.

"Goodison Park, 2-0, we have to be happy.

"In terms of consistency, we didn't concede one shot on target. To score in the last minute of the first half helped us a lot," Guardiola said.

For now, Guardiola is just delighted with the way City has piled the pressure on Li-

verpool by catching it so quickly.

"We have a game every three days for three months. I don't know how far we will get, maybe we will die in the road, but we are trying," Guardiola said.

"We have played one more game than Liverpool. It's good to be on top but Liverpool has a game at Old Trafford. I don't think too much about that but four or five days ago we could have been seven points behind, it is a lesson to never give up. We have an incredible test on Sunday against Chelsea."

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"We have played one more

IN BRIEF



New Mars rover named after Rosalind Franklin

STEVENAGE
A British-made rover that will set off for Mars next year in search for signs of life was named on Thursday after DNA pioneer Rosalind Franklin. U.K. Science Minister Chris Skidmore said at the unveiling, "Franklin helped us understand life on the Earth and now her namesake will do the same on Mars". AFP



Gucci pulls polo neck after 'blackface' claims

PARIS
Gucci pulled a black polo neck sweater from its shops after it sparked comparisons with racially offensive golliwog and "blackface" imagery. The "balaclava jumper" can be pulled up to the eyes with the mouth visible through large red lips. "Happy Black History Month y'all," one African American tweeted ironically, with others pointing out the resemblance to golliwog. AFP

The Huddle begins tomorrow

Some of the brightest minds will feature in *The Hindu's* thought conclave

AKHILA KRISHNAMURTHY

BENGALURU

The third edition of The Huddle, *The Hindu's* annual thought conclave, will be held at the ITC Gardenia hotel here on February 9 and 10.

Vice-President M. Venkaiah Naidu will deliver the Chief Guest's address on February 10. Other prominent speakers at the event include Sri Lanka's Leader of the Opposition Mahinda Rajapaksa, Home Minister Rajnath Singh, Deputy Chief Minister of Rajasthan Sachin Pilot and Karnataka Chief Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy.

The Huddle will feature 15 sessions and about 35 speakers over the two days and showcase some of the brightest minds from the world of politics, business, academ-

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ics, sports, entertainment and the arts. These sessions, which are interactive, are conducted before an invited audience.

The Huddle this year features a host of key political fi-

gures and commentators who will share their perspectives on the evolving political landscape of India.

The list includes Krishna Byre Gowda, Minister for Rural Development and Panchayat Raj, Karnataka; Ma Fo' K. Pandiarajan, Minister for Tamil Official Language and Tamil Culture, Tamil Nadu; K.T. Rama Rao, working president, Telangana Rashtra Samithi; Yogendra Yadav, politician, psephologist and academic; Manisha Priyam, academic and researcher; and Rahul Verma, political scientist and author, among others.

Other prominent speakers from the world of business, entertainment, and sports are Keshav Murugesu, Vinita Bali, Tillotama Shome, Rasika Dugal and Sa-

nia Mirza. The Huddle also includes a stand-up act by acclaimed comedian and writer Anuvab Pal and a session exclusively on celebrating the history of magic in India by John Zubrzycki.

Speaking about The Huddle, Mukund Padmanabhan, Editor, *The Hindu*, said, "At a time of extreme social and political polarisation, this thought platform hopes to promote genuine debate by providing a place for reflection, for nuance, for evaluating the views of others even as we prepare to re-examine our own. Our larger intent with it is to expand the space for democratic debate and provide an opportunity for speakers and members of the audience to interact, both formally and informally."

New emojis are coming

Include a white heart, a sari and a one-piece bathing suit

SARAH MERVOSH

Interracial couples. A guide dog for blind people. A person using a wheelchair.



Universal language: some of the new emojis for 2019. • NYT

leading to jokes about a certain male body part being very, very small.

But don't expect to see the latest offering on your keyboard just yet. That will most likely happen later this year.

The Unicode Consortium sets the standards for emoji compatibility, allowing the symbols to translate across the internet. Then companies like Apple and Google have to design emojis and incorporate the code into their operating systems.

A representative for Google said that it hoped to release the new emoji designs soon.

On Wednesday, a representative for Apple pointed to its proposal for Unicode to create accessibility emoji

jis, which said that the new emojis would "foster a diverse culture that is inclusive of disability" and help people express themselves, as well as show support for loved ones.

Greater diversity

The latest update continues a trend toward greater emoji diversity, which began in earnest a few years ago when a range of skin tones was introduced.

In 2017, a hijab emoji was introduced. "You see people are asking for curly hair or skin tone and bald and hijab," said Jennifer 8. Lee, who serves on Unicode's emoji subcommittee and helped found Emojination, a grassroots effort to make emojis inclusive. NY TIMES

Germany sets new limits on FB data collection

AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE

BONN

Facebook users should be asked for consent before data collected by the group's subsidiaries WhatsApp and Instagram and on third-party websites is combined with their social network ac-

count, Germany's competition authority said on Thursday.

Neither should users who refuse permission for their data to be merged be shut out of Facebook services as a result, the Federal Competition Office (FCO) ruled.

"In future, Facebook will no longer be allowed to force its users to agree to the practically unrestricted collection and assigning of non-Facebook data to their Facebook user accounts," FCO chief Andreas Mundt said in a statement.

"If users do not consent, Facebook may not exclude them from its services and must refrain from collecting and merging data from different sources."

That data then provides the foundation for Facebook's advertising profits.

Buildings in former French colony await restoration

Officials unsure about the source of funds



Restoration plans: French Ambassador Alexander Zeigler unveiling the plaque at Registry Office Building in Chandannagar near Kolkata. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

SHIV SAHAY SINGH

CHANDANNAGAR

Ignoring the vegetation growing from the cracks of this crumbling building in the erstwhile French colony of Chandannagar, 50 km from Kolkata, French Ambassador Alexander Zeigler and West Bengal Heritage Commission Chairperson Shuvaprasanna unveiled the building's historical significance.

Set up in 1875, the two-storyed building served as the registry office and court during the French rule in Chandannagar (or Chander-nagore). Located next to Rani Ghat jetty on the banks of Hooghly, it is in ruins and awaits restoration. West Bengal Heritage Commission officials said even though the plaque has been unveiled, they weren't sure from where the funds will be available for its restoration.

"You can all understand that an undertaking of this nature cannot be served by the limited funds of the West Bengal Heritage Commission alone. We need all the support and help from the French government, if they come forward," Mr. Su-

vaprasanna said.

Ambassador Zeigler said that a team of architects will be visiting the town and pro-

vide inputs on the restora-

tion of the Registry Office Building, but made no com-

mitment about funds.

About a year ago, the French Consulate in Kolkata had said that they were mulling a model of financing the restoration of Registry Office Building through crowd funding, but the initiative did not work out and now both the State government and the consulate are looking at other ways to fund the building's restoration.

Barely 20 km downstream from Chandannagar is Sreerampore, where a 233-year-old Danish tavern was successfully restored in 2018. The restoration was

jointly carried out by experts from Denmark and West Bengal government.

Danish tavern

Sreerampore was a former Danish colony, and Realmania, a private enterprise in Denmark, had contributed ₹5 crore for the restoration of the tavern, now an upscale eatery. Interestingly, the French ambassador Alexander Zeigler and Consul General Virginie Corteval paid a brief visit to the renovated tavern before unveiling plaques on heritage buildings in Chandannagar.

Apart from the registry office, they also unveiled plaques at the Sacred Heart Church, a two-storyed building designed in the Baroque style, and the Chandannagar College, constructed in 1862.

Officials of the Heritage Commission said that altogether 14 buildings in the erstwhile French Colony have been declared as heritage properties. These include the Liberty Gate, House of Harihat Sett, Rakshit Bhawan, Liberty Gate and both the English and French sections of the Kanailal Vidymandir, Tristle Hostel, Clock Tower, Church of Sister Cluny and French Cemetery Cathedral.

Conservation architect Aishwarya Tipnis, who has been working with the French Consulate for several years, had in 2010 compiled a list of 99 buildings in the town, both public and private, that needed restoration.

Several attempts have been made in the past both by the State government and the French Consulate centred around restoration of Indo-French heritage in Chandannagar. However, not a single building has been restored for paucity of funds," said Professor Antara Mukherjee, the author of the book *Chandernagore mon amour: The Citadel of Moon*.

"The French Consulate in Kolkata had said that they were mulling a model of financing the restoration of Registry Office Building through crowd funding, but the initiative did not work out and now both the State government and the consulate are looking at other ways to fund the building's restoration.

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