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THE HINDU

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 2019

INDIA'S NATIONAL NEWSPAPER SINCE 1878

DELHI
CITY EDITION
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NEARBY

Bodies of kidnapped M.P. twins found in U.P.

BHOPAL

The sensational kidnapping of six-year-old twin brothers from a crowded school bus just outside a school at Chitrakoot in Madhya Pradesh's Satna district on February 12 came to a tragic end on Saturday night with the recovery of their bodies from the Yamuna in Banda district of Uttar Pradesh.

NORTH ▸ PAGE 2

Hostellers protest 'moral policing' by warden

NEW DELHI

Women hostellers of Daulat Ram College sat in front of Delhi University's Arts Faculty building on Sunday, trying to approach the Vice-Chancellor, after overnight protests at their hostel. They are protesting a host of issues, including lack of facilities at their hostel, and alleged 'moral policing' by the warden.

DELHI METRO ▸ PAGE 1

EDGE PAGES ▸ 4 PAGES
DELHI METRO ▸ 6 PAGES

Protests, arson rock Itanagar, two dead

Deputy CM's house set afire over grant of residency papers

RAHUL KARMAKAR
GUWAHATI

Two protesters were killed in firing by security forces and three others injured in Itanagar as protests over granting permanent resident certificates (PRCs) to six communities escalated on Sunday.

Protesters also vandalised and partly burnt down the house of Deputy Chief Minister Chowna Mein, set ablaze a shopping complex owned by Environment and Forest Minister Nabam Rebia and a shopping mall owned by BJP leader Tame Phassang, apart from ransacking the office of the Capital Complex Deputy Commissioner and the Itanagar Police Station.

Security forces opened fire when a section of protesters tried to attack the private residence of Chief Minister Pema Khandu near the Circuit House, leading to the death of two men.

The protesters had also set a 5 p.m. deadline on Sunday for Mr. Khandu and Mr. Mein to resign for "betraying the indigenous communities", and the transfer of Chief Secretary Satya Gopal.

The current round of violence followed a 48-hour shutdown called by 18 indigenous groups on Thursday protesting the State government's decision granting PRC to six non-APST (Arunachal Pradesh Scheduled Tribes) communities.

Later on Sunday, the Chief Secretary in a statement, said: "Considering the present situation... the State government has decided that no further action will be taken in grant of PRCs."

With none of the parties in the State, including the opposition Congress, NPP and the PPA, responding to Mr. Khandu's call for an all-party meeting, sources in the Chief Minister's Office said the meeting had been rescheduled for Monday.

CONTINUED ON ▸ PAGE 10

Rising dissent: A road to Itanagar that was blocked by protesters on Sunday. ▪ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Proposal rejected, says Rijiju

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Union Minister of State for Home Kiren Rijiju said on Sunday that Arunachal Pradesh has decided not to accept the recommendations of a committee granting permanent resident certificates (PRC) to six communities.

Mr. Rijiju also blamed the Congress for "instigating a section of people".

Police officer, Army jawan killed in Kulgam encounter

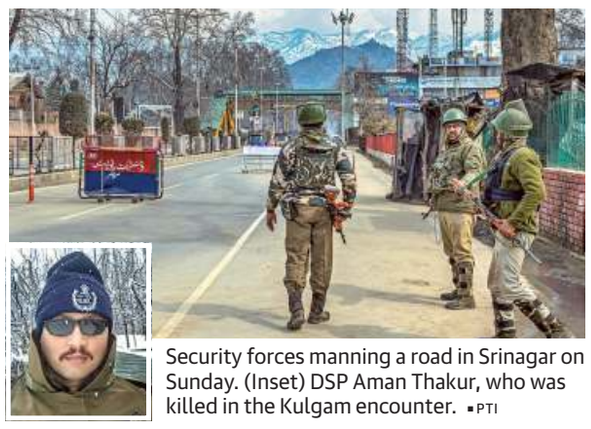
3 JeM militants shot dead; three civilians among six injured

PEERZADA ASHIQ
SRINAGAR

A Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP)-rank police officer, a soldier and three Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) terrorists were killed and six persons, including three civilians, were injured in an encounter in Jammu and Kashmir's Kulgam on Sunday. The Kashmir Valley remained tense for the second straight day and observed a shutdown over fears of an escalation of India-Pakistan tensions and scrapping of Article 35A.

"The police officer died in the initial exchange of fire with the hiding JeM terrorists at Turigam-Yaripora area of Kulgam," said Director General of Police Dilbagh Singh. Deceased DSP Aman Thakur from J&K's Doda joined the police in 2011 and "played a key role in strategising against JeM terrorists" as operations head of an anti-militancy cell. He is survived by his wife and six-year-old son. The jawan belonged to the Army's 34 Rashtriya Rifles. The police said the three slain JeM men had not been identified.

CONTINUED ON ▸ PAGE 10
ARMY FIRM ON WIPING OUT TERRORISTS, SAYS PM ▸ PAGE 10



Security forces manning a road in Srinagar on Sunday. (Inset) DSP Aman Thakur, who was killed in the Kulgam encounter. ▪ PTI

India to push for UN ban on JeM chief

SUHASINI HAIDAR
NEW DELHI

With the UN Security Council and the Paris-based Financial Action Task Force both issuing strong press statements on the Pulwama attack and calling on Pakistan to act against the Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM), diplomats in Delhi and New York say they have begun negotiations on a new proposal to place JeM chief Masood Azhar on the ban list operated by the UNSC's 1267 committee, the fourth such request in four consecutive years.

The effort coordinated between France's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the embassy in Delhi and the UN, is likely to take some weeks, the diplomats said.

CONTINUED ON ▸ PAGE 10

GST on under-construction houses cut

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Goods and Services Tax Council on Sunday decided to reduce tax rates on the sale of under-construction residential properties from April 1, Finance Minister Arun Jaitley announced.

The Council decided that the rate for normal residential properties would be 5% without the option of availing input tax credits.

In the affordable housing segment, the rate has been reduced to a nominal 1% without input tax credits. The previous rates were 12% for the affordable housing segment and 18% for the normal housing segment, both with the option to avail input tax credits.

"The Council had a detailed discussion on real estate," Mr. Jaitley said at a press conference after the meeting. "It was found that the case of under-construction houses was the same as what was seen for restaurants, which set the precedent. The price of under-construction houses should have been reduced by the amount of input tax credits available, but this was not happening."

The Group of Ministers set up to look into the issue recommended reducing the rates to 5% for normal housing and 3% or below for affordable housing, he said.

CONTINUED ON ▸ PAGE 10
INDUSTRY HAILS MOVE ▸ PAGE 13

At the confluence

Seeking blessings: Prime Minister Narendra Modi taking a dip at the Triveni Sangam in Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh, on Sunday during the Kumbh Mela. ▪ ARUNANGSU ROY CHOWDHURY

Opposition misleading farmers: Modi

OMAR RASHID
LUCKNOW

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday accused his opponents of trying to mislead farmers by spreading rumours and lies about the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojana (PM-KISAN) which he launched from Gorakhpur by electronically transferring the first instalment of ₹2,000 each to over one crore farmers.

Referring to the Opposition parties as '*mahamilavati log*' or the adulterated, a dig at their coming together, Mr. Modi said his opponents were so rattled by his scheme for farmers that they were resorting to "lies and spreading fear."

'REBUFF RUMOURS ON KISAN SCHEME' ▸ PAGE 11

Hunger strike decision a last resort: Kejriwal

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Sunday said his decision to go on an indefinite hunger strike from March 1 for Delhi's full statehood was taken as a last resort after all possible efforts to persuade the Centre to allow the Delhi government to function without interference had failed. "We tried everything from fervent appeals to dharnas and even knocked at the doors of courts. Finally, when we are left with no option, we are going on an indefinite fast," Mr. Kejriwal said.

He said excuses like Delhi is the Capital of the country and therefore cannot be granted statehood does not work as the entire NDMC area would still be under the Centre.

DETAILS ON ▸ DELHI METRO PAGE 1

Assam hooch tragedy toll rises to 143

RAHUL KARMAKAR
GUWAHATI

Celebrating the birth of a baby with locally-brewed liquor at a tea estate three days ago has so far left 143 people, including 45 women, dead in eastern Assam's Golaghat and Jorhat districts.

Tragedy had first struck the Halmira Tea Estate on Thursday night when plantation workers gathered at the house of a tea plucker to celebrate the birth of a baby.

The "poisonous" liquor, which officials said could have been sourced from the same illegal brewer, soon felled people in the adjoining Jugibari and Goronga villages and at the Borhola Tea Estate in the adjoining Jorhat district.

DETAILS ON ▸ PAGE 7

Over 170 cars gutted in Chennai fire

Vehicles belonged to defunct call taxi company and were parked in open ground

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI

A day after close to 300 cars were gutted at the Aero India 2019 show in Bengaluru, over 170 cars belonging to 'UToo', a defunct call taxi company, parked in an open ground at Porur in Chennai, were destroyed in a fire that broke out on Sunday afternoon.

The situation was brought under control by 4 p.m. and a case was registered at the Porur police station.

Preliminary investigations reveal that it may have been an accidental fire.

However, the police are not ruling out the possibility of miscreants setting fire to the dry grass in the ground.

Unused for two years

According to the police, nearly 250 cars, lying unused for the past two years, were parked opposite the Sri Ramachandra Hospital. Around 1.45 p.m., the watchman at the ground spotted the fire and alerted the company management.

"He called at 1.59 p.m. and I was trying to reach the fire control room at 101 but could not contact them. We did not get the support on time," alleged Vaidehi, a representative of the company that owns the cars.

Triggers panic

By then thick smoke engulfed the locality and residents panicked. Some motorists contacted the Tamil Nadu Fire and Rescue Services (TNFRS) Control Room and six fire tenders were rushed to the spot along with six water tankers. Thirty TNFRS personnel fought the fire and doused it by 4 p.m.

"All of us panicked seeing the thick smoke as the hospital is situated right opposite the ground. However the situation was brought under control at the earliest. Many residents complained of pungent smell and burning sensation in the eye," said a police officer.

Kancheepuram Collector P. Ponniah inspected the ground and the damaged cars.

"The cars were lying unused after the owner incurred losses in the call taxi business. Apart from the cars parked here, around 25 cabs are operating as call-taxis," he said.

Nagarajan, director of the call taxi company, said they do not know how the fire started.

Mystery blaze: Smoke rising from cars at Porur in Chennai on Sunday. ▪ B. VELANKANNI RAJ

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Bodies of kidnapped M.P. twins found in U.P. river after 12 days

Six arrested, including the brother of a regional convener of Bajrang Dal

ANUP DUTTA
BHOPAL

The sensational kidnapping of six-year-old twin brothers from a crowded school bus just outside the Sadguru Public Higher Secondary School at Chitrakoot in Madhya Pradesh's Satna district on February 12 came to a tragic end on Saturday night with the recovery of their bodies from the Yamuna in Banda district of Uttar Pradesh.

The police have arrested six persons in connection with the murder, including the brother of a regional convener of the Bajrang Dal.

The six accused have been arrested on charges of abduction, killing and conspiracy. Five of them are from U.P. and one from M.P., Satna Superintendent of Police Santosh Singh Gaur told media persons.

Those arrested are Lucky Tomar, Pintu Ramswaroop Yadav, Ramkesh Yadav, Rohit Dwivedi and Raju Dwivedi, all belonging to U.P., and Padma Shukla from M.P.

The seized motorcycles and an SUV. ▪SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Mr. Gaur said some vehicles, including motorcycles and an SUV, have been seized.

Photographs being circulated in the social media show that two of the four motorcycles do not have number plates and have colours of a political party painted on them. The seized SUV carries the flag of a political party.

According to the police, Padma Shukla's younger brother Vishnukant alias Chhotu is a regional convener of the Bajrang Dal. However, so far, the police have not found any link between Chhotu and the abductors.

Protests in Chitrakoot

After the bodies of the twin brothers were found, violent protests erupted in Chitrakoot town forcing the district administration to clamp Section 144. A large number of locals held a protest against what they called "police's inaction" and the Sadguru Seva Trust which runs the school where the children studied.

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Kamal Nath has condemned the incident. Speaking at the State hangar before leaving for Umariya district, Mr. Nath said: "The police will expose those behind all this... whose flag was there on the vehicle in which they were travelling."

The children, both in kindergarten and sons of oil merchant Brijesh Rawat, were kidnapped at gunpoint by two masked persons. The kidnappers had later demanded ransom from the children's father, Chitrakoot's Nayagaon police station in-charge K.P. Tripathi said. The M.P. police had announced a reward of ₹50,000 for information on the twins.

(With PTI inputs)

Himachal Cong. urges EC to stop BJP's campaign

Hoisting of party flags unconstitutional, says State Congress chief

VIKAS VASUDEVA
CHANDIGARH

Following the nationwide launch of the 'Mera Parivar-Bhajapa Parivar' campaign last week, the Himachal Pradesh Congress has approached the Election Commission of India protesting against the hoisting of BJP flags on the houses of beneficiaries of Central government's schemes, terming it 'unconstitutional'.

The Himachal unit of the Congress has highlighted the issue in a letter to the EC.

Ahead of the Lok Sabha elections, the BJP has launched the 'Mera Parivar-Bhajapa Parivar' campaign, through which it plans to reach out to five crore families of party workers by unfurling its flags across the country.

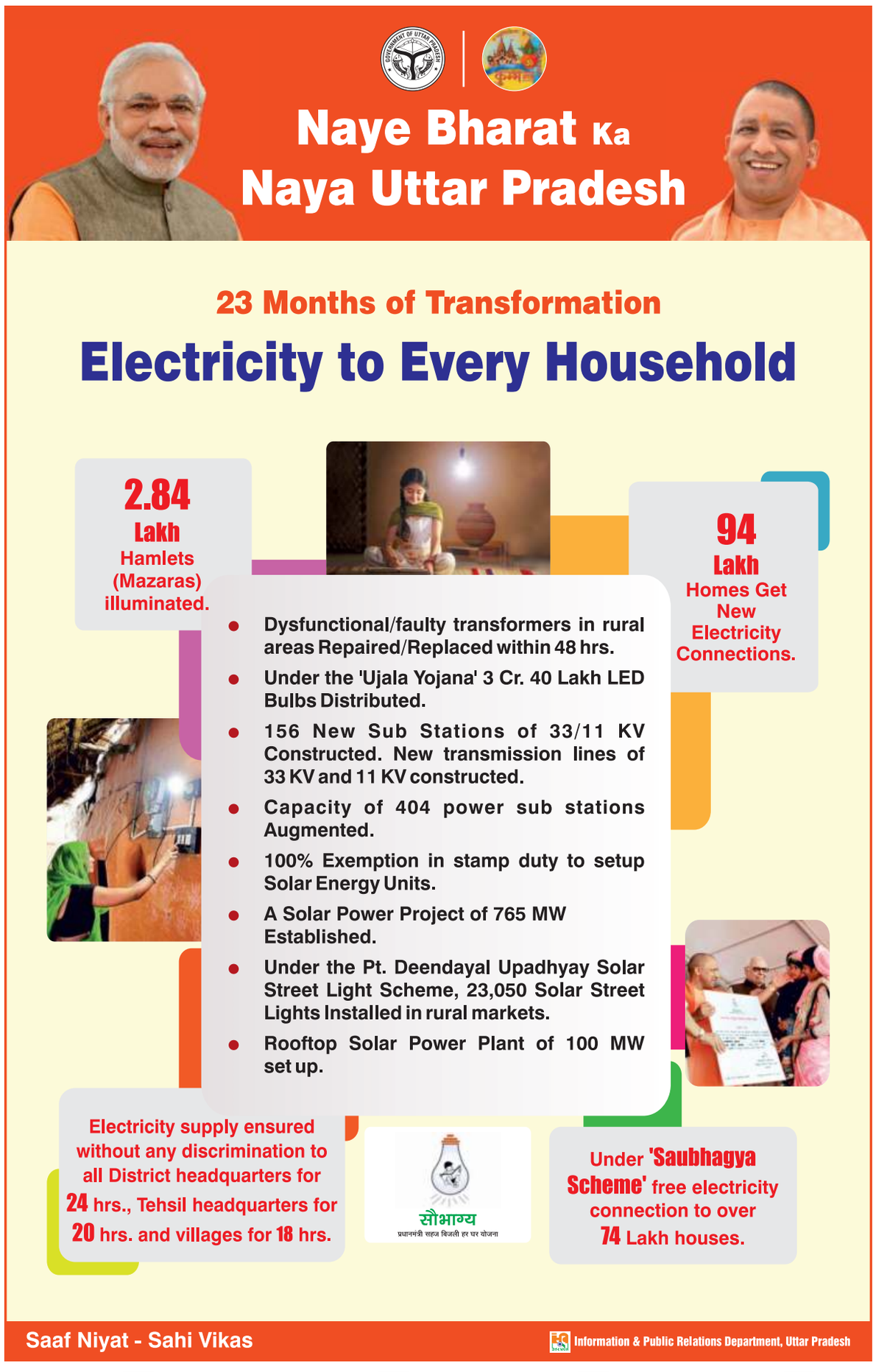
H.P. CM Jai Ram Thakur unfurling the party flag at his house in Shimla. ▪FILE PHOTO

Himachal Pradesh Congress Committee president Kuldeep Rathore told *The Hindu* that benefits to the people under various schemes were given by the government and not by a political party. Hence, it cannot be politicised by such a campaign.

"...the motive behind such action is to derive benefit in the upcoming Lok Sabha elections. The action is unconstitutional, coercive and breach of privacy of the individual. The benefits are given by the government and not by any political party," Mr. Rathore has written in the letter addressed to the EC.

Urging the ECI to immediately ask the BJP to stop from hoisting party flags, Mr. Rathore wrote, "...these actions will send a wrong signal among the masses and create unrest in society. Hence, the Commission is requested to restrain the BJP from indulging in such action."

Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur had on February 12 hoisted party flags on the houses of a few party workers at Chhota Shimla in Shimla, kicking off the 'Mera Parivar-Bhajapa Parivar' campaign in the State.



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RISE	00:00	SET	10:52
TUESDAY, FEB. 26			
RISE	06:50	SET	18:19
RISE	00:25	SET	11:33
WEDNESDAY, FEB. 27			
RISE	06:49	SET	18:19
RISE	01:23	SET	12:16

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Delhi Palam Today
26ºC Pollution level will increase. Shallow fog/mist will occur morning. Day will be comfortable.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow
23ºC Rise in night temperature and fall in maximum are likely. Shallow fog during morning will occur.

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Farmers' body plans campaign over eviction of forest dwellers

Critical of Central government's attitude; vows to resist eviction

STAFF REPORTER
BERHAMPUR

The All India Kisan Mazdoor Sabha (AIKMS) is planning a nationwide campaign to expose the Narendra Modi-led Central government's "anti-forest dweller" attitude and its "collusion" with corporate houses that may lead to eviction of lakhs of tribals and others from their traditional habitat.

Through a statement, the central executive committee of AIKMS has strongly opposed the recent order of the Supreme Court to evict people from forests, whose claims as forest dwellers under the Forest Rights Act, 2006, has been rejected. It has demanded immediate review of the order and vowed to resist eviction.

'Bring ordinance'

"We have also demanded that the Central government bring in an ordinance to stop eviction of forest dwellers," said AIKMS national secretary Bhala Chandra Shadangi. The Kisan Sabha was critical of the Central government for not arguing in favour of forest dwellers in the Supreme Court. Over 20 lakh poor forest dwellers are about to lose their rights over land as their claims were rejected for trivial reasons and the government elected by them did not stand up in their support, alleged the organisation.

"Despite the fact that several organisations had informed Union Tribal Affairs Minister Jual Oram about the government's attitude during the past three hearings, the government intentionally failed to have its lawyer during the hearing on February 13, and the three-judge Bench passed order to States to evict tribals whose claims have been rejected and submit a report to the Supreme Court by July 27," he said.

"As per the Fifth Schedule, two-third of forests belong to the tribals. The Centre should have defended the rights of these forest dwellers but it has failed in its duty," he said.

Man arrested with arms in West Bengal

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
BAHARAMPUR

A man was arrested with a cache of arms, including 7 mm and 9 mm pistols, from a bus at Burwan in Murshidabad district, a senior police officer said here on Sunday.

The accused, Humayun Sheikh, was travelling to Malda from Kolkata, Murshidabad SP Mukesh Kumar said.

The police recovered 20 pistols of 9 mm make in dismantled state, four pistols of 7 mm caliber, 10 bullets and eight magazines, Mr. Kumar said.

Sheikh, a resident of Kaliachak in Malda.

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11-year-old boy rescued by RPF

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
KOLKATA

An 11-year-old boy, a native of Gorakhpur in Uttar Pradesh, was rescued at the Nalhati station and handed over to Rampurhat Childline in Birbhum district, a Railway Protection Force (RPF) official said here Sunday.

Hardcore Maoist surrenders in Odisha

STAFF REPORTER
BERHAMPUR

Dhananjay Gope (27) alias Sudhir, a hardcore Maoist of south Odisha carrying a bounty of ₹5 lakh on his head, surrendered before the police on Sunday.

He surrendered before Deputy Inspector General (DIG), southwest range, Himanshu Lal, at Sunabeda in Koraput district. According to police sources, he was involved in at least 14 cases of murder, several incidents of Maoist violence and exchanges of fire with security forces in Malkangiri district and its adjoining areas.

His wife K. Laxmi, who was a Maoist with a ₹4 lakh reward on her head, had surrendered before Malkangiri Superintendent of Police Jagmohan Meena on May 24, 2018.

Gope hails from Malkangiri district and had joined the outlawed CPI (Maoist) organisation in 2009 as a member of its Kalimela Dalam operating in his home district. He will be provided assistance under the rehabilitation scheme of the Odisha government for surrendered Maoists

UN body hails Odisha on women reservation

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BHUBANESWAR

The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) has complimented the government of Odisha for proposing 33% reservation for women in Parliament and the State Assemblies.

"While the country awaits the passage of the Constitution (108th Amendment) Bill before Parliament; we believe such a commitment from the States is likely to renew dialogue on the issue at the national level," said Nishtha Satyam, Deputy Country Representative of UN Women, in a letter to Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik.

"We commend your thought leadership and support on the fact that the economic and social progress can be sustained, only if half of the population, have a role in the highest decision making bodies of the state and the country," Ms. Satyam wrote in her letter.

She said that UN Women recognises the fact that real, transformative and irreversible progress can only be achieved if women are equal partners in decision making.

The Odisha Assembly had passed a resolution on November 20 last year for providing 33% reservation for women in Legislative Assemblies and Parliament. Mr. Patnaik had initiated discussion on the motion.

Man arrested on sedition charge for social media post

For uploading an anti-national video on social media

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
AGARTALA

A 23-year-old man hailing from Tripura's Khowai district has been arrested on sedition charge from Karnataka for allegedly uploading an anti-national video on social media on the Pulwama terror attack, the police said on Sunday.

A case under sedition charge was lodged against Krishnendu Debbarma of Sonacharanpara village in Khowai district by the police suo motu for allegedly uploading the video on Facebook on the Pulwama terror attack in which 40 CRPF jawans were killed, they said.

Superintendent of Police, Khowai, Krishnendu Chakraborty, said: "After the video clip of Debbarma went viral on Facebook, the police went to his house and came to know that he was working in a hotel in Mysuru. A police team went to Mysuru and arrested him with the help of the local police on Saturday. He will be brought here Sunday."

Second sedition case

This is the second sedition case lodged in Tripura this month.

Earlier the police had charged three indigenous leaders with sedition in West Tripura district.

The three leaders -- Jagadish Debbarma, general secretary of the Indigenous Nationalist Party of Tripura (INPT), Aghore Debbarma, a leader of the Indigenous People's Front of Tripura (IPFT-Tipraha) and Anthony Debbarma, a leader of the Borok Peoples Human Rights Organization (BPHRO) -- were charged with sedition for attending a rally where anti-national slogans were allegedly raised.

Engg. student drowns in Odisha river

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
BHUBANESWAR

An engineering student drowned in the Kuakhai river near here on Sunday afternoon, a fire service official said. The deceased, M. Khatua (21), was a final year student of a private engineering college here.

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Avoid making populist promises: Oppn.

On eve of seven-day Budget session, Chief Minister says government is committed to people

ALOK DESHPANDE
MUMBAI

Setting the tone for what is expected to be a stormy Budget session of the legislature, the Opposition parties on Sunday demanded that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led State government should refrain from making "populist" or policy decisions. Instead, they demanded, the government should concentrate on bringing real change to the lives of people.

The Opposition also slammed the ruling coalition on it's recent announcement of contesting the forthcoming elections together. Terming the agreement as "fake" they pointed at the differences which surfaced over the Chief Minister's post.

At a press conference on Sunday after deciding to boycott the eve of session tea-party organised by the government, Leader of Opposition in the Assembly, Radhakrishna Vikhe-Patil, said that the trend in the Central government has been to make populist claims.

"We have lost confidence in this government. We are not happy at the way the BJP-Shiv Sena is running the government. The farm loan waiver and water conservation schemes are mired in corruption but no action has been taken," said Mr. Vikhe-Patil.

"Hence we have decided not to respond to the Chief Minister's invitation for tea on the eve of the interim session," he said.

Leader of Opposition in the Council Dhananjay Munde said it being an interim Budget session before the Lok Sabha elections, he hoped the government will not make any "populist announcement" like those made by Union minister Piyush Goyal.

Responding to this, Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis said at a press conference later that the Opposition should concentrate on setting it's own house in order instead of criticising others. "We initiated seat-sharing talks after them and have already announced the alliance. The Opposition is yet to complete their negotiations," he said.

Snubbing the second-rank leaders of both BJP and Sena, who indulged in war of words even after the announcement of alliance, Mr. Fadnavis said that only his and Sena chief Uddhav Thackeray's word should be considered final.

He said that the state government is committed to extending relief to drought affected farmers.

The seven-day session will begin with an address by Governor Ch. Vidyasagar Rao on Monday. The vote-on-account, which will have budget provisions till July 31, will be tabled on February 27. The government will be presenting 11 Bills in the session.

Strategy talks?: Chief Minister Devendra Fadanvis talking to PWD Minister Eknath Shinde of Shiv Sena, while another senior Sena leader Neelam Gorhe looks on at the tea party hosted by him at Sahyadri guest house on Sunday, a day before the Budget session. Opposition party leaders skipped the tea party. ▪PRASHANT NAKWE

'Protection for Kashmiri students'

STAFF REPORTER
MUMBAI

Chief Minister Dervendra Fadnavis said on Sunday that the recent attack on students from Kashmir in Yavatmal district, was "absolutely wrong". Kashmiri students are the citizens of this country he said, and added, "It is our responsibility to provide them security. Therefore I immediately held talks with DG and all unit commanders are being informed that in any such case action will be taken against the attackers. The State will provide complete protection to them."

Action plan for free treatment of hepatitis patients launched

Envisages model treatment centres in all States

JYOTI SHELAR
MUMBAI

Patients infected with hepatitis B and C virus, will soon be able to avail free treatment. Eight model treatment centres in Maharashtra, including the Sion Hospital, Mumbai, will roll out free treatment for hepatitis C from March while that for hepatitis B will be rolled out from July.

Viral hepatitis is a global public health problem that kills nearly 2.72 lakh people annually. It is an inflammatory condition of the liver caused by five known hepatitis viruses – A, B,C,D and E. Of these, B and C are known to cause 96% mortality. Vikas Sheel, joint secretary, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, said on Sunday at the launch of the national action plan, that operational guidelines for hepatitis C were formed last year. "We have now released the guidelines for hepatitis B," he said adding that the comprehensive action plan will focus on curbing mother-to-child transmission by improving the coverage of hepatitis B injection given at birth. While hepatitis B requires life-long treatment which costs around ₹2,500 per month, hepatitis C requires a 84-day long course costing nearly ₹40,000. "The government has however, managed to procure this course for around ₹2,200 ," said Dr. Aakash Shukla, head of gastroenterology department, Sion Hospital.

According to the action plan, one model hepatitis treatment centre will be established in each State in a government institution in the first year. While the number of model centres will be increased gradually, by the end of the second year, efforts will be made to establish one such centre at district level. Setting up a national reference laboratory and State-level reference laboratories is also under planning.

Launching the action plan to tackle hepatitis B, actor Amitabh Bachchan said on Sunday he will do everything required to spread awareness and combat the disease. Infected with hepatitis B, Mr. Bachchan has been living with only 25% functional liver. "We must pay a lot of attention on detection," said Mr. Bachchan adding that he is particularly concerned about the discrimination against women due to the infection. "I have heard stories about married women being thrown out of their houses. It is not acceptable," he said.

Union Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare Ashwini Kumar Chaoubey and State health minister Eknath Shinde were also present at the launch.

Amitabh Bachchan, WHO Goodwill Ambassador for Hepatitis in South-East Asia Region, at the launch. ▪SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

₹500 bonus for paddy farmers

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NAGPUR

Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis has announced a bonus of ₹500 per quintal for paddy farmers.

Till last year, the government was giving a bonus of ₹200 per quintal for paddy, the key kharif crop.

"The previous government gave bonus only around the time of elections. But, the BJP-led government gave ₹200 as bonus every year, irrespective of polls," Mr. Fadnavis said while addressing a gathering at Sakoli taluka in Bhandara district on Saturday.

To woo distressed farmers ahead of the general polls, the NDA government at the Centre had last year hiked the minimum support price (MSP) of paddy by ₹200 per quintal for the 2018-19 crop year.

With that decision, the MSP of paddy (common grade) was increased to ₹1,750 per quintal.

Mr. Fadnavis also said no lease will be recovered for fishing in lakes up to 500 hectare area. Also, fishing contracts will be allocated only to fishing cooperative societies.

MKM not to back major parties in LS polls

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI

A key Maratha outfit, that led the quota agitation in Maharashtra, has decided not to extend support to any major political party in the upcoming Lok Sabha polls for "neglecting" its demands.

The Maratha Kranti Morcha (MKM) will support independent candidates or nominees of smaller parties, its convener Sanjeev Bhor-Patil has said.

"We are contemplating to support independent candidates or smaller parties in the polls instead of major political parties, such as alliances of BJP-Shiv Sena or Congress-NCP, as they all neglected our key demands," he said.

He claimed that some members of the community had been falsely framed in atrocity cases.

"One of our key demands was to sort out the issue of false atrocity cases. However, no political party has taken it seriously. Our another demand was to implement the Swaminathan Commission recommendations on minimum support price (MSP) for crops," he said.

7 die as trucks collide near Nashik

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NASHIK

Seven people, including three women, were killed on the spot and more than 25 were injured when the truck in which they were travelling collided with another truck in Nashik district on Sunday.

The accident took place around 11 a.m. at Pachore Phata on the Mumbai-Agra national highway, 34 km from here, an official of Pimpalgaon Baswant police station said. The victims were travelling from Nashik to Kedrai for a religious programme, he said.

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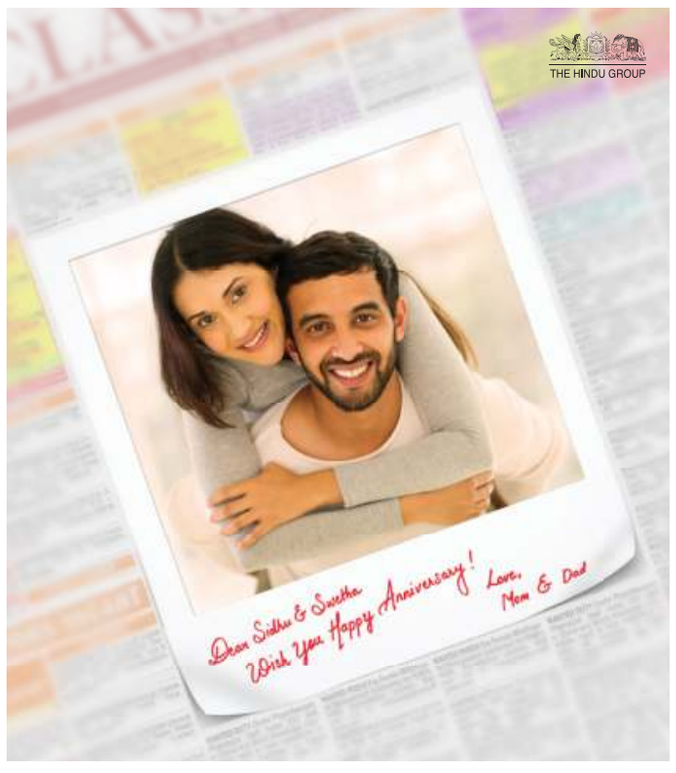

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IN BRIEF

'CBI must probe murder of Congress workers'

KOCHI

Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee (KPCC) president Mullappally Ramachandran has demanded a CBI probe into the twin murders in Kasaragod as he fears that the police probe is off the track. He told media persons here on Sunday that the police were yielding to pressure in the investigation. He demanded an inquiry into the role of Uduma MLA and a former legislator from the region in the incident.

Woodcutters attack policemen in Kadapa

KADAPA

Police personnel on the trail of woodcutters were attacked near Dugyala in Sambepalle mandal of Kadapa district on Sunday. Acting on a tip-off that high-valued wood was being smuggled out of the forest, the policemen landed at the spot, only to come under attack by the woodcutters. They pelted stones, hurled axes and sickles on the security forces, but were overpowered soon. Twelve woodcutters and smugglers belonging to Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka were taken into custody. Red sanders logs worth ₹60 lakh and two vehicles were seized.

Kishore Chandra Deo joins TDP

He raises bauxite mining issue

Big boost: Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu with Kishore Chandra Deo on Sunday. ▪SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

STAFF REPORTER
VIJAYAWADA

Congress leader and former Union Minister V. Kishore Chandra Deo joined the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) in the presence of party president and Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu at his residence at Undavalli near here on Sunday.

His supporters from the Araku Lok Sabha constituency turned up in good numbers.

Welcoming them into the party fold, Mr. Naidu said the TDP would become stronger in north coastal Andhra Pradesh with the entry of Mr. Deo.

The former Union Tribal Affairs Minister touched upon the bauxite mining, a sensitive issue in the Visakhapatnam agency area, where tribals and Opposition parties have been opposing it. "The bauxite mining licence was not cancelled, though I opposed it tooth and nail. The Congress was in power at both the State and the Centre then. The credit of cancelling the licence goes to Mr. Naidu," Mr. Deo said. "People are not aware of the facts behind bauxite mining. It is unfortunate a sitting MLA and an ex-MLA were killed."

Mr. Naidu said the mining was against the sentiments and rights of the tribals.

Bengaluru as show host under a cloud

Suspense over next year's Aero India venue as Defence Ministry official says decision will be taken later

SHARATH S. SRIVATSA
BENGALURU

As the 12th edition of Aero India came to a close on Sunday evening, an element of suspense continued over whether Bengaluru, which is considered the aerospace hub of the country, will be hosting the next edition.

While Chief Secretary T.M. Vijay Bhaskar urged the authorities to declare Bengaluru as the permanent venue for Aero India, the Ministry of Defence maintained that a decision would be taken later. At the valedictory function, which had representation from the Indian Air Force (IAF) and Ministry of Defence besides Governor Vajubhai Vala, Mr. Bhaskar pointed out that Bengaluru had hosted the aero show for 12 consecutive editions.

"I hope Bengaluru will be declared as the permanent venue. I hope it will be the next venue," he said.

Show stopper: Helicopters perform during the final day of the the Aero India 2019 at Yelahanka Air Force Station in Bengaluru on Sunday. ▪G.P. SAMPATH KUMAR

Later, he told *The Hindu* that though there had been no specific information about a possible shifting of venue, his comments came in the light of Karnataka Chief Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy having written to the Centre to retain the show in Bengaluru. So far, he said, the State government had not received any communication on the issue. However, a senior Defence Ministry official told reporters soon after the valedictory that "Bengaluru has not been declared as the next venue for the air show. It [venue and dates] has not been decided. We have not come to that. I'm not sure about where it will be held next."

Speculation rife

Incidentally, the date, and Bengaluru as the venue, had been declared at the start of the previous editions, barring those held in 2015 and 2017, when speculation was rife over shifting Aero India to a new place.

This edition held in Bengaluru also came under a cloud as the Union government actively considered Lucknow as a possible venue.

Stating that a decision would be taken soon, the official said: "The government may announce the date and place soon. It could happen during the coming Defence Expo, too. Ultimately, the decision would be made by the Centre," he added.

'Overheated silencer could have sparked fire'

277 cars gutted, 73 partially damaged at parking lot of Aero India

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU

The burnt chassis of cars continued to remain in the closed-off parking lot of Aero India, a day after being destroyed in a fire, which could have started from an overheated silencer of one of the vehicles.

On Saturday noon, a fire broke out at the P5 parking lot of Aero India, where over 3,000 vehicles were parked. The blaze eventually led to the gutting of 277 cars, while a further 73 cars were partially damaged.

The police said they had got 277 registrations from distraught car owners at the 12 help desks set up on the spot. During a visit to the parking lot on Sunday, Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman was told by senior Indian Air Force officers that the "the probable cause was stated as fire starting from an overheated silencer of one of the cars parked," said a Defence spokesperson in a statement.

Nirmala Sitharaman at the site of Saturday's fire accident in the parking area of Yelahanka Air Base on Sunday. ▪PTI

"Some cars were broken open, even when they had started burning. These cars were then pushed out of the fire area to create an artificial break in the fire," said the statement.

The fire spread quickly owing to strong winds of over 30 kmph, and within a few minutes, the planned response was activated, said the spokesperson.

Thirteen fire tenders, seven water bowsers, 33 Agni Varuna vehicles, and six crash fire tenders of the IAF were deployed to douse the fire within 45 minutes, said a release.

A total of 3,000 litres of foam was used during the operations.

Fire at forest area close to airbase

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU

A day after cars were destroyed in a fire accident during the Aero India show, a fire broke out at Jarakabande forest area situated close to Yelahanka airbase on Sunday afternoon.

Passers-by noticed thick smoke billowing out of the area and alerted the fire control room. Two fire tenders rushed to the spot and put out the fire.

The Fire and Emergency Services officials said none was injured in the accident and only a few acres of dry grass were gutted.

Plight of working class ignored: Mevani

STAFF REPORTER
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The plight of the working class is seldom part of public discourse, Gujarat legislator and Dalit leader Jignesh Mevani has said.

Participating in a seminar on 'Neo-liberalism and the future of democracy' at the National Students Parliament Kerala-2019 on Sunday, Mr. Mevani said that labourers had been relegated to a neglected entity with the emergence of globalisation and neo-liberal policies.

"The exploitation suffered by the working class is hardly talked about by the political parties or the mainstream media. It is no surprise that 60 crore workers are denied minimum wages in the country," Mr. Mevani said.

CPI(M) Polit Bureau member M.A. Baby expressed concern over the repercussions of neo-liberalisation in the field of higher education.

The free-run of finance capital threatened to vitiate the education sector, he said.

Fire spreads in Bandipur National Park

Authorities continue to struggle to contain it; vast tracts of landscape destroyed

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MYSURU

The raging fire in the Bandipur National Park (BNP) spread and ravaged vast tracts of forests in the Himavad Gopalaswamy Betta range on Sunday, even as the authorities continued their struggle to contain it.

The U.S.-based National Aeronautics and Space Administration's Fire Information for Resource Management System (NASA-FIRMS) alert indicated that 32 fire incidents were detected at Bandipur, based on information processed during a satellite overpass on Sunday.

Saturday's fire, which ravaged Melkamanahalli and surrounding places, was brought under control only by dawn on Sunday.

But the landscape in the area has been reduced to ashes.

Tough task: Rescue officials assist in extinguishing a fire at Bandipur Tiger Reserve on Sunday. ▪PTI

The morning and evening safaris in BNP remained suspended for the second day; all staff have been deployed for fire-fighting operations.

No estimate of loss

Though no estimates of the extent of forest cover lost due to the fire are available yet, sources feared that more than 6,000 acres of forest may have been ravaged.

The fire line has spread across vast tracts of the forest, making it impossible for authorities to deploy personnel and resources to douse the flames all along the stretch.

"The only way the fire will be extinguished is when the available fuel in the vicinity burns out completely and there is no more vegetation left to keep the flames smouldering," according to a Forest Department official engaged in the fire fighting operations.

Counter fire

One of the methods to contain forest fires is counter fire, a technique in which wild fire is doused by deliberately setting fire in the opposite direction of the raging flames. The inward movement of the counter fire consumes all vegetation and leaves a bare strip of land with no fuel to burn and the wild fire gets extinguished naturally.

"But in Bandipur, the wind speed and direction has made it a difficult proposition for the authorities to try this," said K.S. Sudheer of Voice for Wildlife.

Smart turn: Karimnagar looks to the sun

Municipal body has made rooftop solar panels mandatory for large houses

K.M. DAYASHANKAR
KARIMNAGAR

Telangana's fastest growing urban centre, Karimnagar, is looking to the sun to reduce its carbon footprint. On Saturday, the Municipal Corporation of Karimnagar (MCK) signed an MoU with the Telangana State Renewable Energy Development Corporation (TSREDCO) for the generation of 1.45 MW of power through solar rooftop panels.

The municipal body has passed a resolution requiring all houses, apartments, community halls and commercial establishments with a built up area of more than 300 square yards (2,700 sq.ft) to install solar panels on rooftops.

From March 1, new buildings of more than 300 square yards, must make provision for solar rooftop panels before they can get construction permits. Older structures will also have to install solar panels.

Telangana is ranked second nationally in solar power, generating more than 3,000 MW. Of this, Karimnagar district has an installed capacity of 1.5 MW and Karimnagar town alone accounts for 1,300 kilowatts of solar power.

Mayor Sardar Ravinder Singh said the decision had been taken to encourage solar power generation and also curb pollution from fossil fuels.

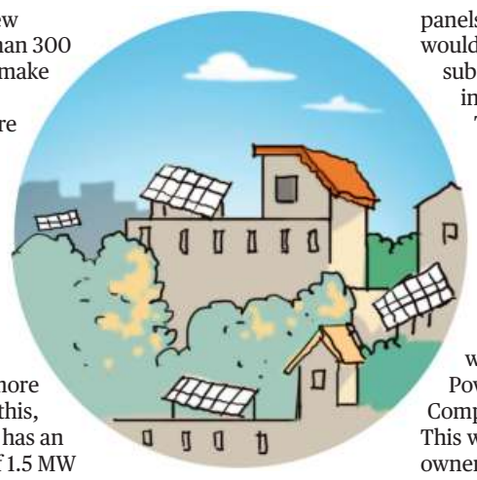

ILLUSTRATION: DEEPAK HARICHANDAN

The MCK is now claiming the mantle of becoming the first corporation to make it mandatory for all new houses to install solar panels. The civic body would provide a 30% subsidy for the installation through TSREDCO.

Integrating solar power is mandatory as part of the Karimnagar Smart City project, and the civic body is making it easier by providing net-metering facility with the Northern Power Distribution Company Limited (NPDCL). This would enable property owners to earn from the surplus power they generate.

The NPDCL would purchase power at ₹3.50 per unit. So far, 43 consumers from Karimnagar town have been selling their surplus solar power.

A women-owned dairy in Andhra Pradesh eyes the big league

With a strength of over 83,000, it procures 3.5 lakh litres of milk a day

A.D. RANGARAJAN
TIRUPATI

Before Shreeja entered her life, middle-aged Gangamma of Palamaner mandal in Andhra Pradesh's Chittoor district had to be content with the daily drudgery of maintaining her barn and selling the milk from her cows to a private supplier. And that came with the attendant problems of first realising payments from the buyer, and once the money was received, risk having the cash commandeered by a dominant male member of the family – father, husband, son or father-in-law.

But once Gangamma joined the dairy cooperative, the Tirupati-based Shreeja Mahila Milk Producer Company, life changed unimaginably for the better. Along with an army of more than 83,000 women, she is now a proud co-owner of a dairy that not only procures 3.5 lakh litres of milk every day but has become a 'game-changer' in the milk-rich Chittoor district.

Shreeja, arguably the world's largest dairy that is exclusively owned by women, was established under the emerging concept of a 'producer company' in September 2014. Backed by the National Dairy Development Board (NDDB), Shreeja is considered a miniature of Amul – every supplier here becomes a shareholder, or conversely, milk is procured only from shareholders. As a result, the shareholder base has spread across the State's three southern districts of Chittoor, Anantapuram and Nellore besides the bordering areas in Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. The cooperative principles of democratic governance and autonomy are also strictly adhered to. Women are not just shareholders, but also handle key positions on the board, as 11 of them are always on the 15-member governing board on a rotation basis, apart from three expert directors and a Chief Executive Officer.

Women power: Shareholders going to supply milk to the dairy at Gollapalle village ▪K.V. POORNACHANDRA KUMAR

The advantages in this 'all women' dairy are many. "First, it is a giant leap towards ensuring women's empowerment in the countryside," Shreeja's CEO Jayatheertha Chary told The Hindu.

A great recognition

"Secondly, it recognises the services of the women who are actually involved in milking and cattle management. Thirdly, when suppliers and owners are the same, there is no scope for adulteration as it adversely impacts the yield, the profit and thus their dividend," he added.

Prior to the establishment of the cooperative, incomes were largely impacted by arbitrariness in calculation of fat and SNF percentage, besides human errors in weighing. The payments, when released, never reached the women. Shreeja's entry into the dairy landscape changed everything.

"Payment is made once in fifteen days, which gets deposited straight into my bank account, making our men look to us for petty cash", Lakshmi Devi, resident of a village in Tirupati rural mandal, said with a wide grin. Transparency in transactions is ensured as data on the procured milk is processed real-time and the amount payable is arrived at right in front of the women.

Initially, there was substantial resistance from the men, who demanded payment to them in cash. But the company, as part of its avowed policy of ensuring women's empowerment as well as a commitment to 'Digital India' initiative, stuck to bank transfers to the women's accounts. The men were soon left with little choice but to accept the change. And seeing the success of the initiative, they are now happy with the savings generated for their families.

The handling of milk was resolved with the use of technology. Milk gathered from the 2,400 pooling points are shifted to a centrally-located Bulk Milk Cooling Unit (BMCU), which can handle up to 5,000 litres. When the volume and distance increases, the procured milk is sent to a bigger Milk Chilling Centre (MCC) having a capacity of 20,000 litres.

While collection details were earlier sent to the corporate office through pen drives, the data is now received online through GPRS-enabled units.

Frequent power cuts no longer pose a grave threat to the cooling units, after the company decided to solar-power the entire setup.

Going retail

Shreeja processes the milk it procures at Balaji Dairy, an NDDB-operated unit in Tirupati. As much as 80% of the milk is sent to New Delhi-based Mother Dairy through railway containers. With a procurement channel firmly in place, the company is now eyeing 'real visibility' through retail market presence. Apart from supplying to external agencies, Shreeja is now mulling production of curd, buttermilk, lassi, sweets, yoghurt and flavoured milk as part of a plan for value addition. There are currently four outlets in Chittoor and plans are afoot to open one in Tirupati.

"Like Amul, we too plan to have a little girl as our brand ambassador, whose icon will feature on our packets", said Mr. Chary.

Shreeja also regularly trains women in barn hygiene and cattle management, works in tandem with the local veterinary officer to identify diseases and conducts deworming camps thrice a year. The company has also arranged micro insurance and accident insurance to the women and animal insurance for the cattle – the cows are ear-tagged with a unique code. When eight of the 4,000 animals insured in the last five months died, the owners were not burdened as they received fair compensation on their claims.

With Shreeja now aiming to get itself into the list of 'Top 10' dairy enterprises in India by the year 2025, the company has invested in capacity building. Given that women get more involved when they perceive ownership and as it takes a lot of effort to ensure transformation of a homemaker into a corporate decision maker, counseling sessions are held to aid this 'supplier-to-owner' mental transformation.

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IN BRIEF

A registration office for foreigners in Dharamshala

DHARAMSHALA

Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur has inaugurated a registration office for Tibetans and foreign tourists, an official said on Sunday. The office is located at SP Complex in Dharamshala. It was built at a cost of ₹2.41 crore. PTI

Two children killed as car collides with truck in U.P.

MUZAFFARNAGAR

Two children were killed and three of their family members injured when their car collided with a truck on Kandhla-Muzaffarnagar Road, the police said on Sunday. The incident happened on Saturday near Tawli village. The victims were aged four and two. The truck driver is absconding. PTI

Seven-year-old girl raped, man arrested

SHAHJAHANPUR (U.P.)

A 22-year-old man has been arrested on charges of raping a seven-year-old girl in Uttar Pradesh's Shahjahanpur district, the police said on Sunday. The minor was returning home on Saturday when the accused dragged her into a field in Allahganj and allegedly raped her, said the police. An FIR has been lodged. PTI

Fire in vegetable oil godown in Hooghly

KOLKATA

A fire broke out in a vegetable oil godown at Dankuni, Hooghly district, on Sunday. Fire brigade sources said 10 fire tenders contained the flames in five hours. There was no report of any casualty or injury in the fire that broke out around 11.30 a.m. The cause of the fire is not yet known. PTI

Street dreams

A boy strumming a guitar by the roadside in Kolkata on Sunday. • DEBAJYOTI SARKAR

Businessman shot in Patna

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
PATNA

A 50-year-old businessman was shot by unidentified persons here, a senior police officer said on Sunday.

Purushottam Kumar, owner of a cake shop, was shot on Saturday evening, Senior Superintendent of Police Garima Mallik said.

The incident happened near Surya apartments on Fraser Road around 7.30 p.m. when Mr. Kumar was going towards his shop, located on New Dakbungalow Road, Ms. Mallik said.

Police personnel rushed the businessman to Patna Medical College and Hospital where doctors declared him brought dead.

The police have recovered a cartridge, an empty cartridge and the deceased's bike from the spot.

The senior officer said that prima facie it does not seem to be a case of property offence.

A conclave on the significance of failure

Padma Shri awardees share stories at 'Failures Conclave' to teach students that failure is not the end

BINDU SHAJAN PERAPPADAN
DEHRADUN

The key qualification to be a speaker at a unique conclave recently held in Dehradun was that you ought to have failed at least once in your life.

Featuring the motto, "Failures open the door to success", the 'Failures Conclave' was aimed at helping school and college-going students come face-to-face with individuals, including three Padma Shri awardees, who had encountered and overcome failures in their careers.

"Failure is not the end," said Avdhash Kaushal, an academic and Padma Shri winner who heads the Rural Litigation and Entitlement Kendra, which had organised the conclave.

Instead, it "should be used as a motivation to achieve your goals," said Mr. Kaushal, who had failed while at school.

Recipe for success

Addressing an audience of school and college-going students from Bhutan, Punjab and local schools, Padma Shri awardee and ayurvedic physician Vaidya Balendu Prakash stressed that hard work, discipline, dedication, the right friends and an eye on the goal were all that one needed to succeed.

"Failure keeps you in check when you stray from this path," said Mr. Prakash, sharing that he had struggled through school and college.

"Nobody is programmed to fail but this fall can be the blueprint for success given the right opportunity and goal," he added.

Yogesh Chandra, a retired physics professor, revealed that physics was a subject that he had failed in as a student. "Those who fail in conventional academic work are mostly those who do not adhere to the norm and have taken a path that nobody dared before," said Dr. Chandra. "From them come inventors and people who see things differently. Toppers take discoveries and inventions made by these people forward," he added.

Mr. Kaushal said the prime motivation for the conference was the high suicide rate among schoolchildren, who are often overwhelmed by the fear of academic failure.

"With this as the background, we Padma Shri awardees have got together for this conclave to give a peek into our failures and how we turned it around for ourselves and proved to be valuable resource to society," added Mr. Kaushal.

Renowned writer and Padma Shri winner Leeladhar Jagudi maintained that good company was vital.

"Make good friends to be successful in life. Bad company can ruin good people," he said.

"Failure is not the end of life," said Dhan Singh Rawat, Uttarakhand's Minister of Higher Education.

"Learning from our failures and not giving up is the secret to success."

WEATHER WATCH

RAINFALL, TEMPERATURE & AIR QUALITY IN SELECT METROS YESTERDAY

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

Forecast for Monday: Thundersquall accompanied by hailstorm and lightning likely at isolated places over Jharkhand, Gangetic West Bengal and Odisha; thunderstorms likely at isolated places over Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, east and west Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Northeast India

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	–	30.7	21.0
Ahmedabad	–	32.2	15.1
Aizawl	–	31.0	–
Allahabad	–	24.9	10.4
Bengaluru	–	34.1	16.5
Bhopal	–	29.7	16.4
Bhubaneswar	–	36.8	22.9
Chandigarh	–	21.6	9.7
Chennai	–	32.0	22.0
Coimbatore	–	36.9	19.7
Dehradun	–	21.8	12.2
Gangtok	–	–	8.7
Goa	–	33.6	21.5
Guwahati	–	30.7	15.0
Hubballi	–	34.0	22.0
Hyderabad	–	37.2	20.8
Imphal	–	27.2	12.4
Jaipur	–	–	14.3
Kochi	–	33.8	22.8
Kohima	0.4	21.0	6.8
Kolkata	–	32.3	21.2
Kozhikode	–	35.4	23.5
Kurnool	–	39.9	23.3
Lucknow	–	24.3	10.8
Madurai	–	36.0	21.0
Mangaluru	–	37.8	20.2
Mumbai	–	34.8	19.2
Mysuru	–	34.6	12.4
New Delhi	–	23.8	11.8
Patna	–	26.4	12.8
Port Blair	–	30.9	22.7
Puducherry	–	32.8	22.5
Pune	–	36.3	15.1
Raipur	–	34.8	21.9
Ranchi	–	31.7	16.0
Shillong	–	23.3	9.9
Shimla	–	13.6	5.5
Srinagar	–	14.7	1.7
Trivandrum	–	34.8	21.0
Tiruchi	–	35.5	20.4
Vijayawada	–	35.7	20.7
Visakhapatnam	–	32.4	24.8

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing — **Yesterday**

CITIES	SO_2	NO_2	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	64	102	23	120	–	
Bengaluru	9	82	70	–	145	
Chennai	23	14	54	131	–	
Delhi	35	44	76	257	163	
Hyderabad	5	32	13	92	117	
Kolkata	12	101	23	278	210	
Lucknow	12	28	54	262	–	
Mumbai	23	33	88	56	121	
Pune	36	18	48	104	109	
Visakhapatnam	39	66	34	68	125	

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Talcher, Odisha recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 362 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Panipat, Haryana recorded a healthy AQI score of 61

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

SO_2: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

NO_2: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

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

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

THE HINDU
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PRESS NOTICE
QUOTATION NO. II of 2018-2019

Sealed Quotation are invited by the undersigned from capable / reliable of reputed firms / authorized dealer for fixing the Supply Rate of materials from the manufactures for fixation of rates of under mentioned materials & Quotation will be received upto 12:00 Noon of 28.02.2019 and will be opened at 2:00 pm at the Mission Director, SBM(G) Office.

Sl. No.	Description of materials	Date & Time of Issue of Quotation
1	5HP Motor Operated- Hydraulic PET Bottle Baling Press Machine for Waste PET Bottle Management	10 am to 2 pm in all working days.
2	3HP Motor Operated- Hydraulic PET Bottle Baling Press Machine for Waste PET Bottle Management	

The Quotation documents and other relevant particular terms & conditions may be seen by the intending Quotationers during office hours in the office of Mission Director, SBM (G), PHED, Aizawl, Mizoram and the same can be downloaded from PHED website at **phed.mizoram.gov.in**

(H.C.LALNUNZIRA)
Mission Director, SBM (G)
Public Health Engineering Department
Mizoram: Aizawl.
PR.NO.- 457(1-3)

NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING
(e-tendering)

Superintending Engineer 7th Circle, PWD Gopeshwar on behalf of Hon'ble Governor of Uttarakhand invites E-tender (Two bid system) for the following work. All information about tender shall be available in e-GPS portal **http://www.uktenders.gov.in** on 25-02-2019.

Contract Package No.	District	Detail of Work: Name of Work	Detail of Work: Length	Completion Period	Tender Fee	Bid Security (in lacs)	Qualification
1	Chamoli	Hon'ble chief minister declaration no. 272/2017. Construction of Adibadri-Nautimotor road to Kansuwa-Chandpurgari motor road including Three year general maintenance of road from Ch. Km. 2.800 to 7.050 in Vidhansabha Karanprayag	4.25 km + 24.00 M. Span Steel girder bridge	18 month	Rs. 5000 + GST	8.55	Registered Category A and above for Road & Bridge work in State/Govt. of India.

DIPR/UK/7296

Brand connect initiative

An Artistic Venture

Meet V.S. Ramana, an artist and founder of 'HeART Beat Foundation' in Chennai that supports differently abled artists and helps them sell their artwork. This foundation was started in April 2014 and has conducted 20 shows featuring the artwork of such artists and raised nearly Rs 22 lakhs for the medical expenses and maintenance of these artists. "I come from a family of artists and musicians, so I understand how art is a unique talent that must be nurtured. What really drove me to focus on differently abled artists was an event in Delhi where I saw one such artist on a wheelchair, with his paintings for sale. Everyone in the event spoke about disability but nobody bothered to mention the artist or his paintings. It made me understand that differently abled artists are equally talented and they just need opportunities to prove themselves." says Ramana.

The first person to receive help from this foundation was Udhaya Kumar; an artist who can only move his index and thumb fingers, who understands Picasso, Van Gogh and M.F. Hussein but can paint only an inch at a time. To sell his artwork, a ten day exhibition was put up and prominent artists like actor Sivakumar and Manian Selvan were invited, and his paintings were sold for Rs 4 lakhs. Another artist, Narasimhalu, an embroider, who uses his feet to paint has also benefitted from the foundation's endeavours.

"Art galleries generally charge rent and get around 30% commission of the entire sale but for exhibitions by such artists, they waive the rent and do not earn any commission." adds Ramana.

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A shot in the arm for upgrade of An-32 aircraft

Ukrainian manufacturer of Antonov aircraft has offered the Air Force its new An-132 as a replacement for the ageing craft

DINAKAR PERI
BENGALURU

The Indian Air Force (IAF) has reason to cheer as all issues related to the upgrade of An-32 transport aircraft, its workhorse, have been resolved, according to the head of the Antonov State Corporation of Ukraine. At Aero India, Ukraine also offered its new An-132 aircraft to the IAF as a replacement for the An-32 fleet.

Time limit

"We are optimistic that the pending issues will be closed shortly... Ukraine should supply all spares and material in two years. After that, it is on India how fast the upgrades are finished," Oleksandr Donets, President of Antonov, said in a conversation with *The Hindu* on the sidelines of Aero India. Ukraine has begun supplying the upgrade kits to India.

Mr. Donets said that preliminary discussions have been held with the IAF on further life extension of the An-32 fleet by another five years. Antonov, which is the design organisation, has already checked the feasibility of further five year life extensions by conducting testing and ground vibrations.

In 2009, India finalised a major upgrade and life extension plan for the entire fleet of 105 An-32 aircraft acquired from Soviet Union under a $400 million deal which would extend their life to 40 years. So far, 46 aircraft have been upgraded, of which 40 were done in Ukraine.

The rest were to be carried out in India by IAF's base repair depot in Kanpur. But the programme came to a halt after bitter relations between Moscow and Kiev following the Russian annexation of the Crimean peninsula. Mr. Donets said that the delay was mainly due to delay in securing spare parts produced in Russia and the gravity of the problem has now "decreased."

IAF's An-32 transport aircraft. ▪ AP

At the air show, an An-132 prototype, an upgraded variant of the An-32, performed impressive turns, loops, low and high speed manoeuvres. According to Antonov, the aircraft jointly designed by Ukraine and Saudi Arabia can carry a load of upto 9 tonnes and land at high altitudes and on unpaved runways.

Mr. Donets said the An-132, which is a major improvement in terms of features and performance over the An-32, makes an ideal replacement for the IAF, and offered joint production in India under the 'Make in India' initiative.

IAF Chief Air Chief Marshal B.S. Dhanoa examined the aircraft at the show. During Aero India, Antonov briefed the IAF and also held several meetings for possible partnerships on the An-132 programme.

Stating that they were looking for international partners for the An-132 programme, Mr. Donets said his team had held discussions with Peru and Myanmar.

"We have completed contract for the demonstrator. Currently, Saudi Arabia is approaching for a contract for serial production," he said.

In the pipeline

An Avro replacement programme of the IAF is currently in the pipeline, for which the Airbus C-295 has been chosen in partnership with Tata group. However, final contract discussions have been delayed. Another project for the joint development of a Medium Transport Aircraft (MTA) with Russia was shelved. The An-132 is in the same class as the C-295 and the now shelved MTA.

Assam hooch tragedy toll rises to 143

20 people arrested, 12 of them in Golaghat and Jorhat districts

RAHUL KARMAKAR
GUWAHATI

Celebrating the birth of a baby with locally-brewed liquor at a tea estate three days ago has so far left 143 people, including 45 women, dead in eastern Assam's Golaghat and Jorhat districts.

Celebrating a birth

Tragedy had first struck the Halmira Tea Estate on Thursday night when plantation workers gathered at the house of a tea plucker to celebrate the birth of a baby.

The "poisonous" liquor, which officials said could have been sourced from the same illegal brewer, soon felled people in the adjoining Jugibari and Goronga villages and at the Borhola Tea Estate in the adjoining Jorhat district.

"Thankfully, the last death was reported on Sunday morning and fewer people are being admitted. So far, 85 people have died and 31 of them are women while 160 are under treatment," Golaghat Deputy Commissioner Dhiren Hazarika said.

58 dead in Jorhat

His Jorhat counterpart Roshni Aparanji Korathi said the death toll touched 58 in her district with 15 of the victims being women.

Excise officials said more than 100 cases have been registered after a crackdown on bootleggers and illicit brewers across Assam. They have arrested 20 people, 12 of them in Golaghat and Jorhat districts.

Two forensic scientists, Abhijit Gogoi and Rupam Lachit, who collected samples of the killer liquor from the sites in the two districts, said they would find the cause of death by Monday evening.

Former Chief Minister Tarun Gogoi visited survivors of the liquor tragedy in Borhola – the estate falls under his Assembly constituency Titabor.

In a first, Air Force commissions aerial surveillance

Hyper spectral imagery to track suspicious movements in dense forest areas

SHARATH S. SRIVATSA
BENGALURU

The Indian Air Force (IAF) has commissioned the development of an aerial surveillance system for monitoring suspicious movements under dense foliage cover along the international border and some parts within the country. This hyper spectral imagery programme, a first for the country, seeks to locate and identify suspicious movements and is expected to be operational in the next two years.

What the programme would mean is that the data gathered from aerial sources would be processed within minutes, and researchers would be able to tell security forces on the ground of "unwanted" human presence in the area, their numbers and locations, among other inputs.

The IAF is spending ₹13 crore for the programme in which human resources from premier research and education institutions across the country are being put together, and has roped in a senior researcher and lead technologist of Indian origin from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) as the chief technologist for the programme.

"For the first time, we will be having multi-sensor data fusion that will help identify an adversary. We have a mandate to change the way we fight the war. The IAF is willing to wait for a couple of years to reap the benefits," said a senior source in the IAF's Air Warfare Strategy Cell. "Some agencies in India tried to work on the technology, but have not succeeded," sources added.

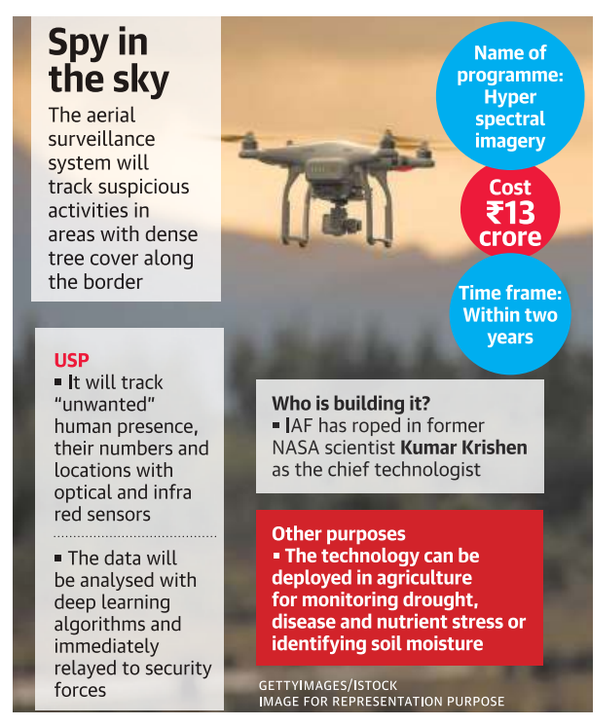
The IAF, which had tracked the work of Houston-based senior scientist Kumar Krishen's work for nearly three years, finally roped him in after he quit NASA in September 2018.

"This is a unique patent application, which will help identify the presence of a human below trees, dense foliage, shrubs or inside a structure, whether it is day or night. It can detect human presence from air even if there a cloud cover, dense fog or snow cover," explained Dr. Krishen, who spent 43 years in NASA.

Data/images will be captured through optical and infra red sensors – to be most likely mounted on an unmanned aerial vehicle – and processed through deep learning algorithms.

Dr. Krishen said that the methods are in place while they were working on handling data and tuning up the algorithm.

"We are talking to nearly half a dozen educational institutes, including IIT Delhi and Rourkee and involve local industries to construct imaging radar and infra red imaging. We want to develop sensors locally. I am confident of having sensors made in India," said Dr. Krishnen.



EVM is 'information' under RTI, says CIC

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

An Electronic Voting Machine (EVM) is "information" under the Right to Information Act, the Central Information Commission has ruled.

The Commission was hearing the appeal of an RTI applicant who had asked the Election Commission for an EVM but was denied.

Chief Information Commissioner (CIC) Sudhir Bhargava ruled that "the EVM which is available with the respondent [ECI] in a material form and also as samples ... is an information under the RTI Act."

Mr. Bhargava noted that the definition of information under Section 2(f) of the RTI Act includes "any material in any form, including records, documents, memos, e-mails, opinions, advices, press releases, circulars, orders, logbooks, contracts, reports, papers, samples, models, data material held in any electronic form..."

IN BRIEF

Vande Bharat Express suffers damage

NEW DELHI

Semi-high speed train Vande Bharat Express suffered damage on its exterior on Saturday after being hit by "flying ballast". The incident occurred near Achalda on the Kanpur-Tundla section in Uttar Pradesh. "A shower of ballast came flying towards Vande Bharat Express when the Dibrugarh-Rajdhani crossing on the adjoining line ran over cattle," the Northern Railways said.

6 houses set on fire in group clash in Gujarat

ANAND

A clash broke out between people from two communities in Gujarat's Anand district on Sunday evening resulting in six houses being set on fire, police said. Seventeen teargas shells had to be fired to stop the irate crowd which was pelting stones in the Akbarpur locality in Khambhat town here, Anand SP Makarand Chauhan said. PTI

5 lakh names added to sex offenders database

NEW DELHI

The names of over five lakh sex offenders convicted of crimes against women have been added to a database which can be accessed by law enforcement agencies to help crack sex crimes, officials said on Sunday. The national registry of sex offenders is maintained by the National Crime Records Bureau. PTI

Quota for EWS is travesty of justice: Stalin

THANJAVUR

Describing the Centre's decision to grant reservation for EWS in the general category as a travesty of social justice, DMK president M.K. Stalin said that agitations were inevitable in the current scenario to safeguard the welfare of the deserving sections. If reservation is based on economic status, the really deserving would lose the opportunity, he said.

M.P. govt. delay saves man from the noose

SC commutes death sentence to life

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL
NEW DELHI

A four-year delay by the Shivraj Singh Chouhan government in Madhya Pradesh to forward the mercy petition of a man who killed his wife and five children to the Centre has helped him escape the noose.

The Supreme Court ruled that there is no doubt that the man killed his family. Not only did the State delay forwarding his mercy plea, it did not, for four years, file an affidavit to explain the lapse. A three-judge Bench of Justices N.V. Ramana, Deepak Gupta and Indira Banerjee concluded that the delay on the part of the State government was "undue, inordinate and unreasonable" and commuted the death penalty of the convict, Jagdish, to life imprisonment in a recent judgment (February 21).

The crime dates to August 2005. The trial was finished in 2006. The M.P. High Court also confirmed the death sentence.

The Supreme Court dismissed an appeal filed by Jagdish in 2009. He filed his mercy petition to the President and State Governor in October 2009.

DNA forensics a vital tool in cracking wildlife crimes

Analysis by the Zoological Survey of India can identify species and number of individuals killed

SHIV SAHAY SINGH
KOLKATA

In November 2017, 23-year-old youth from North 24 Parganas in West Bengal killed a wild animal and posted photographs on a social media platform. State Forest Department officials tracked down the man but by then the meat was half cooked and the accused denied all allegations.

However, a few samples of the cooked meat brought to the Zoological Survey of India (ZSI), Kolkata, were enough to nail the accused. A forensic DNA analysis showed that the meat was that of the Asian Palm Civet (*Paradoxurus hermaphroditus*), a Schedule II species protected under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. The analysis helped Forest Department officials press charges against the youth and in further prosecution of the case.

"With investigating agencies facing increased challenges of collecting evidence to ensure convictions in wildlife crimes, DNA forensics are providing a major headway," said Mukesh Thakur, a scientist with the ZSI's wildlife forensics team who has contributed to the research.

Details of case studies, where advanced DNA forensics were used to help prosecute wildlife related crimes, have been documented in a recently published ZSI report, titled "Ascertaining species of origin from confiscated meat using DNA forensics and Wildlife forensics in nullifying the false accusation."

Details of the case have been published in a Zoological Survey of India report.

Referring to two instances where pangolin scales were seized from Siliguri in August 2017 and April 2018, Dr. Thakur said DNA analysis revealed that these scales were from the Chinese Pangolin whose habitat is restricted to five states in northeast India including parts of north Bengal.

Reference database

"We have now developed morphology-based identification protocols for distinguishing scales of Indian and Chinese Pangolin with high confidence," he said. The ZSI is now developing protocols to identify the number of individuals killed in a seizure from the DNA analyses, he added.

"We are not just confining our efforts up to species identification but our scientists are also involved in creating a reference database to assign the seizures to the source of origin, identifying sexes from seizures to understand poaching/ hunting pressure on the species which might impact the species demography in coming years," said Director of ZSI Kailash Chandra.

"We have a dedicated facility for DNA analysis at the ZSI, where we can identify samples at the molecular level using DNA forensics. This new tool is helping in solving a number of wildlife crimes," he added. The ZSI has also formulated a standard operating procedure in the investigation of wildlife crime.

Sleepless in Kolkata: Kashmiris live in constant fear of threats

SUVOJIT BAGCHI
KOLKATA

A Kashmiri college student helping a friend write an article gave up after repeatedly trying to get Kolkata's Kashmiris to speak. They refused to talk, the student said.

"Even my father refused to talk about the nature of fear that has gripped us over the last week," the student said on condition of anonymity, adding, "Please do not disclose my gender. I do not want to be the reason of trouble for my family and for Kashmiris."

The few hundred Kashmiris in Kolkata have experienced unprecedented hostility over the last week.

"An absurd number of hate messages have flooded Facebook. Kashmiri women are issued rape threats, men are threatened with lynching and attacks on their families," the student said, showing screenshots of hate messages. One of the screenshots notes that a similar "number of [a slang] Kashmiris are available in Bengal," indicating that the Pulwama terror attack could be avenged in Kolkata.

In the past one week, a prominent doctor has been threatened, a shawl seller was brutally beaten in Nadia district, another was threatened in Lalbag in Murshidabad, while other cases are reported but could not be verified. In Lalbag, both the accused and the victim, the shawl seller, were arrested.

Many are surprised that Kashmiris in the city are not speaking up. "The reason is because it is a tiny group," said Sabir Ahamed, organiser of a community-based campaign to diffuse communal tension, Know Your Neighbour.

"The other factor, however, is even more distressing. As soon as a news report is published, people equipped to create trouble are digging out names, locations and even house numbers of the threatened persons, analysing data and issuing more threats. So media reports that are casually disclosing identities are not helping in any way," Mr. Ahamed said.

The student said news of attacks on Kashmiri traders in the city and "the Muslim-Kashmiri identity" was also a reason. They never expected "such behavior" in Kolkata as many have been living in Kolkata for generations.

A Kashmiri housewife said she is planning to leave the city for Hyderabad, "because the politics of Bengal has some form of bloodiness in it, at least before the elections." She said, "Many of our friends and cousins are trying to move to southern States. We have heard that there are fewer or no threats to Kashmiris in south. Perhaps women are safer in Karnataka compared to Bengal."

However, one Kashmiri, a government servant in Srinagar on a visit to Kolkata, said that he is not too keen to return to his home State before the scheduled date of departure.

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NOTICE INVITING TENDER (NIT)
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e-TENDER NOTICE NO.: CPC-61/2018-19 Date: 24.02.2019

ODISHA POWER TRANSMISSION CORPORATION LTD. invites bids (in e-tendering mode only) under single stage two-envelop system from reputed EPC / Turnkey Contractors for **Engineering, Supply, Erection and Commissioning of (i) 2x500 MVA, 400/220/33KV Gas (SF6) Insulated sub-station (GIS) with SAS at Ersama, Paradeep and 125 MVAR bus Reactor; (ii) 400KV DC line (Approx. line length-136.15 Kms.) from 400 KV New DUBURI Grid Sub-station to proposed GIS at Ersama, Paradeep; (iii) 400KV feeder bay extension with 2 nos. 125MVAR line reactors (One dia) at 400KV New Duburi Grid Sub-station; (iv) 220KV DC line from proposed GIS at Ersama, Paradeep to existing 220/132/33KV Grid Sub-station at Paradeep (Approx. line length-31.00 Kms.). (v) Two nos. 220KV feeder bay extension at existing 220/132/33KV Grid Sub-station, Paradeep for connectivity with proposed GIS at Ersama, Paradeep; (vi) 220KV DC line from proposed GIS at Ersama, Paradeep to 220/132/33KV Grid Sub-station at Pratapsasan (U/C) (Approx. line length-73.5 Kms.); and (vii) Two nos. 220KV bay extension at 220/132/33KV Grid Sub-station at Pratapsasan (U/C) for connectivity with proposed GIS at Ersama, Paradeep at an Estimated Cost of the Package for Rs.561.16 Crore on "TURNKEY CONTRACT BASIS".** Interested bidders are required to enroll themselves in the tender portal **"www.tenderwizard.com/ OPTCL"**. Complete set of bidding documents are available on **"www.tenderwizard.com/OPTCL"** portal from Dt.**(25.02.2019) / (11:00)AM** up to Dt.**(27.03.2019) / (12:45)PM.** Interested bidders may visit OPTCL's official website **"http://www.optcl.co.in"** and Tender Portal **"http://www.tenderwizard.com/ OPTCL"** for further detail.

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(Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, Govt. of India)
(An ISO 9001: 2015 Institution)
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Tel.No. 27751741-745, Fax. No. 040-27750198. Website: niepid.nic.in

CORRIGENDUM TO EMPLOYMENT NOTIFICATION 01/2018

Refer to the employment notification no. 01/2018 appeared in this News paper on 27.02.2018. Pay scale/level allocated to the posts at Sl.No. 1 & 3 i.e., Special Education Teacher and Junior Special Education Teacher have since been upgraded upon implementation of Part B recommendation of 6th CPC. Interested candidates may apply for these posts. The candidates who have applied earlier need not to be apply again
The last date for receipt of completed application forms is 11.03.2019. For further details please visit Institute's website: **www.niepid.nic.in** or contact AAO(PM)I/c at **Ph.No. 040-27751741-745 Extn. 209.**
DIRECTOR I/C

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No.JIP/Admn.I/Dep./1(29)/2019 Date: 25.02.2019

Applications are invited from eligible officers of Central/State/ Union Territory Governments/Autonomous Institutions/ Universities/ Research Institutions etc. for filling up the following posts on Deputation basis at JIPMER, Puducherry:

Sl. No.	DESIGNATION	PAY	VACANCY
1.	FINANCIAL ADVISOR	Level 12; ₹78800-209200 (Pre-revised: PB3 ₹15600-39100 + GP ₹7600/-)	1
2.	SENIOR ACCOUNTS OFFICER	Level 11; ₹67700-208700 (Pre-revised: PB3 ₹15600-39100 + GP ₹6600/-)	1

The format of the application, other details regarding age, qualification, experience and other conditions of eligibility etc., for the above posts are available in the JIPMER website.
The last date for receipt of filled in application is **26.04.2019 (Friday) till 4.30 P.M.**
DIRECTOR

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Terror timeline

The FATF must impress upon Pakistan the need to take meaningful action

The statement of the Financial Action Task Force in Paris is another message to Islamabad from the international community of the mounting costs of its decades-old lax policy towards terror groups. Significantly, it came a week after the February 14 Pulwama attack, and the global terror finance watchdog condemned, in no uncertain terms, the suicide bombing of the CRPF convoy that left 40 personnel dead. It issued a 10-point advisory to Pakistan if it wants to be out of the "grey list" of countries posing a "risk to the international system". Pakistan has been on the grey list since June 2018, and will be required to show compliance or face being "black-listed" by the session in October 2019. A black-list would mean enhanced financial scrutiny of its government, possible sanctions against its central bank, and a downgrade of its financial and credit institutions. This is something Pakistan, already facing an acute debt crisis, can ill-afford. Amongst the FATF's stern observations of what it called Pakistan's lack of "understanding" of the terror finance risks posed by groups, such as the Taliban, al-Qaeda, Islamic State, Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammed, was a clear message: Islamabad must visibly demonstrate that it has taken measures to crack down on and shut down the infrastructure and finances of these groups. The first deadline to show results is May 2019, with a review in June. This goes even beyond the Security Council guidelines under its 1267 listing, that oblige Pakistan to ensure that terror entities do not travel out of the country, or have access to funding or weaponry.

Proof that Pakistan took on board the FATF's warnings and potential action came even as the plenary was under way. Prime Minister Imran Khan held a meeting of his national security officials, and vowed to double down to tackle terror groups in Pakistan and to put two Hafiz Saeed-led LeT offshoots, the Jamaat ud Dawa and the Falah-e-Insaniat Foundation, on its schedule (1) list of banned organisations. A day later, security forces took over "administrative control" of a madrasa in Bahawalpur believed to be run by the Masood Azhar-led JeM, which was behind the Pulwama attack. But the measures do not go far enough or inspire confidence. Mr. Khan's own speech in response to India's demand for action on those responsible for Pulwama was a disappointing mix of denial and opportunism to raise the Kashmir issue. The banning of the JuD and the FIF doesn't appear to have affected the groups in the slightest, and a day after taking over the Bahawalpur seminary, Pakistan's Information Minister announced that its links to the JeM were simply "Indian propaganda". The world community must make it clear to the Pakistan government the possible international and financial repercussions of ignoring the FATF's timeline.

Safety nets

New rules on unregulated deposit schemes need to be backed up with proper checks

The savings of low-income Indian households have traditionally remained unprotected by the government when compared to those of the more affluent economic groups. But that may be about to change now. President Ram Nath Kovind on Thursday promulgated the Banning of Unregulated Deposit Schemes Ordinance, which bars all deposit schemes in the country that are not officially registered with the government from either seeking or accepting deposits from customers. The ordinance will help in the creation of a central repository of all deposit schemes under operation, thus making it easier for the Centre to regulate their activities and prevent fraud from being committed against ordinary people. The ordinance allows for compensation to be offered to victims through the liquidation of the assets of those offering illegal deposit schemes. Popular deposit schemes such as chit funds and gold schemes, which as part of the huge shadow banking system usually do not come under the purview of government regulators, have served as important instruments of saving for people in the unorganised sector. But these unregulated schemes have also been misused by some miscreants to swindle the money of depositors with the promise of unbelievably high returns in a short period of time. The Saradha chit fund scam in West Bengal is just one example of such a heinous financial crime against depositors. The Centre's latest attempt to curb unregulated deposit schemes through an ordinance reflects a timely recognition of the need for greater legal protection to be offered for those depositors with inadequate financial literacy.

While the intent of the ordinance, which is to protect small depositors, is indeed commendable, the benefits that depositors will eventually derive from the new legislation will depend largely on its proper implementation. For one, policymakers will have to make sure that the bureaucrats responsible for the on-ground implementation of the ordinance are keen on protecting the savings of low-income households. There must also be checks against persons in power misusing the new rules to derecognise genuine deposit schemes that offer useful financial services to customers in the unorganised sector. In fact, in the past there have been several cases of politicians acting in cahoots with the operators of fraudulent deposit schemes to fleece depositors of their hard-earned money. Another potential risk involved when the government, as in this case, takes it upon itself to guarantee the legitimacy of various deposit schemes is that it dissuades depositors from conducting the necessary due diligence before choosing to deposit their money. The passing of tough laws may thus be the easiest of battles in the larger war against illicit deposit schemes.

After Pulwama, a sorry response

The government and the Opposition must state their policy for security and reconciliation in Jammu and Kashmir

RADHA KUMAR

Like many others, I have watched events following the Pulwama tragedy with mounting stupefaction, not to mention rage and disgust. Rarely have I seen such a disingenuous response, and that is saying a lot considering we have been unable to deal adequately with Pakistan-based terrorists for decades.

Right time for questions

We are told that this is not the time to ask questions. In fact, this is precisely the time. Forty of our security personnel have been killed in what appears to have been a preventable tragedy. We are told there was little or vague intelligence, but in fact the Jammu and Kashmir police advisory, sent a week prior to the attack, was specific that the Central Reserve Police Force deployment would be targeted. What is being done to ensure that operational lapses do not occur again? Moreover what about long overdue security reforms for troops that are sent into harm's way, such as properly fortified vehicles and installations, not to mention adequate protective gear and shorter terms of duty? Will these basic safeguards be provided this time?

Far from improving security, casualty figures within Jammu and Kashmir have mounted to levels far above what they were in the years preceding 2014. Union Law Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad says that 475 terrorists have been killed between 2015 and 2018 as against 249 in the three prior years, but omits the fact that the number of armed youth was below 200 from 2008 to 2013. This number shot up after 2016 and continues to rise. Nor does Mr. Prasad mention the figure of security forces killed. It stands at 358 killed between 2014-18, a rise of 93% over preceding years. There have been more than 1,700 terrorist attacks in the same years; and infiltration too has continued to rise, reaching 400 between 2016 and 2018. Are we not owed some explanation for this deteriorating security situation?

'Coercive diplomacy'

Bad as this is, what followed the Pulwama attack was even worse. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has given the Indian Army the green light to respond as and when they consider appropriate. That is fine, and we will wait and see what the Army does. In the meantime, we are told, New Delhi is engaged in 'coercive diplomacy' to make the Pakistan government suffer diplomatic and economic consequences. Either they don't know what coercive diplomacy is or they think we the people do not. Removing the Most Favoured Nation status is meaningless and raising tariffs on Pakistani goods is equally so given that the balance of trade with Pakistan is heavily in our favour. A threat to divert the surplus waters of the Indus's eastern rivers, such as the Ravi and Beas, is again disingenuous, since it is anyway India's right and will take over four years to materialise, without significantly hurting Pakistan. As for denying sports visas or pulling out of the World Cup, the former has already rebounded against India, with the International Olympic Committee downgrading the event.

One point the government has missed is with regard to Russia. We are currently negotiating to buy Kalashnikov rifles from Russia, surely necessary for our security forces. But have we asked Moscow to cease, or at least freeze, arms sales to Pakistan until the Imran Khan government take credible

REUTERS

action against the Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM)?

Groundwork from the past

So what is Mr. Modi's National Democratic Alliance government doing? As far as one can see, it is mostly following in the steps of the United Progressive Alliance. Getting JeM chief Masood Azhar proscribed as an international terrorist under UNSCR 1267 was an initiative launched by the Manmohan Singh government, supported by France, the U.S. and the U.K. (and consistently blocked by China). The present government is right in persisting with this effort despite the move having had little impact on Pakistan, though it has gained a strong statement from the UN Security Council. What is wrong is the failure to acknowledge that it was his predecessor's initiative and represents continuity of government policy. Such a recognition would go some way to justifying Mr. Modi's demand for unity. In its absence, his demand appears hollow.

In fact, the only step an Indian government took with serious consequences for Pakistan – including last week – was under the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), which placed Pakistan on a grey list in 2012, making it difficult to get aid or loans from international agencies. On Friday, the FATF resolved to keep Pakistan on its grey list while issuing severe strictures at Pakistan's failure to accept the threat that terrorist groups like the Lashkar-e-Taiba and JeM pose. The results have been immediate though perhaps cosmetic: the Imran Khan administration has taken over seminaries in Bahawalpur and reinstated the ban on the Lashkar and affiliated organisations.

Who first activated the FATF? It was the Manmohan Singh government, with substantial support from the U.S.'s Obama administration. And who came up with the proposal to activate the FATF? It was suggested at a Track II on Afghanistan in 2008-9, by Arundhati Ghose, one of our finest diplomats and a committed supporter of Track II, which our talking heads take such pleasure in reviling.

Kashmir crackdown

Disingenuity pales in comparison, however, with the steps the government has taken in Jammu and Kashmir – or not taken. It is a sad commentary that the Supreme Court had to order immediate action to protect Kashmiri students and traders in the rest of the country. The Home and Human Resource Development Ministers have now swung belatedly into action, and on Saturday, Mr. Modi finally spoke on the issue at a rally in Tonk, Rajasthan. But, as of this writing, no action has been taken against Meghalaya Governor Tathagata Roy for his hate speech against Kashmiris.

Blatant as the acts of omission are, it is the acts of commission that truly worry. The government first removed the security given to over 170 people, from Hurriyat leaders to members of Kashmiri political parties and new aspirants like former civil servant Shah Faesal. Now Jamaat-e-Islami members and the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front's Yasin Malik have been detained. Why these arrests? Is there some evidence linking them to the Pulwama attack? Similarly, why the removal of security? There is a terrible canard doing the rounds that Kashmiri political parties are responsible for the militancy in the Valley. In fact, their members have risked and lost hundreds, in some cases thousands, of lives at the hands of armed radicals. What is the point of back-footing constitutional parties? Is it to justify the postponement of Assembly elections when the State urgently needs to move out of President's rule?

Indeed, what reason can there be for withdrawing security to Hurriyat leaders when successive Indian governments, including the current one, have provided them security? The only result has been to unite radical youth behind them, and to allow further radicalisation of the people of the Valley.

A larger question that flows from the above is, does the government have any policy to make peace in Kashmir? Resolution through talks, especially with Kashmiri dissidents, has been axiomatic to government policy for three decades. Their most frequent interlocutors were the Hurriyat. Ironically, the Mirwaiz believed that only right-wing Indian political parties could make peace, offering the Modi government one of the best opportunities of any Indian government. That illusion was exploded in 2014 itself and stands in tatters today.

Clearly, issues of peace, security and reconciliation in Jammu and Kashmir cannot be left to the government alone. It is time for Opposition parties to unite on a programme of sustained engagement with the people of the State, to show that the rest of India cares for the terrible suffering inflicted on them – and even more importantly, that there is political will to end the Kashmir conflict in partnership with the people, not against them.

Radha Kumar is a former Government of India interlocutor for Jammu and Kashmir and author of 'Paradise at War: A Political History of Kashmir'

De-odourising sewage

India's cities are drowning in waste — but no one is bothered

R. SRINIVASAN

The World Bank estimates that more than a fifth of all communicable diseases in India (21%) are caused by contaminated water. It attributes one in ten deaths in India to diseases or infections directly or indirectly transmitted through water. Over 500 children die every day in India due to diarrhoeal diseases.

Nitrogen, a growing pollutant

Now, add nitrogen pollution to the list. According to a study by the Indian Nitrogen Group, a task force of scientists tracking the issue, the amount of reactive nitrogen in a bulk of the water bodies in India is already twice the limit prescribed by WHO. Nitrogen pollution from untreated sewage, the study found, now outstrips nitrogen pollution from the Indian farmer's urea addiction.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has managed to make toilets top of the mind in our country, with his Swachh Bharat Abhiyan. Toilets are being built in mission mode and there is enough anecdotal evidence to suggest that there has been a measurable reduction in the number of people defecating in the open, which stood at over 500 million – or half the population – a few years ago.

Clean India missions

Ironically, India's latest, largest and most significantly scaled attempt at cleanliness – the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan – is likely to add to this problem.

Under the mission, in the past four years alone, over nine crore toilets have been constructed. Of these, only 60 lakh are in urban areas, where one assumes they are connected to some sort of sewage system (even this assumption is a stretch. A study done by the Centre for Science and Environment in 30 cities in Uttar Pradesh found that only 28% of toilets in these cities were connected to a sewage system). The rest will be generating fecal sludge, sewage and septage which has no place to go.

Which means that that too will simply get dumped, polluting land, surface and ground water and killing our rivers and ponds.

J. MANOHARAN

According to the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), 63% of urban sewage flowing into rivers is untreated. The CPCB's website admits that the gap between sewage generated in urban areas (all Class 1 and Class 2 towns) and capacity for treating that is over 78%.

Besides, the numbers are a bit dodgy. Up to a third of the installed sewage treatment capacity is fully or partly dysfunctional. Even where the plants are working, many are not working at full capacity, because the infrastructure needed to feed the raw sewage into the treatment plant – a network of drains, sewers and pumping stations – is inadequate or incomplete.

All this, one would have presumed, prodded policymakers and governments into action. Just like the nation is building toilets in mission mode, one would have thought civic administrations would be building drains and sewers and treatment plants with the same zeal.

One would have presumed wrong. Even though it is arguably one of the major health hazards faced by the people – in cities, in particular – sewage and human waste is simply not on the agenda. Here's a telling statistic to illustrate my point – of the 99 cities in the 'Smart Cities' mission, which are collectively spending ₹2 lakh crore over five years (from 2015), only 2.4% of the money is going to be spent on waste management. Even storm water drainage (which only removes short-term excess water during heavy downpours and doesn't really add to waste management) gets a higher share of 2.5%!

Of course, other schemes like the Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT) also fund such schemes. AMRUT covers a much larger spread – 500 so-called 'mission cities' across the country. Of these, only 217 pitched for a sewage treatment plant as an AMRUT project. Of these, in the last four years, only four have been completed, according to a reply filed in the Lok Sabha.

Even these numbers are misleading. Of the 212 schemes, as many as 189 are accounted for by just Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Gujarat. Only six other States have one or more projects under way. The rest have no plans.

Access to water

This, despite the fact that water is increasingly becoming the biggest challenge faced by most Indian cities today. According to NITI Aayog's composite water management index report released last year, 75% of households do not have access to drinking water on premises, 70% households lack piped water (potable or otherwise) and as many as 20 cities will effectively use up all available water resources by 2020!

Sewage and waste need to come centrestage in our policy debates. Elections may be fought on 'bijli, sadak, paani' (power, roads, water) but no election is fought over naali (drain). Unless that happens, we run the real risk of eventually either choking or being poisoned by our own waste.

R. Srinivasan is Editor, The Hindu BusinessLine

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.

No longer home?

The judicial order which could lead to the eviction of lakhs of forest dwellers is autocratic (Editorial page, "Without land or recourse", February 23). Tribals have been in this habitat for ages. Where will they go? Those who say that tribals are destroying forest land are way off the mark. If they really wanted to do so, forests would have been decimated decades ago. The real destroyers of forest lands are smugglers, corrupt forest officials, their political masters and urban dwellers. It is these people that the judiciary should be keeping under check. Creating conditions for a tribal rebellion would be far more dangerous than a border war.

P.R. HARITH VARMA,
Hyderabad

Buffeted by backpacks

The writer's light-hearted/mild description ('Open page', "Backpacks with punch", February 24) of a careless act by a fellow air traveller with a backpack while boarding a flight does not fully convey the actual potential for discomfort or even outright injury to fellow passengers. I say this as a senior plastic surgeon. The injury caused (after being struck on the head by a backpack with gadgets) could even be of a serious nature if the person happens to be a child. Unfortunately, basic courtesy and care for others right next to us, in our crowded spaces, does not seem to be a part of our much-celebrated culture. However, we can certainly learn from others. On boarding crowded railcars in Japan, one notices how every person who has a backpack, or any other bag for that matter, carries it in a way that does not inconvenience others. Travellers go to the extent of keeping such bags between their feet while standing so that there is more room for other passengers. Perhaps airlines in India and other transport providers should emulate such an example and instruct travellers to observe this. Instructions to this effect can be highlighted prominently so that travellers can have a better experience than what the writer had.

DR. SYED ALTAF HUSSAIN,
Chennai

Travellers beware

Should I as a recent visitor to India have to alter my expectations as to how I as a visitor can expect to be treated? While in Delhi recently, we decided to walk from our hotel to Connaught Place. As an obvious visitor, I am used to people wanting to talk to me. One gentleman, while walking with us, had advice as to where to go, but also warned us about a practice in and around the area perpetrated on the unsuspecting – of 'excrement on the shoe scam' where the victim will either be pickpocketed or charged an exorbitant sum to clean the mess. I had difficulty believing what I was hearing, until while walking through Connaught Place, two people, undoubtedly in on the scam, were extremely keen to point out that I had excrement on my shoes. Having been forewarned, we retreated a safe distance away and sorted it out for ourselves. But this disgusting practice does a great disservice to those in and around Connaught Place trying to make a living and reflects poorly on the area.

MARTYN THOMAS,
Cardiff, U.K.

A Sunday refresh

The idea to have the 'Magazine', in a new tabloid format, is commendable. The look and feel are great, with improved readability. Being rich in content, the portions can be read at leisure. New columns such as 'It Happened Last Week' and 'Green Humour' are thoughtful. The efforts to continuously and successfully experiment to improve the reader experience must be noted.

G. GOKUL KISHORE,
New Delhi

■ I am immensely delighted with the product. It is certain to make Sunday reading more pleasurable and archivable.

G. RAMASUBRAMANYAM,
Vijayawada

■ It is pleasing that the 'Magazine' not only has a refreshed format but also includes the 'Literary Review' section, my favourite, which disappeared from here over a year ago.

RICHIK DADHICH,
Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh

■ Thank you for giving me ample reading material for a whole week while on the move in trains and buses. The 'Magazine' is now a breath of fresh air.

N. KRISHNAMURTHY
New Delhi

■ The product is a pleasant surprise and raises the quality of reading material. I have been a reader since 2001 and am glad to say that the daily is way ahead of the competition in connecting with readers with updations.

PALLAV,
New Delhi

MORE LETTERS ONLINE:
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CORRECTIONS & CLARIFICATIONS:

The graphic that accompanied "Safety, pollution top issues among women voters, says survey" (Feb. 24, 2019), erroneously stated that the total number of respondents of the survey was 40,000. Actually, it was 20,000.

The Readers' Editor's office can be contacted by Telephone: +91-44-28418297/28576300; E-mail:readerseditor@thehindu.co.in

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Old challenges in building a new Kerala

The Nava Kerala Mission requires decentralised planning and the participation of the local government

M.A. OOMMEN

For the Kerala government, the Nava Kerala (new Kerala) Mission, which seeks to address problems in four key sectors, has only become a bigger challenge after the 2018 floods. A Post-Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA) report, prepared by a team of 76 international experts in collaboration with the State government, estimates that ₹31,000 crore, which was 4% of the GSDP in 2018-19, is needed to rebuild the State. Reconstructing 17,316 houses, repairing 46,000 houses, rebuilding 1,613 schools, etc. are herculean tasks. Turning this challenge into an opportunity depends on the will and vision of the people. Rebuilding is different from repairing and demands a paradigm shift in the concept and strategy of development. A novel vision and holistic approach must replace the prevailing ad hoc approach. The PDNA report provides an excellent starting point for this.

Strengths and weaknesses

For any purposeful rebuilding, we need to identify both the strength and capabilities of the State as well as its major failures. Kerala has a fascinating human development narrative and a rich biodiversity. Since the Communist Party of India ascended to power in Kerala in 1957, the State has abolished landlordism, managed a literacy rate that is more than 90%, provided affordable healthcare, ensured decentralised people's planning, and seen the growing inflow of foreign remittances. However, social failures such as widening inequality, marginalisation of the most vulnerable sections of society, an increase in the crime rate, atrocities against women and children, a high suicide rate, and road accidents have been ignored by decision-makers.

Antonio Gramsci famously said that politics means conscious action (praxis) in pursuit of a common goal. While adversarial politics is part of democratic practice, the polarising approach which Kerala witnesses today is unhelpful in the context of rebuilding. New political idioms through discussions are important, for no society can meaningfully function without some presumption of trust and openness. The State needs significant transparency guarantees. Transparency guarantees – "the freedom to deal with one another under guarantees of disclosure and lucidity", as Amartya Sen observes – have an instrumental role "in preventing corruption, financial irresponsibility and underhand dealings". Rent-seeking and growing disregard for the rule of law cannot be the basis for rebuilding.

"Rebuilding is different from repairing and demands a paradigm shift in the concept and strategy of development." A scene from Paravur in Kerala after the floods in 2018. • REUTERS

Today Kerala is told that it should recapture the spirit of renaissance. One needs to clarify this. It is discovering and rediscovering the essence of humanity, which has been under a cloud in recent times. Like the Enlightenment in Europe that threw up reason against religious fundamentalism, Narayana Guru brought out the significance of freedom for those who were suffering caste and class unfreedoms. The moot question is whether Kerala will sink preconceived religious prejudices and political fundamentalism and imbue the public sphere with reason.

The project requires the participation of the local government, and decentralised planning. The third tier of governance in Kerala comprising nearly 22,000 elected representatives is known for its multistage planning process and people's participation. What is wrong in making the local government the centre of recovery and rebuilding?

The current debates and the PDNA report are silent on urban governance. Several problems in Kerala arise out of the failure to address the issue of a rising urban population. Urban Kerala has the highest monthly per capita consumption expenditure in India. As a result, the report estimates the daily municipal solid waste production in Kerala to be at 10,044 tonnes. This is besides the colossal disaster debris that remains to be cleared. It is not difficult to revive the gram sabha spirit of the past as part of the rebuilding project. Section 55 of the Kerala Municipality Act, 1994 provides for the creation of a State Development Council presided over by the Chief Minister with the Chief Secretary as Convener and comprising members of the Council of Ministers and leaders of panchayats and municipalities. Both the United Democratic Front and the Left Democratic Front have wasted this institution. The State Development Council can be made the umbrella organisation that will integrate the Nava Kerala Mission and the local government to serve as the centrepiece of the rebuilding project.

Many people speak of making Kerala a green State. A green economy is not possible without an understanding of the havoc that has been done to the land-use pattern through indifferent policies and action. Reminiscent of Keats' line, "a thing of beauty is a joy forever", Kerala has to be consciously conserved – not just for tourists but for everyone. Human beings have to rely on nature's resources for survival, but aggressive development invites nature's wrath in the form of landslides and floods.

The change in land-use pattern and water management has resulted in a sharp decline in the area under paddy: from 35% of the crop area in the 1960s to 7% today. Rice cultivation is done on watershed basis. The water scarcity that Kerala faces today is largely linked to paddy reclamation. Since the Kerala Conservation of Paddy Land and Wetland Act was belatedly passed in 2008, not much has happened except the ratification of all the illegal transgressions.

Unless we realise that the quarrying, metal crushing and sand mining mafias are endangering Kerala's ecosystem, no meaningful land use and mining policy can be implemented. The Seventh Report of the Legislative Environment Committee regarding the working of the quarries speaks of the pathological environmental management underway in Kerala. Placating vocal voter interests (as in throwing away the Gadgil report) can never be the way to build common good and sustainable development. The PDNA recommendations for an integrated water resource management approach should never be neglected.

An end to social exclusion

Why the tribals and the historically marginalised remain neglected is a question that needs to be raised as part of the rebuilding project. Indeed, the disasters have brought to sharp focus once again the vulnerabilities of the poor in general as well as of the elderly, women, the transgenders, and the disabled. Given Kerala's growing elderly phenomenon, the three million migrant labourers will have to be made a dignified part of its social life. Will Kerala see rebuilding as an opportunity to put an end to the social exclusion through structural reforms and action?

A road policy that aims to reduce accidents should be another priority of the rebuilding project. In 2018, nearly 4,800 people died in road accidents. The State needs a Road Reconstruction Policy that will reduce such accidents. If Kerala is to consciously be rebuilt as a thing of beauty, half the battle will be won.

M.A. Oommen is an Honorary Fellow, Centre for Development Studies, Thiruvananthapuram

FROM THE READERS' EDITOR

Conversations benefit journalism

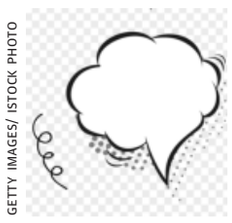
Even in a polarising environment, it is vital to continue the dialogue between journalists and readers

A.S. PANNEERSELVAN

My last column, "Neither vainglorious nor venturesome' (February 18, 2019), generated a debate among journalists about the need to converse with the critics of journalism. Some felt that Jeff Jarvis's prescription, that it is the sacred duty of journalists to listen to the public they serve, needed some modification. They argued that there is a need to make a distinction between the larger public served by journalism and the small, vocal and blatantly partisan section that has been undermining not only journalism, but also the idea of the public sphere.

Engage or disengage?

Journalists felt that this column, which is designed to be a dialogue between the newspaper and its readers, should strive to inform readers about the challenges faced by them in a polarising environment. I would like to summarise their angst in five points. One, we have a government that has a peculiar Teflon coat – none of its monumental failures stick on it. Two, facts are compared with rhetoric and hyperbole. Three, misogyny has grown and become toxic. Four, the threat to individual journalists' safety has become real, and attacks against journalists are taking place with impunity. Five, social media is used to discredit journalism and journalists. In this environment, what should be the relationship between journalists and the social media?



GETTY IMAGES/ ISTOCK PHOTO

A couple of reporters asked whether I, as a readers' representative in a newspaper, agree with Farhad Manjoo, an opinion columnist for *The New York Times*, who asked journalists to disengage from the daily rhythms of Twitter, which he described as "the world's most damaging social network". They wanted to know whether it is possible to carry on with the dialogue process if one section refuses to follow any rules and prefers instead to spew venom and vitriol and threaten people. Mathew Ingram's essay, 'The yin and yang of Twitter and journalism', explores journalism's difficult relationship with Twitter in a nuanced manner.

The points raised are real and disturbing. But disengaging is not the answer. As someone who handles complaints for this newspaper, I can vouch for the fact that the majority of the readers are without rancour. They are inquisitive and desire a fruitful engagement with the newspaper. They may not be as garrulous as the trolls. But they are able to distinguish between journalism and propaganda. They are appalled when reporters are attacked for raising pertinent questions and holding those who wield power accountable. They respect investigative journalism and they value truth. Hence, engaging with them is an inevitable task.

Truth and propaganda

The key question is how to distinguish between a truly inquisitive reader and a propagandist who wants to undermine journalism and the public discourse. I believe that journalists who have developed excellent editorial judgment find the difference in the very first sentence of the communication.

Discerning readers, who form the bulwark of those who support journalism, ask journalists questions to scrutinise those in power. They do not pose questions to obfuscate truth or to defend the regime. These readers are able to see that journalism's first obligation is to tell the truth and its first loyalty is to citizens. They do not want propaganda articles or uncritical appeasement pieces. Citizens look for credible information to make an informed choice.

Journalists must realise that informed readers do not confuse objectivity with naïve neutrality. One cannot be neutral when a young girl is stalked and killed, or when marginalised people are further exploited, or when there is an open display of dominance-dependency in an equation. As Bill Kovach and Tom Rosenstiel rightly pointed out, journalistic responsibility is "to provide citizens with the tools they need to extract knowledge for themselves from the undifferentiated flood or rumour, propaganda, gossip, fact, assertion, and allegation the communications system now produces." Hence, it is vital to continue the dialogue between journalists and readers, and not be short-circuited by the viciousness of the trolls.

readerseditor@thehindu.co.in

SINGLE FILE

Blatantly banal

Bollywood is noteworthy in turning homosexual characters into caricatures

KUNAL RAY

SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Bollywood suffers from the messiah complex. Or perhaps that is a much-coveted status that we have thoughtlessly ascribed to the banal and innocuous films it produces. There was much hype around the release of *Ek Ladki Ko Dekha Toh Aisa Laga*, which has same-sex love at its core. I watched it out of curiosity, given what we know about Bollywood's despicable track record of depicting same-sex love. Remember *Dostana*? Bollywood is particularly noteworthy in turning gay, lesbian and transgender characters into caricatures, perennial residents of marginalia. Their yearning, agony and desire remain entirely unexplored. Of course, this doesn't include films such as *My Brother... Nikhil* or *Aligarh*.

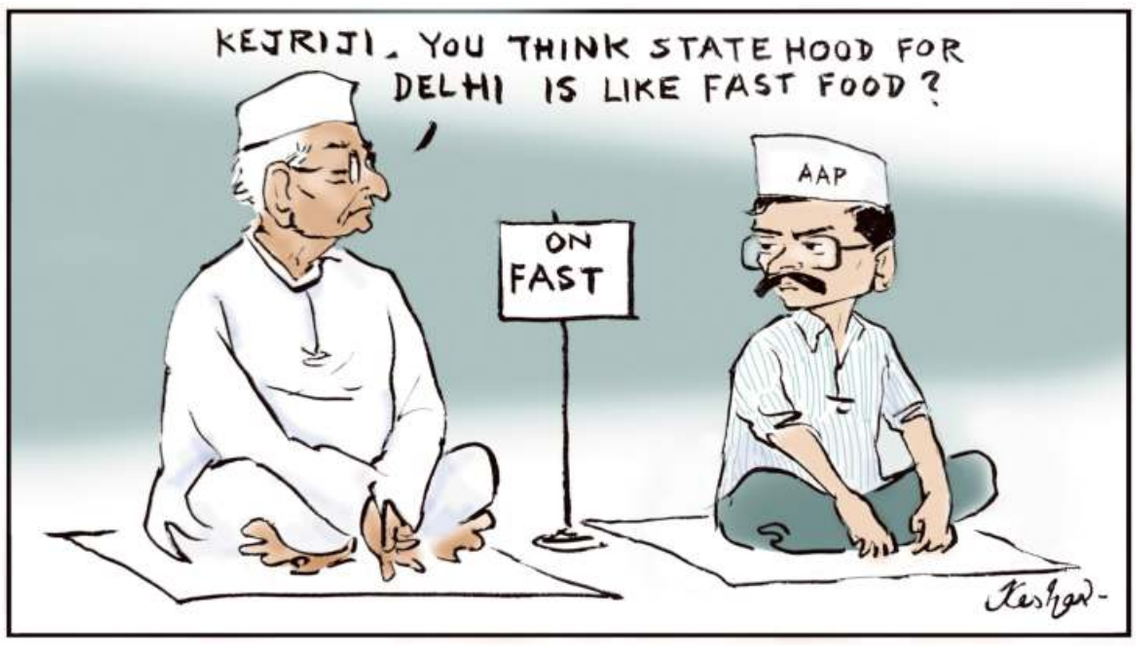
Unsurprisingly, then, *Ek Ladki...* is at best a formulaic Bollywood film that features love between two women as merely a plot novelty. My hopes were expectedly dashed while watching the film amidst unending giggles and guffaws when Sweety (Sonam Kapoor) declares her love for Kuhu (Regina Cassandra). It has all the trappings of a quintessential Bollywood potboiler: the bucolic small-town Punjab setting where everybody is nice and happy, mind-numbing music, a struggling writer (again a classic Bollywood trope), a loving grandmother, and some moments in the big city (Delhi in this case, because how can these love stories originate in small towns?) amidst other props.

Further, Bollywood love stories cannot be realised without strife. Thus, there is the unfeeling elder brother and a prototypical villain from whom his beloved sister must be rescued. What's new then? Only that homosexual love replaces heterosexual love? Same-sex love is thus reduced to a convenient plot point to enable the director to deliver a social message.

Besides, the women in love need a heterosexual man (Rajkummar Rao) as the knight in shining armour to bring them together and of course the dutiful patriarch of the family (Anil Kapoor) must approve the match. They have no agency, which is a seriously problematic position. Sweety and Kuhu's first meeting and eventual falling in love are the most unimaginative I have seen in recent Hindi cinema. For the lack of a better description, it is a poorly etched fairytale far removed from real life experiences. When will Bollywood stop the 'othering' of the same-sex love story? I wonder if this discourse helps the cause or is more of a disservice.

During a conversation with his mother in the film, Rajkummar Rao is told to write *sach* (the truth) and not a story. After watching *Ek Ladki...*, one is left wondering whether this notion would apply equally to the filmmaker. The day when Bollywood films begin to tell stories that adhere to the *sach* principle and eschew blatantly simplistic narratives will be the day that the depiction of minorities, sexual or otherwise, will become truer to their ground realities.

The writer teaches literary and cultural studies at FLAME University, Pune



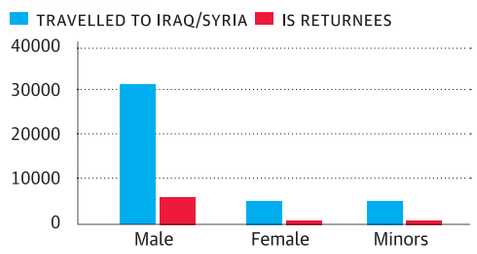
DATA POINT

A long way home

Recently, a woman from the U.S. and another from the U.K. who were part of the Islamic State sought to return home, but were refused entry. Over 40,000 people from 80 countries joined the IS till the fall of the 'Caliphate' in 2017. Only a small percentage have returned to the country from where they left. By **Varun B. Krishnan**

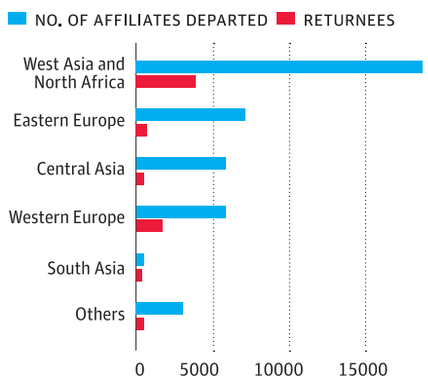
The missing women

The percentage of women who returned to their countries of departure is minuscule (about 5%) as they may be held in detention centres, transferred to other regions, or killed. The status of several of them is unknown



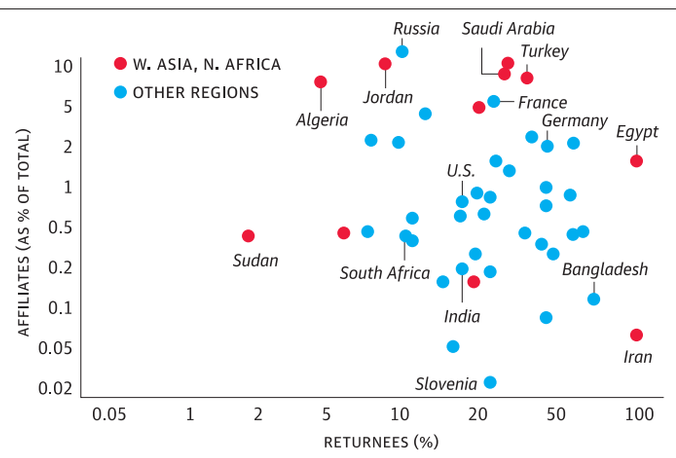
Where were they from?

A region-wise break-up shows that about 45% of the IS affiliates were from West Asia and North Africa. About 9% of these affiliates returned to their countries of departure. There were also a large number of them from Europe



Back to base

About 5,000 affiliates from Russia (including Chechnya and Dagestan) travelled to Syria/ Iraq to join the IS. Only around 8% of them have returned. The scatter plot shows the affiliates from each country as a percentage of total fighters and the percentage of affiliates who returned to their countries of departure



Definitions
Affiliate: Person who traveled to Iraq or Syria and joined the IS in some capacity.
Returnee: Affiliate who returned to his or her country of departure (those who travelled to third countries not included).

Source: International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation report, July 2018, which collated the data from official govt. reports, institutional publications and media reports

FROM The Hindu. ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO FEBRUARY 25, 1969

Anglo-French row

Whatever chances there might have been of considering Gen. De Gaulle's proposals for a "new Europe" on their merits were seriously damaged over the weekend by an acrimonious debate between Britain and France on whether the French President's ideas and intentions were accurately conveyed to the British Government by Mr. Christopher Soames, British Ambassador in Paris, to whom the General first put them across, and on whether it was proper for the British Government to pass on the proposals to West Germany without prior French consent. Gen. De Gaulle proposed that the E.E.C. might be replaced by a larger free trading area and NATO might eventually disappear yielding place to another, less rigid and less institutional, arrangement for the defence of the Western world.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO FEBRUARY 25, 1919

Tilak Case in London.

The Tilak case was continued to-day [February 20, in London]. Addressing the jury Sir E. Carson declared that the case ought to have been tried in India. Mr. Tilak ought certainly to have the verdict if he deserved it but Sir E. Carson emphasised the result of such a verdict on the Government of India and white officials in India. Mr. Tilak had the most profound British justice and before giving the verdict the jury ought to take into account the whole of Mr. Tilak's actions since 1893. Sir J. Simon pointed out that when Mr. Tilak was tried for sedition in Poona in 1897 not a word was said about the murder. Of Mr. Rand also the Government in Bombay confirmed Tilak's election to the Legislative Council. He was not seeking to justify everything Mr. Tilak had done but even the devil should have his due. The case was adjourned.

CONCEPTUAL

Restorative justice

LAW

This refers to a form of criminal justice where the major emphasis of court proceedings is on repairing the damages imposed by a criminal on the victim of the crime. This view of criminal justice is in direct contrast to the modern criminal justice system that is focused primarily on retribution against the criminal. Restorative justice closely involves the victim of a crime in the judicial process so that proper compensation is offered to him through the imposition of an appropriate penalty on the person who committed the crime. Under the restorative justice system, a crime is not viewed as an act against the law but simply as an issue between the criminal and the victim.

MORE ON THE WEB

Video: Sri Lanka's best overseas Test victories

bit.ly/SLTestVictories

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FROM PAGE ONE

India to push for UN ban on JeM chief

In March, by coincidence, France will also take over the presidency of the UNSC, which comprises 5 permanent and 10 non-permanent members.

"When the attack happened, we realised that we would need to tackle this [listing] in a two-step, by first formulating a statement from the UNSC and then try to ensure consensus on the proposal to [ban Masood Azhar]," a western diplomat explained to *The Hindu*. "While technical preparations are expected to take a few weeks, the next two-three days will be crucial," he added. The most important meeting in this regard will come on Wednesday this week, when External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj meets with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi.

Beijing's stance

Beijing has vetoed each of the past three attempts to list Azhar: in 2016, 2017 and most recently in 2018. Ms. Swaraj is expected to meet Mr. Wang for the trilateral meeting of Russia-India-China (RIC) Foreign Ministers along with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov in Wuzhen, and then will meet both bilaterally.

"It will be critical to see what role Russia plays in this effort, not just on supporting India, but on actively convincing China to withdraw its objections to the listing," the diplomat said.

China agreed to the UNSC press statement that named the JeM after considerable wrangling over the wording, particularly insisting on leaving out any direct reference to Pakistan in it and objecting to any "political statements," diplomats aware of the negotiations in New York said. At one point, talks nearly broke down with the U.S. and China at loggerheads, and the French delegation went in to forge an agreement on a carefully worded statement that would send a "strong signal" to Pakistan.

The extent of the disagreement was evident from the relatively much quicker response from the UNSC to a similar attack which killed 27 Iranian soldiers in Sistan, Baluchistan on February 13, a day before the Pulwama attack.

Despite the U.S.'s other issues with Iran, the UNSC was able to issue its statement on February 14, while the statement on Pulwama came a week later, on February 21.

Acknowledging the delay in a tweet, India's ambassador to the UN Syed Akbaruddin, who worked behind the scenes on the final statement, wrote: "A statement with many firsts takes more time than expected. In complex diplomatic situations, however, it is better to be late than never."

GST slashed on residential properties

Niranjan Hiranandani, national president of the National Real Estate Development Council, said, "The announcement gives an impetus to the affordable housing and [will] enthuse homebuyers to close the sale deals." "Industry lauds the GST rate cut... as a welcome and positive move which brings a big relief to the home buyers and help to narrow down the demand mismatch gap," Mr. Hiranandani said.

Sizes defined

The Council has also arrived at a definition of 'affordable housing' in metros as well as non-metro locations. In metros, affordable housing includes properties that have a carpet area of up to 60 sq m (646 sq feet) and cost up to ₹45 lakh. Metros include Delhi NCR, Mumbai MMR, Kolkata, Chennai, Bangalore and Hyderabad. In non-metros, affordable housing includes properties with a carpet area of up to 90 sq m (969 sq feet) and that cost up to ₹45 lakh.

However, the removal of input tax credits for the real estate sector could lead to several problems, tax analysts and industry leaders say. "Having certain categories which are not eligible for input tax credits is an aberration of the basic principles of a good GST, in addition to leading to issues of traceability of transactions and making the transactions opaque," M.S. Mani, partner at Deloitte India, said.

"The GST rate on cement has not been reduced as was expected, [and] at 28% it remains among the highest taxed inputs for construction," Mr. Hiranandani added. "And there will be no input tax credit, so developers will face a challenging time."

DSP, Army jawan killed in Kulgam encounter

Three security personnel, including a Major-rank officer, were injured in the encounter.

Three civilians were injured, two of whom sustained bullet wounds, in the clashes near the encounter site, said an official on the condition of anonymity.

The Kulgam encounter was the second major operation against the JeM since February 14 when a suicide car bombing killed 40 CRPF jawans in Pulwama.

Governor Satya Pal Malik, who chaired a meeting of the State Administrative Council (SAC) on Sunday, appealed for calm.

"The induction of 100 companies should be seen in the backdrop of election preparedness. Shortage of essentials was because of the highway closure. The J&K government has requested the Supreme Court for deferment of the hearing (on Article 35A) and its stand continues to be the same," said J&K government spokesman Rohit Kansal.

Protests, arson rock Itanagar, two dead

His announcement late on Friday that the government would drop the PRC issue, and the imposition of prohibitory orders under Section 144 followed by a flag march by the Army, brought temporary respite to Itanagar the next day.

However, the protesters regrouped on Saturday night, damaging more vehicles and property. Sunday morning saw a widespread rampage with the Deputy Commissioner's office and police station being the first targets. "We were helpless against some 8,000-9,000 people who took away our batons, helmets, shields, walkie-talkies and everything else. How can you defend against a mob that had angry women too?" said the officer-in-charge of the police station in the city's Bank Tiniali area.

Army firm on wiping out terrorists: PM

To suspend monthly radio broadcast, Mann Ki Baat, till May for the Lok Sabha election

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Addressing his last *Mann Ki Baat* before the 2019 Lok Sabha election, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said the Army had resolved to wipe out terrorists and their harbourers following the Pulwama attack.

Mr. Modi also announced the suspension of his monthly radio broadcast for the next two months in keeping with the democratic traditions.

However, he expressed confidence that he would be back with the programme on the last Sunday of May – the results of the election are expected to be declared by then.

'Break barriers'

Mr. Modi said the martyrdom of 40 CRPF soldiers in Pulwama would keep "inspiring us relentlessly to uproot the very base of terrorism", and asked people to rally together to take on the challenge of terrorism by forgetting the barriers of caste, communalism, regionalism and other differences.

"You must have seen how within a hundred hours of the attack, retributive action was accomplished. The Army has resolved to wipe out terrorists and their harbourers. The martyrdom of these brave soldiers brought to the fore, through the media, touching, inspiring stories of their kin, give hope and strength to the entire country," Mr. Modi said.

The Prime Minister said that he would be dedicating the National War Memorial in the memory of fallen soldiers on Monday.

"I do believe that for our countrymen a visit to the National War Memorial will be akin to a pilgrimage to a holy place. The National Soldiers' Memorial is a symbol of the nation's gratitude to those men who made the supreme sacrifice after we gained Independence," he said.

Talking about his decision to suspend *Mann ki Baat* for the next two months, he said,"Elections are the biggest celebration of democracy. In the next two months, we will be busy in the hurly-burly of the general election. I, myself, will also be a candidate. Respecting healthy democratic traditions, the next episode of *Mann Ki Baat* will be broadcast on the last Sunday (May 26) of May."

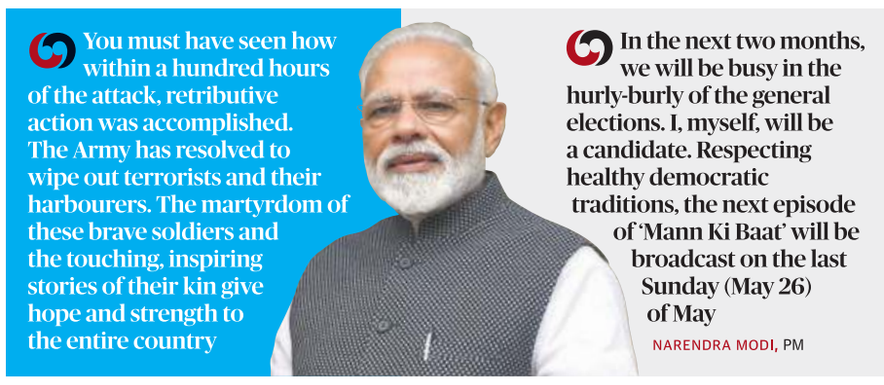
In the past, during the Assembly elections, Opposition parties had demanded stopping the *Mann ki Baat*, arguing that it violated the model code of conduct.

The Prime Minister paid tributes to tribal warrior Birsa Munda, who was arrested by the British forces on March 3 in 1900, industrialists Jamsetji Tata, whose birth anniversary falls on March 3, and the former Prime Minister Morarji Desai, who was born on February 29.

Morarji's safeguards

Recalling Mr. Desai as a leader who undid many excesses of the Emergency, he said, "For the first time, constitutional safeguards guaranteed that the President could only announce the Emergency upon the written recommendation of the Cabinet, and that the period of Emergency could not be extended more than six months at any stretch of time."

"In this way, Morarji *Bhai* ensured that the way democracy was assassinated in 1975 by imposition of Emergency could never be repeated again in the future," Mr. Modi said.



Rajnath visits injured police officer at AIIMS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh visited the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) here on Sunday to enquire about the health of Deputy Inspector General of Jammu and Kashmir police Amit Kumar, who was injured during an encounter with Jaish-e-Mohammed terrorists at Pulwama in Kashmir last week.

"Visited AIIMS to inquire about the health of DIG @JmuKmrPolice, Shri Amit Kumar, who was severely injured in a recent counter terror operation in Pulwama. Officers like him lift the morale of forces with their action. I salute his courage and the bravery exhibited by his team," the Home Minister tweeted after meeting Mr. Kumar.

The officer had received a gunshot wound in the abdomen during the encounter on last Monday in Pulwama's Pinglan area.

Risk pay raised for paramilitaries

Central troops deployed in Jammu and Kashmir, Naxalism-hit States to benefit

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has increased the risk and hardship allowance of the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) personnel deployed in the most difficult areas of Jammu and Kashmir and Left Wing Extremism (LWE)-affected States.

The allowance has been increased to ₹17,300 a month from ₹9,700 for troops up to the rank of Inspector.

The amount has been enhanced to ₹25,000 from ₹16,900 for officers above the rank of Inspectors.

Around 65,000 CAPF personnel, including 55,000 from the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), posted in J&K are to benefit from this order.

The MHA has also reclassified 10 districts of J&K – Anantnag, Kulgam, Shopian, Pulwama, Budgam, Ganderbal, Baramulla, Kupwara, Bandipora, Srinagar – under 'R1H1 matrix,' the apex category for such allowance. The personnel deployed in these districts will be entitled to the enhanced risk allowance.

The allowance will also be effective in eight LWE-affected districts across four States that have also been categorised under R1H1 matrix. The districts are Bastar, Dantewada, Bijapur, Sukma and Narayanpur in Chhattisgarh; Latehar in Jharkhand, Gadchiroli in Maharashtra and Malkangiri in Odisha. Around 33,000 CRPF personnel, the lead force operating in Maoist-affected areas, will benefit from the order.

The decision pending since 2017 was expedited after the Pulwama terror attack. A committee under the chairmanship of the Union Home Secretary was constituted in 2017 for "classification of field areas for grant of risk and hardship allowance in CAPFs."

A police officer pays tribute to DSP Aman Thakur, who was killed in Kulgam, at District Police Lines in Srinagar. ▪ NISSAR AHMAD

Problematic certificate

How a decade-old issue is exposing ethnic fault lines in Arunachal Pradesh. A backgrounder

- Close to 140 ethnic groups reside in Arunachal Pradesh and most of them belong to the Scheduled Tribe community. Most of them, except a few, own the Arunachal Pradesh Scheduled Tribe (APST) certificate
- Some of the non-APST communities have been living in Arunachal Pradesh for a long time
- The issue of granting Permanent Resident Certificate (PRC) to six non-APST communities for "education and job benefits elsewhere in the country" has been in discussion for more than a decade
- In May 2010, the State Cabinet decided to issue PRC to non-APSTs who settled in Arunachal Pradesh before 1968; the joint high power committee that recommended PRC then was headed by Takam Sanjoy, now State chief of Congress party

An Itanagar mall being looted on Sunday

- Stiff opposition from indigenous groups made Dorjee Khandu's Congress government revoke the order of granting PRC in September 2010
- In July 2018, another joint high power committee headed by Environment and Forest Minister Nabam Rebia was set up to look into the issue
- In December 2018, Chief Minister Pema Khandu said his government may grant PRC without infringing upon the rights and privileges of the tribes;
- 18 indigenous groups opposed the move
- A new organisation representing the six groups and their community-based organisations in Assam countered the opposition with economic blockade of Arunachal Pradesh in January 2019
- In February 2019, the Arunachal government decided to discuss the PRC issue in the Assembly on the basis of the Rebia committee's recommendation
- The 18 groups imposed a 48-hour shutdown on February 21. The second day of the shutdown turned violent with 2 persons killed in police firing on Friday night

Deputy CM Chowna Mein's house vandalised and burnt. ▪ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

JuD, FIF change name, bypass ban

It's business as usual: Pak. newspaper

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Hafiz Saeed's extremist groups continue to function in Pakistan despite a recent ban, a leading Pakistani newspaper has reported.

Days after the government of Imran Khan reimposed a ban on Jamat-ud-Dawa (JuD) and its charity arm Falah-e-Insaniyat Foundation (FIF) against the backdrop of the Pulwama terror attack, the *Daily Times of Pakistan* reported that the groups continue to operate with impunity in various parts of Pakistan.

The paper reported that JuD and FIF outlets have put up new banners outside offices and collection centres and are continuing to work as before.

In various places, the two organisations have rebranded themselves as Al Madina and Aisar Foundation.

The weekend report stated that it was driven to prove the need for a genuine will of the Pakistani state to counter and control extremist organisations within its own territory.

Collecting funds

The *Daily Times* report pointed out that, despite the latest reimposition of the ban by the Imran Khan government, Jamat-ud-Dawa and Falah-e-Insaniyat were openly collecting funds for their agenda near Al Qadsia mosque in Lahore.

The reporters found that common people continued to visit these outlets with donations even though the spokesperson of Jamat-ud-Dawa, Yahya Mujahid, maintained that FIF had stopped working after the ban.

The activists of the organisations told the reporters that they just had to change name to avoid the ban imposed by the government.

Daily Times has indicated that it may upload videos and photographs showing the uninterrupted functioning by the banned organisations of Hafiz Saeed.

Hafiz Saeed

Vadra hints at playing 'larger role', BJP takes a dig

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

In the midst of summons from the Enforcement Directorate, Robert Vadra, husband of Priyanka Gandhi Vadra and a businessman, on Sunday said he might play "a larger role in serving the people once his ongoing cases are over."

His Facebook post sparked speculation whether this was a hint of his willingness to join politics. The Congress played it down by pointing out that he has always been involved in social work through NGOs. "Will he need Modi*ji's* [Prime Minister Narendra Modi] permission to do work related to people? Don't think he needs permission from the Emperor," said Congress spokesperson Pawan Khera

Mr. Vadra said he spent years and months campaigning and working in different parts of the country, mainly in Uttar Pradesh, and that "gave him a feeling to do more for the people."

"All these years of experience and learning cannot be just wasted and should be put to better use... Once all these accusations and allegations are over, I feel I should dedicate a larger role in serving the people," said Mr. Vadra in his post.

Taking a dig at Mr. Vadra, the official handle of the BJP tweeted, "Presenting Congress' Prime Ministerial candidate for Lok Sabha elections."

Shabir Shah 'fit and fine': jail authorities

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Tihar prison authorities in Delhi have informed the Union Home Ministry that Kashmiri separatist leader Shabir Shah is "fit and fine".

"Tihar prison authorities have denied occurrence of any untoward incident or mishap involving Shabir Shah," a statement by the Ministry said.

Mr. Shah was arrested by the Enforcement Directorate in July 2017 in a decade-old terror financing case. He has been lodged in the Tihar prison since.

"Refuting fake news circulating in a section of media, DIG Tihar Prison, Shailendra Parihar, said Shah is absolutely fit and fine. He said all other inmates from J&K and Pakistan are also fine. The prison authorities appealed to all to be cautious against fake news," the statement said.

Ganguly-BJP row over Imran photo continues

CAB chief refuses to remove picture

SUVOJIT BAGCHI
KOLKATA

There was no end in sight to the stand-off between president of the Cricket Association of Bengal (CAB) Sourav Ganguly and the Bengal unit of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

Mr. Ganguly refused to remove the photograph of former Pakistan captain and Prime Minister Imran Khan from the club house of the iconic cricket stadium of Kolkata, the Eden Gardens.

Following a demonstration by the BJP workers on Saturday, Mr. Ganguly said he would "stick to his earlier position".

On the other hand, the BJP's State officials indicated that they would "continue with the stir if Mr. Ganguly continues to reject their demand".

The club house also has photographs of Wasim Akram and Ramiz Raza, but the BJP has not demanded their removal. Following the Pulwama attack, the Cricket Club of India in Mumbai had removed the photograph of Mr. Khan from its restaurant. Other cricket associations followed suit, but Mr. Ganguly refused to budge.

The fight between Mr. Ganguly and the BJP, however, is interpreted in political circles as a proxy one between the BJP and Trinamool Congress.

Mr. Ganguly was favoured by Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee when he was selected to lead the CAB, four years ago.

Sourav Ganguly

EC likely to visit J&K on March 4, 5

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Election Commission is likely to visit Jammu and Kashmir on March 4 and 5 to review preparedness for the Lok Sabha election.

"Senior Commission officials will be in Mumbai on Monday to hold meetings with the State administration and police representatives. Thereafter, they also plan to visit J&K," said an official.

Earlier this week, the EC assessed security arrangements across the country, particularly in J&K.

Union Home Secretary Rajiv Gauba and officials from the State, including the Chief Electoral Officer, the Chief Secretary, the Home Secretary and an ADGP, attended the meeting. The EC will also decide if the Assembly and Lok Sabha polls can be conducted simultaneously in the State.

APPEAL

I, **Dharun Pandi aged 2 years** need your support to bring a lasting change and a new hope to my life. I Suffer from Hepatoblastoma and require **Rs. 6,00,000/-** towards Chemotherapy at Meenakshi Mission Hospital & Research Centre, Madurai. Donations sent by Ch/D.D. favouring Meenakshi Mission Hospital & Research Centre, Madurai **will be acknowledged.** The donations sent through Ch/D.D./NEFT Transfer (Syndicate Bank, Nungambakkam Branch, A/C No: **60182010063310, IFSC No: SYNB0006018**) favouring **WOMEN'S WELFARE SYNDICATE** is exempted under 80G IT. Please give us your E-mail ID.

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

Dharun Pandi

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IN BRIEF

Parrikar stable, under observation: Minister

PANAJI

Goa Chief Minister Manohar Parrikar, in hospital since late on Saturday evening, will be kept under observation till Monday, Goa Health Minister Vishwajit Rane tweeted on Sunday.The Minister urged people "not to speculate" about the Chief Minister's health. "Most importantly, he is doing well and his parameters are satisfactory. Happy to see him active and alert. Appeal to the people not to speculate," Mr. Rane said.

W.B. Minister questions law and order in U.P.

MALDA

West Bengal Minister Firhad Hakim on Sunday criticised the law and order situation in U.P., a day after an explosion at Bhadohi killed 13 persons, including nine from here. Mr. Hakim also handed over cheques for ₹2 lakh each as assistance to the kin of the nine killed in Saturday's blast. He assured jobs under the Integrated Child Development Scheme to the wives and old-age pension to the mothers of the victims. PTI

Pakistan MP offers to mediate with India

NEW DELHI

Ramesh Vankwani, a leading member of the Pakistan's Hindu community and member of the National Assembly, has offered to mediate between India and Pakistan. Mr. Vankwani, a member of the ruling Pakistan Tehreek E Insaf, said this in a social media post. In India to participate in the Kumbh mela, he met External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj and Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

'Video conference by Modi to be a record'

NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's interaction with BJP workers and sympathisers on February 28 will be the world's largest video conference, as he is expected to speak to over one crore people spread across 15,000 locations, party president Amit Shah said on Sunday. People can send their questions through the Namo app or using the hashtag #MeraBoothSabseMazboot on social media, he added. PTI

Modi, Shah commend Jayalalithaa's legacy

BJP leaders pay tributes to her on birth anniversary

NISTULA HEBBAR
NEW DELHI

Less than a week after reaching a pre-poll alliance with the All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam and the Pattali Makkal Katchi in Tamil Nadu, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and BJP president Amit Shah paid tributes to the late Jayalalithaa, former Chief Minister, on her birth anniversary on Sunday. Some party leaders termed her a "proud Hindu" in the face of "Dravidian politics".

While Mr. Modi and Jayalalithaa had a political equation till just after the 2014 Lok Sabha election, the new warmth appears to be wholly due to the alliance with the AIADMK, with the BJP counting on the leader's charisma and party organisation to get significant numbers for the National Democratic Alliance, considered a non-starter earlier.

> Jayalalithaa will continue to be fondly remembered as Amma for generations
>
> AMIT SHAH, BJP president

"Tributes to Jayalalithaa*ji* on her birth anniversary. Her contribution towards the development of Tamil Nadu will be remembered for generations. A fine administrator and compassionate leader, her welfare measures benefited countless poor people," Mr. Modi tweeted. Mr. Shah said, "She will continue to be fondly remembered as Amma for generations."

'Hindu icon'

Ms. Jayalalithaa's image is being reworked with Tamil Nadu BJP Yuva Morcha vice-president S.G. Surya terming her a "proud Hindu." "In a State where Dravidian torch bearers abused Hinduism to the hilt, (she) openly displayed her Hindu beliefs and adorned as proud Hindu. Without her, Hinduism in Tamil Nadu would've been at worst state now. Real fighter. 72nd Birth Anniversary," Mr. Surya tweeted.

CPI(M) not keen on common agenda

Yechury says such a programme should be drafted only after the elections

SANDEEP PHUKAN
NEW DELHI

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister and Telugu Desam Party chief N. Chandrababu Naidu, who is playing the role of a facilitator to bring Opposition parties together, wants CPI(M) general secretary Sitaram Yechury to lend his expertise in preparing a common minimum programme (CMP) for the Opposition parties.

Ahead of the Opposition meet in Delhi, now scheduled for Wednesday, the TDP chief reached out to Mr. Yechury who had played a key role in drafting the CMP when the UPA took shape in 2004 and the United Front in 1996. Apart from the CMP, the Opposition meet is likely to discuss the political situation since the Pulwama attack.

Mr. Yechury declined to be part of any CMP drafting exercise, though the issue of attending the meet has been left open.

N. Chandrababu Naidu (left) has sought the expertise of Sitaram Yechury to draft a common programme. PTI

Past experience

"I told Mr. Naidu that such an exercise will be more fruitful only after the election. That is how the CMPs were drafted on earlier occasions, be it UPA or United Front," Mr. Yechury told *The Hindu*. Another senior Opposition leader said a CMP would not find much acceptance among voters when the parties were fighting each other.

"There are too many internal contradictions. The Left is ranged against the Trinamool in Bengal and against the Congress in Kerala. The TDP and the Congress have parted ways in Andhra after their Telangana experiment failed. Why should the voters take your CMP seriously," he asked.

On February 13, senior Opposition leaders including Congress chief Rahul Gandhi, Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and Mr. Naidu, along with others met, at NCP chief Sharad Pawar's Delhi residence.

They had agreed to work on a common minimum programme as the the next step in forging the anti-BJP front ahead of the upcoming Lok Sabha polls. "The CMP will be important in case of a hung Parliament. Parties which are signatories to the CMP will have to be considered pre-poll allies and the President will have to invite such a group if they have higher numbers than the NDA," said a senior Congress leader.

Rebuff rumours on KISAN scheme: PM

Modi says States ruled by non-BJP parties are yet to submit the list of farmers eligible for benefit

OMAR RASHID
LUCKNOW

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Sunday that the States rules by parties other than the BJP had not submitted the list of eligible farmers under the PM-KISAN scheme to the Union government. The BJP-ruled Gujarat, Bihar, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand had made it "a priority", he added.

Speaking in Gorakhpur in eastern Uttar Pradesh, Mr. Modi said his opponents were spreading "rumours" that farmers would have to return to the government the amount (₹6,000) given to them in three instalments at the end of the year.

"This money that you are getting, is your right. Nobody can take it back, not even Modi or any State government," he said urging farmers to give a "befitting reply" to rumour mongers.

Mark of 'honesty'

Distinguishing the PM-KISAN scheme launched by him from previous farm loan waiver steps taken by the Congress governments, Mr. Modi said his decision was not motivated by elections.

In honour: Narendra Modi washing the feet of sanitation workers in Prayagraj. TWITTER/PTI

That the scheme was discussed in Parliament and a budget provision provided for it showed the "honesty" of the Modi government, he said. The Congress and its allies and the Samajwadi Party and the Bahujan Samaj Party remembered farmers once in 10 years only to "pull the wool over their eyes" for votes through promises of loan waivers, he said.

"They [non-BJP governments] feel they can do politics over it. But I am warning them, if they do not send the list of farmers on time and if farmers are deprived of this benefit, then the curse of farmers will destroy your politics," Mr. Modi said.

While the Congress government made a lot of "promises on paper", its intention was never to make the farmers strong and capable. So it could never take any "right decisions" in their favour, he said.

Mr. Modi said he could have also waived off loans, which he compared to the distribution of *rewri* (a sweet delicacy made of sesame) before the elections as it was "not such a difficult thing" to do but said he would not think of "such a sin". The loan waiver schemes benefit only the upper crust of farmers and those with bank loans but not the "crores" of poor farmers who took loans from other sources, while the PM-KISAN scheme not only provided relief to farmers but was also an investment for the rural economy.

He alleged that the policies of the previous Congress governments, in particular their 'failure' to implement minimum support prices, destroyed the farmers.

The PM-KISAN scheme was announced in the interim Budget 2019-20 and under this small and marginal farmers owning combined land holding of up to 2 hectares will be given ₹6,000 per year through direct transfer to bank accounts. The government says it is estimated to benefit more than 12 crore farmers.

The Prime Minister later took a dip at the Sangam at the Kumbh Mela in Prayagraj (previously Allahabad) and offered prayers and *aarti*. He washed and wiped the feet of five *swachh karmacharis* (sanitation workers), including two women, deployed at the Kumbh.

In Prayagraj, he distributed the Swachh Kumbh Swachh Aabhaar awards to *safai karmacharis*, *swachhagrahis*, police personnel and boatmen.

PM-KISAN is 'bribe for votes': Chidambaram

Criticises EC for not taking action

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Former Finance Minister P. Chidambaram on Sunday described PM-KISAN as a "bribe for votes" scheme, and criticised the Election Commission for not acting against it.

In a series of tweets, Mr. Chidambaram called it an attempt to buy votes.

"Today is the 'cash for vote' day. The BJP (Bharatiya Janata Party) government will officially give a bribe of ₹2,000 per agricultural family to get their votes. The money will go to the cultivating farmer as well as the absentee landlord," the Congress leader said.

"Nothing can be more shameful in a democracy than bribes for votes. The greater shame is that the Election Commission is unable to stop the bribe for votes," he added.

BSP chief Mayawati, too, slammed the Centre for the scheme.

She tweeted: "₹500 a month to poor farmers under PM Kisan Samman Nidhi is an insult of farmers. Farmers believe in their labour and want remunerative price for their produce but BJP mentality to give them little monetary help is atrocious and arrogant. BJP has failed to fulfil their promise."

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CREATING WEALTH FOR WELLBEING

NOTICE INVITING TENDERS FOR SUPPLIES
(Global Tender Sl.No.1 to 3) (e-Tender Notices Sl.No.4 to 8)

Sl.No. Tender Ref./Scope of Supplies & Qty. Reqd.

1. **UNIT: M.M.COMPLEX: ENQ/18-19/004619/MM02(07) Dt: 19-02-2019: Material Code: 499120008:** 2400 mm Wide Steel Cord Belt ST 4000 with Top Cover 14 mm and Bottom Cover 10 mm as per the Technical Specification and Drawing enclosed. **Qty.: 8,000 Metres.** **B.G.Amount:** ₹ 35,00,000/- / US$ 50255 / EURO 44570

2. **GTE.ENQ/18-19/004665/MM16(02) Dt: 21-02-2019:** Taper Roller Bearing **(10 Items). B.G.Amount:** ₹ 3,00,000/- / US$ 4160 / EURO 3640

3. **GTE.ENQ/18-19/004682/MM16(01) Dt: 21-02-2019:** Spherical Roller Bearings **(04 Items). B.G.Amount:** ₹ 70,000/- / US$ 970 / EURO 850

4. **ENQ/18-19/004566/MM09(04) Dt.14-02-2019:** Purchase of M&M (B.O.) Spares **(131 Items). Due Date of Opening:** 13-03-2019

5. **ENQ/18-19/004631/MM05(05) Dt: 20-02-2019:** Procurement of Valves **(08 items). Due Date of Opening:** 25-03-2019

6. **PTE No.ENQ/18-19/004688/MM01(01) Dt.21-02-2019: 7 Items** of Spacer, Cover and Labyrinth. **Due Date of Opening:** 22-03-2019

7. **PTE No.ENQ/18-19/004693/MM01(03) Dt.21-02-2019:** Bottom Roller Bush. **Due Date of Opening:** 25-03-2019

8. **ENQ/18-19/004717/MM19(01) Dt: 23-02-2019:** Procurement of Pasteurised with Standardised Milk. **Due Date of Opening:** 22-03-2019

Sl.No.	Tender Document Cost	Last Date for Sale	Date & Time of Opening
1	₹ 1000/- / US$16 / Euro13	03-04-2019 Upto 12.00 Hrs.	03-04-2019 At 15.00 Hrs.
2	₹ 1000/- / US$14 / Euro13	01-04-2019 Upto 12.00 Hrs.	01-04-2019 At 15.00 Hrs.
3	₹ 1000/- / US$14 / Euro13	04-04-2019 Upto 12.00 Hrs.	04-04-2019 At 15.00 Hrs.

FOR e-TENDER DOCUMENTS/DETAILS/CORRIGENDUM, VISIT: www.nlcindia.com
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SC eviction order only against encroachers

Forest rights claims undergo due verification process

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL
NEW DELHI

The February 13 order of the Supreme Court to several States to evict lakhs of claimants finally rejected under the Forest Rights Act (FRA), 2006, is an outcome of the consistent stand taken by the top court in the case since 2016 that encroachers should be evicted from forest land after due process.

On January 29, 2016, a three-judge Bench of Justices J. Chelameswar (now retired), A.M. Sapre and Amitava Roy (retired) held that "if the claim is found to be not tenable by the competent authority, the result would be that the claimant is not entitled for the grant of any patta or any other right under the Act, but such a claimant is also either required to be evicted from that parcel of land or some other action is to be taken in accordance with law."

Two years later, on March 7 last year, an apex court Bench of Justices Madan B. Lokur, Kurian Joseph (both retired) and Deepak Gupta again sought information from the States concerned about the "action taken against those claimants whose claims have been rejected" and "the status of eviction of those claimants whose claims have been rejected and the total area from which they have been evicted", among other directions. The February 13 order was a follow-up of these two orders. All three orders are based on a writ petition jointly filed by NGOs Wildlife First, Nature Conservation Society and Tiger Research and Conservation Trust, represented by senior advocate Shyam Divan and advocate P.K. Manohar, in 2008.

The three orders – 2016, 2018 and 2019 – passed by the Supreme Court do not question the three-tier verification process which forest rights claims undergo under the 2006 Act. The process of verification of the claims of forest-dwelling Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (OTFD) is initiated by none other than the gram sabha. The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Rules of 2007 mandate that the gram sabha should have adequate representation from the Scheduled Tribes, particularly vulnerable tribal groups and pre-agricultural communities.

An appeal would lie with the sub-divisional level committee against the gram sabha's decisio. A second appeal can be filed with the district level committee. It is these "finally rejected" claims that the SC is bothered about. It has not interfered with genuine titles.

Reports criticised the Centre for remaining a mute spectator on February 13. In fact, the 2016 order records the stand taken by the Centre in the case.

Unwavering stand

The Supreme Court had, over the years, taken a consistent stand on evicting encroachers from forest land

JANUARY 29, 2016
Court says, "If the claim is found to be not tenable by the competent authority, the result would be that the claimant is not entitled for the grant of any patta or any other right under the Act, but such a claimant is also either required to be evicted from that parcel of land or some other action is to be taken in accordance with law"

MARCH 7, 2018
Court seeks "action taken against those claimants whose claims have been rejected" and "the status of eviction of those claimants whose claims have been rejected and the total area from which they have been evicted"

FEBRUARY 13, 2019
Court orders several States to evict lakhs of claimants finally rejected under the Act

ED launches probe into hawala ring

DEVESH K. PANDEY
NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate has launched money laundering investigations into a complex network of domestic and international shell companies, foreign exchange and travel agencies that were allegedly used by Naresh Jain and his associates for illegal fund transfers across more than 18 countries. In just a few months, the syndicate had allegedly transferred $15.5 crore using close to 190 accounts with several foreign banks.

The group is suspected to have caused losses worth thousands of crores to the exchequer by helping unscrupulous Indian businessmen evade import duties, according to the agency.

Global operations

Mr. Jain was allegedly involved in large-scale money laundering and unlawful money transfer to countries such as the U.S., the UAE, Canada, Australia, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Indonesia, Korea, Malaysia, Singapore, Turkey, Taiwan, Vietnam, China, Hong Kong, Afghanistan and Bangladesh.

The ED gathered initial information about the international "hawala" network during searches in July 2017, which led to seizure of documents. Suspicious transactions worth more than ₹10,000 crore were detected.

Commissioner of Geology and Mining
Industries & Mines Department
Government of Gujarat
Email: ad-devp-cgm@gujarat.gov.in

Date: February 25, 2019

Notice Inviting Tender

"Invitation of bids for grant of Mining Lease for Limestone and MarlMineral"

In exercise of the powers conferred by Section 10 (B) of the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957 and in accordance with the Mineral (Auction) Rules, 2015 notified thereunder, the Government of Gujarat has identified 3 (three) mineral blocks containing Limestone mineral and 1 (one) mineral block containing Limestone and Marl minerals for electronic auction and her by invites tenders for the purpose of grant of *Mining Lease.*

Accordingly, Financial bids are invited in digital format only and Technical bids are invited both in digital and physical format from Eligible bidders.

Eligibility conditions, date and time for participating in the electronic auction are provided in the Tender Document. Detailed Tender Documents along with timelines, notifications, updates and other details for the e-auction process for the mineral blocks are available in electronic form only and can be downloaded from the website of MSTC Limited (http://mstcecommerce.com/auctionhome/mlcl/index.jsp).

Interested and eligible bidders can register themselves on MSTC website. On successful registration, eligible bidders will obtain login ID and password necessary for participation in the e-auction process. Model Tender Document and Mineral Block Summary are available free of cost on the website of MSTC Limited (http://mstcecommerce.com/auctionhome/mlcl/index.jsp).

Last date for purchase of Tender Document, after payment of a tender fee of INR 2,00,000 [INR Two Lakh] plus applicable GST, on website of e-auction platform provider is April 02, 2019 [on or before 17:00 hours (IST)] and the last date for submission of the bids is April 08,2019 [on or before 17:00 hours (IST)].

*It may be noted that the Bidders who have already participated in the third phase of auction (Reference to NIT Dated August 11, 2017) that was held for **Mudhvay Sub-Block - A** (i.e. the Bidders who have submitted their technical bids and bid security pursuant to the third phase of auction held for **Mudhvay Sub-Block - A** and who propose to participate in the fifth phase of the auction being held for **Mudhvay Sub-Block - A**), shall not be required to pay Tender Document fee in respect of purchase of the Tender Document for **Mudhvay Sub-Block - A** and may download the Tender Document for Mudhavay Sub-Block - A free of cost from the website.*

List of Mineral Blocks for Auction

S. No.	Name of Mineral Block	Mineral
1.	Dhank Sub-Block - A	Limestone
2.	Dhank Sub-Block - C	Limestone
3.	Mudhvay Sub-Block - A	Limestone
4.	Sutrapada Block	Limestone and Marl

INF/3062/18-19

AGRICULTURAL PRODUCE MARKET COMMITTEE
Yeshwanthpur, Tumkur Road, Bangalore - 560 022

No:APMC(B)DEV/5835/2018-19 Date: 21-02-2019

SHORT TERM E-TENDER NOTIFICATION

Agricultural Produce Market Committee, Yeshwanthpur, Bangalore invites competitive tenders through e-procurement Website: **http://eproc.karnataka.gov.in** as per Standard Tender Document KW-4 from KPWD registered Class-I Contractors who have registered and obtained user ID & Password from HP Services, Bangalore.

Name of the Work: Providing infrastructure facilities at 'C' Block of SMY Dasanapura, Yeshwanthpura, Bangalore Rural, **Amount put to Tender (Rs. in Lakhs):** 4000.00, **EMD Amount (Rs. in Lakhs):** 40.00, **Time limit for Completion of Work:** 11 Months, **Class and Type of Eligible Contractors:** PWDClass-I (KW-4), **E-processing Fee (e-Payment):** As per e-Procurement.

CALENDER OF TENDER PROCESS: 1) Date of Pre-bid Meeting: **16-03-2019 at 12.00 Noon** 2) Last Date for Submission of Completed Tenders: **26-03-2019 upto 5.00 PM** 3) Date of Opening of Technical Bid: **29-03-2019 at 4.00 PM** 4) Date of Opening of Financial Bid: **05-04-2019 at 12.00 Noon.**

Taxes will be deducted as per the Tax Act. For blank tenders prescribed fee shall be paid and user ID password can be obtained through our website: http://eproc.karnataka.gov.in and for any additional information and conditions contact Karnataka Government E-procurement help desk 080-22485867 and Secretary, APMC, Yeshwanthpura, Bangalore-22, 080-23472850 on all working days. Changes if any in the Tender Notification shall be made only in the website.

Sd/- SECRETARY APMC, Bangalore **Sd/- ADMINISTRATOR APMC, Bangalore**

DIPR/Bengaluru/R.O.No.2302/2018-19

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Talking denuclearisation

North Korea's leader Kim Jong-un, who left the country's capital by train on Saturday, is scheduled to meet U.S. President Donald Trump over two days next week. Denuclearisation of the Korean peninsula is expected to be on the top of the agenda

THAW AND TALKS

President Donald Trump designated North Korea as a "state sponsor of terrorism" on Nov. 20, 2017. Since then, a flurry of diplomatic manoeuvres have brought about a thaw between the two countries

Jan. 2, 2018: South Korea says it is willing to meet with North Korea and proposes talks at Panmunjom

Jan. 4: President Donald Trump and his South Korean counterpart Moon Jae-in agree to postpone the annual 'Foal Eagle' joint military exercise

Feb. 10: Kim Yo-jong, Kim's sister, meets with Moon in the Presidential Blue House in Seoul, and invites him to visit Pyongyang for a summit meeting

March 8: South Korean National Security Advisor Chung Eui-yong, following a meeting with Trump, announces that Trump accepted an invitation from Kim

April 27: Kim and Moon meet in Panmunjom in the third ever meeting of North and South Korean leaders

May 24: North Korea reports that it has destroyed its nuclear testing site at Punggye-ri

A new chapter: Kim Jong-un departing from Pyongyang on Saturday. ▪ AP

June 12: Trump meets with Kim in Singapore in the first summit between the sitting leaders of the two countries

July 25: U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo confirms that North Korea is dismantling a missile launch facility

Sept. 14: North and South Korea open their first joint liaison office in Kaesong

Oct. 19: The United States and South Korea cancel the joint military exercise 'Vigilant Ace'

Dec. 26: After a sanctions waiver from UN, officials from North and South Korea hold a groundbreaking ceremony in Kaesong for an inter-Korean railroad project

Jan. 1, 2019: Kim delivers his annual New Year's Address, stating that he is willing to meet U.S. President Donald Trump at "anytime" and committing that North Korea would "neither make and test nuclear weapons any longer nor use and proliferate them"

NUCLEAR TESTS SO FAR

North Korea is estimated to have assembled 10-20 nuclear warheads and produced enough fissile material for an estimated 30-60 nuclear weapons. The country has conducted six nuclear tests, four of them under current leader Kim Jong-un

Oct. 9, 2006: North Korea conducts an underground nuclear test near the village of Punggye-ri

May 25, 2009: Pyongyang conducts its second underground nuclear test a few km from its 2006 test site near the village of Punggye-ri

Feb. 12, 2013: The Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty Organization detects seismic activity near North Korea's nuclear test site

Jan. 6, 2016: North Korea announces it conducted its fourth nuclear test, claiming to have detonated a hydrogen bomb

Sept. 9, 2016: Pyongyang conducts its fifth nuclear test

Sept. 3, 2017: North Korea conducts its sixth nuclear test, claiming the device tested was a hydrogen bomb and the test was a "perfect success." The yield is estimated to be higher than the previous tests

Source: Armscontrol.org, Graphic News

N. Korea asks Trump to ignore critics

Pyongyang calls the upcoming summit a 'historic opportunity' to improve bilateral relations

REUTERS
HANOI

North Korea warned President Donald Trump on Sunday not to listen to U.S. critics who were disrupting efforts to improve ties, as its leader Kim Jong-un made his way across China by train to a second summit with Mr. Trump in Vietnam.

The two leaders will meet in Hanoi on Wednesday and Thursday, eight months after their historic summit in Singapore, where they pledged to work toward the complete denuclearisation of the Korean peninsula.

Vague agreement

But their vaguely worded agreement has produced few results and U.S. Democratic Senators and U.S. security officials have warned Mr. Trump against cutting a deal that would do little to curb North Korea's nuclear ambitions. The North's KCNA state news agency said such opposition was aimed at derailing the talks. "If the present U.S. administration reads others' faces, lending an ear to others, it may face the shattered dream of the improvement of the relations with the DPRK and world peace and miss the rare historic opportunity," the news agency said in a commentary.

The venue: The Government Guesthouse in Hanoi, which is likely to host the summit. ▪ AP

The Trump administration has pressed the North to give up its nuclear weapons programme, which, combined with its missile capabilities, pose a threat to the United States, before it can expect any concessions.

But a week before his second summit with Mr. Kim, Mr. Trump signalled a possible softening of that stance, saying he would love to be able to remove sanctions if there was meaningful progress on denuclearisation.

Mr. Trump also said he was in no rush and had no pressing schedule for North Korea's denuclearisation, hinting at a more gradual, reciprocal approach, long favoured by Pyongyang. The North also wants security guarantees and a formal end of the 1950-1953 Korean War, which ended in a truce, not a treaty. In a letter to Mr. Trump last week, three Democratic chairmen of key House committees accused the administration of withholding information on the negotiations with North Korea. "There are ample reasons to be sceptical that Chairman Kim is committed to a nuclear-free North Korea," the lawmakers wrote.

U.S. intelligence officials recently testified to Congress that North Korea was unlikely to ever give up its entire nuclear arsenal.

KCNA, referring to U.S. fears of the North's weapons, said if this week's talks ended without results, "the U.S. people will never be cleared of the security threats that threw them into panic".

In rare, revealing coverage of Mr. Kim's travel, the North's *Rodong Sinmun* newspaper featured photographs of him getting a red-carpet send-off on Saturday afternoon and waving from a train door while holding a cigarette. South Korea's Yonhap news agency said Mr. Kim's train had passed through a station in China's port city of Tianjin at around 1 p.m. (0500 GMT).

Bangladesh hijack attempt foiled

Suspect, who claimed to have a bomb, shot dead by forces

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
CHITTAGONG

Bangladesh commandos stormed a passenger jet in the country's southeast Sunday and shot dead an armed man who allegedly tried to hijack the Dubai-bound flight, an Army official said.

The suspect, described by officials as a Bangladeshi man in his mid 20s, was shot as special forces rushed the Boeing 737-800 plane after it landed safely in Chittagong.

The Bangladesh Biman flight after it made an emergency landing at the airport in Chittagong on Sunday. ▪ AP

All passengers safe

The 134 passengers and 14 crew aboard the Bangladesh Biman flight BG147 were all rescued unharmed, officials said. But the suspected hijacker – identified by the name "Mahadi" and described as being 25 or 26 years old – was injured and died shortly after being arrested, said Army spokesman Major General Motiur Rahman.

"Our commando team asked the hijacker to surrender, but he rejected it by being aggressive, and was shot," Mr. Rahman told reporters. "Later on we learnt he had died... We found a pistol from him and nothing else." The airport was sealed off by Army, Navy and elite police after landing to collect more passengers from Dhaka on its journey to Dubai. "Just ten minutes after the plane took off (from Dhaka) he fired twice," one passenger told reporters in Chittagong.

Air Vice Marshall Mofid said he kept the accused man busy talking on the phone while special forces units prepared for the dramatic raid. "He demanded to speak to our Prime Minister (Sheikh Hasina)."

The operation took less than 10 minutes and the plane has been searched and declared worthy to fly again, Mr. Rahman said.

The country's civil aviation chief, Nayeem Hasan, earlier said the suspect had claimed to have a bomb aboard the flight. "From the talks and dialogue we have with him, it seems he is psychologically deranged," Mr. Hasan said after the man was arrested.

Record civilian deaths in Afghanistan last year: UN

Conflict claimed 3,804 lives in 2018

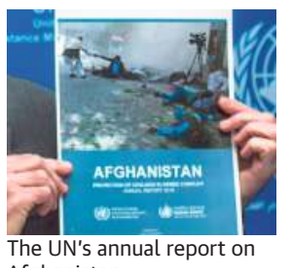
REUTERS
KABUL

A record number of Afghan civilians were killed last year due to stepped up aerial attacks by U.S-led forces and more suicide bombings, the United Nations said in a report on Sunday.

The conflict in Afghanistan claimed 3,804 civilian lives that included 927 children, both all-time highs, leading to an 11% spike in civilian deaths versus 2017, the report from the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) said.

"The best way to halt the killings and maiming of civilians is to stop the fighting. That is why there is all the more need now to use all our efforts to bring about peace," said Tadamichi Yamamoto, the top UN official in Afghanistan.

The Afghan war has intensified despite peace talks gaining momentum.



The UN's annual report on Afghanistan. ▪ AFP

The report stated that 1,185 civilians were killed and 1,427 civilians were injured from operations conducted by pro-government forces. Their aerial operations caused 492 child casualties as many attacks were on anti-government elements hiding among the civilian population.

The report said the Taliban was responsible for 1,751 civilian casualties in 2018, versus 916 in 2017, while the Islamic State (IS) killed or wounded 2,181 civilians last year.

All options open, says Guaidó

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
UREÑA

International pressure mounted against Venezuela's leader Nicolás Maduro on Sunday, with Washington vowing to "take action" after Opposition efforts to bring humanitarian aid into the country descended into bloody chaos.

Self-declared President Juan Guaidó called on the international community to consider "all measures to free" Venezuela after clashes at the border crossing left at least two people dead. Mr. Guaidó announced he would participate in Monday's Lima Group meeting of mostly Latin American countries in Bogotá, and called on the international community to be prepared for "all possibilities" regarding Mr. Maduro.

U.S. Vice-President Mike Pence will represent Washington at the meeting.

ELSEWHERE

No Brexit parliamentary vote this week: May

LONDON

British Prime Minister Theresa May said on Sunday that MPs would not have a chance to vote again on her Brexit deal this week but promised this would happen by March 12, reports said. "We won't bring a meaningful vote to Parliament this week. But we will ensure that that happens by March 12," she told British media. AFP

Iran successfully tests cruise missile

DUBAI

Iran successfully tested a cruise missile on Sunday during naval exercises near the Strait of Hormuz, state media reported. "On the third day of the... exercises, a Ghadir-class Iranian Navy submarine successfully launched a cruise missile," the official news agency IRNA reported. AFP

Saudi Arabia names Princess Reema as Ambassador to U.S

She will become the kingdom's first woman envoy

BEN HUBBARD
ISTANBUL

Saudi Arabia appointed a Princess as its new Ambassador to the United States on Saturday, the first time the kingdom had named a woman to such a post.

The appointment of Princess Reema bint Bandar bin Sultan by royal decree came amid strained relations between Saudi Arabia and the United States over the killing of Jamal Khashoggi by Saudi agents in Istanbul in October.

To replace MBS' brother

Princess Reema will replace Prince Khalid bin Salman, a son of King Salman and a younger brother of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman (MBS), who took the post in 2017. Also in a royal decree on Saturday, Prince Khalid was named Deputy Defence Minister under the Crown Prince, who heads the Ministry.

Since his father ascended to the throne in 2015, Crown Prince Mohammed has pushed for vast changes in Saudi Arabia. He has called for a more diversified economy, granted women the right to drive, expanded entertainment options and moderated the kingdom's official religious rhetoric, while also spearheading a disastrous military intervention in Yemen and other policies that have raised doubts about his judgment.

Saudi Princess Reema bint Bandar bin Sultan. ▪ AFP

The appointment of Princess Reema to Washington appeared aimed at turning a new page after the killing of Khashoggi, who lived in Virginia and was a columnist for *The Washington Post*, while also emphasising the kingdom's social reforms in the capital of its most important ally.

New possibilities

In addition to representing the new possibilities now available for Saudi women, Princess Reema is the daughter of Prince Bandar bin Sultan, a towering figure in Saudi diplomacy who served as the kingdom's Ambassador to the United States from 1983 to 2005. He was so close with the Bush family that he was often referred to as "Bandar Bush."

Princess Reema spent many years in Washington while her father was Ambassador and graduated with a degree in museum studies from George Washington University. She has recently served in the kingdom's sports commission. NY TIMES

India-built houses handed over to Sri Lanka estate workers

MEERA SRINIVASAN
COLOMBO

As many as 155 houses, built as part of India's ongoing housing project in Sri Lanka, were on Sunday handed over to estate workers in Hatton, located in the Central Province. The effort is part of India's pledge to help construct 63,000 houses in Sri Lanka – including 46,000 homes built in the war-hit north and east – with a grant of $350 million, the largest Indian grant assistance project in any country abroad.

Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe, Minister for Hill country New Villages, Infrastructure and Community Development Palani Digambaram and Indian High Commissioner to Sri Lanka Taranjit Singh Sandhu were present at the ceremony held on Sunday, to mark the completion and handing over of the 155 houses.

The houses have come up at a cost of about LKR 10 lakh each (roughly ₹4 lakh). Of the 14,000 houses coming up in the hill country with Indian aid, 1,000 have been completed, 3,000 are under construction and work on the remaining are expected to commence soon, officials said.

The newly-constructed houses will enable families of estate workers to move out of the cramped, colonial-era line rooms, into individual units

Odisha State Medical Corporation Limited (OSMC)
In front of Ram Mandir, Convent Square, Unit-III, Bhubaneswar-751 001
Tel.:(0674) 2380608; Website: www.osmcl.nic.in
Email: proc.osmcl.od@nic.in
Assuring Quality, Saving Lives
Date : 22.02.2019

NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER FOR SUPPLY & INSTALLATION OF EQUIPMENTS FOR PSYCHIATRY & NEUROLOGY DEPARTMENT (Re-Tender)

Online Bids through **e-Tender portal (https://tendersodisha.gov.in)** are invited from eligible bidders for **supply, installation & commissioning of Equipments as per the particulars mentioned below:**

Sl.	Bid Reference No.	Item Name	Bid Document Cost inclusive of GST (Rs.)
1.	OSMCL/2018-19/EQP-MHI (Re-tender)/27	Supply & Installation of Equipments for Psychiatry & Neurology Department (Re-Tender)	5,600/-

Sl. No.	Particulars	Date and time	
1.	Date & time of release of bid	23.02.2019, 3 PM	
2.	Date & time of Pre-bid meeting	01.03.2019, 11 AM Venue : Conference Hall, Odisha State Medical Corporation Ltd., Convent Square, Unit-III, Bhubaneswar	
3.	Date & time of Online bid submission	Start Date & Time	End Date & Time
		08.03.2019, 3 PM	22.03.2019, 5 PM
4.	Date & time of online Technical Bid Opening	26.03.2019, 11 AM	
5.	Date of demonstration of Equipment (If required by the Tender Inviting Authority for some equipments)	To be informed to those bidders whose bids are found to be technically responsive based on documents furnished in technical bid.	
6.	Date of opening of Price Bid	To be informed to the qualified bidders	

The bid document with all information relating to the bidding process including cost of bid document, EMDs, Prequalification criteria and terms & conditions are available in the websites: **www.osmcl.nic.in** and **https://tendersodisha.gov.in** . The Authority reserves the right to accept / reject any part thereof or all the bids without assigning any reason thereof.

CAD-1483
10112/11/0059/1819

Managing Director, OSMC Ltd., Odisha

Sri Lankan police seize record haul of heroin

MEERA SRINIVASAN
COLOMBO

Sri Lankan police have seized 300 kg of heroin, worth about $17 million, at a parking lot in the heart of the city. Two persons were arrested following what is said to be a record haul of the narcotic.

Police spokesman Ruwan Gunasekara told media persons that when personnel of the Narcotics Bureau and the police Special Task Force raided a mall car park on Saturday, they found two vans loaded with heroin, packed in nearly 300 plastic bags.

In a tweet, President Maithripala Sirisena commended the team that led the seizure. "My congratulations to the Police #Narcotic Bureau & the #STF personnel who successfully seized the largest consignment of illicit drugs in our history. Behalf of the future of our beloved children, I thank you and I assure my fullest support on achieving this noble purpose," he said. The development comes amid heightening concern over the drug menace facing the island. Mr. Sirisena has vowed to hang drug traffickers, signalling the controversial revival of the death penalty after a four-decade-long moratorium.

The Philippines example

Mr. Sirisena, who was in Philippines this January, had praised President Rodrigo Duterte's war on drugs, and is said to be modelling Sri Lanka's own crackdown on the Philippines's widely-criticised approach. Last year too, Mr. Sirisena made a similar announcement in the wake of a 100 kg-seizure of heroin.

Even as authorities flag concerns that Sri Lanka could become a transit point for narcotics trade in Asia, police have arrested over 50 people in the past six months in connection on drug trafficking charges, according to media reports.

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER, ANANDAPUR BARRAGE PROJECT, SALAPADA.
(E-mail Id:- cceabp-eicwr.od@nic.in/ loabp-eicwr.od@nic.in)

1317-A:

e-Procurement Notice No. CCEABP-21 of 2018-19

E-Procurement Officer	Name of Work	Bid Id No.	Tender Cost in Lakhs (Appx.)	Bid Security in Lakhs	Cost of Bid Document	Class of Contractor	Period of Completion	Availability of Tender On-line for bidding From	To	Date of Opening of Technical Bid (Cover-1)
Chief Construction Engineer, A.B.Project, Salapada	Construction of Balance Field Channel work to Develop Command Area of Kalyani, Baghua, Nahanga & Panichatra Distributary off taken from Salandi Left Main Canal (SLMC).	ABP-BCD-04/1 of 2018-19	223.33	2,25,000/-	10,000/-	B&A	6 (Six) Calendar months	27.02.19 11.30 hrs	14.03.19 17.00 hrs	16.03.19 11.30 hrs

Further details can be seen from the Govt. website : **www.tendersorissa.gov.in / www.dowrodisha.gov.in.** Addendum/Corrigendum/ Cancellation if any required will be published in Govt. website only.

32068/11/0033/1819

Chief Construction Engineer, Anandapur Barrage Project, Salapada.

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IN BRIEF

Maruti to inspect ABS software in Baleno units

NEW DELHI

Auto major Maruti Suzuki India (MSI) is undertaking a service campaign for 3,757 units of its premium hatchback Baleno to inspect and update modified software in actuator assembly ABS, a key part of braking system. The service campaign will cover Baleno units manufactured between December 6, 2018 and February 4, 2019, the firm said in a customer notice posted on its website. PTI

FPIs sell debt securities worth over ₹1,900 crore

NEW DELHI

Foreign portfolio investors (FPI) sold debt securities worth over ₹1,900 crore in February amid escalation of cross-border tensions in the wake of Pulwama terror attack. Latest data from the depositories showed that the overseas players pumped in ₹2,039 crore into equities even as they dumped debt during February till 22. In January, the net FPI outflow (from both equity and debt) stood at ₹5,360 crore. PTI

Blackstone, Embassy JV to launch REIT soon

NEW DELHI

Global investment company Blackstone and realty firm Embassy Group will, in a few weeks, launch the country's first real estate investment trust (REIT) with an estimated issue size of ₹5,000 crore, a top company official said. Embassy Office Parks, the joint venture firm of Blackstone and Embassy, in September had filed the draft red herring prospectus with the Securities and Exchange Board of India to launch REIT. PTI

Want to create long-living institutions: Ramco's Raja

We have to steadily keep on improving value so that our companies can sustain for long, says the group's chairman

K.T. JAGANNATHAN
N. ANAND
CHENNAI

It's not a sprint. It's a marathon. Ask the czar of the low-profile Ramco Group. He will vouch for it. "There is no point in just being proud of your institution. How can you be a long-living institution? That's our vision," said P.R. Venketrama Raja, chairman of Ramco Group.

In a free-wheeling interview, the soft-spoken Mr. Raja indicated that the group had a blinkered horse-like focus on creating "long-living institutions" on the lines of those existing in Japan and Sweden.

"When companies are dying after 60-70 years, how can you be like Japanese and Swedish firms that have survived for long? What is it that helps us to go on and give value to society and stakeholders? What is it that we can build and that can also give us deep satisfaction? These were always high on the agenda of the group's thought leadership," he added.

In for the long haul: We have created assets and excellent products in different sectors, says P.R. Venketrama Raja.

"My wish is to steadily keep on improving value so that our companies could sustain for a long time," he added. "That's the approach we have taken. The world is rapidly changing. Hopefully, we will stay relevant as there are demand for our products. We are dealing in commodities (cement, textiles, infrastructure, software products and logistics) and not in fashionable products. And, the margins are thin in commodities," he pointed out. "We want the Ramco Group to be remembered for its values."

Ramco Systems, the IT product company of the group, had invested heavily in modern technology in the area of ERP. The firm's products, he said, were much sought after worldwide.

"There is lot of interest for our products across the world. Again, there is solidity. It requires a lot of value, R&D and depth to give such products," he said.

"We have created assets and excellent products in different sectors. Assets like these cannot be built again without wealth. It is important that we make it, give it, grow it and reach full value," he added. Is Ramco Systems under-marketed? Not exactly, he said. "We had our own limitations. We focused on a few things ... though we could have done many things ... till we reach a particular stage. It is time now to scale up our products and workforce," he added.

Are finances and workforce a constraint for scale-up? "It is not a problem. Things grow faster than expected. We have to solve it," he said.

On the rat race among the new age companies, he said: "Rat race is there. Ultimately, if you have a fundamental purpose and something of meaning, some of them will sustain and others will go. Our approach has been to steadily improve value, sustainable in the long run as a company and institution. Hopefully, it will work, and we will continue to stay relevant. With deep R&D, efficient product and quality, we can be better than the competition."

Bankruptcy law

To a question, Mr. Raja said that the bankruptcy law was the need of the hour. It was important for the economy as it facilitated the sunset of an asset, he added. "With its implementation, inefficient assets have been taken out of the market."

To a question on the much talked about one-day default prescription for initiating insolvency proceedings under the IBC, he felt that it was a bit harsh.

In this context, he said India could also have a Chapter 11-like law as in the U.S. bankruptcy code.

NPS: minimum assured return scheme on the cards

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA) is working on a minimum assured return scheme (MARS) for subscribers of the National Pension System (NPS).

The regulator is in the process of designing and developing MARS, according to a PFRDA document.

Some aspects, including what kind of guarantee – absolute return guarantees or relative rate of return guarantees (sector and benchmark-based) – can be reasonably provided by the pension funds with recommendation of suitable proposals, need to be examined, the PFRDA said in the expression of interest.

Ordinance clamps down on unregulated deposits

Prescribes fines, jail terms for violators

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

In a bid to clamp down on Ponzi and fake deposit schemes, the government has, through an ordinance, banned unregulated deposit schemes.

The ordinance has also put in place a mechanism that will penalise the operation and advertisement of such unregulated schemes with jail time as well as monetary fines.

Unregistered deposits

The Banning of Unregulated Deposit Schemes Ordinance 2019 states that any deposit scheme not registered with the government would be treated as an unregulated deposit scheme and would, as such, be banned.

This extends to the entire country except Jammu and Kashmir and is to come into force immediately.

"No deposit taker shall directly or indirectly promote, operate, issue any advertisement soliciting participation or enrolment in or accept deposits in pursuance of an unregulated deposit scheme," the ordinance said.

The ordinance has separate penalties for those who solicit deposits for an unregulated scheme, those who accept such deposits, and those who then fraudulently default on repaying the depositors.

GST cut may boost realty demand

Move to spur homebuyers to close deals, says Hiranandani

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

The GST Council's move to cut the tax rate to 1% (from 8%) on affordable housing and 5% (from 12%) on under-construction housing would raise demand for residential realty, said developers.

Shishir Baijal, CMD, Knight Frank India, said: "The reduction in the GST rates for under-construction projects is the most decisive move by the council with a clear focus on demand stimulation. This move will give the necessary fillip to the demand in under -construction segment, which has been suffering from low sales levels for many quarters.

"The elimination of input tax credit (ITC) benefit may hit profitability for the supply side. However, the potential demand generation as a result of this move will far outweigh negative aspects leading to greater sales numbers and revenues. We estimate that the reduction in GST rates can reduce the buyers' payout by 6-7% on the overall purchase, depending on the category. The consequent accelerating sales will reduce the unsold inventory, which has been afflicting the sector," he said.

Niranjan Hiranandani, MD, Hiranandani Group and national president, NAREDCO, said: "Industry lauds the rate cut. This move brings relief to homebuyers and helps narrow down demand-supply gap. This announcement will give a fillip to affordable housing and enthuse homebuyers to close sale deals."

No cut in GST on cement

However, he said, the GST rate on cement had not been reduced as was expected. "At 28%, it remains among the highest taxed inputs for construction and there will be no ITC. So, developers will face a challenging time."

SBI plans NCLT route to recover loans from Jet

'Not enough funds even for operations'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

To recover its loans from Jet Airways, state-run lender SBI is planning to move the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT). The lender feels the airline is running out of funds for operations, even as shareholders of the debt-laden carrier have approved a debt recast plan, officials said.

A consortium of banks, led by the SBI, had extended loans to Jet Airways.

Officials associated with the lenders and key shareholders said the SBI was considering moving the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) seeking its approval to commence insolvency proceedings against Jet Airways since it was running out of money for operations.

Lenders can initiate proceedings under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) to recover dues from debt-laden entities.

The process can commence only after approval from the NCLT.

INTERVIEW | SANTOSH SHARMA

'Our mine expansion programme will reduce India's import dependence by 25%'

We will take ore capacity to 20 million tonnes by 2024: Hindustan Copper's CMD

INDRANI DUTTA

A listed PSU, Hindustan Copper Ltd. (HCL) is a vertically integrated copper producer, engaged in mining, beneficiation, smelting/refining and manufacturing value-added products. Recently, HCL has been taking efforts to insulate itself from the volatility of international copper prices by entering into non-LME linked items of production. The company's CMD **Santosh Sharma** *shares his thoughts. Excerpts from an interview:*

HCL is now pursuing a ₹5,500 crore mine-expansion plan that will increase its capacity to 20 million tonnes by 2024. Could you elaborate?

■ Mining and ore exploration are HCL's key growth areas.

Our mine expansion plan aims to take ore capacity from 3.8 million tonnes in 2018 to 20 million tonnes by 2024.

The capital outlay is phased over five years. About ₹1,000 crore has already been invested.

The strategy involves expansion of existing mines, reopening of closed mines in Jharkhand and development of new mines.

The expansion projects are located in Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand and Rajasthan. Most of the funding would be through internal accruals.

To what extent will it reduce import dependence?

■ With the completion of the expansion projects by 2024-25, copper availability will be suffice to meet 30% of India's demand against the present 5%.

Consequently, concentrate import will decline by 25%. It will help HCL to enhance its profitability (even if LME prices drop sharply). This is because of a huge cost reduction due to the economies of scale.

Increasing resource base through investments in exploration is needed urgently

For HCL, the benefit would be that we will then be able to scale up and play by volume.

India holds about 2% of global copper reserves. Increasing resource base through investments in exploration is needed urgently.

HCL has a crucial role to play here.

Depth exploration in existing mining leases (beyond the 300-500 metres done now) is another thrust area. We plan to undertake an exploration programme covering geophysical and depth drilling in existing mines in Rajasthan, Jharkhand, and Madhya Pradesh and complete it in two years.

Our joint venture, Chhattisgarh Copper Co. Ltd will boost these efforts.

Could you share your mine expansion strategy?

■ We are implementing a three-pronged strategy of expansion at four mines – Malanjkhand (Madhya Pradesh), Surda and Khetri (Jharkhand) and Kolihan (Rajasthan).

We are reopening two mines at Rakha and Kendadih (Jhakhand).

Of these, Kendadih has already been reopened. These were closed years back due to unviable operations.

This has now improved with availability of new technology and larger operational scale. The tendering process has begun for Rakha. Alongside, we are also setting up a greenfield mine at Chapri Sideshwar (Jharkhand).

So, the bulk of the projected capacity will come from the underground mine under development at Malanjkhand, which has the single largest copper deposit in India?

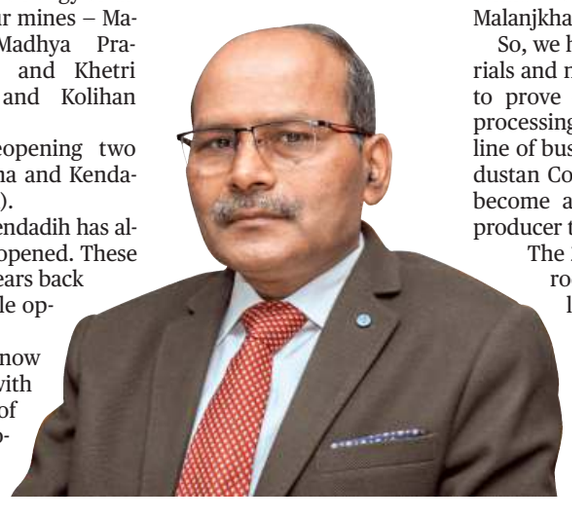
■ The eight-million tonne capacity will come from the Malanjkhand underground mine which is under development. Initially, five-million tonne capacity will be achieved. We are going to try out new things here.

What is your progress at Banwas?

■ The production ramp-up from the Banwas mine has commenced this fiscal and will increase to six lakh tonnes by 2020. At Malanjkhand, we will gradually taper off opencast mining.

Will HCL operate these new expansion projects, or will you outsource?

■ Except Khetri and Kolihan, we have planned to operate all the other mines through outsourcing mode. Tendering process is now under way. We plan to expand through the EPC mode for most of these mines.



What advantages does HCL enjoy over its competitors like Sterlite and Birla Copper, as India's sole copper miner?

■ The business model of private companies viz. Birla and Sterlite are based on custom smelting i.e they are importing copper concentrate and processing in their smelter and refinery plant.

Private players' business is essentially low-margin, high-volume business. As an integrated producer, HCL's margins are linked with LME copper prices. Compared to private players, HCL enjoys higher profit margin.

You had plans of getting into new metals as a means of entering non-LME linked sectors. Has this progressed?

■ We have taken initiatives to monetise the waste generated during ore mining.

These are copper ore tailings and mine waste rock of Malanjkhand mine.

A plant of annual capacity of 3.3 million tonnes has been installed at Malanjkhand to treat ore tailings and the trial run has begun.

HCL has over 100 million tonne stocks of tailings at Malanjkhand and at Khetri.

So, we have the raw materials and now, we only need to prove our efficiency in processing in this parallel line of business, where Hindustan Copper can actually become a precious metals producer too.

The 200 million-tonne rock stock at Malanjkhand can be used as railway ballast aggregate in the construction sector. Lab tests by RDSO, Lucknow have been successful.

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Consistency is the key

Which were the Central Public Sector Enterprises that consistently recorded profits or losses in the last six years? Of the 208 surveyed, 31 had registered a net loss for the past six years while 107 had recorded a net profit* in those years, both consecutively. Employee strength crossed the 10,000-mark in four of the loss-making CPSEs, each, thus increasing the risk for staff in case the trend continued.*
*By **Vignesh Radhakrishan***

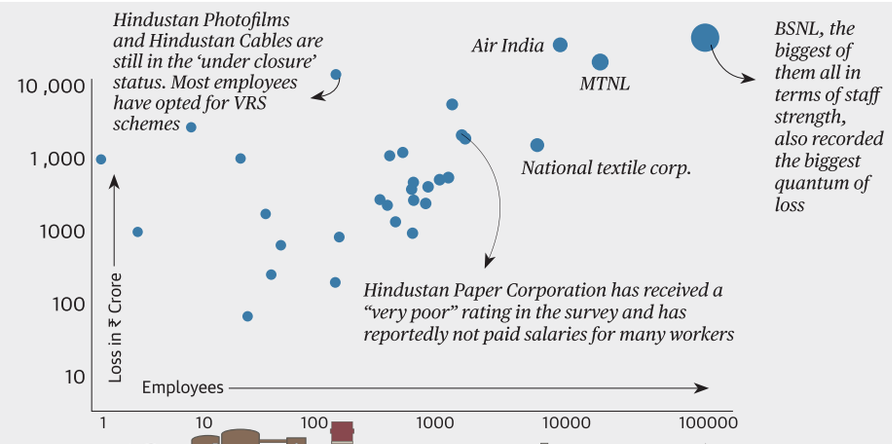
CONSISTENT FAILURES
Of the 31 that had posted consecutive losses, a list of top seven based on the accumulated loss during the period

Enterprise	Loss* (₹ cr.)
Bharat Sanchar Nigam	42,313
Air India	34,008
Mahanagar Telephone Nigam	20,141
Hindustan Photo Films	13,790
Hindustan Cables	5,526
STCL	2,753
Hindustan Paper Corporation	2,159

CONSISTENT SUCCESSES
Of the 107 that had posted consecutive profits, a list of top seven based on the accumulated profit during the period

Enterprise	Profit* (₹ cr.)
Oil & Natural Gas Corporation	1,70,465
Indian Oil Corporation	94,501
Coal India	80,004
NTPC	75,933
Bharat Petroleum Corporation	50,032
Power Grid Corporation Of India	45,785
Power finance corporation	44,400

VULNERABLE EMPLOYEES
Employees working in companies which post consecutive losses are in danger of losing their jobs if a turnaround is not achieved in the future. The graph shows the number of employees in such companies as of FY2018 against its cumulative quantum of loss in the past six years



* The profit/loss was calculated before exceptional, extraordinary items and tax (PBEET) | Source: Public Enterprises Survey

Too many imponderables in Jet rescue plan

Among the questions lurking is who will commit funds into a firm with ₹7,242-cr. negative net worth

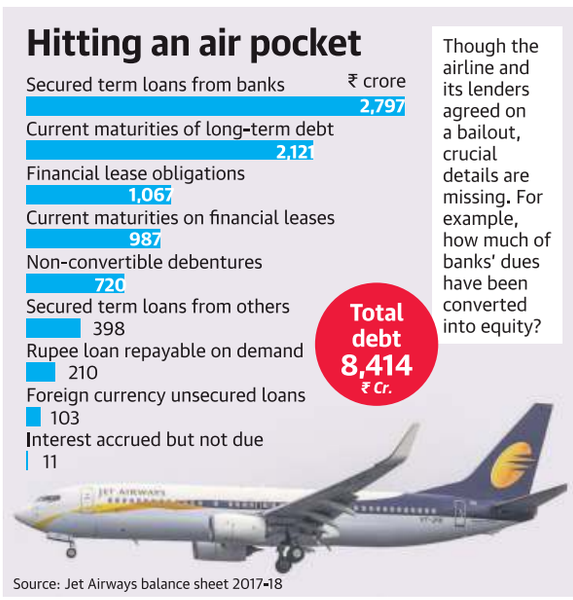
RAGHUVIR SRINIVASAN

The more that things seem to change, the more they remain the same. The bailout of Jet Airways by its lenders finalised last week and approved by shareholders on February 21 is reminiscent of a bailout seven years ago of another high-profile airline that fell into bad times.

In an attempt to rescue Kingfisher Airlines, a consortium of lenders led by State Bank of India (yes, the same SBI which is now leading the effort to keep Jet Airways flying) decided to convert a part of its loans into equity. Thus, in April 2011, a sum of ₹1,303 crore, representing a third of the airline's total dues of ₹4,263 crore to banks, was converted into equity.

The scandal, though, was the fact that the conversion happened at a premium of 61% to the then prevailing market price of the Kingfisher Airlines share. The SBI-led consortium agreed to convert its debt into equity at a price of ₹64.48 a share against the market price of ₹39.90!

Cut to the present. Banks have eased themselves into the pilot's seat of Jet Airways, converting their dues into equity in the airline. Jet, which is reeling under losses for the last four consecutive quarters, has a debt overload of ₹8,414 crore (as of March 31, 2018) which includes terms loans from banks and dues to lessors for aircraft lease.



The airline and banks announced the bailout with much fanfare, but the crucial details have not been disclosed. How much of the banks' dues have been converted into equity? As per the last audited balance sheet as on March 31, 2018, Jet owed ₹3,007 crore (₹2,797 crore term loan plus ₹210 crore loan repayable on demand) as secured loans to banks.

In addition, a sum of ₹2,121 crore has been grouped under current liabilities in the balance sheet under the head of "current maturities of long-term debt". These are probably the overdues on loan repayment.

So, how much of this outstanding debt of ₹5,128 crore (₹3,007 crore plus ₹2,121 crore) has been converted into equity? And at what price? The answers to these questions will help us understand how harmful the bailout is for the lenders.

A small, back-of-the-envelope calculation will be useful here.

The banks have been issued 11.40 crore shares for a total consideration of ₹1, giving them a majority stake in the airline. Jet Airways' share capital before the bailout was ₹113.60 crore divided into 11.36 crore shares of ₹10 each.

On February 15, the day the bailout was finalised, Jet's share closed at ₹232.55. This would put the total value of the 11.40 crore shares issued by Jet to the lenders at

Why did the lenders decide to rescue the airline instead of referring it to the bankruptcy court?

₹2,651 crore. This sum has a close resemblance to the overdue amount of ₹2,121 crore grouped under current liabilities in the balance sheet. It is also pretty close to the outstanding term loans of ₹2,797 crore from banks. So, have banks converted their entire overdues into equity? With neither the airline nor banks disclosing details, we can only speculate here.

Critical component

There are too many imponderables in the rescue plan that has been devised now. A critical component of the bailout is infusion of equity from a new investor, which may or may not be an airline. Which investor would be willing to commit his funds into a company with a negative net worth of ₹7,242 crore (as of March 31, 2018) and whose shares were down by over 60% in just one year?

There is also a rights issue envisaged besides sale of aircraft that is expected to fetch ₹3,000 crore.

As of now, at least five aircraft have been grounded by the airline, though media reports say that it could be as many as nine. How many more aircraft can the airline dispose off without affecting its schedules?

What is Etihad's gameplan here? The Gulf airline's stake in Jet will drop by half to 12% after the issue of shares to banks. Yet, the rescue plan envisages that it would double to 24% again after the rights issue. Has Etihad committed to putting in the required money?

Why not IBC?

The larger question here is why did the lenders decide to rescue the airline instead of referring it to the bankruptcy court as they have done in so many other cases? That would have been the less controversial of the two options and probably safer too. What happens if the rescue doesn't work to plan? Dragging the airline to bankruptcy court later will cause a loss to banks which would then have been demoted to the status of equity holders.

The parallels here with the Kingfisher bailout are too similar for comfort.

Banks need to come out with full disclosure on the deal, as it is public money that is now being used to fund a private airline. With public sector banks assuming majority ownership of Jet, the airline now de facto becomes a government company and will remain so at least until the rights issue goes through successfully. This means that the Government of India now owns and runs two airlines – Air India and Jet Airways. Both loss-making, with an uncertain future.

Balancing risk with reward

Tightening of mutual fund norms needs delicate handling

ASHISH RUKHAIYAR

'Mutual fund (MF) investments are subject to market risk. Please read the offer document carefully before investing.'

This is the mandatory disclaimer that all MF houses have to show at the end of every advertisement. Moreover, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has mandated that the disclaimer should be shown for a full five seconds.

And that's not all. Every penny that a fund house spends on advertising, marketing and distribution and also the manner in which it spends is highly regulated.

In October 2017, SEBI also laid down guidelines for categorisation of MF schemes.

So, what more can be done so that MFs do not end up in a situation that is being talked about in the markets?

Some fund houses, through their debt schemes, had structured exposure with promoters of certain firms, which effectively was a lending activity in the form of loan against shares.

Such exposure is now being questioned as the underlying shares of many conglomerates like Zee Group, Anil Dhirubhai Ambani Group and Dewan Housing Finance, among others, saw significant and swift erosion in their share prices.

"Investment against shares is more of a lending activity than investment activity and hence regulations should be different," said J.N. Gupta, MD, Stakeholders Empowerment Services (SES), a proxy advisory firm.

"However, if there are many rules to comply with, then only the compliance cost will increase. A proper disclosure regime is better than extreme regulation," added Mr. Gupta who earlier served as an ED with SEBI.

Incidentally, there are many who believe that MFs should be barred altogether from such activities due to the significant risk involved.

But look at the returns of a plain vanilla mid-cap or even a large-cap equity fund and chances are that the one-year return – even longer tenure in many cases – could be in the red. So, should one ban such funds as well?

Higher risk

There is no denying that the risk is higher in such debt products but if a riskier product is offered with the right disclosures then an investor can take a better informed decision. And that is what the regulator should do if it thinks that there is further scope to tighten the disclosure norms for MFs.

It's a very fine line. There are many who believe that the ongoing developments do not pose a systemic risk like the one seen post the IL&FS crisis, which led to SEBI introducing the side pocket framework.

"Nothing needs to be done by SEBI as whatever needs to be done has already been done," said Dhirendra Kumar of Value Research, a MF tracking company.

"Side pocketing was a very important decision by SEBI to safeguard investors against investments turning bad," added Mr. Kumar.

Debt funds have been in existence for decades and currently have assets totalling ₹15 trillion. Till date, only a negligible part of that has turned bad.

It's also a fact that every investor has a different level of risk appetite. Incidentally, there is a global market for even junk bonds and smart money managers have made money on such instruments.

SEBI can also look at the business model for rating agencies as, based on the actions of such entities, fund houses decide on the quantum and even price of debt products. Mr. Kumar is of the view that a change should ideally lead to a change in rating.

The reality is that equity investments – whether direct or through MFs – would always have an inherent element of risk. Then, remember the disclaimer.

Idukki cardamom planters get 'dry' succour from this start-up

Electricity-powered machine can dry 500 kg in 14-18 hours

M. SOUNDARIYA PREETHA
COIMBATORE

Suresh K. Raju, a planter in Idukki district of Kerala, has nearly 50 acres under cardamom cultivation. The harvest goes on for almost nine months in a year and the fresh cardamom should be dried within a day or two.

Mr. Raju uses both firewood and diesel to operate the dryer. "Since the moisture content is high in cardamom, dryers are used. There is shortage of firewood, which is expensive too. It costs about ₹8 to dry a kilogram of cardamom in the dryer," he says.

This problem is faced by several cardamom planters in the district, which is among the largest cardamom producing areas in the country. Further, when 600 kg of cardamom is dried, the weight comes down to nearly 140 kg, reducing it to just one fourth.

Carpro Technologies, an incubatee at PSG – Science and Technology Entrepreneurial Park in Coimbatore, has come up with a solution to help the cardamom planters.

Uthayakumar, one of the founders of Carpro, says the company has developed a machine that removes the moisture using "low heat dehumidified dry air technology with unique airflow system". The machine runs on electricity and can dry about 500 kg of cardamom in 14 to 18 hours. (The firewood dryer takes 20 to 22 hours for 600 kg of cardamom.)

Fruitful solution: A vegetable and fruits dryer developed by Carpro Technologies of Coimbatore. ▪SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Uthayakumar and P.B. Surendran, another founder of the company, came out with the first machine in 2016 after three years of research. However, it was not successful and they continued working on different technologies.

GREEN SHOOTS

The challenge was to remove the surface, inner, and core moisture to a specific level without affecting the colour of cardamom.

25 trials

The new machine is a complete unit with multiple chambers that removes the moisture in two stages. "Colour is important for cardamom. We conducted 25 trials at several plantations in Idukki and took the feedback from the planters. It was successful as the properties were retained and the weight did not reduce much even as the moisture content reduced. We plan to launch the machine for commercial sale next month," says Mr. Uthayakumar.

"Turmeric cultivation is high in Erode and farmers sun-dry the turmeric. We plan a trial run of the machine for turmeric by joining hands with a farmer producer company. We are trying to see if the machine can be used to dry vegetables, fruits, and herbs. This will increase the shelf life of the produce, benefiting farmers," he adds. It can be connected to generators or solar panels so that power disruptions do not affect operation of the machine.

"We will try using solar energy and reducing the time and energy consumed during the trials for turmeric," Mr. Uthayakumar said.

INTERVIEW | PAWAN GOENKA

'Whoever wins polls, focus on ryots, infra will continue'

Global trade may come under pressure from increasing protectionism, says the MD of M&M

LALATENDU MISHRA

India's GDP growth rate of 7.1, 7.2% may have put the country in a bright spot among all major economies as we have even gone past China, but there is still room for improvement, says **Pawan Goenka**, *MD, M&M. Excerpts from an interview:*

Why is growth sluggish in the auto sector?

■ If you look at all the macro economic parameters, there is very little that one can be concerned about. GDP growth, interest rate, right now, the oil prices, commodity prices are also slowing down. So, all of that is in a reasonably positive situation. Yet, somehow the market sentiments for the auto and tractor industry are not very strong.

And the last three, four months, the performance of the industry has been slower than what most of us had planned for and frankly, we cannot put a finger on why that is happening and there is no specific cause for the slow offtake of auto and tractors.

And one would think that it is more something psychological, or sentiment, which will pass away.

Whether it will happen in one month, three months, five months, I cannot say but I do not think that there is anything wrong with the economy. Anything that will lead or [is] leading to a slow down.

There are many concerns about the global economy...

■ There are many concerns on the global side. Concern in terms of overall economic growth and every time there is a reassessment, there is a little bit of lowering of the prediction for the next year but the bigger concern is the trade barriers that are being created, by almost all countries now; there is a lot more protectionism that is coming in and therefore, the global trade may come under pressure.

It is almost becoming like if you do 1, then I am going to do 1.5, then I will do 2 and then you do 2.5.

So, that probably will lead to major change of dynamics of global trade which can create opportunities for India also because India is not on the wrong side of any bilateral tension.

There is a possible upside for India but then we will have to do a lot of things right to take advantage of the upside.

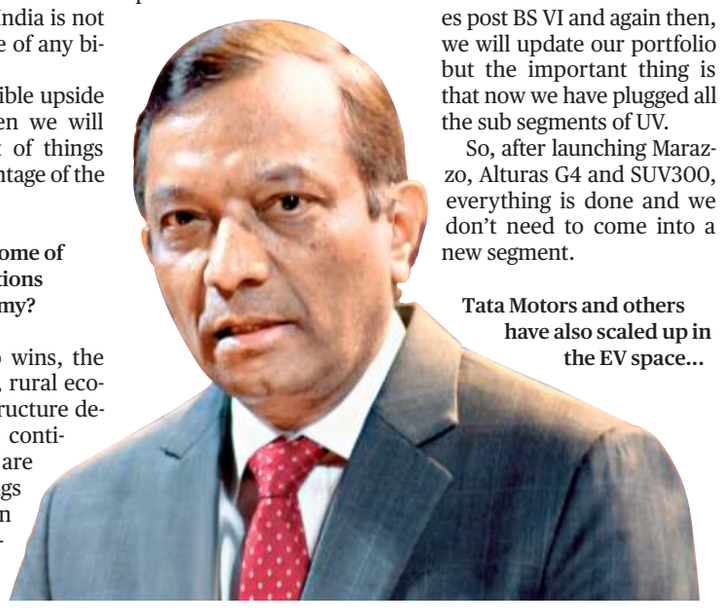
How will the outcome of 2019 general elections impact the economy?

■ No matter who wins, the focus on farmers, rural economy and infrastructure development will continue. So, these are three to four things that will happen for sure, no matter who wins.

Where the difference might come in is where the focus gets fixed into specific programmes like Make In India, how much emphasis gets put on investment, growing industry, these are the things which might change.

Will this help Mahindra?

■ The three things that I said will definitely move in the positive direction, no matter who the government is. Farmers, rural and infra, all three are positive for Mahindra. Infra means higher automobile sales, infra also means higher tractor sales, farmers also mean obviously higher tractor and higher agriculture equipment sales. What probably has to revive a little more is urban demand which is under pressure.



Somehow, the market sentiment for the auto and tractor industry is not very strong

With BS VI approaching, what are the challenges for Mahindra?

■ Right now, the biggest challenge for the whole of auto industry is BS VI. So, the challenge maybe more for one player than for the other but everybody will have that.

Beyond that, it is always about the products, investments for the success of new products. Mahindra has launched three new products in the last four months, so we are relatively fresh in our portfolio and will do the next set of launches post BS VI and again then, we will update our portfolio but the important thing is that now we have plugged all the sub segments of UV.

So, after launching Marazzo, Alturas G4 and SUV300, everything is done and we don't need to come into a new segment.

Tata Motors and others have also scaled up in the EV space...

■ The biggest difference is we know the business and everybody else is coming in. We have recently announced that we have completed a million kilometres on electric vehicles. We have a fleet of more than 7,000 cars on road. I don't think anybody is close to that.

So that experience should give us an edge over others. Technology is available to all players. It is how you integrate it and what kind of product planning that you do, what range, what cost, all that we will look at...

In the '90s, you left General Motors in the U.S. and joined Mahindra. You are called the father of Scorpio. Has the journey been satisfying?

■ Obviously it is, I wouldn't be here otherwise. I had worked at GM for 14 years; and as we moved home I found a very old T-shirt that was given to me at my farewell function of GM.

The T-shirt said "Father of Flare". Because that was the work that I did at GM; my 14 years of work was in one software programme that I developed called "Flare", which is being used in GM even today, I am told.

It is about CA analysis of engine components, of bearings, of connecting a lot of pistons... And I wore that T-shirt and surprisingly still fit into it.

I am a father of two kids I guess – the Flare and the Scorpio.

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Australia scampers home off the final delivery in exciting finish

Coulter-Nile, Maxwell and Short the architects of the win; Bumrah bowls a brilliant penultimate over but his effort goes in vain

AUS IN INDIA

SHREEDUTTA CHIDANANDA
VISAKHAPATNAM

Pat Cummins and Jhye Richardson combined to score 14 off the final over as Australia snatched a dramatic three-wicket victory over India in the first T20 international. A capacity crowd at the ACA-VDCA stadium was treated to a remarkable game on Sunday as fortunes swung this way and that.

Chasing a far-from-imposing 127, the touring side appeared to be cruising towards the target, needing 29 off the last five overs with seven wickets in hand.

But D'Arcy Short was run out in silly fashion before Krunal Pandya bowled Ashton Turner as India glimpsed an opportunity. As the tension rose and Australia's batsmen sweated, Jasprit Bumrah sent down a superb 19th over, taking two wickets and conceding only two runs. The home side seemed the favourite from that stage but Umesh Yadav was unable to prevent one last twist.

Terrible start

Australia began its reply poorly, slipping to five for two after Marcus Stoinis and Aaron Finch fell cheaply. But Glenn Maxwell soon took control.

The Victorian is a delightful striker of the ball and he was on song here, attacking Umesh Yadav before launching towering sixes off Yuzvendra Chahal and Mayank Markande. When he fell for 56, the touring side was still firmly in charge but in T20 cricket, things can often unravel at break-neck speed.

Earlier, K.L. Rahul's breezy 50 on his return to the side proved to be the top score of the Indian innings.

The Karnataka batsman will have been relieved with his effort: he had endured a difficult tour of Australia, before his suspension forced an early flight home.

Here, Rahul looked in fine form from the outset, opening alongside Rohit Sharma while India rested Shikhar Dhawan. He clipped Richardson off his hips before driving him through the covers. Adam Zampa was thumped down the pitch, and later deposited beyond the sight-screen.

At the other end, Rohit fell early, caught at short fine-leg trying to paddle-sweep Jason Behrendorff. Virat Kohli was involved in a lively 55-run stand for the second wicket with Rahul, a partnership broken when the captain was caught at long-on in his attempt to clobber Zampa.

Rishabh Pant was cheered to the crease, a sign of his stature as an entertainer with the bat, but his stay lasted all of five balls. He was run out for three, Behrendorff making a diving, one-handed stop at point before releasing the ball in a flash. Pant was a long way down the pitch.

The slide

When Rahul perished, caught at mid-off one ball after completing his half-century, India was still some distance away from achieving an imposing total. A big contribution would be needed in the final third of the innings, but there simply wouldn't be any.

Dinesh Karthik followed Rahul to the pavilion three balls later, Nathan Coulter-Nile uprooting middle-stump with one that moved in off the seam.

Krunal Pandya was dismissed for one, clumsily trying to heave the same bowler over the leg-side. Coulter-Nile finished with three for 26, just reward for his efforts on the evening. The Australian was also named the Man-of-the-Match.

India handed Markande his international debut, omitting Vijay Shankar from the side. The pitch would take turn, Kohli had felt at the toss, as he fielded three spinners. What this meant, however, was that Umesh walked in at eight: tails do not come much longer.

Cummins, who was excellent during his four-over spell of one for 19, swiftly accounted for the Vidarbha quick.

From 76 for two at the end of the ninth over, India had slid to 109 for seven in the 17th. Even M.S. Dhoni could not help India mount a serious recovery: too much damage, it seemed, had already been done.

That's middle! Dinesh Karthik is done in by a Nathan Coulter-Nile special. ▪ K.R. DEEPAK

Stat attack

- The 21-year-old leg-spinner **Mayank Markande** became India's 79th T20I player
- Kohli's 24 is his first sub-50 across formats at Visakhapatnam where he has scored four centuries and three fifties
- Finch has scored only 133 runs in his last 12 T20I innings at an average of 11.08
- This is the fourth occasion India lost a T20I contest off the last ball.

Against **NZ**, Wellington, 2009
Sri Lanka, Gros Islet, 2010
England, Mumbai, 2014

SCOREBOARD INDIA VS AUSTRALIA, FIRST T20I

India: Rohit Sharma c Zampa b Behrendorff 5 *(8b)*, K.L. Rahul c Finch b Coulter-Nile 50 *(36b, 6x4, 1x6)*, Virat Kohli c Coulter-Nile b Zampa 24 *(17b, 3x4)*, Rishabh Pant run out 3 *(5b)*, M.S. Dhoni (not out) 29 *(37b, 1x6)*, Dinesh Karthik b Coulter-Nile 1 *(3b)*, Krunal Pandya c Maxwell b Coulter-Nile 1 *(6b)*, Umesh Yadav lbw b Cummins 2 *(4b)*, Yuzvendra Chahal (not out) 0 *(4b)*; Extras (lb-2, w-9): 11; Total (for seven wkts. in 20 overs): 126.

Fall of wickets: 1-14 (Rohit, 2.3 overs), 2-69 (Kohli, 8.4), 3-80 (Pant, 9.6), 4-92 (Rahul 12.2), 5-94 (Karthik, 12.6), 6-100 (Krunal, 14.6), 7-109 (Umesh, 16.5).

Australia bowling: Behrendorff 3-0-16-1, Richardson 4-0-31-0, Coulter-Nile 4-0-26-3, Zampa 3-0-22-1, Cummins 4-0-19-1, Short 2-0-10-0.

Australia: D'Arcy Short run out 37 *(37b, 5x4)*, Marcus Stoinis run out 1 *(5b)*, Aaron Finch lbw b Bumrah 0 *(1b)*, Glenn Maxwell c Rahul b Chahal 56 *(43b, 6x4, 2x6)*, Peter Handscomb c Dhoni b Bumrah 13 *(15b)*, Ashton Turner b Krunal 0 *(5b)*, Nathan Coulter-Nile b Bumrah 4 *(8b)*, Pat Cummins (not out) 7 *(3b, 1x4)*, Jhye Richardson (not out) 7 *(3b, 1x4)*; Extras (w-2): 2; Total (for seven wkts. in 20 overs): 127.

Fall of wickets: 1-5 (Stoinis, 1.6), 2-5 (Finch, 2.1), 3-89 (Maxwell, 13.3), 4-101 (Short, 15.2), 5-102 (Turner, 16.2), 6-113 (Handscomb, 18.5), 7-113 (Coulter-Nile, 18.6).

India bowling: Bumrah 4-0-16-3, Chahal 4-0-28-1, Umesh 4-0-35-0, Krunal 4-0-17-1, Markande 4-0-31-0.

Toss: Australia.

Man-of-the-match: Coulter-Nile.

Australia won by three wickets off the last ball to take a 1-0 lead in the two-match series.

Next match: Feb. 27, Bengaluru.

Low bounce made hitting big shots difficult: Bumrah

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM

Jasprit Bumrah has defended India's batting performance in the first T20 against Australia, pointing out that a slow, low pitch played a part in the middle-overs collapse.

India lost six for 40 in just over eight overs, eventually managing 126. Australia had its own share of troubles, scraping through to victory off the last ball.

Sluggish wicket

"The wicket was a little difficult to bat on. It was sluggish. It wasn't easy to score heavily," said Bumrah afterwards. "Once you know your target is small, batting is a little different.

"Once you hit one boundary you don't need to take a lot of risks. When we were batting first, we were still figuring out what is a safe total. Maybe that was the difference."

Bumrah added: "On this wicket, around 140-145 would have been a very good score.

"There was low bounce and it was difficult to hit big shots. We were short by 15-20 runs but we had a fighting total."

Bumrah, who finished with three for 16, had nearly clinched the game for India with his 19th over. The Gujarat pacer did not have too many complaints about Umesh Yadav's final over, off which Australia scored 14 runs.

"It can always go both ways. Once you bowl the last over in a close game, it's 50-50. You try your best, you're always clear in your execution, but some days it works and some days it doesn't. We wanted to close the game in our favour but it's okay, it happens. Death bowling is always difficult," he said.

Maxwell delighted

Glenn Maxwell, meanwhile, was delighted that Australia had begun the tour with a narrow win. "A lot of times when you go overseas, you get to these close games and you lose them so often," he said.

"The home crowd can get behind the home team and you can lose and it can take your momentum away. The days that you are stuck in your hotel become really long. The way in which we got ourselves into trouble in this game, we probably should have lost.

"If it wasn't for Pat Cummins and Jhye Richardson pulling something out of the hat, we would have lost. To have a result like this in our first game on the tour is great for our confidence. Winning momentum is great but losing momentum is pretty hard to turn around," said Maxwell.

Connects well: Glenn Maxwell's striking ability even on a tough wicket kept Australia ahead in the chase. ▪ K.R. DEEPAK

Rai calls for Pakistan's isolation

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

CoA chief Vinod Rai on Sunday said the sporting community "needs to ostracise Pakistan" for fomenting terror activities just like South African was banned from international cricket due to the country's policy on apartheid.

"We would be shooting in the foot if we don't play Pakistan in the World Cup.

"Our aim should be to ostracise Pakistan as a cricketing nation," Rai said.

'WIPL can improve domestic structure'

G. VISWANATH
MUMBAI

An IPL for women has been the burning topic of discussion for a little over a year. Mithali Raj, India's ODI skipper, was not in favour of a WIPL a year ago but has revised her opinion, saying it will give exposure to youngsters.

Mithali cited the reasons for a change in her stand.

"Before the ODI World Cup (in England), the players' individual identity was not as big. During the event, people started to understand what is Indian women's cricket and who all play for the team. Now, after a year or two, people have gone beyond knowing two or three players. They recognise other players in the squad too and now is the right time to have a WIPL because T20 is also a format in which the ICC is looking to promote women's cricket."

Experience factor

"It's important to have the WIPL and promote the league in our country in order to improve the domestic structure.

"A lot of young players like Harleen Deol will take some time (to improve) because the domestic structure doesn't offer that much experience before coming into the international arena. If you have leagues like this (WIPL), when they make their debut, they will be experienced enough to absorb the pressure at the international level," said Mithali.

Interestingly, a month or so after Mithali had expressed her reservations about the WIPL in March 2018, Harmanpreet Kaur and Smriti Mandhana said India has 30/35 players to start the league!

Mithali Raj. ▪ AP

- The second ODI will be played on Monday. Match begins at 9 a.m.

Draw gives Liverpool top spot

Will be disappointed not having won at injury-raved United

EURO LEAGUES

REUTERS
MANCHESTER

Liverpool took over at the top of the Premier League table despite being held to a 0-0 draw against Manchester United on Sunday.

Juergen Klopp's side now has 66 points from 27 games while second placed Manchester City has 65 from the same number of games.

While Liverpool has the destiny of the title in its own hands – with 11 games remaining – it will be disappointed not to have taken advantage of an injury-ravaged United.

Having lost holding midfielder Nemanja Matic to injury before the game, Spanish midfielder Ander Herrera went off in the 20th minute and Juan Mata was replaced by Jesse Lingard five minutes later.

But Lingard didn't even last until the break as he suffered what appeared to be a recurrence of his hamstring strain and limped off to be replaced by Alexis Sanchez.

Amid those three United injuries, Liverpool also lost its Brazilian forward Roberto Firmino to a muscle strain.

The results: Premier League: Arsenal 2 (Lacazette 6, Mkhitaryan 17) bt Southampton 0; Manchester United 0 drew with Liverpool 0.

La Liga: Leganes 1 (Braithwaite 89) drew with Valencia 1 (Kondogbia 22); Atletico Madrid 2 (Morata 31, Niguez 88) bt Villarreal 0.

Serie A: Sampdoria 1 (Quagliarella 66-pen) bt Cagliari 0; Bologna 0 lost to Juventus 1 (Dybala 67); Chievo 0 drew with Genoa 0; Sassuolo 1 (Peluso 43) drew with SPAL 1 (Petagna 68-pen).

Bundesliga: Hanover 0 lost to Eintracht Frankfurt 3 (Rebic 54, Jovic 63, Kostic 90).

Saturday: La Liga: Alaves 0 drew with Celta Vigo 0; Athletic Bilbao 1 (Raul Garcia 1) bt Eibar 0.

Premier League: Leicester 1 (Evans 64) lost to Crystal Palace 4 (Batshuayi 40, Zaha 70, 90, Milivojevic 81-pen).

Serie A: Torino 2 (Izzo 42, Falque 46) bt Atalanta 0; Frosinone 2 (Ciano 5, Pinamonti 80) lost to Roma 3 (Dzeko 30, 90+5, Pellegrini 31).

Bundesliga: Borussia Monchengladbach 0 lost to VfL Wolfsburg 3 (Gerhardt 38, Mehmedi 68, 83); SC Freiburg 5 (Petersen 9, 43, Grifo 30, Waldschmidt 64, Niederlechner 85) bt Augsburg 1 (Khedira 52).

Saving the day: The game's only clear chance fell Jesse Lingard's way, but Alisson's crucial intervention denied him. ▪ REUTERS

Dynamos beat Pune

Three superb finishes do the trick

ISL

NANDAKUMAR MARAR
PUNE

Delhi Dynamos, high on adrenalin after a shock win over Bengaluru FC, carried the mood and momentum against FC Pune City to win 3-1 on the back of three superb strikes in their ISL match at the Balewadi Stadium on Sunday.

The home team drew level 1-1 but felt short in finishing against goalkeeper Francisco Dorronsoro. The visitors remained eighth after their fourth win in 17 games and Pune stayed seventh.

Lalhianzuala Chhangte fired a first-time volley into the roof of the net for the opener and Daniel Lalhimpuia swept home the third goal on the rebound before goalkeeper Kamaljit Singh had time to react after blocking the first attempt by Ulises Davila from close. Romeo Fernandes, the provider for the first goal, got his name on the scoresheet with a looping right-footer from way out on the right flank.

Nikhil's scorcher

Pune's equaliser happened out of the blue as Nikhil Poojary weaved his way in from the right of the midfield.

As if trying to spot a teammate to pass the ball, the midfielder produced a thundering long-ranger with his left foot and Dorrosorro, not expecting the outrageous attempt from so far out, just witnessed the ball curl into the net.

Marcelinho got sent off after collecting a second yellow card in the closing stages.

The result: Delhi Dynamos FC 3 (Lallianquala Chhangte 17, Romeo Fernandes 30, Daniel Lalhimpuia 53) bt FC Pune City 1 (Nikhil Poojary 23).

Rashid 'tricks, Ireland slips

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
DEHRADUN

Rashid Khan claimed a hat-trick to help Afghanistan complete a 3-0 sweep over Ireland with a 32-run win in the third T20I on Sunday.

The scores: Afghanistan 210 for seven in 20 overs (Hazratullah Zazai 31, Mohammad Nabi 81, Boyd Rankin three for 53) bt Ireland 178 for eight in 20 overs (Kevin O'Brien 74, Andy Balbirnie 47, Rashid Khan five for 27, including four wickets off four balls).

Bencic wins

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
DUBAI

Belinda Bencic defeated Petra Kvitova 6-3, 1-6, 6-2 on Saturday to win the Dubai Championships and vowed to celebrate with her first parachute jump.

"It may be funny, because my dad is afraid of heights," the Swiss said.

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Triple delight for Saurabh

Shoots WR, gold and Olympic quota; Manu Bhaker eliminated

WC SHOOTING

KAMESH SRINIVASAN
NEW DELHI

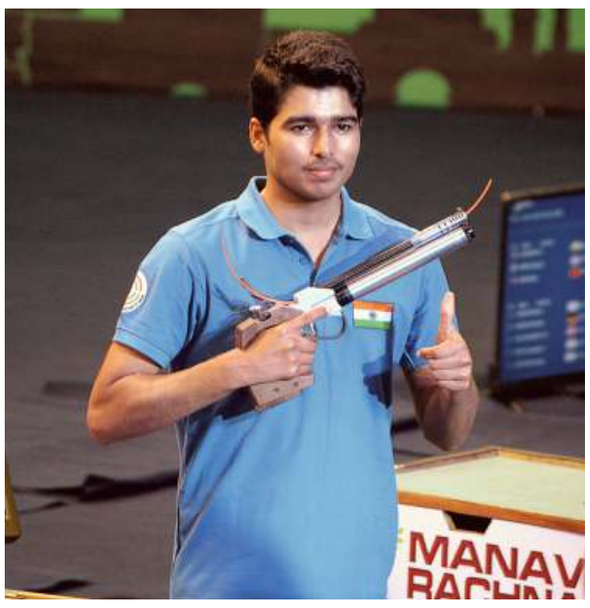
He is too young to be a monk, but Saurabh Chaudhary can put a monk to shame when it comes to retaining equanimity in an electrifying atmosphere.

The 17-year-old Asian Games gold medallist, Youth Olympic champion and World junior champion, Saurabh added another golden leaf to his portfolio by winning the Olympic quota with a golden world record in men's air pistol on Sunday.

One better

In a way, it was one better in the ongoing shooting World Cup at the Dr. Karni Singh Range for the host, after the brilliant gold and world record of Apurvi Chandela in women's air rifle, as Saurabh could pin the Olympic quota as well.

Of course, it was no fault of Apurvi that she had won the Olympic quota in the World Championship last year itself, but the pressure to do it at home was very much on the Indian squad.



Young star: Saurabh Chaudhary asserted his strength of character in an unbelievable final. ▪ KAMESH SRINIVASAN

Saurabh stuck to the basics, qualified with an impressive 587 in the afternoon, before asserting his strength of character in an unbelievable final in which he started with a modest 10.2 and unleashed the next 23 shots like a statue.

Saurabh won the gold with 245.0, a world record, bettering his own record, with an improbable 5.7 point margin over Damir Mikec of Serbia who took the other Olympic quota place from the event.

"I knew I had a big lead, but I was not thinking about it. Just focused on my technique. I did not turn or look back, as it was important to retain the good position, physically. I did not want to change anything," said Saurabh.

In the women's 25-metre sports pistol event, Manu Bhaker slipped from being in the second place after six series of five shots, to getting eliminated in the fifth place, as she could hit only two out of five targets.

The results:

Men: 10m air pistol: 1. Saurabh Chaudhary 245.0, WR (587); 2. Damir Mikec (Srb) 239.3 (586); 3. Pang Wei (Chn) 215.2 (587); 24. Abhishek Verma 576; 26. Ravinder Singh 576. **MQS:** Om Prakash Mitharwal 578.

50m rifle 3-position: 1. Istvan Peni (Hun) 459.1 (1178); 2. Sergey Kamenskiy (Rus) 459.0 (1180); 3. Marco De Nicolo (Ita) 444.5 (1179); 22. Parul Kumar 1170; 25. Sanjeev Rajput 1169.

Women: 25m sports pistol: 1. Veronika Major (Hun) 40, WR (591); 2. Zhang Jingjing (Chn) 33 (586); 3. Haniyeh Rostamiyan (Iri) 30 (584); 5. Manu Bhaker 22 (590); 15. Rahi Sarnobat 580; 17. Chinki Yadav 580. **MQS:** Annu Raj Singh 571.

Ashwa Bahula may make amends

HYDERABAD: Ashwa Bahula, a failed favourite, may make amends in the first division of the Jurala Cup (1,200m), the main event of the extra day's races to be held here on Monday (Feb. 25).

1 **ASTONISH PLATE (DIV. II)**, (1,100m), 4-y-o & over, rated 42 to 62 (Cat. II), 1-10 p.m.: 1. Arc Of History (1) Akshay Kumar 60, 2. Symbol Of Gold (8) Deepak Singh 59.5, 3. Vallee Sceptre (2) Md. Ismail 58, 4. Happy Together (5) Jitendra Singh 56.5, 5. Max (7) P. Trevor 55.5, 6. Your Grace (4) Nakhat Singh 54, 7. Cymbal (6) Abhay Singh 53.5 and 8. Running Fire (3) Kiran Naidu 53.5.

1. ARC OF HISTORY, 2. HAPPY TOGETHER, 3. MAX

2 **ONNU ONNU ONNU CUP** (Div. I), (1,200m), maiden 3-y-o only (place 2nd and 3rd not eligible), (Cat. II), (Terms), 1-40: 1. Bob Campbell (9) Akshay Kumar 55, 2. Buzz Light Year (8) Md. Ismail 55, 3. Golden Faraska (7) Kunal Bunde 55, 4. Let It Be Me (5) B.R. Kumar 55, 5. Speed Warrior (10) Nakhat Singh 55, 6. Vijays Maestro (3) Deepak Singh 55, 7. Angel Tesoro (14) A.A. Vikrant 53.5, 8. Ayur Shakti (1) Yash 53.5, 9. Kintsugi (6) Kuldeep Singh 53.5, 10. Original Temptress (4) I. Chisty 53.5. 11. Paso Robles (12) P. Trevor 53.5, 12. Rasika (13) Gaddam 53.5, 13. Star Of Tiara (11) Ashhad Asbar 53.5 and 14. Wah Ms Zara (2) G. Naresh 53.5.

1. PASO ROBLES, 2. ORIGINAL TEMPTRESS, 3. BOB CAMPBELL

3 **ONNU ONNU ONNU CUP** (Div. II), (1,200m), maiden 3-y-o only (placed 2nd and 3rd not eligible), (Cat. II), (Terms), 2-10: 1. Brooklyn Heights (7) Sai Kumar 55, 2. City Of Blossom (1) Deepak Singh 55, 3. Jacky (2) A.A. Vikrant 55, 4. Linewiler (9) B.R. Kumar 55, 5. Stepper (4) I. Chisty 55, 6. Blickfang (6) Yash 53.5, 7. Break The Ice (8) Nakhat Singh 53.5, 8. Flamingo Fame (13) N. Rawal 53.5, 9. Moskova (11) Akshay Kumar 53.5, 10. Remember Forever (3) R. Ajay Kumar 53.5, 11. Silver Set (14) Md. Ismail 53.5, 12. Spiritual (10) P. Trevor 53.5, 13. Sweet Brandy (5) G. Naresh 53.5 and 14. Zamora (12) Ashhad Asbar 53.5.

1. MOSKOVA, 2. SPIRITUAL, 3. STEPPER

4 **ASTONISH PLATE (DIV. I)**, (1,100m), 4-y-o & over, rated 42 to 62 (Cat. II), 2-45: 1. Riddari (1) Akshay Kumar 60, 2. Platinum (3) Surya Prakash 59.5, 3. Apowerx (6) Rohit Kumar 58, 4. Rahil (5) Gopal Singh 57, 5. Flying Spaghetti (8) B.R. Kumar 55, 6. Southern State (2) R.S. Jodha 54, 7. Ispahan (4) Md. Ismail 53 and 8. Shakephere (7) Afroz Khan 53.

1. RIDDARI, 2. PLATINUM, 3. RAHIL

5 **JURALA CUP (DIV. II)**, (1,200m), 5-y-o & over, rated 58 to 78 (Cat. II), 3-20: 1. Champion Bull (2) I. Chisty 60, 2. Newport (9) Surya Prakash 59.5, 3. King Of Pop (8) C.P. Bopanna 57.5, 4. La Romance (7) Afroz Khan 57.5, 5. Prince Caspian (5) Jitendra Singh 55.5, 6. Tootsie Roll (3) P. Trevor 55.5, 7. Asteria (6) Md. Ismail 55, 8. Royal Dynamite (10) Gaurav Singh 55, 9. Top Link (1) Yash 54.5, 10. Southern Crown (11) Akshay Kumar 54 and 11. Gorgeous Lady (4) R.S. Jodha 52.5.

1. TOOTSIE ROLL, 2. CHAMPION BULL, 3. SOUTHERN CROWN

6 **BRAVE HUNTER PLATE** (1,200m), 4-y-o & over, rated 26 to 46 (Cat. III), 3-35: 1. Moka (5) P. Trevor 60, 2. Yogastha (3) Deepak Singh 60, 3. City Of Ayaansh (2) Rohit Kumar 59.5, 4. Air Salute (6) Sai Kumar 59, 5. Bombastic (4) Akshay Kumar 59, 6. Hurricane (7) B.R. Kumar 59, 7. Aflatun (1) Jitendra Singh 57, 8. Fabulous Art (9) I. Chisty 56.5 and 9. Top Singer (8) Md. Ismail 56.5.

1. MOKA, 2. BOMBASTIC, 3. HURRICANE

7 **JURALA CUP** (Div. I), (1,200m), 5-y-o & over, 58 to 78 (Cat. II), 4-30: 1. Meritocracy (5) Koushik 60, 2. Dancing Leaf (10) Kuldeep Singh 58.5, 3. Aragonda Princess (6) Yash 58, 4. Ashwa Bahula (4) I. Chisty 56.5, 5. Miracle King (8) Akshay Kumar 55.5, 6. Sea Castle (11) R.S. Jodha 54.5, 7. Star Gazer (3) C.P. Bopanna 54.5, 8. Indian Dreams (7) G. Naresh 54, 9. Ashka Ashka Ashka (1) B.R. Kumar 53.5, 10. Astra (2) Surya Prakash 53, 11. Mandy (9) Aneel 52.5 and 12. Without Makeup (12) Ashhad Asbar 51.5.

1. ASHWA BAHULA, 2. SEA CASTLE, 3. DANCING LEAF

8 **GREENER PLATE** (1,200m), 4-y-o & over, rated upto 30 (Cat. III), 5-05: 1. Gangadhar (6) Kuldeep Singh 62, 2. Jazz It Up (4) P. Trevor 62, 3. Sefarina (7) R. Ajay Kumar 62, 4. Super Act (3) Md. Ismail 62, 5. Dippy Dip (13) Deepak Singh 61.5, 6. Magic Street (1) Rohit Kumar 61.5, 7. Blazing Speed (10) N. Rawal 61, 8. Golden Image (14) A.A. Vikrant 61, 9. Honourable Guest (8) Afroz Khan 61, 10. Agilis (5) Surya Prakash 60.5, 11. Rose Petal (11) G. Naresh 60, 12. Sweet Story (12) C.P. Bopanna 60, 13. New Hope (2) Kiran Naidu 53.5 and 14. Negress Dolly (9) Gaurav Singh 52.

1. MAGIC STREET, 2. SUPER ACT, 3. BLAZING SPEED

DAY'S BEST: ARC OF HISTORY
DOUBLE: RIDDARI – MOKA
Jkt: 4, 5, 6, 7 & 8; Tr (i): 1, 2 & 3; (ii): 3, 4 & 5; (iii): 6, 7 & 8; Tla: all races.

Jeevan and Purav qualify

SPORTS BUREAU
DUBAI

Jeevan Nedunchezhiyan and Purav Raja won two rounds to qualify for the doubles main draw of the $2,887,895 ATP Dubai Duty Free tennis championship in the UAE.

Leander Paes and Benoit Paire of France have got a wild card entry and will play Rohan Bopanna and Divij Sharan.

In singles, Ramkumar Ramanathan, who got a wild card, will play Roberto Bautista Agut.

The results: $2,887,895 ATP, Dubai, Qualifying doubles (second and final round): Jeevan & Purav bt Hubert Hurkacz (Pol) & Denis Kudla (US) 6-4, 6-2; **First round:** Jeevan & Purav bt Karim Mohd. Maamoun & Mohd. Safwat (Egy) 4-6, 6-2, [10-6].

Missing You wins main event

MUMBAI: The 8 to 1 long-shot Missing You, piloted by David Allan, sprang a surprise by winning the Poonawalla Breeders' Multi-Million (Gr.1), the main attraction of Sunday's (Feb. 24) races.

The winner is owned by Mr. Cyrus S. Poonawalla, Mr. Adar C. Poonawalla & Mrs. Natasha A. Poonawalla rep. Villoo Poonawalla Racing & Breeding Pvt. Ltd. and trained by Dallas Todywalla.

This was the third successive win for the Poonawalla family and Stud Farms in the Multi-Million after Ruffina (2017) and Corfe Castle (2018).

1 **R.N. KANGA TROPHY** (1,600m), Cl. I, rated 80 and upward: **TURNING POINT** (Neeraj) 1, B Fifty Two (Trevor) 2, Gloriosus (Parmar) and Forest Fairy (Sandesh) 4. 1-3/4, Nose, 2-1/4. 1m 37.95s. ₹41 (w), 16 and 16 (p). SHP: 30, FP: 102, Q: 48, Tanala: 352 and 221. Favourite: B Fifty Two. Owner: Mr. Rajesh Monga. Trainer: S.K. Sunderji.

2 **KUMAR R. DALAL GOLD TROPHY** (1,000m), md. 3-y-o only: **ACROSS THE SEA** (Trevor) 1, Turmeric Tower (Dashrath) 2, Daddy's Pride (Chouhan) 3 and Celestia (Neeraj) 4. 1/2, 1, 1-1/4. 59.87s. ₹21 (w), 10, 11 and 26 (p). SHP: 31, FP: 36, Q: 19, Tanala: 195 and 164. Favourite: Across The Sea. Owners: Mr. Pallon S. Mistry rep. Manjri Horse Breeders' Farm Pvt. Ltd. Trainer: P. Shroff.

3 **INTERVALVE POONAWALLA LTD TROPHY** (2,400m), Cl. IV, rated 20 to 46: **MOMENTUM** (Akshay) 1, Brazos (Sandesh) 2, Jager Bomb (Trevor) 3 and Retained Asset (Dashrath) 4. 2-3/4, 2-1/4, Dist. 2m 33.04s. ₹16 (w), 11 and 14 (p). SHP: 22, FP: 22, Q: 18, Tanala: 58 and 51. Favourite: Momentum. Owners: Mr. Mehernosh H.Deboo & Mrs. Auzita M. Deboo. Trainer: P. Shroff.

4 **POONAWALLA BREEDERS' MULTI-MILLION** (Gr.1) (1,400m), 3-y-o only: **MISSING YOU (ARAZAN–CHANGE OF LUCK) (DAVID ALLAN) 1,**
Trouvaille (Surfrider–Highly Fashionable) (Chouhan) 2,
Hunt For Gold (Letir Mor–Pleasure Hunt) (Srinath) 3,
Juliette (Musketier–Gimmesumsugar) (Bhawani) 4.
1-1/4, 3/4, 3/4. 1m 22.97s. ₹57 (w), 17, 25 and 12 (p). SHP: 80, FP: 956, Q: 489, Tanala: 1,015 and 257. Favourite: Hunt For Gold. Owners: Mr. Cyrus S.Poonawalla, Mr. Adar C.Poonawalla & Mrs. Natasha A.Poonawalla rep. Villoo Poonawalla Racing & Breeding Pvt. Ltd. Trainer: Dallas Todywalla.

5 **SIR VICTOR SASSON GOLD TROPHY** (1,400m), Cl. III, rated 40 to 66: **AWESOME ONE** (Yash Narredu) 1, Mozart (L. Roche) 2, Intense Stylist (Trevor) 3 and Domination (Akshay) 4. 4-3/4, Nose, 1m 22.33s. ₹23 (w), 10, 10 and 11 (p). SHP: 28, FP: 112, Q: 38, Tanala: 74 and 20. Favourite: Intense Stylist. Owners: Mr. D.A. Nanda, Mrs. Esha Nanda Bhojwani & Mr. Amitabh Nanda rep. Arion Horse Co. Pvt. Ltd & Mr. Sultan Singh. Trainer: Deepesh Narredu.

6 **DR. GOOLAM E.VAHANVATI GOLD TROPHY** (1,200m), Cl. IV, rated 20 to 46: **DIVINE POWER** (Sandesh) 1, Dazzling Star (Parmar) 2, Bounty Queen (Shubham) 3 and Patriots Day (Dashrath) 4. Nose, Hd, 7. 1m 11.64s. ₹31 (w), 12, 14 and 12 (p). SHP: 40, FP: 81, Q: 30, Tanala: 196 and 126. Favourite: Dazzling Star. Owners: M/s. Solomon F.Sopher & Altaf Hussain. Trainer: Altaf Hussain.

7 **HONG KONG JOCKEY CLUB TROPHY** (1,400m), Cl. V, rated 4 to 30: **GANDALF** (Peter) 1, Dragonmoss (Trevor) 2, Hi Ho Silver (Neeraj) 3 and Solo Mission (Bhawani) 4. 3, 1-1/2, Sh. 1m 24.76s. Rs. 107 (w), 26, 16 and 15 (p). SHP: 47, FP: 826, Q: 427, Tanala: 954 and 329. Favourite: Dragonmoss. Owner: Mr. Chandeep Singh Walia. Trainer: Asad Siddiqui.

Jackpot: (70 per cent) ₹24,818 (170 tkts); (30 per cent) 731 (273 tkts).

Treble: 1,345 (51 tkts).

Super Jackpot: (70 per cent) 21, 975 (five tkts); (30 per cent) 772 (61 tkts).

Bengaluru snooker event postponed

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
KOCHI

The Asian Tour 10 Reds snooker tournament, scheduled to be held in Bengaluru in late March, has been postponed indefinitely over issue of visas to Pakistan players according to information provided by S. Balasubramaniam, the Billiards and Snooker Federation of India secretary.

BFC-B to travel to Srinagar to take on Lonestar Kashmir

SPORTS REPORTER
BENGALURU

Bengaluru FC-B is set to travel to Srinagar for its I-League second division encounter against Lonestar Kashmir on Thursday.

Last Monday, I-League side Minerva Punjab had refused to play in Srinagar in the wake of the terrorist attack in Pulwama.

Reservations

East Bengal, which is scheduled to take on Real Kashmir the same day BFC-B meets Lonestar, has expressed reservations.

A BFC-B club official confirmed on Sunday that the side had already left Bengaluru and will play Hindustan FC in Delhi on Monday before taking on Lonestar.

The Naushad Moosa-coached outfit is currently top of Group A with nine points from three matches.

Chennai City FC hits top form against Mohun Bagan

Strengthens title chances; Indian Arrows holds Real Kashmir

I-LEAGUE

RAYAN ROZARIO
COIMBATORE

Chennai City Football Club strengthened its title chances with a convincing 3-1 win over Kolkata giant Mohun Bagan in a Hero I-League clash at the Nehru Stadium here on Sunday.

The Chennai City men dished out a double delicacy quite early in the first half. But not before missing out a couple of easy sitters five minutes into the game – Nestor first followed by Edwin Sydney Vanspaul failed to find the back of the net.

But, Nestor shot back to stun the packed holiday crowd with a thundering effort in the seventh minute.

It came from close to the half line and was packed with so much power that the visiting custodian Shilton Paul had no answer. It was without doubt the goal of the season and Nestor heaved a huge sigh of relief after having missed earlier.

Goal! Chennai City's Pedro Manzi scores past Bagan custodian Shilton Paul. ▪ M. PERIASAMY

Full throttle

He went full throttle from there on and, with it, set up two great passes for Sandro Rodrigues in the 15th minute and then Pedro Manzi in the 23rd to put the team in a position of strength.

William Lalnunfela pulled one back for Mohun Bagan in the 37th to make sure that the team had something to talk about at the first-half break.

Chennai City FC played the second session in a similar fashion and is magical short passes were quite pleasing to the eye. Its men preferred not to relax and looked pretty determined to take home those three points that may well prove crucial for the team in their march for the title.

The Kolkata side showed better understanding both up front and at the back but struggled to disturb the strong Chennai defence. And to add to its woes, its goalkeeper Shilton was flashed the red card for bringing Manzi down right outside the box.

Debutant Real Kashmir on Sunday continued its unbeaten run with a 2-2 draw against Indian Arrows at Bhubaneswar to leave the I-League title race tantalising poised.

The results: Chennai City FC 3 (Nestor Jesus 7, Sandro Rodrigues 15, Pedro Manzi 23) bt Mohun Bagan 1 (William Lalnunfela 37).

At Bhubaneswar: Indian Arrows 2 (Amarjit Singh 78-pen, Rahul K.P. 90+1) drew with Real Kashmir 2 (Kofi Tetteh 82, Mason Robertson 90).

Highly Acclaimed clinches feature

HYDERABAD: Mr. Ahmed Alam Khan's Highly Acclaimed (Surya Prakash up) won the Telangana Race Horse Owners Association Trophy (1,600m), the feature event of the races here on Sunday (Feb. 24). The winner is trained by Deshmukh.

1 **AGOSTINI PLATE (DIV. II)**, (1,400m), 4-y-o & over, rated upto 25 (Cat. III): **GOLDEN ADARA** (Afroz Khan) 1, Smarty (I. Chisty) 2, Turf Emperor (Kuldeep Singh) 3 and Vallee Ikon (Md. Ismail) 4. 1/2, 1/2 and 1-1/4. 1m 28.36s. ₹39 (w), 8, 6 and 13 (p), SHP: 15, FP: 94, Q: 33, Tla: 423. Favourite: Smarty. Owners: Mr. Manish Jaiswal, Mrs. Candida Tania Jaiswal & Mr. C. S. Suresh. Trainer: M.F. Alikhan.

2 **ATTRACTRESS PLATE** (1,600m), (Cat. II), md. 3-y-o only (terms): **MAGNETOSPHERE** (I. Chisty) 1, Gazebo (Nakhat Singh) 2, Red Snaper (Kuldeep Singh) 3 and Caledonia (Dhebe) 4. 1/2, hd and 4. 1m 40.29s. ₹18 (w), 7, 7 and 11 (p), SHP: 24, FP: 94, Q: 53 and Tla: 384. Favourite: Magnetosphere. Owner: Mr. Gautam Shaidhar Kotwal. Trainer: M. Srinivas Reddy.

3 **AGOSTINI PLATE (DIV. I)**, (1,400m), 4-y-o & over, rated upto 25 (Cat. III): **GOLDEN XANTHUS** (Sai Kumar) 1, Actually (I. Chisty) 2, Dhool Ka Phool (Nakhat Singh) 3 and Diesis Dream (Gaurav Singh) 4. 1, nk and 3/4. 1m 27.47s. ₹43 (w), 8, 6 and 14 (p), SHP: 19, FP: 145, Q: 31, Tla: 1,079. Favourite: Actually. Owners: M/s. Manish Jaiswal, C. S. Suresh & Mrs. Candida Tania Jaiswal. Trainer: Prasad Raju.

4 **SINGH IS KING PLATE** (1,200m), 4-y-o &over, rated 42 to 62 (Cat. II): **TRUMP GIRL** (Koushik) 1, Kamyar (Nakhat Singh) 2, Nayadeep (Ashhad Asbar) 3 and Dancing Doll (Kuldeep Singh) 4. 3/4, 3/4 and 1/4. 1m 11.47s. ₹30 (w), 10, 8 and 7 (p), SHP: 30, FP: 155, Q: 83, Tla: 426. Favourite: One One One. Owners: Mr. Eswarachandra Rajagopal Tripuraneni & Mr. Vijay Anand Jangiti. Trainer: Sequeira.

5 **NAGARJUNA SAGAR CUP** (2,000m), 4-y-o & over, rated 42 to 62 (Cat. II): **GOLDEN FORTUNE** (I. Chisty) 1, Hailstorm (Deep Shanker) 2, Wings Of Eagles (B.R. Kumar) 3 and Valee Tiger (Deepak Singh) 4. 5-3/4, nk and 6-3/4. 2m 05.07s. ₹10 (w), 7, 7 and 7 (p), SHP: 22, FP: 34, Q: 19, Tla: 154. Favourite: Golden Fortune. Owners: M/s. Zaveri Stud Farm Pvt. Ltd. rep. by Mr. Champaklal Zaveri, Mrs. Bindu C. Zaveri, Miss Harsha N. Desai & Miss Niti N. Desai. Trainer: Deshmukh.

6 **CHARON PLATE** (1,100m), 4-y-o & over, rated 26 to 46 (Cat. III): **SOUTHERN METEOR** (Gaurav Singh) 1, Holy Healer (R.S. Jodha) 2, Marvel Princess (Sai Kumar) 3 and Curcumin (G. Naresh) 4. Shd, 1-1/2 and shd. 1m 05.94s. ₹110 (w), 29, 10 and 8 (p), SHP: 26, FP: 877, Q: 467, Tla: 2,915. Favourite: Marvel Princess. Owner: Mr. Chandrasekhar Reddy Challuri. Trainer: Ravinder Singh.

7 **TELANGANA RACE HORSE OWNERS ASSOCIATION TROPHY** (1,600m), 4-y-o & over, rated 74 & above (Cat. I): **HIGHLY ACCLAIMED** (Surya Prakash) 1, Starlight (Kuldeep Singh) 2, Western Wind (I. Chisty) 3 and Chase Your Dreams (Gaddam) 4. 3/4, 1/2 and 1-3/4. 1m 37.13s. ₹21 (w), 9, 11 and 6 (p), SHP: 39, FP: 265, Q: 147, Tla: 790. Favourite: Western Wind. Owner: Mr. Ahmed Alam Khan. Trainer: Deshmukh.

8 **BEACON PLATE** (1,600m), 5-y-o & over, rated 26 to 46 (Cat. III): **SEMIRA** (Afroz Khan) 1, Joy Of Giving (Gaurav Singh) 2, Top Sprint (I. Chisty) 3 and Carnival Express (R. Ajay Kumar) 4. 1-1/2, 1-1/4 and 3-1/2. 1m 39.62s. ₹17 (w), 8, 8 and 12 (p), SHP: 27, FP: 70, Q: 42, Tla: 503. Favourite: Flowersfromabrook. Owner: Mr. Saqafath Ali Khan. Trainer: M.F. Alikhan.

Jackpot: ₹24,744 (19 tkts); Runner-up: 1,334 (151 tkts); Treble: (i): 1,457 (29 tkts); (ii): 778 (55 tkts); (iii): 2,223 (41 tkts).

THE HINDU CROSSWORD 12558

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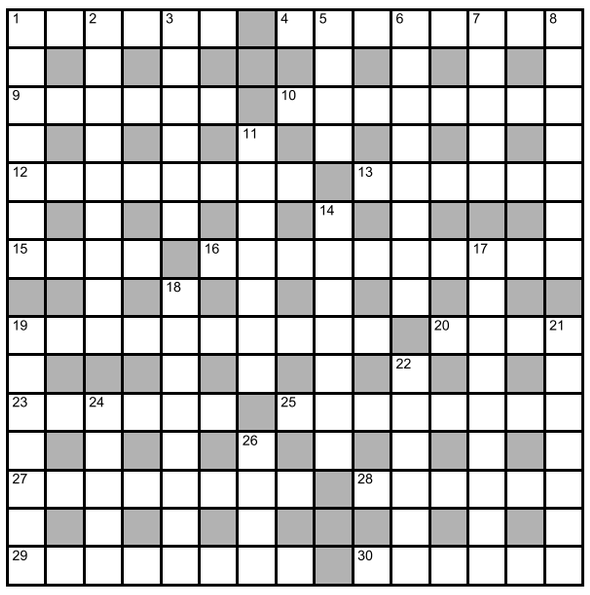

ACROSS

1 Put off using pluckiest tool for harvest (6)
4 Preference's eating cold desserts (4-4)
9 Cayenne, a dozen boxes (6)
10 Wrinkle on mouth's unseemly (8)
12 The panel recruits a bigwig (8)
13 Is it a surety for Kaveri? (6)
15 The second person to declare a feast (4)
16 Married girl aims to train newbie to put on a little weight (10)
19 Partners rather well-fed. Boss? Not quite (10)
20 Cut off = 'Pare' (4)
23 Big girl previously getting hot footwear (6)
25 Accommodate a trapped brute (8)
27 Gold to intermingle advanced robots (8)
28 One taking a French female without gentlemen is secure (6)
29 Sitting duck, calm symbol (4,4)
30 Read about Montana, got into a reverie (6)

DOWN

1 Landscape said to be found on top of lines (7)
2 Hidden scam reportedly shut (9)
3 Look at what's turning to hate (6)
5 Provide a deal (4)
6 See, by morning, a panel will be announced for political race (8)
7 Face of grandfather, possibly (5)
8 Free press hangs about man's circles (7)
11 Limited edition of scent – it lessens style (7)
14 Buds and devotees God left reeling (7)
17 A cute lab needing surgery (advanced) for hip parts (9)
18 Son tucking into pies served by mother? Worst! (8)
19 Celebrity is beaming all over (3-4)
21 Nerveless bones – what one may need (7)
22 Unskilled actor half-deserves censure (6)
24 Lincoln walking out of absolute ruckus – a bloomer (5)
26 Adept removing particles from tadka ingredient (4)

SUDOKU

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

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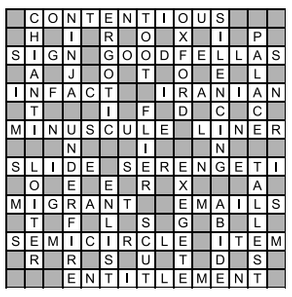
DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★☆☆☆

Solution to puzzle 12557



Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

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

FAITH

Yoga destroys sorrow

The Gita gives a broad definition of yoga that is applicable in daily life for all at all times by highlighting two important qualifications for the aspirant, righteousness in one's thought, word and deed along with nishkama, cultivating a state of mind that does not expect any reward. In other words, it advocates strict adherence to what is to be done at the required times and also tuning one's mind and attitude to the truth that any work or undertaking that is well accomplished is itself the highest reward. Krishna goes on to say that a person committed to these principles is actually practising the kind of yoga that destroys sorrow, pointed out Srimati Sunanda in a discourse. This is important for once sorrow is dispelled happiness alone prevails, just as removal of ignorance leaves one with knowledge. Sita exemplifies the stages of development of yoga in the individual. Though she first transgresses the Lakshmana Reka she takes control of herself and engages in the spiritual path until she is united with Rama. In Asoka Vana she is in the midst of temptations. The ten headed Ravana is symbolic of the assaults of the karmendriyas and jnanendriyas on the human personality. The promise of the life of luxury does not lure her. She abides by her dharma and in her mind concentrates on Rama alone, just as a jnani is engaged in Brahma Dhyana. This is the preparatory stage leading to meditation. The mind has to be trained to reject the demands of the senses that are drawn to worldly attractions. Rigorous training, tremendous effort, and unwavering concentration without yielding to disappointments despite frequent failures are absolutely essential. Constant practice and preparation alone can lead one to the goal. Such is the spiritual path to the experience of transcendent bliss of union with the Absolute Reality.

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TV PICKS

India Women vs England Women: 2nd ODI, Stsr Sports 1 (SD & HD), 8.45 a.m.
Syed Mushtaq: Star Sports 2 (SD & HD), 8.45 a.m. & 1.15 p.m.
NBA: Sony Ten 1 (SD & HD), 6 a.m.
West Indies vs England: 3rd ODI, Sony Six (SD & HD), 7 p.m.
Dubai Open: Sony ESPN (SD & HD), 3.30 p.m. & 8.30 p.m.

IN BRIEF

Tejaswin wins Big12 title, equals National record

NEW DELHI

India's Tejaswin Shankar won the men's high jump title at the Big12 collegiate athletics meet with a National record-equalling leap in Texas. Appearing for Kansas State University, Tejaswin cleared a season's best 2.28m on his final attempt to equal his National record set in the 22nd Federation Cup in Patiala last year. However, Tejaswin's personal best is 2.29m, cleared last April at the Texas Tech invite. PTI

Zoravar misses final

SPORTS BUREAU
NEW DELHI

Zoravar Singh Sandhu shot 119 (24, 25, 23, 25, 22) and missed the final by two points in men's trap in the Qatar Open shotgun championship at the Lusail Complex in Doha on Sunday.

The results: Trap: Men: 1. Erminio Frasca (Ita) 45 (123); 2. Valerio Grazini (Ita) 44 (121); 3. Sebastien Guerrero (Fra) 35 (123); 12. Zoravar Singh Sandhu 119; 17. Kynan chenai 117; 20. Prithviraj Tondaiman 117; 26. Shamsher Singh Chauhan 115.

Junior men: 1. Vivaan Kapoor 118; 2. Manavaditya Rathore 115; 3. Kacper Dopierala (Pol) 109; 4. Bhowneesh Mendiratta 108; 5. Suraj 103.

Women: 1. Silvana Maria Stanco (Ita) 44 (123); 2. Zuzana Rehak Stefecekova (Svk) 40 (118); 3. Melanie Couzy (Fra) 30 (121); 25. Shagun Chowdhary 107; 32. Rajeshwari Kumari 104; 40. Varsha Tomar 99; 42. Sharayu Dalvi 96.

Rashpal, Jyoti win

Tendulkar happy with overwhelming response

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Rashpal Singh and Jyoti Gawte won the fourth edition of the IDBI Federal Life Insurance New Delhi Marathon clocking 2:21:55seconds and 2:47:54s respectively here on Sunday.

Rashpal, who trains at the Army Sports Institute, Pune, said: "The weather was cool and I am happy with my performance. My target was to complete the race in 2:19 but I am happy with this performance.

Proud moment: Sachin Tendulkar with the men's winners. ▪SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Tough competition

"We (best three) were running together till 25k and after that I took the lead and finished first. It was a challenge for me as we all have trained together and we knew it was going to be a tough competition."

Gawte of Maharashtra said: "I am a regular runner and have participated in 15-16 marathons. Last year I was the runner-up and today I completed the run in 2:47:54. It is the happiest moment for me."

Prior to each of the races, Sachin Tendulkar, along with the participants, did 10 push-ups as part of a challenge. The sponsor donated ₹100 on behalf of each participant and raised ₹15 lakh towards the fund for the martyrs of the Pulwama terrorist attack.

Tendulkar was happy with the response. "I am especially delighted to see so many children participating. It is a very big step in life to participate in a marathon and not to be intimidated by seeing so many adults around.

Pat for Delhi

"You are the next generation who will take over the reins of our nation. Our dream is to transform India from a sports-loving nation into a sports-playing nation for a healthy and active lifestyle.

"And if children are starting from here, things are going to get better and better. So well done Delhi, keep up your energy to run in the marathon. It is fantastic that you all are here with so much enthusiasm and energy."

The results:

Full Marathon: Men: 1. Rashpal Singh 2:21:55; 2. Sher Singh 2:23:16; 3. Manavendra Singh 2:28:27.
Women: 1. Jyoti Gawte 2:47:54; 2. Jigmet Dolma 3:01:30; 3. Tsetan Dolkar 3:01:32.
Half Marathon: Men: 1. Robin Singh 1:09:01; 2. Dipak Suhaug 1:11:07; 3. Deepak Singh 1:12:51.
Women: 1. Jyoti Singh 1:22:20; 2. Ujala 1:24:25; 3. Prabhawati Rawat 1:34:26.

Hockey's loss may be football's gain

Former National coach Harendra eyes sport switch

UTHRA GANESAN
NEW DELHI

With Hockey India not interested in availing his services any further and having received an official release from his duties from SAI, former National men's coach Harendra Singh has now decided to shift focus to football, something that he has been planning for a while.

Harendra Singh. ▪FILE PHOTO

Harendra, a self-confessed football fanatic, has already spoken to Football Delhi president Shaji Prabhakaran and is likely to participate in a coaching course for AIFF's D Licence – the first step – next month.

"I feel it is the best time for me to look elsewhere. Knowledge is power and nothing learnt ever goes waste. It is very common in Europe for coaches and personnel to move between hockey and football since the two games are very similar in terms of tactics, but it doesn't happen in India," Harendra confirmed on Sunday. Germany is a prime example of it with national hockey coaches Bernhard Peters and Markus Weise moving to football. Former India coach Dutchman Roelant Oltmans was the technical director of football back home before returning to hockey.

Harendra has also spoken to Pradip Dutta, the only FIFA certified conditioning instructor from India and an Elite instructor with the AFC, regarding his plans. "I would love it if it happens in Delhi, but I am willing to travel anywhere in the country for the course. I am clear I want to start at the bottom. Simply because I have been the national coach in hockey doesn't mean I can jump to the top in another sport."

Garcha strikes Aravali Polo's winner in final

NEW DELHI: Satinder Garcha struck the match-winner in the sixth chukker as Garcha Group-Aravali Polo pipped Sahara warriors 11-10 in the final of the La Pegasus Northern India 16-goal polo championship at the Jaipur Polo ground here on Sunday.

Angad Kalaan top scored for the champion team with five goals, while Matthew Perry and Dhruvpal Godara scored nine goals between them for Sahara Warriors.

Angad Kalaan was adjudged the Most Valuable Player and mare Cantraflor, ridden by Manuel Llorente was declared the 'best polo pony'.

Earlier, in an exhibition match, La Pegasus Polo Titans tied 3-3 with La Pegasus Polo Knights.

Prizes were presented by Lt. Gen. Ashok Ambre, Quartermaster General and president of the Army Polo and Riding Club.

The results:

Final: Garcha Group-Aravali Polo 11 (Angad Kalaan 5, Manuel Llorente 3, Ravi Rathore 2, Satinder Garcha) bt Sahara Warriors 10 (Matthew Perry 5, Dhruvpal Godara 4, Vandit Golechha).

Winner: Northern India polo champion Garcha Group-Aravali Polo with the trophy. ▪SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Navi lifts maiden title

WEIGHTLIFTING

Y.B. SARANGI
VISAKHAPATNAM

Eighteen-year-old Gulam Navi edged out seasoned campaigner Susant Sahu in a thrilling contest to win the men's 67kg title in the National weightlifting championships at the Railway Indoor Sports Enclave here on Sunday.

A flawless Navi shone in a competitive field, comprising several international lifters, to aggregate 280kg and pip an injured Sahu by 1kg for his maiden National crown.

In good form

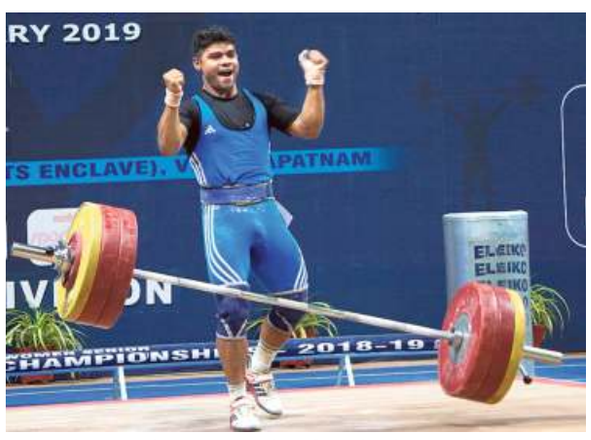
His achievement came on the back of gold medal-winning performances in the National junior championships and Khelo India Games, where the Services lifter beat Youth Olympics champion Jeremy Lalrinnunga.

After seven lifters recorded between 118kg and 121kg in snatch, Navi – who had hoisted 120kg – began clean and jerk at a high 152kg and followed it up with 157kg.

Railways' Sahu, who reduced his initial snatch entry from 120kg to 115kg due to the recurrence of a lower back injury during warm-up, lifted 121kg in snatch. He fell on the platform because of the pain after finishing each of his clean and jerk effort, but managed 158kg in his last attempt to total 279kg.

Needing a 3kg improvement in his concluding try, Navi, an Army Sports Institute product, rose to the challenge by returning 160kg.

"I was determined to do the last lift successfully," said Navi, hailing from Uttarakhand.



Triumphant: Gulam Navi exults after clinching gold in the 67kg category. ▪C.V. SUBRAHMANYAM

S. Thasana Chanu, a silver medallist in 64kg last year's Nationals, upset previous edition's champion Rakhi Halder to take the women's 63kg gold medal.

Manipur lifter Thasana totalled 212kg to beat Railways' Rakhi, who had been nursing a knee injury for over two months, by 8kg.

The results:

Men: 67kg: 1. Gulam Navi (SSCB) snatch 120kg, clean and jerk 160kg, total 280kg; 2. Susant Sahu (RSPB) 121kg, 158kg, 279kg; 3. T. Sudheer (AP) 120kg, 151kg, 271kg.
Women: 63kg: 1. S. Thasana Chanu (Mani) 90kg, 122kg, 212kg; 2. Rakhi Halder (RSPB) 87kg, 117kg, 204kg; 3. Anju Chauhan (Har) 86kg, 116kg, 202kg.
71kg: 1. Sarbjeet Kaur (Pun) 89kg, 124kg, 213kg; 2. Lalchhanhimi (Miz) 92kg, 115kg, 207kg; 3. K. Sarjubala Devi (Mani) 89kg, 113kg, 202kg.
76kg: 1. Manpreet Kaur (Pun) 97kg, 120kg, 217kg; 2. Deepika Handa (Chd) 84kg, 120kg, 204kg; 3. Shashi Yadav (RSPB) 91kg, 112kg, 203kg.

MUSHTAQ ALI TROPHY - SUNDAY'S SCORES

Group A (Mulapadu)

Kerala 160 for six in 20 overs (Vishnu Vinod 70, Arun Karthik 31, Sachin Baby 38) bt Andhra 152 in 19.4 overs (Prasanth Kumar 57, Sandeep Warrier three for 27, including a hat-trick).

J&K 189 for seven in 20 overs (Jatin Wandhwan 57, Shubham Pundir 68, Irfan Pathan 26 n.o., Suboth Bhati three for 26) lost to Delhi 191 for six in 19.5 overs (Hiten Dalal 32, Anuj Rawat 45, Lalit Yadav 47 n.o.).

Jharkhand 219 for one in 20 overs (Anand Singh 26, Ishan Kishan 113 n.o., Virat Singh 73 n.o.) bt Manipur 98 for nine in 20 overs (Yashpal Singh 40, Utkarsh Singh three for seven, Rahul Shukla three for 14).

Group B (Surat)

Gujarat 167 for five in 20 overs (Priyank Panchal 40, Dhruv Raval 71 n.o., Axar Patel 28) bt Himachal 97 in 15.1 overs (Prashant Chopra 35, Hemang Patel three for 14, Hardik Patel three for 29).

Bihar 131 for nine in 20 overs (M.D. Rahmatullah 32, M. Mohammed three for 21, R. Ashwin three for 31) lost to Tamil Nadu 132 for four in 18.5 overs (N.S. Chaturved 25, B. Indrajith 46, Washington Sundar 38 n.o.).

Rajasthan 137 for five in 20 overs (Mahipal Lomror 47, Robin Bist 38) bt Meghalaya 65 in 16.1 overs (Tanveer Ul-Haq three for 10, Nathu Singh three for seven, Rahul Chahar three for 13).

Group C (Indore)

Madhya Pradesh 143 in 19.3 overs (Rajat Patidar 47, Parth Sahani 28, Venkatesh Iyer 29, Tushar Deshpande four for 28) lost to Mumbai 145 for two in 16 overs (Shreyas Iyer 103 n.o., Suryakumar Yadav 39 n.o.).

Punjab 122 in 20 overs (Yuvraj Singh 34, Gurkeerat Mann 29, Jaydev Unadkat three for 30) lost to Saurashtra 126 for two in 17.4 overs (Cheteshwar Pujara 42 n.o., Robin Uthappa 54).

Goa 164 for seven in 20 overs (Suyash Prabhudessai 49) lost to Railways 168 for two in 17.3 overs (Mrunal Devdhar 82, Pratham Singh 60 n.o.).

Group D (Cuttack)

Chhattisgarh 194 for two in 20 overs (Shashank Chandraker 56, Harpreet Singh 92 n.o., Amandeep Khare 30 n.o.) lost to Assam 195 for five in 20 overs (Sibsankar Roy 52, Amit Sinha 77 n.o., Rajjakuddin Ahmed 35 n.o.).

Haryana 141 for eight in 20 overs (Himanshu Rana 60, Rahul Tewatia 30, Ishan Porel three for 28) lost to Bengal 145 for seven in 19 overs (Vivek Singh 32, Manoj Tiwary 30).

Mizoram 91 in 19.1 overs (Taruwar Kohli 37, Pappu Roy three for eight) lost to Odisha 95 for one in 12.5 overs (Rajesh Dhuper 38 n.o., Sandeep Pattnaik 54 n.o.).

Karnataka 226 for four in 20 overs (Rohan Kadam 25, Manish Pandey 111 n.o., B.R. Sharath 43) bt Arunachal Pradesh 80 in 14.4 overs (Samarth Seth 49, Shreyas Gopal five for 11).

Group E (New Delhi)

Uttarakhand 141 for six in 20 overs (Rajat Bhatia 30, Shivam Khurana 29, Vijay Sharma 30 n.o.) bt Puducherry 131 for nine in 20 overs (Paras Dogra 53, Thalaivan Sargunam 26).

Uttar Pradesh 184 for four in 20 overs (Upendra Yadav 32, Priyam Garg 59 n.o., Rinku Singh 52 n.o.) bt Tripura 126 for eight in 20 overs (Sanjay Majumder 27, Manisankar Murasingh 28, Ninad Kadam 26, Ankit Rajpoot four for 17, Ankit Chaudhary three for 19).

Hyderabad 131 for seven in 20 overs (Akshath Reddy 46, Bavanaka Sandeep 39, Rishi Arothe four for 18) lost to Baroda 134 for six in 19.4 overs (Vishnu Solanki 40, Deepak Hooda 35, Swapnil Singh 36 n.o.).

Maharashtra 116 for nine in 20 overs (Ankit Bawne 34, Sachidanand Pandey three for 21) lost to Services 119 for four in 19.2 overs (Ravi Chauhan 45 n.o.).

Monday's fixtures

- **Group A (Mulapadu):** Manipur vs Nagaland; Delhi vs Kerala; J&K vs Andhra.
- **Group B (Surat):** Himachal vs Bihar; Gujarat vs Tamil Nadu; Rajasthan vs Vidarbha.
- **Group C (Indore):** Saurashtra vs Sikkim; Mumbai vs Goa; Madhya Pradesh vs Railways.
- **Group D (Cuttack):** Odisha vs Arunachal Pradesh; Karnataka vs Mizoram; Assam vs Bengal; Chhattisgarh vs Haryana.
- **Group E (New Delhi):** Puducherry vs Uttar Pradesh; Baroda vs Services; Tripura vs Uttarakhand; Hyderabad vs Maharashtra.

Ishan Kishan guides Jharkhand to win

Delhi wards off a spirited challenge from Jammu & Kashmir

SPORTS BUREAU
VIJAYAWADA

Ishan Kishan slammed his second century of the tournament when he cracked an unbeaten 113 (62b, 12x4, 5x6) to fashion Jharkhand's convincing, 121-run win over Manipur in the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy T20 cricket championship league match at Mulapadu Cricket Complex here on Sunday.

Batting first, Jharkhand was off to a brisk start with openers Anand Singh (26, 12b, 4x4, 1x6) and Ishan Kishan putting on 54 runs for the first wicket in 4.3 overs before the former was dismissed.

Ishan and Virat Singh (73 not out, 7x4, 3x6) then put on 165 runs to Manipur's dismay.

In reply, Manipur was never really in the hunt as it eventually finished at 98 for nine with off-break bowler Utkarsh Singh and pacer Rahul Shukla picking three wickets apiece.

In an exciting finish, Delhi warded off a spirited challenge from Jammu & Kashmir to record a four-wicket win in the last over.

Chasing 189 for seven, Delhi lost wickets at regular intervals before Lalit Yadav (47 not out, 28b, 7x4, 1x6) and Pawan Negi (15, 7b, 1x6) got together.

In the last over when it looked as if J&K would pull off an upset win, Negi hit a six off the penultimate ball of the innings off Manzoor Dar to clinch the issue in Delhi's favour.

Late in the evening, Kerala notched up an eight-run win over Andhra.

Brijbhushan elected WFI president

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Brijbhushan Sharan Singh was on Sunday elected unopposed as president of the Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) for a third time. All office-bearers were elected unopposed and will serve a three-year term.

The Office-bearers:

president: Brijbhushan Sharan Singh; **senior vice-president:** I.D. Nanavati; **secretary-general:** V.N. Prasood; **treasurer:** Satyapal Singh Deshwal; **vice-presidents:** Asit Kumar Saha, Hamza Bin Omer, N. Phoni, N. Khalo, R.K. Hooda, Bhola Nath Singh, Karan Bhushan Singh, B.S. Langde.

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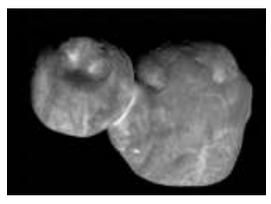
IN BRIEF

Huawei unveils 5G phone with foldable screen

BARCELONA

Chinese telecoms giant Huawei on Sunday unveiled a phone with a folding screen, just four days after rival Samsung became the first major handset maker to offer the feature. The phone, Mate X, will be compatible with the new fifth-generation wireless networks. The phone will be available in mid-2019 and has a price tag of $2,600. AFP



NASA shares sharpest images of Ultima Thule

WASHINGTON

NASA's New Horizons spacecraft has beamed back the sharpest images of Ultima Thule — the most distant object ever explored by mankind. Just before its closest approach on January 1, the spacecraft pointed the cameras to snap the sharpest possible pictures of the Kuiper Belt object officially named 2014 MU69. PTI

Humans had pet foxes in Bronze Age, says study

LONDON

Humans domesticated foxes, along with dogs, between the third and second millennium B.C., say scientists who found that the diet of these animals at the time was similar to that of their owners in the Bronze Age. They came to the conclusion after studying the remains of four foxes and a large number of dogs at sites in Spain. PTI

Cell-based meat may soon find its way to your dining table

Maharashtra govt. and the Institute of Chemical Technology have teamed up with U.S.-based Good Food Institute to set up a lab by 2019 end

PRISCILLA JEBARAJ
NEW DELHI

It has long been a staple of science fiction – utopian and dystopian alike. Its development was predicted by former British Prime Minister Winston Churchill back in 1931. And by 2020, cell-based meat may finally make its way to an Indian laboratory – and ultimately to Indian dining tables as well.

The Maharashtra government and the Institute of Chemical Technology (ICT) signed an agreement with the U.S.-based non-profit Good Food Institute (GFI) this week to set up a Centre for Excellence in Cellular Agriculture. GFI India is scouting for ₹50 crore-worth of funding to set up a lab at ICT by the end of 2019, and also build a greenfield facility for the research centre in the next two years. By early 2020, it expects to begin offering taste tests of meat grown in the lab from samples of animal tissue.

Churchill's prediction

"We shall escape the absurdity of growing a whole chicken in order to eat the breast or wing, by growing these parts separately under a suitable medium," wrote Churchill, in his 1931 essay *Fifty Years Hence*. His prediction may have been a few decades off, but researchers and entrepreneurs across the world have been scrambling to make it a reality over the last decade.

The first government-funded research on this kind of lab-grown meat began in the Netherlands in 2005, and culminated in August 2013, when the first cell-cultured hamburger was cooked and tasted live on air in London.

Clean meat: The first cell-cultured hamburger was cooked and tasted live on air in London in 2013. MOSAMEAT.COM

The burger's price tag? A whopping €2,50,000.

Mark Post, the Dutch pharmacologist behind the development of that burger, went on to co-found a company named Mosa Meat to develop commercial production methods to bring cell-based meat to the dining table at more affordable prices.

Several dozen other companies across the world have also joined the race to bring the product to the marketplace.

Proponents of the technology list several benefits. The meat is slaughter-free and aims to bypass the problems of modern factory-farming and the objections of cruelty to animals. There is no scope for infections from salmonella and e coli, or meat injected with multiple doses of antibiotics.

Environmental benefits

"Apart from the health benefits to the consumer, the environmental benefits are immense. Going by our current research, the performance of cell-based meat is an order of magnitude better than traditional meat when it comes to land use and water use," says Varun Deshpande, managing director of GFI India, which promotes both plant-based and cell-based meat. "It's a far more efficient production process. Today, to produce one calorie of chicken flesh, the bird is fed nine calories of input. And chicken is the most efficient meat to produce." GFI is in the process of doing a full life cycle analysis to get a comparable figure for cell-based meat, and to combat recent research claiming that the technology may not be as environmentally-friendly as previously thought.

He hopes the research centre being set up in Mumbai will spur Indian researchers, entrepreneurs and funders – including traditional meat companies – to take the process forward to create products not only for the ₹20,000-crore Indian meat sector, but also the trillion dollar international market. "We envision a new global food system, one which is better for people and the planet. India could become the base for this global transformation," said Mr. Deshpande.

He admits that several hurdles remain. The science is still a work in progress, especially the effort to find a suitable serum and a cell culture medium which are stable, standardised and not dependent on live animal products. There needs to be a regulatory framework in place to test, regulate and label such foods, and initial discussions have been held with the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India.

However, the biggest unknown is the matter of public opinion. Will the Indian consumer be willing to taste test meat that has never been an animal?

A study soon to be published in the journal *Frontiers in Sustainable Food Systems* claims that surveyors "found significantly higher acceptance of clean and plant-based meat in India and China compared to the U.S.,"according to the article's abstract.

Pope declares 'all-out battle' against child sexual abuse

He calls priests who prey on children 'tools of Satan'

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
VATICAN CITY

Pope Francis on Sunday vowed to tackle every single case of sexual abuse by priests in the Roman Catholic Church, comparing paedophilia to "human sacrifice" in a speech that left victims cold.

His public address to top bishops at the end of a landmark summit in the Vatican promised an "all-out battle" against abusive priests, but blamed the devil and insisted the Church was not the only place children were assaulted.

"If in the Church there should emerge even a single case of abuse - which already in itself represents an atrocity - that case will be faced with the utmost seriousness", Francis promised.

Pope Francis

"I am reminded of the cruel religious practice, once widespread in certain cultures, of sacrificing human beings – frequently children – in pagan rites," he said. The sexual abuse of minors was "a widespread phenomenon in all cultures and societies," Pope Francis said, and he slammed those priests who prey on children as "tools of Satan".

"I make a heartfelt appeal for an all-out battle against the abuse of minors both sexually and in other areas... for we are dealing with abominable crimes that must be erased from the face of the earth," he said.

Children must be "protected from ravenous wolves", he said, adding: "We stand face to face with the mystery of evil".

The scandals have hit countries around the world.

For the bravehearts

Big push: Sachin Tendulkar doing push-ups as part of the "Bharat Ke Veer" initiative to raise money for members of the Armed Forces, during the New Delhi Marathon at Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium on Sunday. AP

Brushstrokes with a difference

Mouth and Foot Painting Artists planning to set up five more centres to support more artists

PRAKASH KAMAT
PANAJI

The Mouth and Foot Painting Artists (MFPA) plans to set up centres in five more cities to support differently abled artists.

Talking to *The Hindu* on the sidelines of a live demonstration by 16 artists at a resort near here on Sunday, Bobby Thomas, head of marketing and development, MFPA, Mumbai, said they have plans to set up centres with training facilities in Bengaluru, Delhi, Hyderabad, Chennai and Pune in the next two years.

Personal touch: Ravindran M. V. painting with his mouth and Sheela Sharma, right, painting using her leg. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Artistic expression

Based on the concept of sustainable livelihood, the initiative aims to provide a platform for artists to exhibit their creative talents.

Unable to paint using their hands because of injury, illness or birth deformity, the artists use brushes held either in their mouth or with their feet to paint. Twenty-one artists, who are at different levels of skills, namely, students, associate members and members, are part of the group.

Mr. Thomas said when they are students, they get a stipend; at the provisional level of artist, they get a salary of around ₹10,000 to 12,000 per month; and as the artists grow in stature, they can earn from ₹30,000 to 40,000 per month which may go up to ₹1,10,000 per month, in addition to an annual bonus. The money comes from paintings and exhibitions.

Established in 1956 and owned by disabled artists themselves, the MFPA association today has over 800 members spread across 74 countries. In India, it supports 21 artists.

"Driven by the motto 'self-help, not charity', the objective of every member is to earn his or her livelihood with self-respect and dignity, and free of any charity", said Mr. Thomas.

"Our artists financially support themselves and their families, while their families stand behind them in support of their activities," he said.

In 2015, the Indian chapter of MFPA established a trust fund – IMFPA Training Foundation Trust – to provide vital financial and training assistance to differently abled children and adults keen on pursuing their interest in arts.

As of now, the Foundation has 10 trainees, and next year it proposes to increase the number to 30 and then go on adding new members based on resources.

Dickens tried to send wife to asylum, letters show

He maintained tight control over what the public learned about his 1858 separation from his life partner

PALKO KARASZ
LONDON

As a great novelist and a master journalist, Charles Dickens maintained tight control over what the public learned about his 1858 separation from his wife, perhaps the most scandalous story in his eventful life.

But letters revealed this past week cast the episode in a new and cruel light. Dickens, they suggest, not only sought to banish Catherine, his companion of two decades and the mother of his 10 children, while pursuing an affair with a young actress, Ellen Ternan.

He also tried to have his wife imprisoned in an asylum.

Letters suggest that Charles Dickens sought to banish Catherine while pursuing an affair with a young actress. AFP

"This is a stronger and more damning account of Dickens' behaviour than any other," John Bowen, a professor of 19th-century English literature at the University of York in northern England, wrote in *The Times Literary* Supplement on Tuesday.

The article accompanied the publication of an analysis of letters held at Harvard.

Dickens was careful of his image and legacy. In the 1860s, he burned the letters and papers of 20 years. Still, scholars and biographers continue efforts to pierce the privacy of his life and his relationship with women. The circumstances of the separation have inspired fiction, biography and a feature film, *The Invisible Woman*.

Catherine Dickens herself rarely spoke of the separation. Nearly a decade after her husband's death, she confided in Edward Dutton Cook, a theatre critic and her neighbour in Camden, north London. The letters Bowen analysed were based on those conversations.

Charles Dickens fell out of love with his wife, Dutton Cook wrote in a letter. "She had borne 10 children and had lost many of her good looks, was growing old, in fact.

98 letters

"He even tried to shut her up in a lunatic asylum, poor thing!" Dutton Cook continued. "But bad as the law is in regard to proof of insanity he could not quite wrest it to his purpose."

The collection of 98 letters from Dutton Cook to a journalist friend, William Moy Thomas, was bought at auction in 2014 by the Houghton Library at Harvard. NY TIMES

Don't fight the robots, tax them

The rise in automation will shrink government's tax revenue

EDUARDO PORTER

When Bill Gates floated the idea of imposing a tax on robots a couple of years ago, Lawrence Summers, a former top economic adviser to President Barack Obama, called the Microsoft co-founder "profoundly misguided."

How do you even define a robot to tax it? And taxing innovation is a sure way to make a country poorer.

Europe has also rejected the idea. In 2017 the European Parliament soundly defeated a draft motion that recommended considering a tax on the owners of robots to fund retraining programmes for workers displaced by the machines and shore up the finances of their social security system.

And yet properly constructed, a tax on automation may not be as destructive as it sounds. South Korea, the most robotised country in the world, instituted a robot tax of sorts in 2018 when it reduced the tax deduction on business investments in automation.

There are two sound arguments for taxing robots. The easiest is this: Governments need the money. In the U.S., income taxes account for half of the $3 trillion collected every year by the Internal Revenue Service; payroll taxes account for another third.

Imagine that the fears about robots taking over jobs actually come true. Two years ago, the McKinsey Global Institute found that the job functions that are "most susceptible to automation" in the U.S. account for 51% of the activities in the economy and $2.7 trillion worth of wages.

Welfare doles may rise

The institute estimates "half of today's work activities could be automated by 2055." If that happens, hundreds of billions of tax dollars would be lost every year.

Make them pay: A file photo of robots carrying medical documents at a hospital in Bangkok, Thailand. REUTERS

And at the same time that the rise of robots shrinks government tax revenue, the fallout from automation will place more demands on government services. The U.S. will probably need more money to retrain workers bumped from their jobs by automation, to give them a shot at a new one. Welfare rolls could grow, as millions of workers are displaced to the bottom end of the service economy, where wages are low and robots are scarce.

To afford any kind of government services in the robot era, governments will have to find something else to tax. Why not the robots themselves?

The case for taxing robots is stronger when you consider that a lot of automation is not deployed to enhance economic productivity. Instead, many businesses are investing in automation simply because the tax code is urging them to do so.

The purpose of taxing robots is not simply to stop them from killing jobs. It is to level the playing field, to ensure that investments in automation raise productivity. "The tax system incentivises automation even in cases where it is not otherwise efficient," wrote Ryan Abbott and Bret Bogenschneider of the University of Surrey School of Law in Britain.

One reason that businesses deploy robots is that automation is subsidised. "Subsidies induce firms to substitute capital for labour even when this is not socially cost-saving, though it is privately beneficial because of the subsidy," Daron Acemoglu, an economist, and his co-author, Pascual Restrepo, wrote.

The tax subsidies to robots are varied. For starters, machines don't incur payroll taxes, which are used to fund Social Security and Medicare. For every worker replaced by a robot, the employer saves on payroll taxes.

The tax code and many State governments allow companies to use "accelerated depreciation" for capital investments, which allows them to deduct the cost of their robots faster than they could deduct the wage of the payroll of the workers they replace.

This means that eliminating the tax break for robots would improve economic efficiency. By subsidising capital investment, the government is encouraging businesses to use capital when they otherwise would not, to replace workers with machines. NY TIMES

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THE HINDU

MONDAY • FEBRUARY 25, 2019

DELHI METRO

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Jailhouse block

Occupancy in 2018 was the lowest in over a decade in city jails. But they are filling up again Page 2

Guidelines on lawyers' fee

HC directs the BCI to consider framing guidelines prescribing the manner of charging fees by lawyers Page 3

OK to be outrageous

Why the very outspoken Karl Lagerfeld, legendary for his epic shows, will be a tough act to follow Page 4

A feast for the senses

The legend of Basant is as engrossing as the festival of spring is captivating. Page 5

IN BRIEF

Voice against violence, hatred to reverberate

GURUGRAM

Art cannot exist in an atmosphere of divisiveness and in isolation, therefore, the prevailing situation in which attempts were being made to impose the supremacy of one over the other demanded each artist to take a stand, said leading Kathak dancer and choreographer Aditi Mangaldas.

CITY ▸ PAGE 3

Air quality of Delhi-NCR

Delhi	190	Gurugram	90
Ghaziabad	159	Faridabad	143
Noida	173	Greater Noida	199

Good 0-50 | Satisfactory 51-100 | Moderate 101-200 | Poor 201-300 | Very poor 301-400 | Severe >401

AIR QUALITY INDEX AT 4 P.M. YESTERDAY (AVERAGE OF PAST 24 HOURS) | SOURCE: CPCB

DUTA condemns assault on law faculty teacher

NEW DELHI

The Delhi University Teachers' Association on Sunday condemned the assault by a student on a law faculty teacher who had reportedly raised questions on the veracity of a WhatsApp video shown to him by the student. The video allegedly contained representations of the Pulwama Terror attack. The student's "justification" for the assault, that questioning by the teacher has hurt his nationalist sentiment, is completely unacceptable, the teachers' body said. PTI

Tutor attacked for turning down proposal

NEW DELHI

A man, out on bail in a case of honour killing, has allegedly attacked a 23-year-old private tutor with a blade for refusing his marriage proposal, the police said on Sunday. They received a PCR call was received stating that the injured woman was rushed to a hospital. She had been attacked multiple times with a blade on face and chin on February 23, they said.

CITY ▸ PAGE 3

Hunger strike decision taken as a last resort, says Kejriwal

Agitation for full statehood to start from March 1; let Centre take NDMC area: CM

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Sunday said his decision to go on an indefinite hunger strike from March 1 for Delhi's full statehood was taken as the last resort after all possible efforts to persuade the Centre to allow the Delhi government to function without interference had failed.

CM Arvind Kejriwal said Centre had created hurdles in major decisions on public welfare taken by the government. ▪ FILE PHOTO: SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

'No option left'

"We tried everything from fervent appeals to dharnas and even knocked at the doors of courts. Finally, when we are left with no option, we are going on an indefinite fast," Mr. Kejriwal said.

He said excuses like 'Delhi is the Capital of the country, therefore, it cannot be granted statehood', does not work as the entire NDMC area would still be under the control of the Centre.

"Yes, Delhi is India's Capital, so let the Centre keep entire the NDMC area under its complete control. How can rest of Delhi, in which Delhiites elect their own government, be kept subservient to the Centre? No more injustice will be tolerated," Mr. Kejriwal said.

The Chief Minister added, "During last four years, the Modi government deliberately passed orders to snatch all the powers of the elected Delhi government and this treachery will now be placed before the court of the people, which is supreme in a democracy."

> **PM Modi lied to the people of Delhi in 2014 Lok Sabha elections. Delhiites will now respond to the lies and decades of deceits**
>
> ARVIND KEJRIWAL
> Chief Minister

He said the Central government had created hurdles in all major decisions of public welfare being taken by the Delhi government.

"From installation of CCTVs for the safety of residents to the construction of schools, hospital, Mohalla Clinics etc., hurdles were created in the implementation of each and every decision at every step," said the Chief Minister. He added that BJP stands completely exposed on the major issue of providing statehood to the people of Delhi since it has suddenly taken a U-turn on its decades-old stand of promising the same.

Mr. Kejriwal said during the tenure of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee in 2003, the then Home Minister, L.K. Advani, had introduced the Delhi statehood bill in the Lok Sabha. But, it was allowed to lapse, he said, adding that the issue was brought up again ahead of the 2014 Lok Sabha elections by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

"BJP's opposition to the statehood for Delhi is now like a confession that Mr. Modi lied to the people of Delhi in 2014 Lok Sabha elections. Delhiites will now respond to lies and decades of deceit appropriately," Mr. Kejriwal said.

Rai: venue for agitation yet to be finalised

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Senior Aam Aadmi Party leader Gopal Rai on Sunday said the party was yet to finalise the venue for Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's hunger strike for full Statehood of Delhi.

The venue will act as the office of the Chief Minister as he will discharge his duties from there during his protest, he said.

Mr. Rai said the hunger strike will start on March 1 at 10 a.m. and Mr. Kejriwal will be joined by all party Lok Sabha incharges, Ministers, MLAs and councillors.

"Delhi has been divided into 560 zones and three committees have been formed at Central, Vidhan Sabha and Zonal level. The venue of the Chief Minister's fast will be the control room from where instructions will be sent out," Mr. Rai said, adding that from March 1 to 9, 560 'nyay yatras' will be taken out at the zonal level. Several RWAs, students, teachers, lawyers and professionals will also be involved in these yatras.

'CM should have taken up statehood issue 4 years ago'

Sheila Dikshit says Kejriwal trying to confuse Delhiites

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Delhi Pradesh Congress Committee (DPCC) president Sheila Dikshit on Sunday said Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal should have taken up the full statehood issue four years ago and not when his government's term was coming to an end.

She said Mr. Kejriwal was now raking up the issue to confuse the people.

"Mr. Kejriwal is raking up the full statehood issue with an eye on the forthcoming Lok Sabha elections as he knows very well that only a few months remain for the term of the Aam Aadmi Party government to end in Delhi," Ms. Dikshit said.

DPCC president Sheila Dikshit at a public meeting in New Delhi on Sunday. ▪ ANUJ ARORA

Using strategies

Another strategy he was using to confuse people was about a tie-up with the Congress and AAP in the forthcoming Lok Sabha, the DPCC president said.

She clarified that the Congress will contest the Lok Sabha elections on its own and will sweep all the seven seats in Delhi.

'People want change'

Speaking at a public meeting at Mehrauli and Badarpur, she said the people of Delhi now want change as they were tired of the hollow promises of the Modi government at the Centre and the Kejriwal government in Delhi.

> **Mr. Kejriwal is raking up the full statehood issue with an eye on the upcoming polls as he knows that only a few months are left in the tenure of the AAP government**
>
> SHEILA DIKSHIT
> DPCC president

"Both Mr. Modi and Mr. Kejriwal make big promises but they remain as just promises," she said listing her achievements during her 15-years in power.

She told the Congress workers present at the gathering that the Kejriwal government had failed on all fronts and was thriving by putting out five to six full-page advertisements in newspapers with lies and falsehood, and was squandering the hard-earned money of the tax payers' for self-publicity.

"Had the money wasted on advertisements been used for the good of Delhi, many development works could have been carried out in the JJ clusters, resettlement and unauthorised colonies where the poor live," Ms. Dikshit said.

Fishing for business

Net result: Men repair and dry fishing nets on a sunny day in Burari. ▪ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

Daulat Ram College hostellers protest 'moral policing' by warden

'When we wear shorts, the warden passes comments on our character and asks us to change clothes'

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Hostellers of Daulat Ram College sat in front of Delhi University's Arts Faculty building on Sunday, in an attempt to get an audience with the Vice-Chancellor, after overnight protests at their hostel.

They are protesting a host of issues, including the lack of facilities promised at the hostel, and alleged 'moral policing' by the warden.

The students said the warden harasses them regularly and also passes comments on the clothes they wear.

"We are not allowed to wear shorts in our own hostel. It is not a rule but if we do, the warden comments on our character and asks us to change our clothes," said one student. In a statement, the Pinjra Tod group said up to eight students were recently humiliated by the warden for 'taking leave but not going to visit their parents'. Rekha* said the warden called her parents to the hostel and showed them Instagram pictures of her on an outstation trip. "My parents knew about my whereabouts so that was not a problem. But why is she harassing us like this," the student asked. She added that the warden had asked her to withdraw her application from the hostel so as to avoid formal procedures of removal. The student alleged that the warden was trying to impose false complaints on her.

The DRC hostellers outside Delhi University's Arts Faculty building on Sunday. ▪ SIDHARTH RAVI

Eviction notices

The students claimed that up to five others had been told to vacate the hostel on similar grounds. The Pinjra Tod group said multiple students were given eviction notices for reaching the hostel 15 minutes past the curfew. Students with disabilities staying at the hostel also complained about being treated rudely by the administration and threatened with removal in case they raised any demands.

The protesters said they had written multiple letters and applications to various authorities regarding the lack of facilities and other complaints but got no response. The hostellers said they would continue their protest at the hostel on Sunday night until the administration addresses their concerns.

**Name changed to protect identity*

Ready to allow 50% MSP for farmers: govt

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi government on Sunday said it has conceptualised the implementation of recommendations of Swaminathan Committee on farmers and was ready to allow 50% higher minimum support price (MSP) for farmers.

The government said it has proposed a scheme – Mukhya Mantri Kisan Mitra Yojna – for the benefit of farmers of Delhi according to the recommendation of the report that reads: "MSP should be at least 50% more than the weighted average cost of production."

The government said Development Minister Gopal Rai has discussed the modalities of Delhi MSP implementation with the farmers, tenant farmers as well as wheat and paddy traders. After taking suggestions, the MSP for Delhi in respect of wheat and paddy have been decided in view of the higher production cost here as compared to other States.

Mr. Rai has directed the Development Department to prepare a note to be put up before the Cabinet so that the new scheme for the welfare of farmers can be implemented, the government said.

Six couples in search of safe home in Delhi

Exploited by NGO Love Commando

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL
NEW DELHI

For six young couples, who married outside their caste or faith and fled to Delhi for a safe haven, life has taken a turn for the worse here.

The couples had to endure exploitation at the hands of an illegal NGO – Love Commando. The NGO had blackmailed and extorted them, threatening to expose their whereabouts to their vengeful families. They had lived in mortal fear for many days until one of them gathered courage to inform the Delhi Commission for Women (DCW).

They were rescued from the NGO in a joint raid conducted by the DCW and the Delhi Police on January 29. But the couples are still far from safe.

The DCW with its limited resources cannot protect them for long.

In fact, the commission has accommodated the men and women separately due to lack of manpower, facilities and security.

The men are scattered around, living in gurdwaras or some such temporary accommodation while their wives are lodged in hostels.

The DCW through advocate Sunil Fernandes has drawn the attention of the Supreme Court to the plight of the young couples.

It said time is running short for them and these young lives have suffered because neither the Centre nor the States have bothered to implement a Supreme Court direction to protect inter-faith/community couples from honour killing and provide them accommodation in safe houses.

It has been nearly a year since the judgment in March 2018. The Commission argued that the lapse on the part of the State is a violation of the fundamental rights of persons to choose a life partner and live with dignity.

> **...it is necessary that there should be State-sponsored safe houses in the metros where these young people come in search of a new life**
>
> SUNIL FERNANDES
> Advocate

Reply in two weeks

A Bench led by Justice A.K. Sikri has taken serious exception to the non-compliance of the State. It has sought a reply from the Union, Delhi Police Commissioner and the Delhi government in two weeks.

The Commission has asked the apex court to put the government on a deadline to implement the March 2018 judgment in the Shakti Vahini case.

The judgment had in March last condemned honour killing as an act which "guillotines individual liberty, freedom of choice and one's own perception of choice".

The Supreme Court had issued a series of guidelines putting the onus on the State to protect young lives from honour killing. The judgment requires every district to have a safe house for runaway couples to stay during the first year of marriage for a nominal charge.

"Most of these couples flee their birthplace and come to metros like Delhi. So it is necessary that there should be State-sponsored safe houses in the metros where these young people come in search of a new life," Mr. Fernandes explained.

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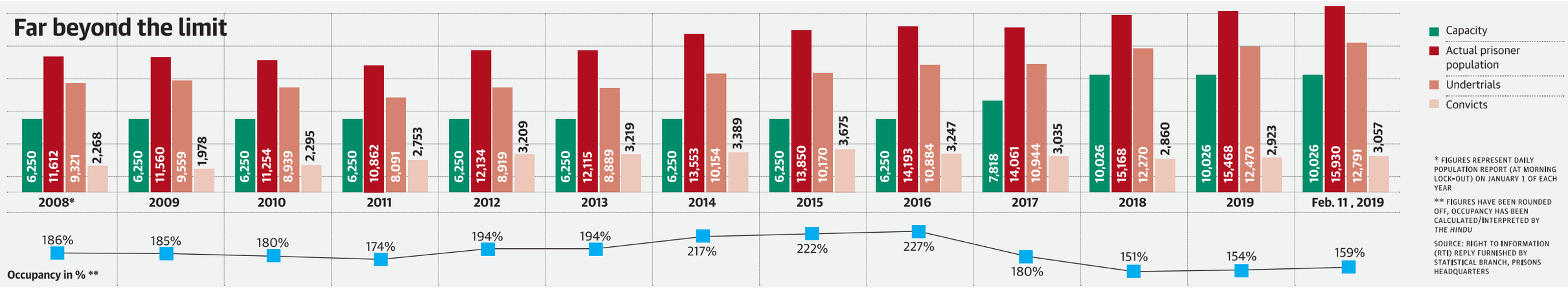


Jailhouse BLOCK

Overcrowded jails have always been a problem in Delhi, but due to a spree of prisons being operationalised over the past few years, occupancy in 2018 was the lowest in over a decade. But the prisons are filling up again, *The Hindu* takes a look at the reasons why

JATIN ANAND
NEW DELHI

Last year, the Capital's prisons were the least overcrowded they have ever been in over a decade – but things have started going south once again.

Delhi's 16 prisons, including Asia's largest prison complex – Tihar Central Jail, housed 15,168 inmates on January 1, 2018, as per data provided by Prison Headquarters, in reply to an Right to Information (RTI) request from *The Hindu*.

The combined sanctioned capacity of the jails is 10,026, which means that the prisons were at 151% occupancy.

Though far from ideal in terms of living conditions, 2018 saw the least congested jails in Delhi since 2008.

The analysis of prison statistics shows that Delhi's prisons were the most congested on January 1, 2016, when they registered an occupancy of 227%.

At the time, the total combined sanctioned capacity of the jails was 6,250 – but 14,193 inmates were packed into the prisons.

In an attempt to solve the overcrowding, half-a-dozen new prison facilities were opened at north-east Delhi's Mandoli within months of each other between October 2016 and October 2017.

The new facilities significantly eased the load on the prison infrastructure for an entire year - but not a day longer than that.

Factors ranging from operationalisation of more police stations to upcoming general election and even the weather have been cited as reasons for upward trend in prison occupancy.

Trying to keep up

Two jails were made operational in 2016 – 'Jail number 14' in October and 'Central Jail number 13' in December – with a total capacity to hold 1,568 inmates.

As a result, on January 1, 2017, the prison occupancy dropped from 227% to 180% as the jails housed 14,061 inmates against a total capacity of 7,818.

'Jail number 15', categorised as a high-security jail, was opened in March 2017. In July, 'Central Jail number 16', the second women-only Jail in Delhi, was made operational. 'Central Jail number 12' was opened in September and 'Central Jail number 11' in October.

The declining trend in prison occupancy continued as the capacity was increased by 2,208 by the end of 2017. The prison occupancy in Delhi dipped to its lowest in 12 years: down from 180% to 151% – a drop of around 29%.

A total of 15,168 inmates were lodged in Delhi's prisons, which had a total sanctioned capacity of 10,026, on January 1, 2018.

By the beginning of 2019, however, a host of factors, including better detection rates in instances of common crime, operationalisation of more police stations and, according to police sources, a special drive to investigate and close pending cases, triggered an upward trend in prison occupancy.

"More police stations means more police personnel, which means better enforcement of the law leading to more arrests and, as a result, more people entering the prison system," said Neeraj Kumar, who has headed both the Delhi Police as Commissioner and also served as Director General, Prisons.

From midnight of January 1, 2019, 15 new police stations and a new police district became operational in the Capital bringing the number of territorial police stations in Delhi to 178 and the total number of police stations, including those under specialised units such as the crime branch, to 209.

A senior police officer said that the stations, apart from being able to "focus more sharply" on street crime, were also mandated with carrying out Delhi Police Commissioner Amulya Patnaik's instructions to carry out a specialised drive to clear pending cases.

"With the general election coming up, there is added emphasis on keeping street crime and activities of small-time criminals, who may indulge in smuggling of liquor or black money to influence voters, at bay leading to more arrests," said the officer.

According to the RTI, prison occupancy on January 1, 2019, went up by 3%, from 151% to 154%, as the number of inmates increased from 15,168 to 15,468.

Over the next 42 days – from January 1 to February 11, 2019 – the prison population increased by 5% as number of inmates went up to 15,930 inmates.

More police stations

"The creation of more police stations, which enhances law enforcement, is certainly a factor for more people landing in jail. Another factor is the weather, an increase in the number of inmates is usually noticed during the winter months," said Raj Kumar, Additional Inspector General (Prisons).

"Disposal of criminal cases of inmates also takes place in the same proportion. In Delhi, a majority of undertrials remain in prison for one to three months at the most," the AIG said, adding that efforts to create two more jails, in Narela and Baprola, were on track.

Decongestion through creation of new facilities, however, is just one solution to the problems confronting Delhi's prison system. A more significant issue is the distribution of the existing jail population.

"The average ratio of undertrials to convicts in Indian jails is 65%:35%. But in Delhi prisons, it has always been 80%:20%, which proves that there is something wrong with the system," said advocate Sunil Gupta.

"If undertrials are more, it indicates that the criminal justice system – from the police to the judiciary – is lethargic. The issue that accompanies the problem of more undertrials than convicts is that of uneven distribution of prison population, which the RTI reply clearly points out," said Mr. Gupta, who now practices law at the Delhi High Court, after serving in the Legal Cell and as spokesperson of Delhi Prisons over a career spanning 32 years.

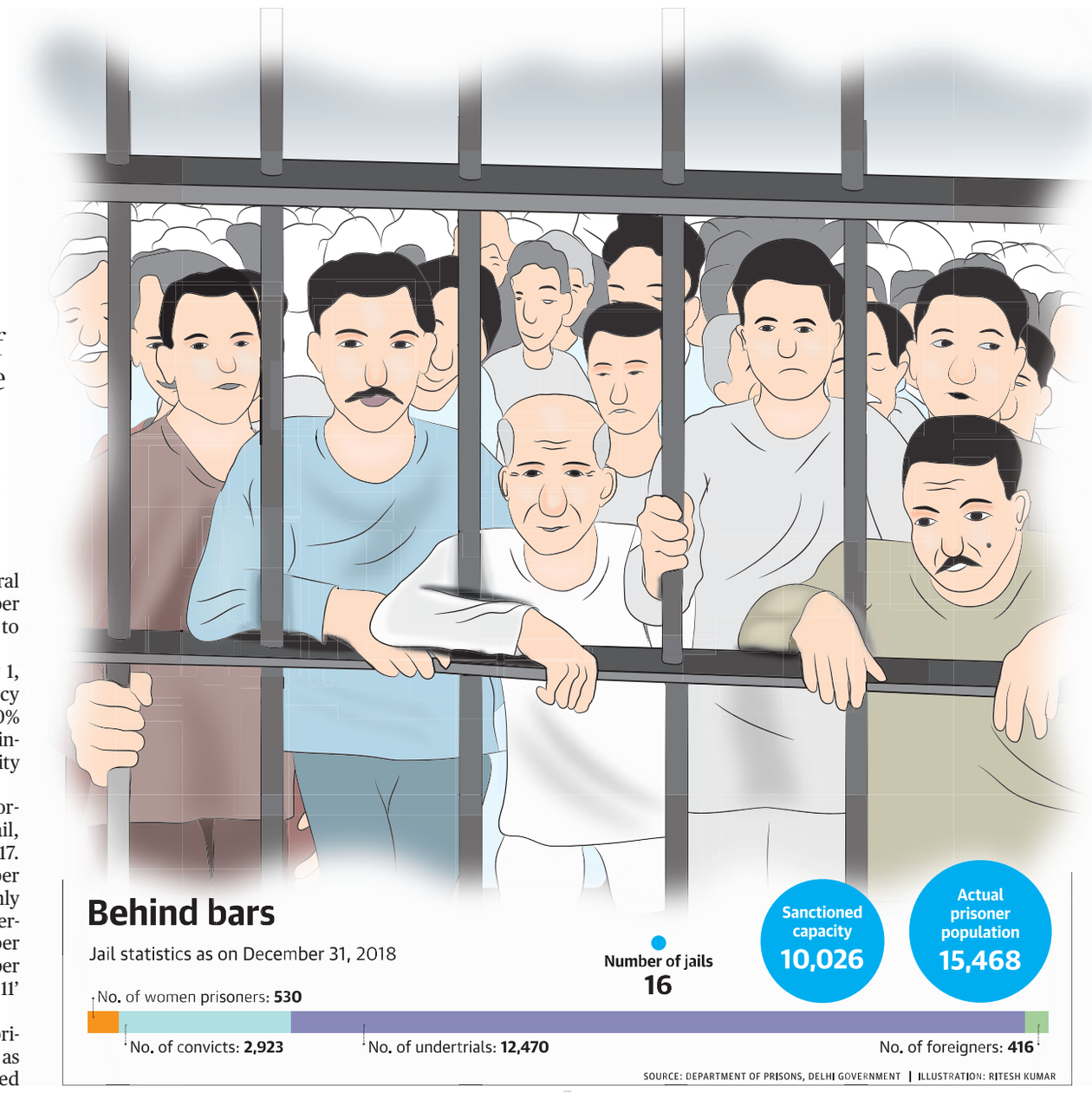
Distribution of inmates

According to the prison statistics, on February 11, 2019, there were a total of 15,930 inmates in Delhi's 16 prisons, out of which 12,791 (80.3%) were undertrials and 3,057 (19.19%) were convicts. The RTI reply also posits that overpopulation was most acute at Tihar Jail compared to the new jail complex at Mandoli. For instance, 'Jail number 1' had 1,990 inmates against a capacity of 565; Jail numbers 3 and 4 had 2,065 and 2,574 inmates against capacities of 740 each.

On the other hand, 'Jail number 11' at Mandoli had 564 inmates against a capacity of 700, 'Jail number 12' had 925 inmates against a capacity of 980 and 'Jail number 15' housed 136 inmates against a capacity of 280.

"There is clear disproportionate distribution of inmates because most inmates prefer the Tihar campus, sprawling across 200 acres located in the city as opposed to the 68-acre Mandoli Jail campus or the 14-acre Rohini Jail," Mr. Gupta said.

Former DG Prisons Neeraj Kumar said: "This situation is severely detrimental to the existing prison infrastructure. The monitoring of the prison population needs to be done on a regular basis to ensure that this problem does not arise."



'Undertrials at mercy of the justice system'

Sushil Sharma, who spent 23 years in jail for killing his partner Naina Sahni, shares his experience

HEMANI BHANDARI
NEW DELHI

In 1995, when the court asked Sushil Sharma whether he was guilty of killing his partner Naina Sahni, he said "not guilty".

"If I had pleaded guilty then, I might have served lesser number of years in jail," he says.

Speaking to *The Hindu*, Mr. Sharma, who spent 23 years in jail, says that around 70% of prisoners in Tihar are undertrials. He believes that a major reason why undertrials are languishing in prisons is because their lawyers do not counsel them properly. Mr. Sharma was released from jail in December last year.

Tandoor murder case convict Sushil Sharma was released after spending 23 years in jail.

'Plead guilty'

"I knew I had committed the crime but my lawyer suggested not to plead guilty and the trial went on for 10 years. If the lawyers know that their clients have actually committed the crime then they should suggest them to plead guilty," he says.

Speaking from his years of experience in jail, he says that another reason why undertrials languish in jails for many years is because they are at the mercy of their lawyers and the judicial system.

"Most of them are uneducated and do not know what is happening in their case. They are told by their lawyers about their hearing dates for which they dress up and show up. In the court, they are represented by their lawyers and then they go back to jail," he says, after having interacted with many undertrials in Tihar.

Recalling a case, Mr. Sharma says he met two people who were imprisoned on a murder charge.

Legal aid, counselling

Investigators had stated that the accused were adults, but after a few years it was discovered through documents in their possession that they were minors at the time of the murder.

With the help of legal aid, the Supreme Court ordered their release. However, they had already spent about 12 years in jail by then.

Mr. Sharma says legal aid and counselling inside the prison is voluntary. . Talking about the taboo attached with counselling, he says many prisoners do not understand its importance and feel its for those "suffering from mental illnesses".

Similarly, the inmates are "hesitant" to take legal aid.

Most of the undertrials are in jail on charges of murder due to personal enmity or sudden provocation, attempt to murder, domestic violence, dowry deaths and charges under Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, says Mr. Sharma.

"Lately, a lot of those charged with economic offences have also started coming in and their trials seem to run long," he adds.

The treatment meted out to undertrials and convicts is also different, says Mr. Sharma. For instance, working inside the prison is a choice for undertrials, but necessary for convicts.

"They [undertrials] choose to work for either monetary reasons or to kill time," he adds.

On whether undertrials come under the influence of hardcore criminals with whom they have to spend time, Mr. Sharma says the situation has changed in the last few years. "Earlier, the hardcore criminals were able to rope-in first-time offenders, but since counselling has become more regular, there seems to be hardly any influence. There are exceptions though," he adds.

'Inconsistencies in bail system'

Section 437A of CrPC keeps some in jail even after acquittal

SOIBAM ROCKY SINGH
NEW DELHI

The Law Commission of India in its 268th report has highlighted that inconsistency in bail system may be one of the reasons for the over-crowding of prisons across the country.

In the May 2017 report, Justice B.S. Chauhan highlighted a particular provision in the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC), which seeks to secure the attendance of a person, who is acquitted of all charges, before a higher court when the decision may be appealed.

Section 437A of the CrPC provides that before conclusion of the trial and disposal of the appeal, the court trying the offence shall require the accused person to execute bail bonds with sureties, to appear before the higher court as and when notice in respect of any appeal or petition filed against the judgment.

"This provision poses a problem because the person accused of an offence is not entitled to release even after an acquittal by a trial court, unless and until he furnishes a bail bond, with sureties," the Commission had said.

The Commission was critical of the section saying that even "where the person is found innocent but is not able to furnish sureties, the section requires that the person should not be released".

It had recommended amending the section to read along the lines of: a person, who is acquitted of all charges, is set free on him giving a personal bond for appearance before the higher court, if so required.

Advocate Ajay Verma, a prison activist, told *The Hindu*: "Section 437A need a relook as despite suggestion from Law Commission, this provision is still causing overcrowding as person remains in jail even after acquittal".

'Upgrade infrastructure'

Mr. Verma also said that the infrastructure in jails require upgrade.

Taking into consideration that there is overcrowding, he said that there was requirement of bigger prisons with more space.

Mr. Verma opined that the inmates, while in jail should be given adequate opportunities to develop skills which will give them better chance of employment once they are released.

This, he said will help the inmates in integrating into the society once they are out.

Reforms take centre stage at Bhondsi jail

Taking inspiration from Tihar Central Jail in Delhi, the Gurugram District Jail is offering its inmates a host of opportunities to improve themselves

ASHOK KUMAR
GURUGRAM

Beautiful paintings adorn the walls of the office of Bhondsi jail's Superintendent of Prisons Jai Kishan Chhillar.

The works of art are not by famous painters but made by the jail inmates here, Mr. Chhillar says proudly.

On one side of the office is a painted tree trunk with pictures of birds on it, which was also made by a prisoner. Pointing towards his desk, Mr. Chillar says: "The pen holder and the small pitcher have also been made by the inmates."

Whipping out his phone, Mr. Chhillar shows off pictures of inmates painting and taking part in various activities, including yoga.

"The concept of jails has changed a lot over the years with emphasis now on reforming the inmates and preparing them for the challenges ahead after they step out into the real world," says Mr. Chhillar.

The initiative to improve the lot of prisoners in Haryana came after Mr. Chhillar – along with other Superintendents of Prisons of the State – got an opportunity to visit Tihar Central Jail a few years ago. They were so impressed with the condition of the jails and the facilities provided to the inmates that they decided to replicate the model in Haryana.

Mr. Chhillar says that none of the jails in Haryana are overcrowded. The District Jail, Gurugram (Bhondsi jail), is spread over 45 acres and has 2,392 inmates; its capacity is around 2,500 prisoners, he says. Of the total inmates, 1,477 are undertrials. There are only 44 women inmates of which 14 are convicts.

The District Jail, Gurugram (Bhondsi jail), is spread over 45 acres and currently houses 2,392 inmates. • MANOJ KUMAR

More jails coming up

Besides Gurugram, the jail also has inmates from Nuh district. The district jail in Nuh will be ready by this year-end. It will reduce the number of inmates at Bhondsi jail, says Mr. Chillar.

Alongside Nuh, two new jails are coming up at Rewari and Panipat.

To provide education and impart livelihood skills to the inmates, the Bhondsi jail has centres of Indira Gandhi National Open University, National Institute of Open Schooling and a government polytechnic college running on its premises.

The jail authorities also organise activities to promote art, culture and fashion designing.

"We recently launched 'Dhun Project' to identify inmates with a flair for music and singing, and train them. Similarly, apparel designed by our inmates were exhibited at the ITC Grand Central Hotel in Mumbai four months ago. We have inmates who can compose music and write songs," says Mr. Chhillar.

Like other district jails in the State, Bhondsi jail is fully computerised and data on the inmates are constantly updated.

"At the click of a button, all the details of an inmate can be viewed on the computer screen, including the time spent in jail, treatment details, visitors, and even purchases made at the jail canteen. The issuance of Custody Certificates to court has become very quick now. We also plan to computerise the process of furlough to make it quick and transparent. Even the inmates can access their details online, at a kiosk using their biometrics," says Mr. Chhillar.

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IN BRIEF

North Corporation Mayor inspects Chandni Chowk

NEW DELHI

North Delhi Municipal Corporation Mayor, Adesh Gupta, inspected Chandni Chowk on Saturday along with senior officials of the corporation. During the inspection, the Mayor directed officials to repair damaged floor in the town hall premises. He also instructed officials to improve cleanliness in the area. STAFF REPORTER

Multilevel parking to come up in East Delhi

New Delhi

A commercial and car parking complex is being developed at Anaj Mandi Shadara by the East Delhi Municipal Corporation. The building is expected to accommodate up to 200 cars. The corporation in a statement said that the complex will be developed on a public private partnership model . STAFF REPORTER

JTA urges CM to build hospital in Jamia Millia

NEW DELHI

Jamia Teachers' Association (JTA) has written to Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal asking him to establish a 500-bedded hospital at Jamia Millia Islamia that could be converted into a medical college in the future. STAFF REPORTER

Bar Council told to frame rules on fee charged by lawyers

HC directive comes while adjudicating a case between a client and lawyer over fee

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court has directed the Bar Council of India (BCI) to consider framing guidelines prescribing the manner of charging professional fees by lawyers.

In a verdict passed on February 15, Justice Prathiba M. Singh has directed BCI to consider creation of a resolution mechanism including appointment of an external Ombudsman to deal with any complaints from litigants in respect to professional fees charged or practices adopted by lawyers.

"The standards of professional conduct and etiquette which are prescribed in the Bar Council of India Rules do not lay down any guidelines for charging of fee by lawyers," the High Court said, adding, "There is a severe

gap/lacuna in the rules which could lead to harassment and frustration of litigants, as has happened in the present case".

Client vs lawyer

The High Court was adjudicating a case between a client and the lawyer over payment of fees. It was informed to the court that several cheques were accepted by the counsel as security for his professional fee. Apart from taking the cheques, the counsel presented the same in the bank even after his services were withdrawn by the client. However, as the cheques were dishonoured, the counsel filed criminal complaints against the client over alleged non-recovery of fees.

"The facts in the present case are demonstrative of the misconduct that could be indulged in by lawyers against litigants, including the manner of collection of fees, practices adopted to recover fees etc," the High Court said.

"While it may be true that litigants may not pay the agreed fees to lawyers, the same cannot justify conduct of taking blank cheques as security for fees and encashing the same without the permission of the client," the High Court added.

Tenders apology

After the counsel tendered an unconditional apology to the court and undertook to withdraw all the complaints, the court said it is not inclined to take any action against the counsel. "All the above facts reveal a completely sorry state of affairs in which a counsel has filed criminal complaints against his own client, leading to the client approaching the court with various allegations against the counsel," Justice Singh remarked.

The HC said to ensure that there is some regulation in charging professional fee by lawyers and for providing a forum for litigants to air grievances, there is an urgent need to frame rules.

23-year-old attacked with blade for declining marriage proposal

Attacker was held in an honour killing case and was out on bail

SAURABH TRIVEDI
NEW DELHI

A man who was out on bail in a case of honour killing, has allegedly attacked a 23-year-old tutor with a blade for refusing his marriage proposal on Saturday evening.

Police said a PCR call was received and the injured was rushed to the hospital for treatment. Doctors confirmed that the woman was attacked multiple times with a blade on the face and chin, which needed stitching. She is out of danger.

In their police compliant, the family of the victim alleged that Rahul alias Bhola (25), was stalking their daughter for a couple of months. The man had approached her with marriage proposal several times, but knowing his criminal activities she refused the proposal and was ignoring him. On Saturday evening, when she had gone to a nearby market in Mangolpuri to buy some grocery, Rahul stopped her and forced her to accept his marriage proposal. But she again refused. This angered him and he attacked her with a blade on the face with a motive to disfigure her.

None saved her

"He kept attacking her in full public view, but no one came forward to save her. She kept screaming and asking for help. But her cries were ignored by passers-by and locals. The accused fled after attacking her," said the victim's father.

The victim's family said that the accused had harassed their daughter in 2009 when she was in Class IX. The issue was resolved after his parents apologised and scolded their son for the act, said the police.

Rahul's father left the locality in 2012 after he murdered his brother-in-law as he was unhappy with his sister's choice. Rahul was arrested and sent to jail, said a police officer.

In 2018, Rahul's friend approached the woman and enquired her as to why she is not marrying Rahul. But she ignored.

The woman is pursuing post-graduation from an open school.

"We have registered an FIR under IPC Section 324 (voluntarily causing hurt by dangerous weapons or means) at Raj Park police station. Police teams have been formed to nab the accused. We have got some leads in the case ," said ADCP (Outer) Rajendra Singh Sagar.

Woman found dead; cops suspect loan default by friends behind death

The 38-year-old had loaned ₹35 lakh to her friends

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

A 38-year-old woman was found dead at her house in east Delhi's Shakarpur on Saturday afternoon.

The police said that she was under pressure as her friends had not repaid the loan of ₹35 lakh, which they took from her. The deceased had borrowed the money from her other friends.

PCR call received

The police said they received a PCR call around 3.30 p.m. on Saturday regarding a woman found dead at her home.

A police team rushed to the spot and found that a woman, identified as Pushpa Mehta, was found hanging at her home.

The body was brought down and taken to GTB hospital where the doctors reconfirmed the death.

"The woman was alone at her home when she hanged herself. Her husband and son were at their work places. When her son went home for lunch, she did not open the door despite repeated calls. He peeped into the room through the ventilator and found her hanging. Soon, he alerted neighbours and the police," said a senior police officer.

Diary recovered

Police said no note has been recovered from the room where the woman was found hanging. But they recovered a diary from her possession in which she used to maintain the records of her finances. In one of the recent notes in the diary, she had mentioned the names of two women, who had taken loans totalling around ₹35 lakh from her on the pretext of giving high interest rate. But they did not return the amount to her. The deceased had taken the amount from her other friends who were mounting pressure on her to return the amount to them.

"It seems she was under pressure to return the amount that she had given as loan to other women. We are going through the details before registering an FIR. The body was handed over to relatives after a post-mortem," said a police officer.

Sanjivini, Society for Mental Health, 011-4076 9002, Monday-Saturday (10 a.m.-7.30 p.m.)

Four held for robbing, attacking man

Stolen cell phone recovered; knife, scooty used for crime seized

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Four persons were arrested for allegedly robbing a 45-year-old man after attacking him multiple times with a knife, police said on Sunday. They have recovered the stolen mobile phone and a knife and scooty used in the crime.

The accused were identified as Gulshan, Nikhil (22), Rahul Bisht (26) and Amit (24), they added.

The accused in police custody. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Waylaid, attacked

Giving details about the incident, a senior police officer said, the 45-year-old man was waylaid by four persons while he was on his way home from GTB Hospital on the intervening night of February 21 and 22. When he resisted, the accused attacked him multiple times with a knife following which he sustained injuries on his head, neck and mouth, the officer added.

During the investigation, the police team scanned CCTV footage from the nearby areas. They narrowed down on Gulshan and Vishal Saini, who were previously arrested in mobile snatching case. On the instance of Gulshan, Nikhil, Rahul Bisht and Amit were arrested, the senior officer said.

The accused disclosed that they were involved in 19 cases of robbery and 16 cases of snatching in Sahadara, the officer added. They also disclosed the identity of two more accomplices -- Akash Sharma and Narender Thakur. The two are involved in four more cases of snatching, said the police adding that efforts are being made to arrest the absconding.

School gets notice in sex assault case

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GURUGRAM

The Gurugram police has issued a notice to the school administration here in connection with the sexual assault on a three-year-old student on February 18. They wanted to know whether all laws on child safety were being adhered to or not.

SHO, Badshahpur, Inspector Mukesh Kumar said the notice was issued to the school under Section 91 of the CrPC to furnish records with regards to adherence to the district administration's 2017 directions for child safety and under the Juvenile Justice Act. "In 2017, the district authorities had issued a host of directions to the schools under Section 144 of the CrPC such as verification of support staff, installation of CCTVs. There are also directions for the safety of children under the Juvenile Justice Act," said Mr. Kumar. He added that action would be initiated against the school authorities in case any lapses were found.

Meanwhile, parents of the child on Sunday submitted an audio recording of their conversation with the child wherein she told them that she had confided in her class teacher and woman attendant about the alleged assault. "It was during a conversation on Saturday that she revealed that she had told her friends, class teacher and the woman attendant about the incident. We recorded the conversation and submitted the clip to the police seeking action against the teacher and attendant for hiding information," said the father.

Bawaria gang member wanted in dacoities held

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NOIDA

The Special Task Force of the Uttar Pradesh Police has arrested a Bawaria gang member wanted in a string of cases, including dacoity and murder, across the State, officials said here on Sunday.

Rajkishor Bahelia alias Kaale Pradhan (55), was held around 11.30 p.m. in Ghaziabad's Sahibabad by the Noida unit of the STF, the officials said.

Bahelia, carrying a reward of ₹50,000 on his arrest, was most recently wanted in sensational cases of dacoities in Lucknow, Barabanki and his home district Farrukhabad, a senior official said.

"Our field unit was constantly tracking him since the dacoities. On the basis of a reliable input that he would be coming to Mopura in Ghaziabad to meet somebody on Saturday, we planned an operation and trapped him," DSP, STF, Rajkumar Mishra said.

A firearm, some ammunition and five kg of drugs were seized from his possession , he said. "During interrogation, Bahelia told the STF about his involvement in nearly two dozen cases of dacoities," he said.

Proposed amendments to land Act irk many

Students, environmentalists say Bill was not shared, implications not explained

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GURUGRAM

A large number of people, including students and environmentalists, turned up at Khushboo Chowk on Gurugram-Faridabad Road on Sunday to protest against the proposed amendments to Punjab Land Preservation Act (PLPA) by the Haryana government during the ongoing budget session.

The protesters expressed their amazement at the government tabling a Bill that had not been shared with the public and whose implications had not been properly explained.

Forest analyst Chetan Agarwal painted a chilling picture of the implications of the proposed amendments to the PLPA, which though not yet formally shared by the government, have been in circulation.

"The amendments proposed are far-reaching that it is a virutal repeal of the Act. The proposed amendments seek blanket provisions that exclude the PLPA from applying to urban areas and gives the government the power to unilaterally restrict the application of the Act to any area it wishes to. The amendments are sought to be made with retrospective effect from 1966 thereby nullifying the protections made under the act since then. The amendment subverts the directives of the Supreme Court to protect the Aravallis at any cost and to treat the PLPA areas as forests. Instead, the entire Aravallis will be open for real estate development, mining, and any activity the State fancies," he said.

Ecologist Vijay Dhasmana said Aravalli forests were the golden goose that gives us the ecological benefits of clean air and fresh groundwater. Aravalli forests act as green lungs for the NCR. The Aravallis are also critical for recharging our groundwater, which is depleting at the rate of 5 feet per year in Gurugram alone – extraction of groundwater in this region is 300% more than the recharge, he said

The group shouted slogans like 'Clean Air and Water is My Right', 'No Aravalli, No Vote', 'Builder - Neta Nexus - *Hai Hai*', and 'Stop PLPA Amendment'.

"Haryana needs to re-notify all the expired PLPA notifications and extend the law to other unprotected hilly areas rather than try and dilute the provisions of the act. The act is 119 years ago and has served us well. What is the hurry to amend it in such a rush without examination and review", said Lt. Col (Rtd) Sarvadaman Singh Oberoi.

Second phase of school survey completed

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi Commission for Protection of Child Rights has completed its second phase of evaluation of up to 4,041 schools in the city as part of its "School Development Index"(SDI), expected to be launched in May, the Delhi government said in a statement on Sunday.

The programme involves the evaluation of schools on parameters of child safety, learning and social inclusion. Marking the end of the second phase of the survey, Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia said "It is a question of utmost importance to the nation, as to how are the places where every citizen spends 6-8 hours of their childhood? Where does a school stand on relevant quality parameters?"

A total of 5,650 schools under the education department of the Delhi government and civic bodies are being surveyed. As part of it, details of all the schools will be put up on an online interactive dashboard, the statement read.

Mr. Sisodia termed it a fresh wave of accountability in the field of education. The evaluation is being undertaken along with Quality Council of India and various NGOs involved in the field of education, he added.

DELHI TODAY

Talk: Discussion on the book "100 Ideas to Improve Governance in India" written by J.K. Dadoo. Discussants: Pankaj Vohra, Editor, The Sunday Guardian; Parag Tripathi, former Additional Solicitor General of India; and Srikant Velamakami, CEO, Fractal Analytics. Chair: Shumsher K. Sheriff, Secretary General, Rajya Sabha at Multipurpose Hall, India International Centre (IIC), 6:30 p.m.

Dance: Centre for Cultural Studies & Development presents Odissi recital and lecture on Cultural Value Education by Moumita Ghosh at D.I.E.T. Pitampura, FU Block, 11 a.m.

Exhibition: Cottage Crafts Mela, a show of Indian artefacts, woodcraft, metalware, pottery, marblecraft, paintings, stonecraft, furniture organised by Central Cottage Industries Corporation at Crafts Museum, Bhairon Marg, Pargati Maidan, 11 a.m. - 8 p.m.

Exhibition: "My Floral Fantasy", a painting exhibition by Radha Kumar at Convention Centre Foyer, India Habitat Centre (IHC), 11 a.m. - 7 p.m.

Exhibition: Indian deities worshipped in Japan - text and photographs by Benoy K. Behl at The Japan Foundation, Lajpat Nagar-IV, 11 a.m. - 7 p.m.

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

Under the banner Artists Unite, voice against violence and hatred to reverberate

Over 200 musicians, artists and poets from across the country to use their music, images and bodies to demonstrate unity at the two-day event

ASHOK KUMAR
GURUGRAM

Art cannot exist in an atmosphere of divisiveness and in isolation, therefore, the prevailing situation in which attempts were being made to impose the supremacy of one over the other demanded each artist to take a stand, said leading Kathak dancer and choreographer Aditi Mangaldas. Ms. Mangaldas is one of the performers at the two-day convention under the banner "Artists Unite" beginning next month at the Lal Qila against the "dangerous and cynical triggering of violence and communal hatred".

More than 200 musicians, artists and poets from across the country will come together to perform at multiple platforms in one space on March 2 and 3 where thousands of people will pass through each day. There will be a main stage active in the evenings. During the day, programmes will run simultaneously at several platforms and these include, a performance stage for theatre, a stage for young musicians and spoken word poetry, a visual arts space for installations and other forms of display, a children's space for music, story-telling, art work and performances. Programmes will simultaneously be held in Chennai, Bangalore, Mumbai, Kolkata, Dharwad, Chandigarh, Pune, Ahmedabad, Patna and Bhubaneswar.

Disciple of Pandit Birju Maharaj, Ms. Mangaldas said

she felt the need to celebrate the uniqueness of this diverse country and it prompted her to be part of this convention. She said India was made of "diverse colours", "diverse fragrances" and "diverse nuances", and we all must fight to preserve this diversity. "Every responsible citizen of this country must now take a stand on this," the Kathak exponent said.

Underlining the significance of convention in fight against hate , Ms. Mangaldas, said violence was not uncommon to humanity, but turning blind eye to it and encouraging it with statements and actions or the lack of it is not good for a democratic society. "A political party not open to criticism is like a river without banks. It can cause huge devastation," she said.

Declaration of Intent

Artists Unite, a platform of writers and artists from across the country who have come together for the cause, also recently came out with a detailed 'Declaration of Intent' signed by hundreds of artists and writers.

Gurugram-based independent filmmaker Rahul Roy said the declaration is the catalyst for collective events across the country. He said the idea behind the convention is to weigh in with a collective voice, and with a creative energy that reinforced the idea that culture is the glue that kept India together.

"India is a uniquely rich repository of cultures that evolved out of long histories of philosophical, religious, literary, linguistic and artistic encounters. As cultural practitioners, it is our responsibility to protect the legacy of India which resides in its history of plurality," said Mr. Roy.

On the political significance of the convention, Taru Dalmia, a reggae artist, said the State is acting in an increasingly authoritarian manner and basic freedom are under attack in India. He added that hate is being used as a political currency and narrow nationalism that didn't allow questioning or nuanced debate is being forced on them.

"Politicians and large sections of the media are speaking in a language that mandates murder. There is an attempt to scare us into submission and to silent inconvenient voices. We have seen writers murdered, professors, journalists, students, activists and lawyers jailed," said Mr. Dalmia, who is also part of the band called The Ska Vengers.

Mr. Dalmia said many communities and individuals in India are resisting. "As artists we are not part of a single community. We come from different disciplines and beliefs. But we all felt the need to speak out collectively. Many have come together to organise festivals and use their music, voices, images and bodies to demonstrate unity, to say that we are not afraid to speak out and that we want a more inclusive and equal society," Mr. Dalmia summed up.

Among others, Shubha Mudgal, Rabbi Shergill, Astad Deboo, Maya Rao, Jasbir Jassi and Chaar Yaar, Dhruv Sangari and Shital Saathe have committed to perform at the Delhi event.

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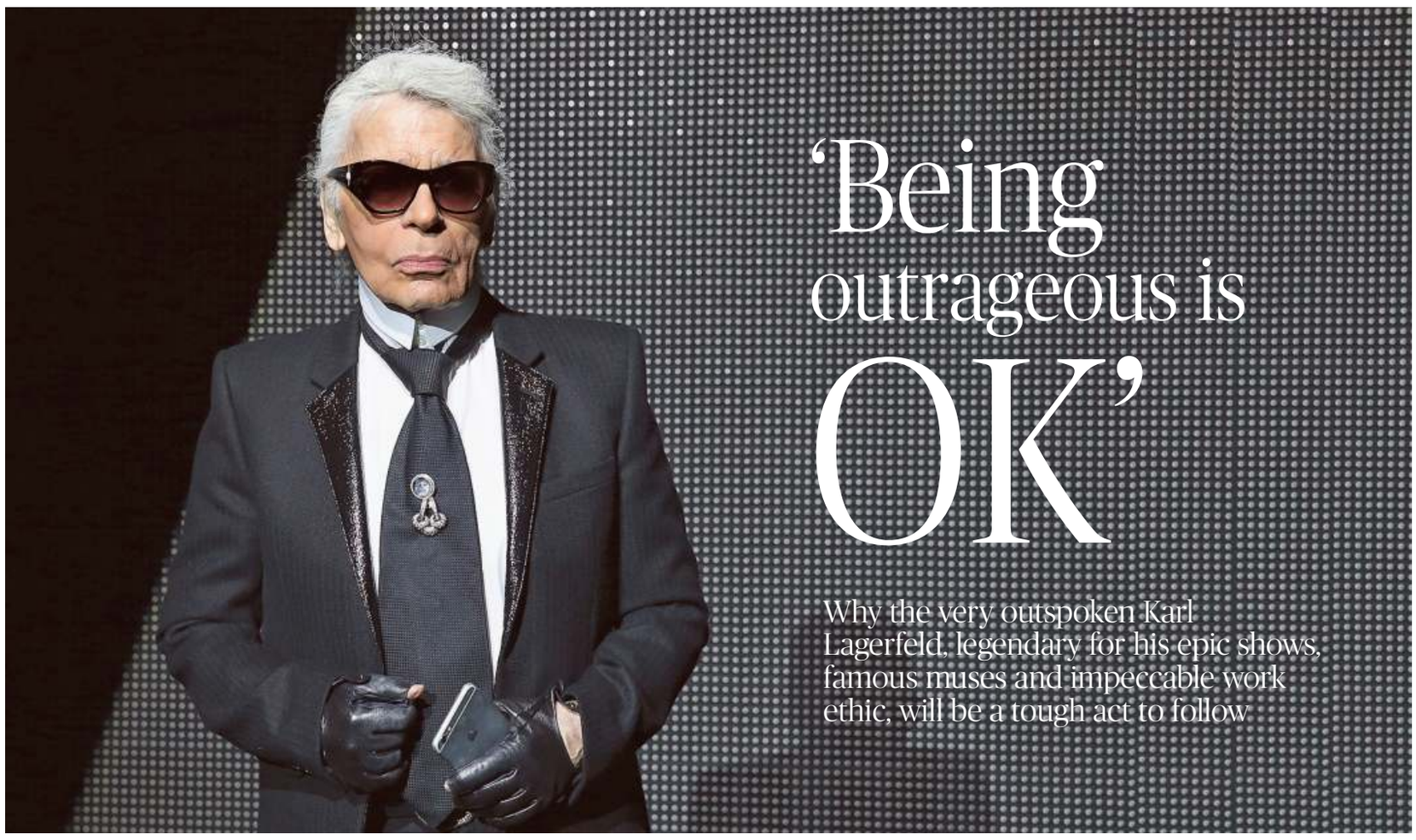


'Being outrageous is OK'

Why the very outspoken Karl Lagerfeld, legendary for his epic shows, famous muses and impeccable work ethic, will be a tough act to follow

(Clockwise from top) The designer with model Ines De La Fressange; Lily-Rose Depp and Lagerfeld at the Chanel SS 17 show; Tarun Tahiliani. ▪ GETTY IMAGES/SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Set theory

I've attended at least four to five of his shows, and his sets were spectacular. I can't say the supermarket (Fall 2014, pictured below) and airplane (Spring 2012) sets were my favourites, but I loved the SS 2011, which I was at, where he had a French garden, but done in black and white (Lagerfeld had quipped, "It's Versailles. It's 'dead French'"). For Spring 2019, he transformed the Grand Palais into Chanel By The Sea... to look at the models walking on sand, with waves lapping, was amazing. I even liked the one where he recreated his ateliers — with people working on clothes, as the models walked around. I suppose he showed the settings the clothes belonged to.

▪ GETTY IMAGES

TARUN TAHILIANI

Karl Lagerfeld was an intellectual. He was also prolific. He designed for Balmain, Chloé, Fendi and Chanel, he had his own namesake line, he photographed magazine editorials (*V Magazine, Harper's Bazaar, Vogue*) and shot his own campaigns. He went to work every day, and for me, that resonates.

I went to fashion school in the '90s, which was his heyday. It was the end of a decade of excess, and Lagerfeld was putting Chanel back on the couture map. It was a dying brand when he joined it 35 years back, and it is spectacular how he updated what Coco Chanel did, constantly evolving to keep up with the present – bringing in the mini skirt, making tweeds shorter, pairing them with tights. He weathered grunge, brought athleisure into Chanel; he was one of the few people who made sportswear sexy. I agree with (editor of *American Vogue*) Anna Wintour when she said he embraced change. He took it to the next level, but always kept it classy.

I was once invited by (late magazine editor and stylist) Isabella Blow to a Chanel fitting in Paris, in '97-'98. It was July, so it was the couture show, but I was running late and I never made it. It is one of my deepest regrets.

Guts and glory

Largerfeld worked with pre-established fashion houses, and had great resources. So he didn't have to spend his time marketing the clothes or organising production, which unfortunately some of us Indian designers are still doing. So it was a fantastic marriage and probably the first of its kind, where someone came to represent the brand so powerfully, where Lagerfeld was Chanel.

His muses ranged from royalty to rock stars. While his favourites among the royals were Princess Grace of Monaco and her beautiful daughter Princess Caroline, he had a knack for identifying the next 'it girl' – from Claudia Schiffer and Keira Knightley to millennial muses Lily-Rose Depp and Willow Smith. He was smart; I loved the way he looked to Knightley, because she was not a classical choice for beauty. [Lagerfeld cast the actor as Gabrielle 'Coco' Chanel in the short film, *Once Upon a Time*, and said he preferred her "genius" portrayal to that of Audrey Tautou, in the 2009 *Coco Before Chanel*, which she played "like women's lib".]

Commanding presence

There is no other designer in his league who did as much, who did four lines (sometimes even eight) a year. I've seen documentaries where he said he woke up at 3 a.m. to do fittings at the age of 80. He had an energy that was unbelievable. That is another inspiration, the amount he worked and educated himself.

He was also one of the few people who always said what he thought. He was not called Kaiser Karl for nothing. And I have to say that, however outrageous they might have seemed at the time, I agreed with him 99.9% of the time. His line about how "people buy dresses to be happy, not to hear about somebody who suffered over a piece of taffeta" was brilliant; it really made me laugh. He just said things as they were. He didn't mince his words even when social media surveillance came in. Being a little outrageous, I think, is OK; it goes with being a creative genius.

I think he did his best work in the last 30 years. He had command at his fingertips. I'm drawing sustenance from that. As designers, we should take cues from his discipline, fearlessness, ability to embrace change, and uncompromising stand on good taste. I see a lot of people in fashion compromise, for the sake of shock value. I think a designer's job is to distil the essence and, at a time when people may be confused by the bombardment of information, to help them make refined choices.

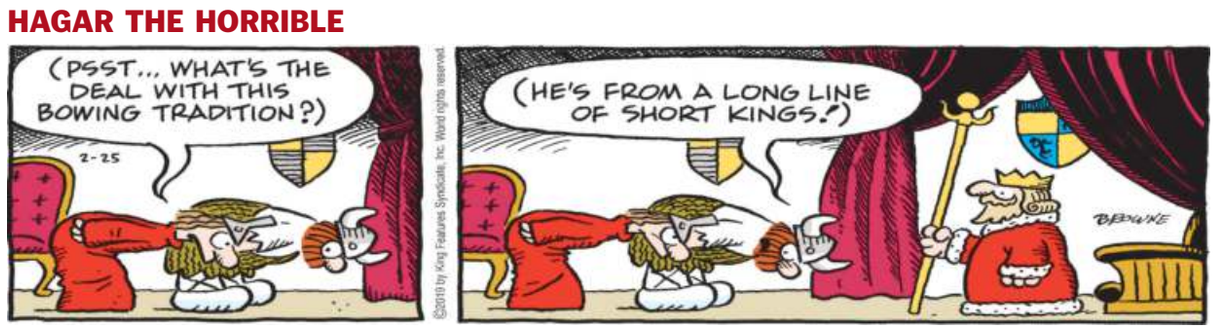
Tarun Tahiliani is one of the country's leading designers. Isabella Blow once refered to him as the Karl Lagerfeld of India.

As told to ***Surya Praphulla Kumar***

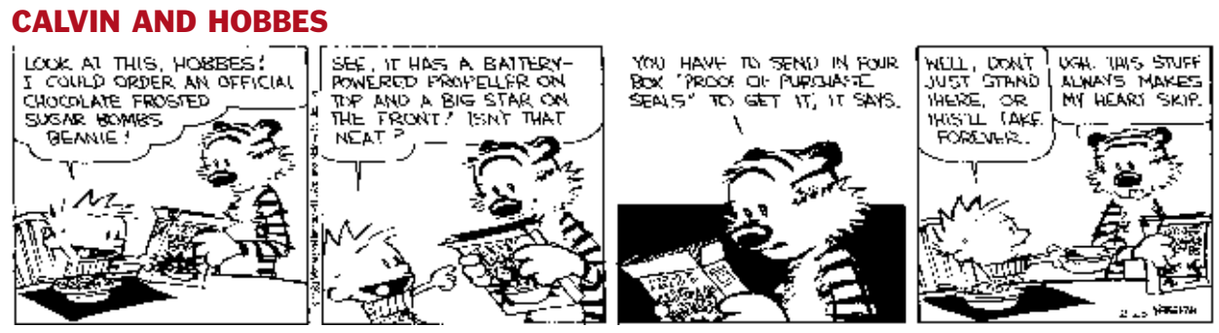
POOCH CAFE

PEANUTS

HAGAR THE HORRIBLE



CALVIN AND HOBBES



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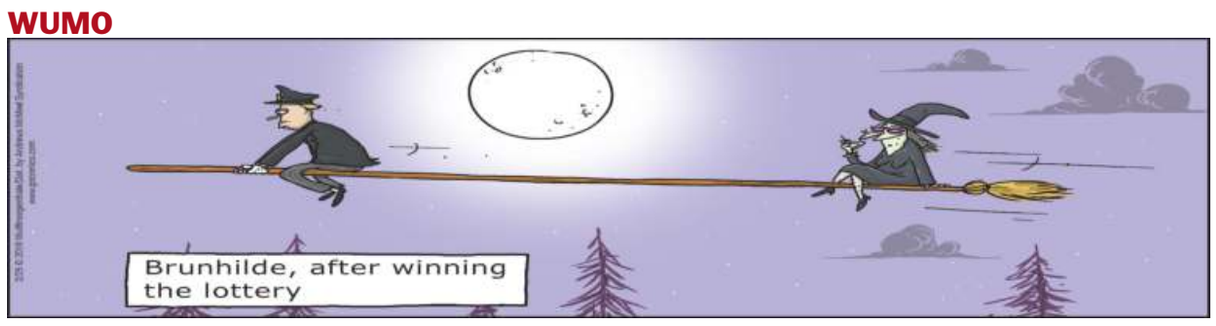
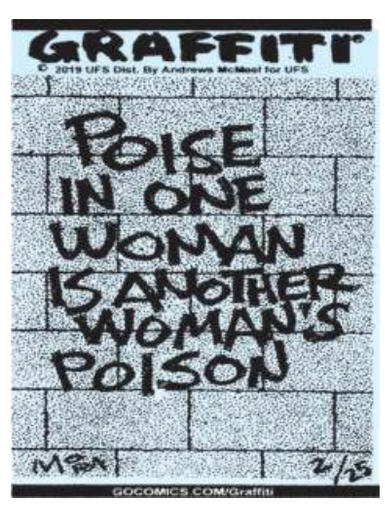
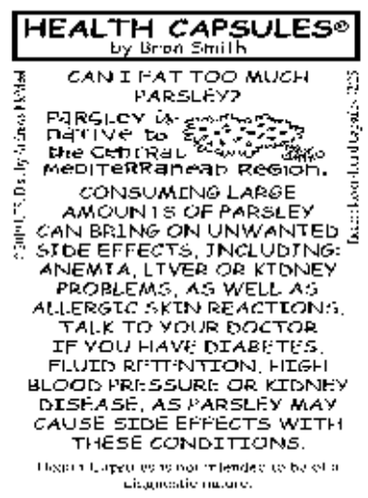


PEARLS BEFORE SWINE





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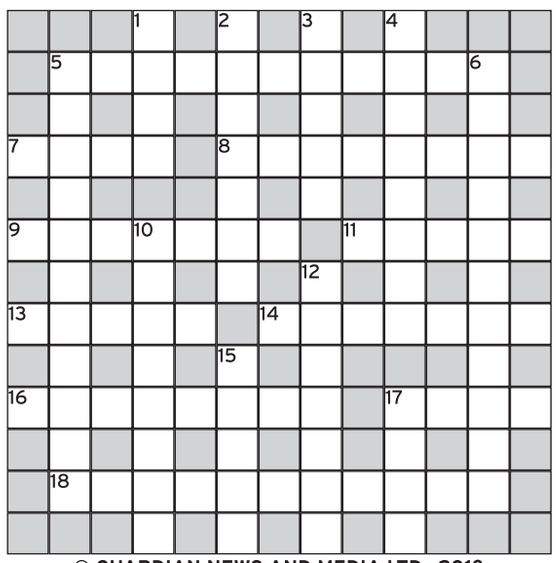

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Across
5 Proceed without advance planning (4,2,2,3)
7 Arduous journey (4)
8 Formal agreement between two or more parties (8)
9 Rebuked angrily (7)
11 Lukewarm (5)
13 Woman's scarf worn about the shoulders (5)
14 Scientific study of animals (7)
16 Close at hand (8)
17 Oaths (4)
18 Welsh textile and fashion designer, d. 1985 (5,6)

Down
1 Just a bit of fun (4)
2 Female dogs (7)
3 Over (5)
4 Want to be helpful (4,4)
5 Common analgesic (11)
6 Absconding (7,4)
10 Land visited by Gulliver (8)
12 Competition (7)
15 Gurkhas' homeland (5)
17 Detestable (4)

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As *The Final Call* takes off, Arjun Rampal discusses the contours of the web series and the curves in his career

'I don't look that GOOD anymore!'

ATIF KHAN

From an intense lover boy to a brooding villain, Arjun Rampal has done it all. He doesn't often soar when he flies solo; it is in an ensemble cast that he makes his presence felt. "This is how I survive in the industry. I play characters," avers Arjun, as he prepares to talk about his original web series, *The Final Call*, on ZEE5. Based on Priya Kumar's novel *I Will Go With You: The Flight of a Lifetime*, Arjun is playing a pilot undergoing a mental trauma in the series.

Excerpts:

What kind of preparation did you undergo to play a pilot?

I didn't have any experience of flying an aircraft. I have been inside a cockpit once. My obvious demand was to take me inside the cockpit of an airplane to understand things better. I did the flight simulation training where they use virtual reality to teach. I understood how to use the throttle, working with radars, what to press when you talk to a base and what are the different codes.

Like many other recent works, does it also aim to understand the mind of a defence person...

The main character here is not driven by nationalism or patriotism. Here is a pilot who was associated with the Air Force and some events have left unbearable imprints on his psyche. The show attempts to understand the mind of the protagonist. The focus is on the mind because as a pilot a lot depends on his mental focus. The mental disturbances, what all goes into his decision making, has been dealt with in detail. I think more than external activities if you try to understand the mind of the protagonist, it would help you understand what is driving him.

Once upon a time, there was a general perception that you are demoted if you work in television. Do you think a similar comparison exists with a web series too?

I don't think that if you do some work on the OTT platforms, you are being demoted because the budgets here are comparable to cinema and sometimes much higher. Here, we are actually in competition with international platforms in which all great filmmakers from across the world are showcasing their content. The bar has definitely gone up.

Because of your modelling background, you were always praised for your looks and screen presence. Did you have to make efforts on acting to come out of that image trap?

Yes. Sometimes it is frustrating that people say that you look good in the movie and they don't say anything about performance. Acting, which should be the parameter to judge an actor, sometimes is not discussed. I always care about my performances. I think that has gone away with time maybe. I don't look that good anymore (laughs). Physical presence, that is the screen presence, is really important for an actor and that is humbling if I have that. How I look is not something of my doing. That credit goes to my parents. If someone is coming to watch me and not getting engrossed in the character, then obviously something is wrong.

How helpful was the deep baritone?

I don't know. With time you understand how to use your voice according to the need. It is a part of the training that you do to throw or modulate voice. I don't agree with the analogy that voice makes you a good actor. Sometimes, you are a great actor not by saying anything - pauses, gestures, expressions say a lot.

How has been your approach to make the directors understand your process?

It's very important to have a good friendship and to understand what is his vision. Each one has his own style. Some people are minimalistic but some directors want it loud. When I was doing *Rajneeti*, I asked Prakash (Jha) to change the sequence where Ranbir's character was killing a cop but I asked Prakash to give that to me because it was more convincing and after a few days Prakash did come to my room and told me that I was right on my part and then we improvised the scene together and it came out really well. If I have material to share, I do that with the director. Things were different with Ashim (Ahluwalia) on *Daddy* because he is someone who likes minimal action and a lot of internalisation goes into understanding the character. Then someone like Farah Khan likes it loud. I still remember a sequence from *Om Shanti Om* where I was saying 'Ek chutki sindoor' dialogue and I was going too intense but she asked me to go loud. 'I don't need Brando here,' she shouted. 'Stop mumbling, kuch sunai nahi de raha'. I retorted that she was making me overact but she had orchestras and band in the background score in mind, while shooting.

You are also a producer now. Any learnings?

I have an idea about spending money on films and I know that films don't fail but the budgets fail. So if you know how much you should spend on a kind of film, it will determine its business. And rest is about taking chances.

You studied in Delhi. How do you feel here?

It was a long time ago that I studied here but I still remember Delhi University. I keep coming back here but one thing concerns me a lot which is the weather here. I keep listening to the news about the smog of Delhi and when I am here I can see with my eyes. So it bothers me a lot; it is something I feel disappointed about. I think people deserve cleaner air to breathe.

Bracing for the challenge: Arjun Rampal in a still from the series ▪ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

DOWN MEMORY LANE

A feast for the senses

The legend of Basant is as engrossing as the festival of spring is captivating

R.V. SMITH

Basant's history goes back to primeval times when Kama, the god of love, lost his body for shooting a love arrow at Lord Shiva during an ecstatic spring day. He hides in the forest since then, as he is ashamed to show his formless self. But during Basant time, he continues to shoot his flowery arrows from his hiding place, to arouse passion in young couples . Rural areas are the main theatres for his antics. This is perhaps so because the month of Basant marks a welcome change in the weather, after the freezing grip of winter. In keeping with the adage "In spring a young man's thoughts turn to fancy", the season stirs up a romantic urge . The fields around Delhi are full of mustard flowers, and the city gardens too present a rare feast to the senses. In villages, the saffron sari and turban are in vogue this season. Urban women too don yellow saris, but the men limit themselves to wearing yellow socks, ties, shirts and sweaters there's rarely a turban of that colour in the cities.

This is the time for fairs, with melas springing up in rural areas to celebrate the joy of emancipation from cold days and colder nights, which had worsened lives of slum-dwellers, rain basera inmates, and the country folk, forcing children to stay indoors long before twilight. But though Basant marks a welcome change, the belief is that if it's nippy and cloudy on Basant Panchmi day, winter lingers on till Holi. But if it's a mild day, it will be a balmy spring until the festival of colours, with villagers harking back to the saying, "Ayeo Basant Pala uranth (come Basant and ground frost flees). That means good days for farming are in store, with swains singing in baritone voices to their hearts' content, and belles (the innumerable Basantis) lending them company while returning with matkas full of water from the "panghat" – steep steps that lead to the distant well. This journey would make their legs ache with the effort that follows the brisk waist, heel, and toe exertion ("Badi kathin hai dagar panghat ki"). But Basant provides the healing balm and much-needed nourishment: the butter-flavoured "sarson-ka-saag and Makki-di-roti".

This is worth repeating: few know that the first celebration of Basant Panchmi, during the Delhi Sultanate, began in AD 1200, some decades before the birth of Hazrat Nizamuddin. The then-venue later came to be known as the Turkman Gate area. During the reign of Firoz Shah Tughlaq, the celebration was at Bhuli Bhariyari ka Mahal, opposite present-day Karol Bagh's Link Road. Bhuli Bhatiyari is identified as a fair innkeeper, whom Firoz is said to have fallen with, in love in the month of Basant. Sir Sayyid Ahmed Khan however, says that the mahal was the palace of a nobleman, Bu Ali Bharri, whose name in course of time was corrupted to Bhuli Bhatiyari. Kite-flying competitions at the palace, now just a ruined gateway, were the highlight, with yellow flags fluttering about in the balmy breeze. Even up to the 1970s, one found manja (kite-string) makers, using the palace ground to wind up yards and yards of string in the charkhis (reels) used by the kite-fliers. One doesn't see them anymore, but Basant Kumars and Basantis are a dime a dozen (though latter don't drive a tonga like Basanti from the film *Sholay*). There have been outstanding Basant-born people too. In recent times, Vasant Sathe was a well-known name, one-time Maharashtra strongman Vasant Dada Patil, Basanti Sanyal and before them, Basant Kumar Biswas, who was hanged in the (Lord) Hardinge Bomb Conspiracy Case of 1912. No wonder yellow or saffron bags (jholas) have become a symbol of martyred patriots. Basant, the most romantic season after Sawan, was interestingly enough celebrated even pre-Sultanate, in Mehrauli.

Nizamuddin Auliya became fond of Basant in his middle age, when he was passing through a bereavement – the death of his beloved nephew Taqqiuddin Nuh. His concerned chief disciple, Amir Khusrau, wearing yellow garments, danced before him to dissipate the gloom – first making the saint smile and then laugh. After that Basant Panchmi became an annual feature at his khankah (abode) – a custom still observed by his descendants, the Hasan Nizamis, with qawwalis. In Mughal times, Akbar and Jahangir got attracted to the festival of spring, which was celebrated in a grand manner at Humayun's Tomb, to the strains of Basant ragas. Jahangir particularly relished the season because of his love for nature - flowers, birds, and bees found expression in his paintings. Among the later Mughals, before Mohd Shah Rangila, Muizuddin Jahandar Shah picked his concubines at this time, among whom Lal Kanwar and her melon-seller friend Zohra found pride of place. His nephew Mohd Farrukhsiyar was more interested in State intrigues, with the Sayyid brothers. However, Rafi-ush-Shan, father of Shah Jahan II (1719), is said to have lost his heart to a village belle in a Basanti sari, carrying a pitcher on her head. That he did not get to marry her is another story. Basant got good patronage during the reign of Akbar Shah Sani and Bahadur Shah Zafar too.

It is a curious fact that once, the biggest Basant Mela was held outside the Kotla of Firoz Shah. The mela during Zafar's time was held behind the Red Fort – the emperor would watch it with his begums from the open space between the Shahi Hammams and Dewan-e-Khas. The Basant mela of Raja Hindu Rao Ghadke – Bara Hindu Rao is named after him – was also a prominent fair in those days. In that age, Urdu poetry found a worthy subject in the festival, with Nazir Akbarabadi (1740-1830) and others lauding it in eloquent verse. The Nazir mela, at the poet's grave near the Taj Mahal, is noted for the erotic Basant night verses recited there. As a boy, Ghalib used to fly yellow kites from the roof of the Kala Mahal in Agra where he was born until, like Mir Taqi Mir, he came to Delhi. Here, under the tutelage of his stern guardian Khan-e-Arzu after his father's untimely death when he was only five years old, Ghalib had to restrain his enthusiasm for Basant. But not for long, as it found an outlet in his exquisite poetry.

When Pusa Institute came up in the 1930s, the residents of Todapur-Dasghara and present-day Inderpuri villages used to flock to the Institute's mustard fields to celebrate Basant with song-and-dance. It had been their land earlier. Now too these mustard fields are a pleasant sight even for those passing by in DTC buses, though no flags are flown there, like at the Yogmaya temple where Basant dohas are also quoted. Incidentally, the most popular saying is 'A love affair in Basant finds fruition at Sawan'. Prince Rafi-ush-Shan's bitter experience, however, seems to belie this.

It was all yellow: Basant is welcomed with celebrations and warm colours. ▪ A. ROY CHOWDHURY/SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

THE WRITER IS A VETERAN CHRONICLER OF DELHI

PEOPLE

New innings

The next big thing in the ready-to-wear market is collections by designers, says Varun Bahl

After nearly 15 years of romance with couture, designer Varun Bahl has now forayed into the ready-to-wear segment. His game-plan, he says, is to reach out to a wider audience. Venturing into the prêt market makes better business sense in line with this.

Tapping into the vast middle class market, Bahl will dress up the modern-day woman — one who dresses according to her personality, and not age — with saris, lehengas, kurtis, culottes, and trousers.

Excerpts:

What was the catalyst for making an advent into prêt?

The aim is to reach out to more people than couture can. Couture is always going to be my first love, but this is super exciting. I want more and more people to wear my clothes.

How would you describe your collection? How is it different from your couture label?

The collection is contemporary Indianwear for the young-in-age and young-at-heart. There are a few evening looks in addition to daily wear. Varun Bahl couture strongly centres around florals. This label also incorporates floral motifs and a lot of nature. There are no straight lines. A line is created by placing a lot of five-petal flowers together. Also, my favourite subject currently is Art Nouveau. We have drawn a lot of curves from architecture and mirror frames and incorporated those in our seams, borders, and embroideries.

The idea is to create clothing that's affordable for all. Our price range starts at ₹5, 000 onwards. We have very attractive price points with premium quality fabrics, and a large selection to choose from. There is hand embroidery on several garments as well as machine work; it depends on the style of the garment. We truly have something for everyone in this new prêt label.

On one side we have bridal, while on the other we have prêt. Is this how the market is panning out?

In apparel, yes, this is how the market is panning out. Bridal wear is a part of my couture line, while Varun Bahl Prêt is ready-to-wear clothing. Apart from this, I also look into wedding design and decor under my other brand Aurum by Varun Bahl.

Tell us more about the work you're showcasing through this collection.

The collection has delicate 3D flower motifs as embellishments, wave-like seams, hems, and appliqué additions. Lazer-cut 3D flowers make for eye-catching details. Micro-floral gingham checks, sinuous, curvy lines, damask and mosaic patterns have all been achieved by tessellating the simple five-petal motif. Also, my signature transparent bombers, embroidered with silk-thread flowers can be used to update any outfit.

What else is new in prêt? How are you feeding into it?

The big thing in prêt is that couture designers are creating ready-to-wear clothes. They are reaching out to aspiring customers, and are targeting a wider audience.

In prêt I have played with digital prints, and the 3D embroidery details inspired by my signature five petal flower pattern. But it is all about comfort and simplicity. Even the saris are minimal with ruffle details and soft fabrics. The entire collection is designed as separates, and then styled to achieve easy, 'put-together' looks. This is how stylish women dress today.

The prêt collection The Five Petal Story is available at DLF Emporio, Nelson Mandela Marg, Vasant Kunj

MADHUR TANKHA

PRODUCTS

Sitting on a sculpture

For Shitij Dogra, the only thing that sculpture provides and furniture doesn't (apart from utility value, one would presume), is a point of discussion.

To balance this, the Delhi-based architect has crafted a new line of furniture. Consisting of eight pieces, it is called Newborn, and includes elaborate seating pieces, floor lamps, and a TV table.

Featured here is The Firstborn, an imposing, yet spacey rocking chair from the series, with a wide back and seat. The cylindrical accent logs at its base make for an immediate visual connection with its purpose: a gentle and smooth rocking backwards and forwards.

"I feel wood as a material, is soulful and comforting," says Dogra, whose recent work with other architects has inspired him into woordwork.

The Firstborn costs ₹90,000. For orders, mail@s-da.co, or call +91 9999329691

VANGMAYI PARAKALA

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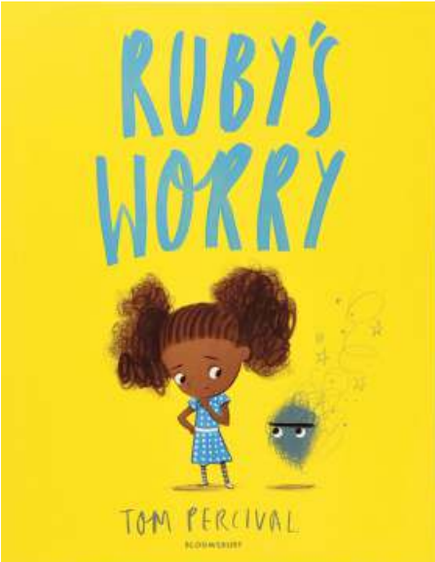
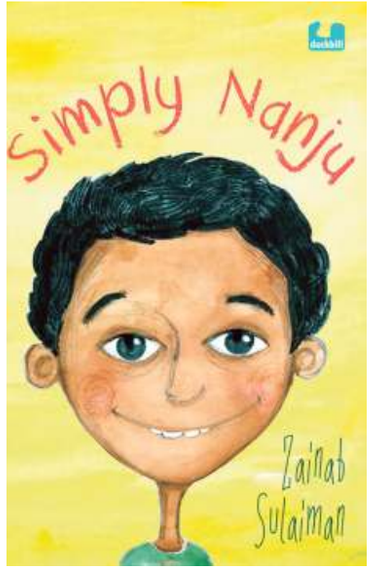




Special books for the special soul

Words make a world of difference to the lives of children with developmental disorders

AKILA KANNADASAN

Surekha Ramachandran remembers reading books to her daughter from the time she was "in a semi-comatose state in the hospital". "Babli was 21 months old then. She got pneumonia and couldn't see. Everyone declared she was going to die," says the mother. Ramachandran laid her daughter on her lap, and read to her. She knew Babli, her little one with Down Syndrome, was listening.

"She defied what medical professionals told me," recalls Ramachandran, who is the President of the Down Syndrome Federation of India. Today, stories form a major part of Babli's life. However, Ramachandran wishes that there were more books that featured protagonists with special needs. "They will create such an impact," she says,

Say what you need to say

Lakshmi Satish, a special educator and co-founder of Chennai-based Mirra, a remedial centre for children with learning disabilities and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), says that her children make their own books that tell stories from their lives. All it takes is a set of photos from, say, a trip to the beach, some chart paper, and a pen. "We stick the pictures to create a booklet, and write simple words next to each, describing what it is about," she says.

These books that she reads with the children, introduce commonly-used words, and with repeated reading, children become familiar with the terms. "Children begin to understand the complexity of language," she says. Once this happens, Satish says she moves on to titles from other children's publishers.

Pratham's *Colours on the Street* is among their favourites. "I tell parents that they should place two books by their children's bedside. One, a regular storybook and the other, a book that they made themselves. It's good to keep changing these titles up once in a while."

SOWMYA RECOMMENDS

Ruby's Worry (Bloomsbury): Deals with externalising anxiety, helping children understand that by talking about anxiety, it can go away

Help Me Say Goodbye: Activities for Helping Kids Cope When a Special Person Dies (Fairview Press): Helps kids express feelings as pictures

When Dinosaurs Die: A Guide to Understanding Death (Little, Brown): Helps children understand death

Please Tell: A Child's Story About Sexual Abuse (Hazelden Publishing) Takes children who have experienced trauma, to a space they may be able to

Simply Nanju (Duckbill): Gets kids to related to the story of a boy with below-average intelligence and his experiences at a school for the differently-abled

Stories that matter: Lakshmi Satish at a session with a student

▪ B JOTHI RAMALINGAM AND SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Words make life meaningful for everyone, she feels. But more so for children who struggle to express themselves. "Words unravel a whole new world for them," says Satish.

Dr Sowmya Bhaskaran TS, Consultant Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist at Coimbatore-based Insight Clinic, says that children with developmental disorders, such as intellectual disability, autism spectrum disorder, ADHD, learning disorders, and mental-health problems due to anxiety, depression and trauma/loss/abuse, can "benefit from books being read to them". For some, especially those with autism, stories about their problems reassure them that there are others like them.

Do what you need to do

"Young children, especially those less than eight years, find it difficult to verbalise their feelings," says Dr Bhaskaran. "I find books related to anxiety quite helpful." These are for everyone. "When typical children, siblings of atypical children, and parents read to them, it helps get a perspective of how they think, the difficulties they face, and most importantly, to look at the abilities that they posses rather than looking at them only through the disability lens," she adds.

Dr Bhaskaran calls these books "small but significant steps in creating an inclusive environment. With children being among the vulnerable sections of society – having minimal rights and few adults willing to give their opinions a patient ear– any attempt to look at things from the child's perspective is a welcome change," she says. By introducing these titles, it wouldn't be hyperbole to say that parents and caregivers are actually changing the world, one page at a time.

GOOD OLD RHYMES

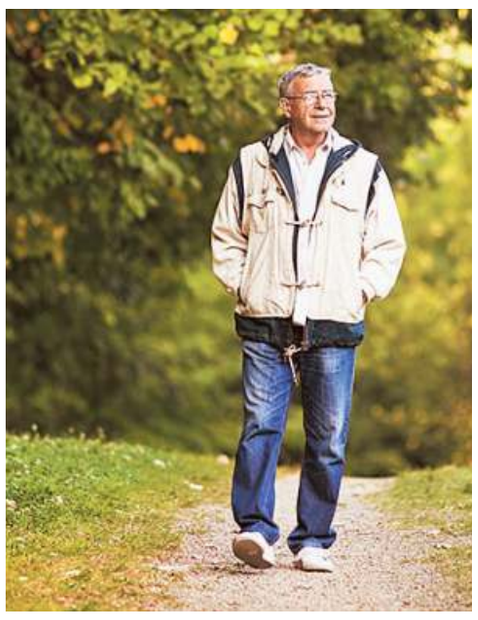
The earliest known collection of British nursery rhymes is called *Tommy Thumb's Song Book*. It was printed in 1744.

Q&A

I have a problem where my second toe is very long. When I buy sports shoes, they are often very loose. What should I do?

■ This is a condition called Morton's foot, where the second digit is longer than the first. The problem is that the shoe size will need to be measured to the second toe. You could try wearing two pairs of socks or thick socks. Unfortunately, there are no special shoes for this. Be conscious that a number of people develop pain in places other than the foot because of this condition (it could be anywhere from the feet to the neck), as the second toe becomes the fulcrum. This change in mechanics affects the rest of the system. Ideally, when you put your finger into the shoe when wearing it, the finger shouldn't be able to go around the heel. You could meet a podiatrist for orthotics.

My children have left home, and I now have time to spend for exercise. I have upto two hours. What are the possibilities?



▪ GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

■ Find a good local gym for your support system. They will do an assessment to check your fitness parameters before you begin. It's also best to check with a doctor to make sure what you're doing is safe. Try getting basic strength, especially in your core. Also important is aerobic activity. If you don't have access to a gym, go for a brisk walk and make sure that your heart rate goes to 100. For a rough guide, feel your pulse for 15 seconds and multiply by 4 to know your heart rate. After you stop, it should drop 10-20 beats a minute or so later.

Dr Kannan Pugazhendi is a sports physician and fitness consultant with over two decades of experience.

Nothing in this column is intended to be, and is not, a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis or treatment. Please seek independent advice from a licensed practitioner if you have any questions regarding a medical condition. Email us with your questions at mp_health@thehindu.co.in

HYPE OR HAPPENING?

Probiotic beverages

NEERAJA MURTHY

▪ GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

As someone who has become health-conscious only recently, I was curious about probiotic beverages, so I picked a set of five tiny bottles from a supermarket. With a hit of sweet, (there are non-sugar variants too) I hoped the live, friendly bacteria in them would do wonders for my gut, overpowering the bad bacteria. I then turned to the pros to ask if they really worked.

How does a probiotic work? The live bacteria, lactobacillus and bifidobacteria, in probiotics, aid in digestion, absorption and assimilation of nutrients to protect our gut from harmful bacteria. "As most toxins get into the system through the intestinal tract, probiotics create a good line of defence for the body," says Bengaluru-based gastrointestinal surgeon Dr Chandramouli, from Fortis Hospital. But probiotcs can come from food: *idli/dosa*, yoghurt, *kanji*, *kimchi* (even the home-made kind). Basically, fermented foods.

When should you have a probiotic drink? Doctors may recommend it when treating an upset tummy, inflammatory bowel diseases like ulcerative colitis, or Crohn's disease. It does contain some sugar, but not in quantities to worry about, unless you have diabetes, says the doctor.

Safety is key. Paediatric gastroenterologist Dr Sarath Gopalan of Madhukar Rainbow Children's Hospital in Delhi, says that as they are over-the-counter products, they're safe, even if the good bacteria are not in ideal proportions (if the cold chain is not maintained, for instance, the good bacteria may die).

This does not make probiotic drinks essential. If you have access to good old probiotic foods, then go with those. If you don't (think people living in hostels), then see if a drink works for you. Try and buy from a place that maintains the cold chain.

HAPPENING

There's a caveat: probiotics feed on prebiotics. These are fibre-rich vegetables, fruits, and grains like beans, banana, apple with skin, onion, garlic, and oatmeal (not the instant variety). To have a healthy garden, one needs to feed the seed with enough water, fertiliser, and adequate sunlight, explains Hyderabad-based nutritionist Sunita Arya. Meaning you can't live on junk food and then expect a probiotic drink to take care of your gut.

Bottom line: If you're well, and are eating probiotic foods, you may not need a drink. If you have a problem accessing these foods or have a stomach problem, it may be of use.

In this column, we decode health trends and decide if it's all just 'hype' or actually 'happening'

ON THE MAT

Roll your eyes

Yoga to keep the windows to the world healthy

SEEMA SONDHI

Our eyes take us outward: they help us connect with and experience the world. We think about what we see, and then make our decisions based on this. There are many *asanas* which help strengthen our eyes, needed all the more today, because of all the gadgets we are constantly looking at. Here are a few which are beneficial, and can be done any time and anywhere.

▪ GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

Trataka (Gazing)

Sit in a comfortable position on the floor or on a chair. Place a candle at eye level and at an arm's distance away. Now concentrate your gaze on the flame of the candle with eyes wide open. Try not to blink, until you tear. Then close your eyes and try to focus the image of the candle on the point between the eyebrows for as long as you can.

Repeat once more, then close your eyes and rest, as you breathe deeply.

Benefits: This exercise cleanses the eyes and helps build focus for meditation.

Eye roll

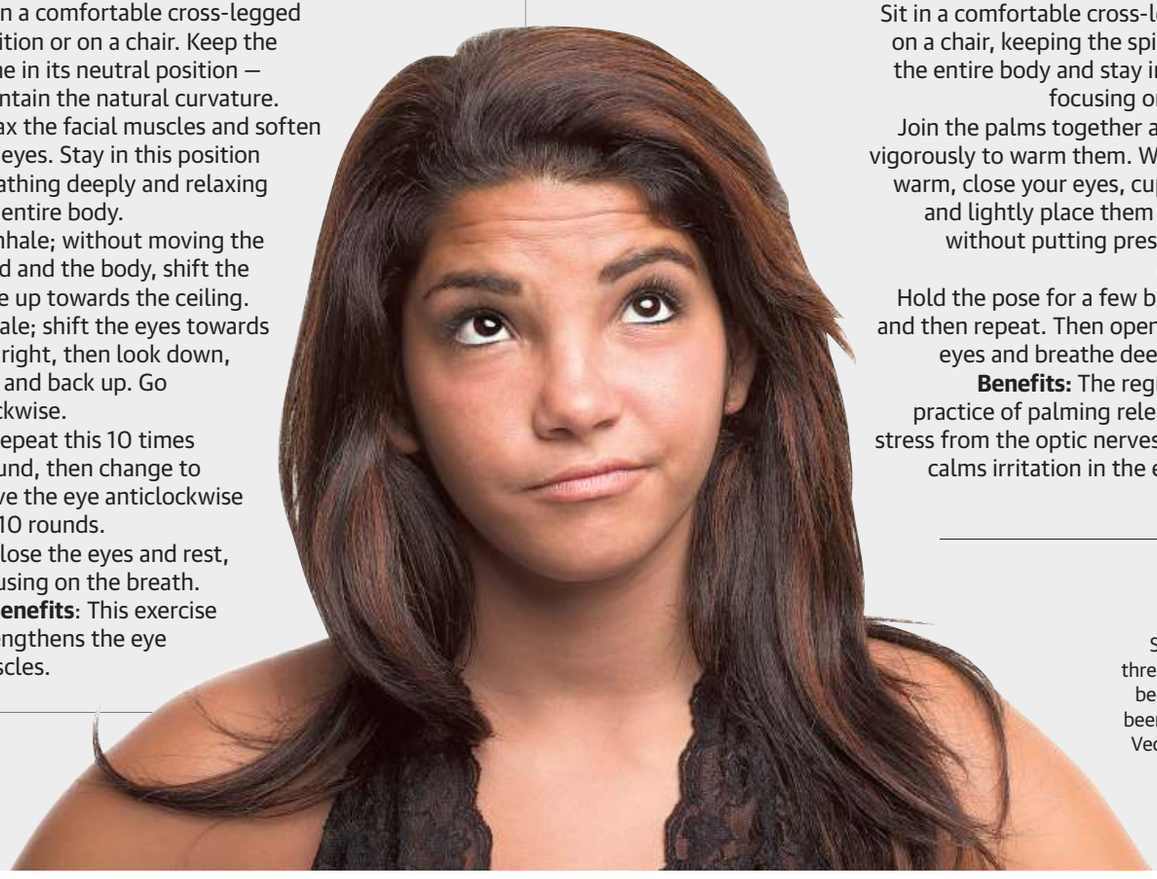
Sit in a comfortable cross-legged position or on a chair. Keep the spine in its neutral position — maintain the natural curvature. Relax the facial muscles and soften the eyes. Stay in this position breathing deeply and relaxing the entire body.

Inhale; without moving the head and the body, shift the gaze up towards the ceiling. Exhale; shift the eyes towards the right, then look down, left and back up. Go clockwise.

Repeat this 10 times around, then change to move the eye anticlockwise for 10 rounds.

Close the eyes and rest, focusing on the breath.

Benefits: This exercise strengthens the eye muscles.



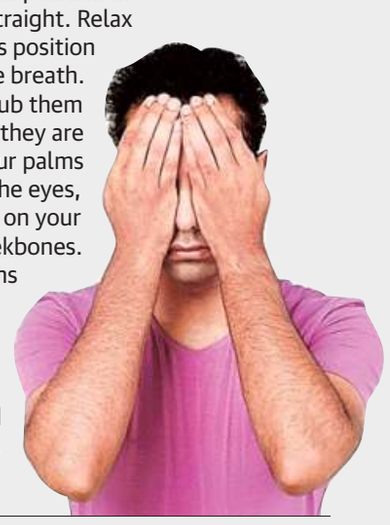
Palming

Sit in a comfortable cross-legged position or on a chair, keeping the spine straight. Relax the entire body and stay in this position focusing on the breath.

Join the palms together and rub them vigorously to warm them. When they are warm, close your eyes, cup your palms and lightly place them on the eyes, without putting pressure on your cheekbones.

Hold the pose for a few breaths and then repeat. Then open the eyes and breathe deeply.

Benefits: The regular practice of palming releases stress from the optic nerves and calms irritation in the eyes.



Seema Sondhi discovered yoga when she suffered three lumbar slipped discs and was advised complete bed rest. Over the last 18 years, she has trained and been certified from the International Sivananda Yoga Vedanta Centre and Matthew Sweeney. She has also written six books on the subject.

Asanas are not meant as a substitute for medication. Please check with your doctor.

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DELHI
MONDAY • FEBRUARY 25, 2019

I grew up in a small town in India, but through books I knew the world.
MIRA NAIR

GLOBAL ED

In second spot

The number of foreign students attending Australian universities is likely to reach 460,000, which will put it on course to exceeding those studying in higher education institutions in the U.K. in 2019. This will put Australia in second place behind the U.S., in terms of overseas student enrolments.

Rising numbers

Japan is all set to attract 3,00,000 foreign students in higher education — a goal set a decade ago. This is backed by an easing of employment restrictions on foreigners in the country. Reports show that the total number of overseas students in 2018 was 267,042 — up 11.6% from the year before.

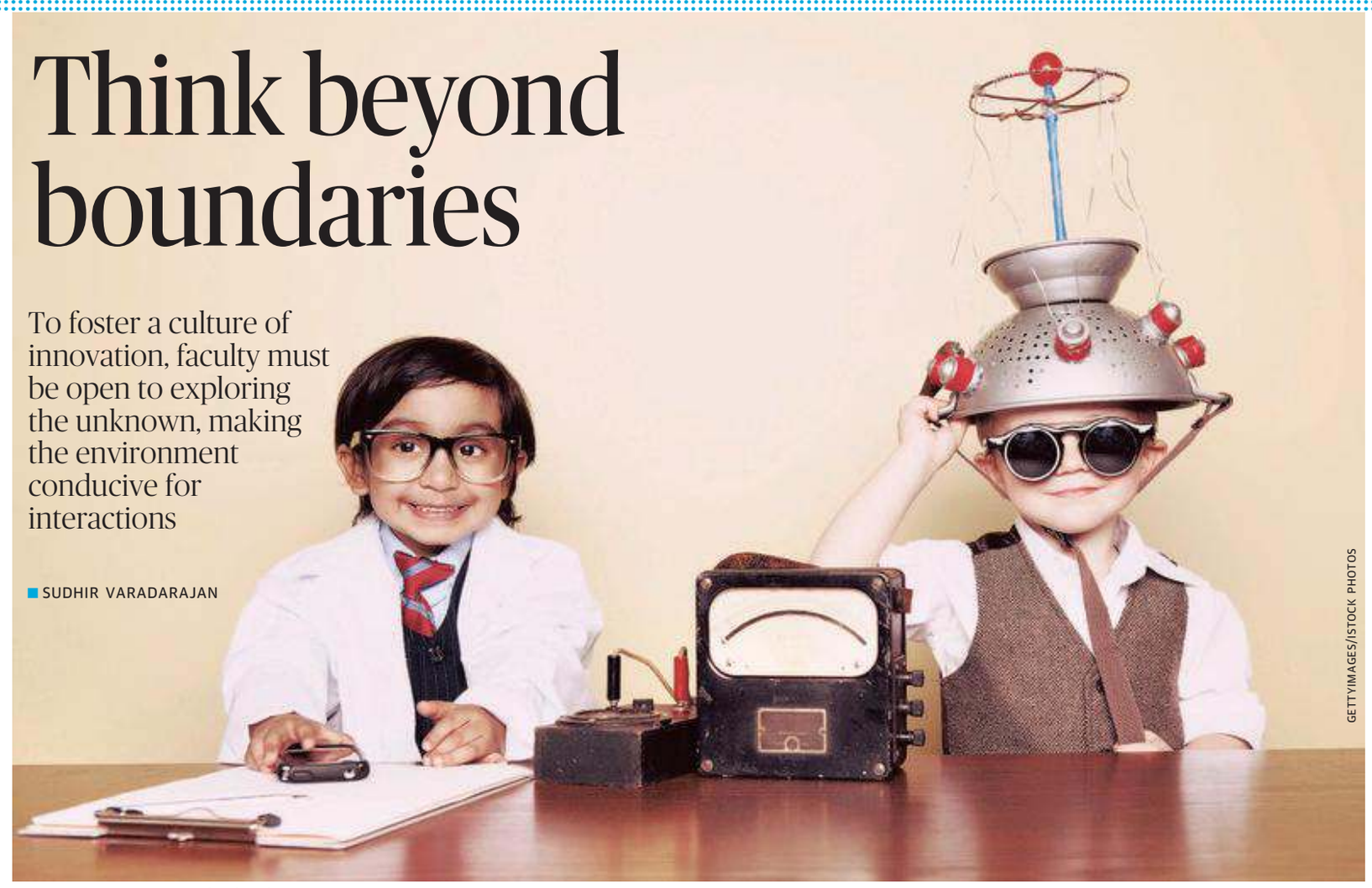
AI surge

A new study has revealed a surge in artificial intelligence-based inventions, with Chinese universities featuring among the top higher education and scientific research institutions in this field, generally dominated by the U.S. and Japanese companies. Some 167 universities and public research organisations are ranked among the top 500 patent applicants.

Think beyond boundaries

To foster a culture of innovation, faculty must be open to exploring the unknown, making the environment conducive for interactions

SUDHIR VARADARAJAN



GETTYIMAGES/ISTOCK PHOTOS

Start early: Encourage whacky ideas.

On November 21, last year, the Ministry of Human Resources Development (MHRD) launched a landmark initiative to enhance the innovation ecosystem in the Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs).

It involves the implementation of a coherent set of interventions such as setting up the Institution Innovation Councils (IICs) in the 1,000+ HEIs; guiding the IICs in terms of best practices for promoting innovation; encouraging HEIs to adopt All India Council for Technical Education's new model curriculum so that students will get the necessary time and skills to innovate; organising contests such as the Smart India Hackathon, to expose students to real-world industry problems and harness innovative solutions; and benchmarking institutions as per the new Atal Ranking of Institutions on Innovation Achievement (ARIIA) framework.

While the intent and strategy of MHRD's initiative are good, implementation in HEIs can easily fall into one of the two traps normally observed with large-scale change initiatives. First, is the possibility of HEIs focusing too much on getting a favourable position in the ARIIA ranking. Second, is the danger of putting too much faith on conducting awareness sessions, and teaching design and entrepreneurship techniques to students and faculty.

Both approaches cannot create a culture of innovation in an institution. On the contrary, it can lead to a situation where students and faculty can become allergic to the concept of innovation. HEIs would do well to realise that internalising the innovation agenda calls for embracing instability in an educational process that is fundamentally designed for stability and control. This is bound to create confusion and conflicts.

- THE FIRST SOUNDING BOARD FOR STUDENTS IS THEIR FACULTY
HEIS AND THE IICS MUST PAY ATTENTION TO THE QUALITY OF EVERYDAY INTERACTIONS IN CLASSROOMS, EXAMS, PROJECT REVIEWS, AND SO ON
- THE ACADEMIC ENVIRONMENT CANNOT BECOME CONDUCIVE FOR INNOVATION OVERNIGHT

In order to deal with these challenges, HEIs and the IICs must direct attention to the quality of everyday interactions in the classrooms, examinations, project reviews, student clubs, competitions, and faculty meetings.

Open-minded faculty

Students, who are the main stakeholders of the MHRD initiative, have the potential to generate radically new ideas, or re-frame problems in creative ways.

For instance, in a design contest on managing space debris, a first-year engineering student came up with a radical idea of pushing the debris out of the earth's orbit, instead of collecting and bringing it back to the earth. The student was fortunate to get some encouraging advice from ISRO experts.

However, this may not always be the case. Most often, the first sounding board for students is the faculty of their institution. And faculty, who are habituated to testing students against a well-defined knowledge base, may unknowingly, judge student ideas from the binary perspective of right/wrong or ordinary/impractical. Very few take the time and effort to explore the grey areas in-between jointly with the student, and more so, if the topics are slightly out of their research interests. As a result, whacky ideas tend to get stifled very early, and students can get demotivated and lose interest quickly.

For example, a couple of years ago, an all-girls' team from second-year computer engineering came up with an idea of "storing the Internet to deal with poor network coverage". When they presented this idea to a couple of faculty members, they were not only told that it was impractical, but also advised to revisit the basics. It didn't stop there. The faculty also went about spreading the message that students were possibly wasting time on impractical ideas in the name of innovation. As a result, students began to doubt themselves and lost interest in the whole process, when in fact, some joint exploration could have helped them to re-frame their problem as "designing a network that follows the users", which continues to be a key challenge for telecom operators.

Instead of taking the faculty feedback as a rejection of the idea, students should use the opportunity to explore further and refine the idea.

It is naive to expect the academic environment to become more conducive for innovation overnight. Students and faculty must start to re-look at their everyday interactions in a fresh way.

Students must note that faculty also have blind spots when it comes to open-ended real-world problems. Instead of taking the faculty feedback as a rejection of the idea, students should use the opportunity to explore further and refine the idea.

Faculty, on their part, must try to think beyond the binary and become more comfortable with exploring the unknown. They should also be open to the possibility that while not every student can innovate, good ideas can come from anywhere. A five-point something student can come up with a more promising idea and show a greater willingness to persist than a nine-pointer. It is only by paying attention to the everyday interactions and challenging prejudices that institutions can develop a culture of innovation.

The writer is dean, design, innovation and incubation, IIITDM Kancheepuram

VALUE ADD

Refocus and reform

With the onus on students and parents to deal with exam stress, the education sector needs to pitch in to transform the very purpose of exams

ATUL TEMURNIKAR

Two things happened recently which can be seen as a light at the end of a rather dark education tunnel in India.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi held a town-hall style session on 'Pariksha pe Charcha 2.0' – an event which received a great viewership from schools and students around the world.

This was followed by Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) announcing the launch of pre-exam counselling to students and parents to help them both deal with exam anxiety.

There could have been no better news for the education sector. Authorities at the highest-level took cognisance of the stress felt by students and parents during crucial months of important exams, which are a main cause of stress for both.

During Pariksha Pe Charcha, PM Modi, who has already written a book on exam stress, took to the stage to discuss at length ways to cope, circumvent and ease the pressure on students and their parents. Some of his tips like making a table to manage time, relaxing by listening to music and playing sport, taking breaks between studying and so on have been welcomed.

CBSE's step to offer counselling lends a strong helping hand and reassurance to the needy.

What can therefore be done is for schools and education sector on the whole to roll up their sleeves and evaluate their processes in order to ensure that no student reaches that dangerous edge in the first place.

PRATEEK KUMAR

Shifting focus: From scoring marks to enhancing skills

There are several methods to do this.

Learning outcomes:

Focus of exams needs to shift from just scoring maximum marks to enhancing students' learning outcomes. This is a difficult, but not an impossible goal, in a country where getting good grades outshines the need for getting good, well-rounded education.

Few recent indicators show that focus is shifting towards learning outcomes and accessible quality education. For instance, the recent Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) shows a definite improvement in percentage of students showing improvement in mathematics.

- CBSE's pre-exam counselling to students and their parents to help deal with exam anxiety is a positive move.
- Exams should focus on enhancing students' learning outcomes.
- Digitisation of exams can help avoid problems in connection with assessment and delivery of results.

But, a visible change will be seen if there is a real shift in assessment methods as well, which will give a clear signal that the emphasis is on evaluating student performance based on the depth of understanding of concepts, rather than on just finishing the school syllabus and forcing students to rote-learning.

Transform exam and assessment processes:

The next step would be to transform the way assessment processes are carried out currently. With paper-based examination still prevalent in this age of digitisation, students get a tough deal in connection with assessments, especially if question-paper leaks force authorities to announce re-exams. The best solution to such problems is to go digital.

While it is important to keep challenging students to achieve their goals, it is equally necessary to make them understand that their competition is with themselves and not with others.

Through digitisation, examination papers can be made available before exam time, which saves the risk of leaks, helps teachers assess the answer sheets online from anywhere in the world, thus resulting in quicker delivery of results.

Enforce holistic development:

The third and most important aspect is the attitude towards exams.

While it is important to keep challenging students to achieve their goals, it is equally necessary to make them understand that their competition is with themselves and not with others.

Helping them map their previous performance and then encouraging and guiding them to outperform themselves with the help of Predictive Analysis is a better way of nurturing a student.

The writer is the Chairman of Global Schools Foundation, a Singapore-headquartered institution which runs a chain of two international schools.

SCHOLARSHIP

HP Udaan Scholarship Programme

HP Inc. India is giving this scholarship to students of economically-weaker section, pursuing their higher studies in post-matric courses, undergraduation and diploma programmes. Of the 750 scholarships, 50% seats reserved for female candidates.

ELIGIBILITY: Cleared class X in 2018 and enrolled for one-year diploma/ITI or two-year HSC/Diploma/ITI programmes. Cleared class XII in 2018 and enrolled for three-year diploma or three-year undergraduate programmes. Must have minimum 60% marks in last qualifying exam and family income less than ₹ 4L p.a.

PRIZES AND REWARDS: For class XI-XII/ITI/diploma, ₹ 20K p.a.; for three-year degree/diploma, ₹ 30K p.a.; one-time 20K for one-year ITI/diploma.

APPLICATION: Online only

DEADLINE: February 26

http://www.b4s.in/EDGE/HUS2

SAGE Fellowship

Leo & Mike Co. is providing a 10-week fellowship to teaching professionals with a chance to attend pedagogy training to learn teaching skills.

ELIGIBILITY: 17 to 65 years of age, interested in learning modern teaching skills and honing pedagogy qualities.

PRIZES AND REWARDS: ₹60,000 stipend

APPLICATION: Online

DEADLINE: February 28

http://www.b4s.in/EDGE/SFB2

MPOWER Global Citizen Scholarship Programme

MPOWER Financing is providing scholarships for students to study at one of its 200+ partner universities in the U.S. and Canada, which include Ivy League schools and other top schools such as USC, NYU, MIT, Columbia, UCLA, Penn, Michigan.

ELIGIBILITY: 18 years old, accepted or enrolled at one of the partner universities, and be a U.S./Canadian student-visa holder.

PRIZES AND REWARDS: $5,000

APPLICATION: Online only

DEADLINE: April 15

http://www.b4s.in/EDGE/MGC1

Courtesy: www.buddy4study.com

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FREEPIK

CAREER CUES

RICH DWIVEDI SAKLANI

We all know how much of importance and credit is assigned to the college you study in. But, what you become is more about you, and less about the college you graduated from

If you are a student, a word of caution – don't throw your books and flip on Netflix just yet, do read on and get the whole point I am making. If you are a parent, let me qualify that I run a career and college counselling firm, and it is my job to help kids get into the best colleges they can. So, do read on and get the subtle distinction I am making between "best" colleges and "best-fit"colleges.

Which colleges do you aim for?

The best college is a relative term. It could be St.Stephens or Stanford, IIT Powai or NTU in Singapore, Ashoka in Sonepat or IISc in Bangalore. It really depends on how you define your goals. What is common about these colleges is that they are best in class and selective in who they admit. Students who make it into these, often experience a sense of glory similar to Olympic gold medallists. Parents feel a tremendous sense of validation on how they brought up their kids.

Naturally, then, those that aim for but don't make this exalted list – or its extended companions (Ivy League and top-ranked colleges across India and the world) – have a sense of "averageness" that could even amount to failure.

This scale of high-stakes outcomes and high-pitched reactions translates into performance pressure, much before students actually finish school. FIITJEE and Vidya Mandir become real options with entrance tests to prepare for and potentially be rejected by. The practice SAT becomes an option, and so do a host of college counselling services. Extracurricular activities no longer are sources of engagement and self-development but CV-building tools – like points to collect for that big moment of reckoning coming up in class XII.

Students begin to see themselves as products being positioned for the eventual auction and measure each other by their potential college value. She is a topper, he's got MUN, she has her squash medals, he has published a book (!), she is a sports captain and so on.

What's wrong with a little pressure?

I have known parents to argue that they are preparing students for success – giving them a taste of the real-world, honing their talents, teaching them to measure themselves by the achievements (which is a bit like measuring adults by their bank balance but let's not go there).

What is wrong is that this approach may create false ideas of worth or worthlessness in students. The gravest of these mistakes is to equip a 16-year-old with a sense of failure even before he/she leave home, to be on his/her own. This would manifest in thoughts like "There is no way I will get into a good college", which often translates into statements like "I have not done anything worthwhile", by students who are getting above average grades in school, playing national-level tournaments, reading avidly, writing poetry and volunteering at dog shelters. It is just not good enough.

One in four Indian teenagers suffers from depression, according to a 2017 World Health Organisation (WHO) report on the Mental Health Status of Adolescents in South-East Asia. The 2016 National Mental Health Survey of India showed mental disorders to be nearly double in urban metros than rural areas.

And what is causing this stress? A study published in the Indian Journal of Psychological Medicine in 2017, pegs pessimism and past failure to be the main sources of depression among school-going adolescents. Another study in the *Australian Journal of Educational and Developmental Psychology* noted that parental pressure for better performance was the chief source of stress in Indian high school students with middle-class urban students being the worst affected.

So how important is the ranking of your college for future success?

Luckily, not much. Here is a quick look at some anecdotal but compelling data. The Economic Times 40 Under 40 list gives us a look at contemporary leaders from inMobi, Oyo, Puma India, Hindalco, Endemol Shine India, Bira, Lowe Lintas, Cyril Amarchand Mangaldas, Mobikwik, Zomato, Jabong-Myntra and Bain & Co. And the colleges they went to include IITs Kanpur, Kharagpur and Delhi, Tilka Manjhi Bhagalpur University Bihar, Maharishi Dayanand University Rohtak, SIBM Pune, Illinois Institute of Technology Chicago, Mumbai University, Indian Law Society's Law College Pune, Barkatullah Vishwavidyalaya Bhopal and Presidency College, Kolkata. The list is a testimony to the calibre of these people themselves, and not a listing of India's Top Colleges – barring a spattering of IITs.

The international story is not so different. In his bestselling book, *Where You Go Is Not Who You'll Be: An Antidote to the College Admissions Mania*, Frank Bruni tracks where the CEOs of Fortune 500 companies went to college, and the following list shows up: University of Arkansas; University of Texas, University of California Davis, University of Nebraska, Auburn, Texas A&M, Kettering University, University of Kansas, Dartmouth College and the University of Missouri-St. Louis. Just one Ivy League school. Fewer than a third of US Senators have undergrad degrees from Ivy League, or highly selective colleges (including Donald Trump who went to Fordham College). Bruni himself, who has written two bestselling books before this, graduated from the University of North Carolina.

Is it okay, then, to stop studying and chill out?

Economists Alan Krueger and Stacy Dale have researched the "return to college selectivity" or the differential in earnings that can be attributed to how selective a college the student went to. Their research indicates the correlation between the ranking of the college and a student's earning is close to zero, if you adjust for school grades, student ambitions, SAT scores and parental background.

In plain English, that means that students who performed well is school, aimed high, got good SAT grades and came from enabling family backgrounds performed well in life, irrespective of which college they finally went to.

The good news here is that all this stress for cracking that dream college, on students and parents may be largely misplaced. However, working hard and getting good grades is still highly likely to indicate future success. So, here is a clichéd bit of advice – aim for the best but don't worry about the outcome so much. If you aim for success, no college can stop you from getting there.

Students begin to see themselves as products being positioned for the eventual auction and measure each other by their potential college value.

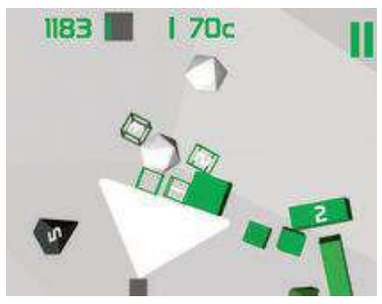
Richa is the author of The Ultimate Guide to 21st Century Careers (Hachette India, 2017). Richa leads Inomi Learning, a Gurgaon based career and college guidance firm. info@inomi.in

BON APP-ETIT

ARATHI MINI

Who doesn't like a good brain teaser? Not only do they provide a respite from boredom, they also boost brain activity and improve concentration and memory. Here are some puzzles that will challenge your brain and advance your cognitive abilities.

Equilibrium

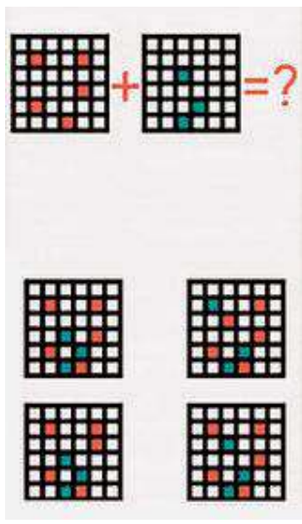


This arcade game is based on physics, and requires you to pile up cubes on a triangle that is balanced on a small support system. Hold up as many cubes as you can, to increase your score. The game has two modes for you to compete in – normal and no-special cubes mode. In the normal mode, the app slowly increases the game's difficulty level by adding cubes that are different from the ones that generally appear as you make your way to the top. However, in the no-special cubes mode, you can take your time and slowly progress as, only normal cubes are sent your way. (bit.ly/2DF3AJQ)

Tricky Test 2: Genius Brain?

Tricky Test 2 comes with a set of brain teasers that will have the most ridiculous answers. In this game, all you have to do is finish 111 amazing brain teasers, in two hours. If you can accomplish this task, you will be pronounced a genius. This addictive game will analyse your memory, math abilities and logic, and push your brain to the limit. You can also select the hardest questions if you are playing with your friends, and are on a quest to discover who among you is the genius. (bit.ly/2BB06b6)

Skillz - Logic Brain Games



The objective of this game is to boost your memory, improve your accuracy and speed in solving brain teasers. There are various levels in the game, where you are provided a bunch of tests, and the results are ranked between one and five stars. You need to have five stars in each level to go to the next round. With each star, you are provided a 'brain,' which can be used later to get out of a round in case you do not have five stars. It also has a multiplayer option with which you can play with your friends, or random people, who are using the app at the same time. The maximum limit for multiplayers is four. (bit.ly/2UZtXRz)

Small ways to live our lives

Redefining the way we think, especially with regard to certain phrases and words, can make a difference

FREEPIK

BACKPACKER'S GUIDE

USHA RAMAN

Insights come from random conversations – that is, if one reflects on them. Last week I was chatting with a nephew I meet only rarely and, unlike many intergenerational conversations, this one ventured out of the usual polite pleasantries into the risky terrain of politics, morality, and ethics. The young man spoke of the dilemmas of his generation, many of whom are bothered by the state of the world, and are confused about what to do about it. Some are beset by a sense of helplessness. Some end up burying themselves in social media and streamed content, emerging only now and then to order a meal through an app on their smart phones or make a restless run to the gym. Others look for ways to make the best of it by focusing on a career that takes them into a comfortable zone where they are shielded from these inconvenient truths. A few throw themselves into the good fight, taking up jobs that to their minds "make a difference" in some way. And the rest try to face the contradictions of this messy world, seeking opportunities where they can balance personal gain with public good.

"Do you really need to rush off to a war zone or to remote villages to do good work?" asked my nephew. "What about doing something in your own backyard, or neighbourhood, that could help someone?"

Think again!

We went on to talk about how values are applied along a continuum, from the way we live our personal lives to how we conduct ourselves in public and in our work (and I have talked about this before). Our ideas about the world also can be applied across contexts, and we can in many ways do the kinds of things that will lead to change. Compassion, for instance, does not have to be expressed only by doing relief work in a disaster area, or by working to help street children – although, these are urgent and necessary activities that need as many resources as they can get. Compassion can also be about spending 10 minutes with a lonely elder, or stepping aside for someone who seems to be in a hurry, or taking the time to help a classmate who is having trouble with a lesson. Fighting the big climate change battle need not be about becoming an environmental scientist or joining protests against cutting trees, but also by not taking that plastic straw when you re ordering a soda, or turning off the fan and lights when you are the last one to leave the classroom. Believing in gender equity is as much about sharing all manner of tasks at home and reflecting upon your habitual responses as it is about signing petitions and carrying placards.

Many of us want desperately to do something that "makes a difference" (a tired phrase that refuses to lose its appeal), and we think we have failed if we don't achieve the big goals. We end up placing less value on the small acts that make our immediate surroundings better, or bring pleasure and comfort to the people around us. But as that conversation reminded me, our values, beliefs, and ideas need to find expression not just in the academic and professional spaces we inhabit but also in the small ways we live our lives, every day.

Compassion, for instance, does not have to be expressed only by doing relief work in a disaster area, or by working to help street children.

The author teaches at the University of Hyderabad and edits Teacher Plus. usha.bpgll@gmail.com

What will you do with your life?

Caught up with the expectations of others? We may miss the opportunity to go after what we truly want

ETHICS AND YOU

MINI KRISHNAN

GETTYIMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

During the last fortnight, I spent time with university students in different parts of Tamil Nadu. All of them were warm and courteous, making me wonder about their polar opposites sighted often enough, off-campus. Trained for the most part of the first 10 years of their lives to not speak up spontaneously or question the teacher-figure in the room, both groups took some time to warm up.

And then, they let fly. Some of them had thought carefully about literary and cultural passages that were under discussion and came up with surprising responses. As I studied their fresh faces, I wondered what sort of choices they would make and remembered the lines of Mary Oliver, a poet we lost very recently "What will you do with your one wild, precious life?" What indeed?

All through the year, advertisements and articles in the media of every kind pound young minds ceaselessly with suggestions. Messages, both direct and otherwise, reach them about how they might improve themselves, starting with their appearance and going on to various crash courses to help them get a job, get on, get ahead. Do these intense crammers really help? A personality that fits other peoples' image of you may not be you at all. A recruiting officer who had set up interviews told me how he was impressed when the first candidate of the day told him that his favourite pastime was reading. "What are you reading?"

"Yuval Noah Harari's Homo Deus" was the answer followed by a neat summary of the book. The rest of his responses also came through smoothly and confidently. When the next candidate and the next entered and were interviewed they too said nearly the same things. They were all clones of the same training academy. Now manicured into acceptability, where had their true personalities fled to? We discussed the anxiety they must have felt as they prepared for the interview.

Re-examine

Before you enter a tunnel others feel you should be in, so that you will occupy the positions that those queues lead to, ask yourself what you really want to do. Is it to work with India's unbeatable range of colours and fabrics? Is it to work in the archives to research our socio-history? Perhaps it is to plan tours to largely unknown monuments in parts of the country that are not on the tourist circuits. Or to set up a school or help in a para-medical in a village.

Are they impossible to share with the expectations of your family and peers?

Remember that most health problems that arise from stress during middle-age are because people are not particularly happy doing what they are doing with their lives. Even those of us who are already on set paths and jobs that cannot be given up, can from time-to-time, question the validity of what we are doing; but if you are young, a great opportunity lies ahead of you. You can take that step to do what you want in life. It could be anything, but let it be a choice which suits your temperament.

If you are older and took a decision – today – to switch lanes, would it be such a bad thing?

Many years ago, an Odia writer and his wife visited the Sri Aurobindo Ashram in Puducherry. Both were strongly drawn to the ambience of the place and discussed how, "some day", they might move to Puducherry.

"Why not today?" asked the lady.

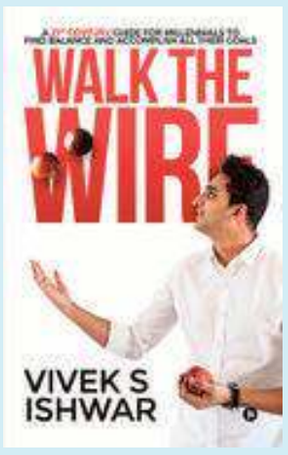
With that, an entirely new chapter in their lives began, far away from "home", but in a new home.

The author is consultant, Publishing , Oxford University Press. minioup@gmail.com

ON THE SHELF

URMI MUKHERJEE

Walk the Wire



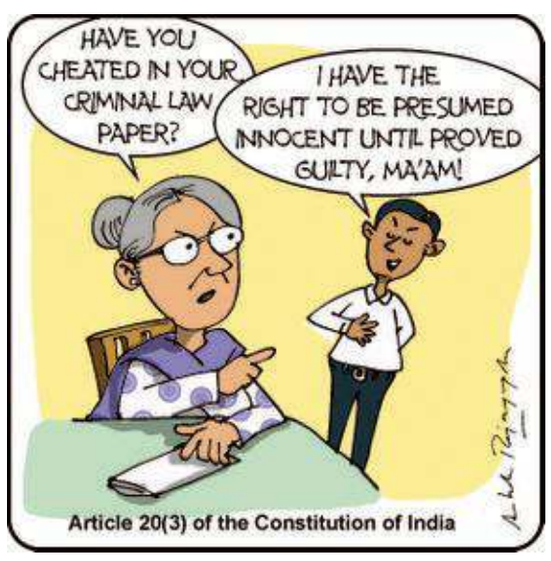
AUTHOR: Vivek S Ishwar
PRICE: ₹200

The title says it all. *Walk The Wire* unveils the secret to effective goal-setting and goal-achievement, something that the youth value most, in today's time. It simplifies the process of multitasking, to achieve continuous growth. The process has been elaborated in four chapters, to dig deep into the root cause of the problem, in order to discover the best possible solution and work on it.

In a world where success has been given supreme importance, the book is extremely handy. A book that allows self-analysis of past mistakes for a better future, deserves to be in each bookshelf. The author, Vivek S Ishwar, a finance and strategy professional, has let us walk the wire confidently, without the fear of falling.

EAR SHOT

ASHOK RAJAGOPALAN



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WIDE ANGLE

ALBERT P'RAYAN

Make knowledge free

The Open Access Movement is gaining momentum for its intention to make research material freely available to all

FREEPIK

Assume that you wish to conduct research and write a scholarly article on a particular topic. During the process, you Google the topic and find some relevant research papers on the topic. After going through the abstract of a particular article, you feel like going through the full article.

When you click on the link to have access to the full paper, the following message flashes on the screen: *You do not have access to the full version of this article. View access options below*. The access options are: $7 for 48-Hour Access, $16.50 for Read-only, and $42 for full text and PDF download. You try another research paper and again you get a similar message that you have to pay a certain amount of money for the article. You get frustrated and decide not to try again. You put an end to your research work.

This is what many independent researchers face when they wish to have access to some useful scholarly articles.

Of late, many research activists, scientists and scholars, across the globe, have raised these questions: Is it ethical for researchers and scholars to hide their scholarly work behind a paywall? Don't researchers have a moral responsibility to make their new knowledge known to the world by making it available free online?

- OPEN ACCESS MOVEMENT AIMS TO PROMOTE VOLUNTARISM AND PROVIDE READERS WITH UNRESTRICTED ACCESS TO RESEARCH ARTICLES.
- ALMOST ALL OPEN ACCESS JOURNAL ARTICLES ARE PEER-REVIEWED.
- UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES IN INDIA SHOULD ENCOURAGE THEIR SCHOLARS TO PUBLISH IN OPEN ACCESS JOURNALS.

Taking a moral stand, British mathematician Sir Timothy Gowers, who won the Fields Medal, leads a boycott against the publisher Elsevier and has started the new Forum of Mathematics journal. Gowers says that the journal, "will not under any circumstances expect authors to meet APCs (article processing charges) out of their own pockets, and I would refuse to be an editor if it did".

A few months ago, 11 European funding agencies announced an open-access initiative which requires grantees of research funds to make their research articles freely available online so that other scholars can have access to the articles. Grantees will not be permitted to publish their scholarly articles in journals such as *Nature, Science, Cell,* and *The Lancet* unless the journal publishers change their access policies.

Open Access Movement

Open Access (OA) has gained momentum during the past decade and many publishers have open access channels. OA refers to "freely available, digital, online information" and it is based on the idea that all scholarly articles and scientific research papers should be made freely available to anyone who wants to use it for research purposes. It is opposed to the subscription-based model which requires readers to pay for scholarly articles they want to have access to. The need to overcome the roadblock has resulted in laying the foundation for the Open Access Movement (OAM). It aims to promote voluntarism and provide readers with unrestricted access to research articles.

Peter Suber, Director of the Harvard Office for Scholarly Communication, and Stevan Harnad, a cognitive scientist are prominent OAM activists. Stephen Krashen, a well-known linguist, second language acquisition expert, researcher and open access activist, publishes exclusively in open access journals and make all his articles for free for download at sdkrashen-.com.

Open access is not something new in India. Way back in 2004, the Chennai-based MS Swaminathan Research Foundation organised workshops on the need for open access, and in 2009, the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) made it clear that grantees should provide access to their scholarly work.

Myths

Open access is widely misunderstood in India because of certain myths about open access journals.

Myth 1: Open access journals (OAJ) are not peer-reviewed.

Myth 2: Reputed universities and university faculties do not give researchers credit for promotion if the papers are published in OAJs.

Myth 3: It is very expensive to get papers published in OAJs.

It is wrong to say that articles submitted to OAJs are not peer-reviewed. Almost, all OAJ articles are peer-reviewed. Editors of repute do not simply accept a scholar's paper without subjecting it to the scrutiny of experts in the field.

Again, it is wrong to say that universities do not consider OAJ articles for promotion. There are many OAJs with high-impact factors and the papers published in such journals are highly cited and many universities do give credit to such papers.

Don't researchers have a moral responsibility to make their new knowledge known to the world by making it available free online?

It is not true that all OAJs charge high article processing fees. There are many highly subsidised quality OAJs and scholars can publish their articles by paying nominal charges.

What should be done?

Universities and colleges in India should encourage their scholars to publish in OAJs. If required, educational institutions and funding agencies should come forward to pay article processing fees charged by some.

It is the moral responsibility of scholars to promote scholarship and make knowledge freely available to all. By publishing in OAJs, researchers and scientists serve the humanity in a better way.

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LINGUISTICS

Language dynamics

English teachers will not be able to deliver students who can speak English well, if they don't have the opportunity to converse with others who can speak the language fluently

AVINASH SUBRAMANIAM

GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

Hola! I am an English teacher and I am learning Spanish on Duolingo, a great app which has motivated me to study Spanish for about 40 minutes, every day, for nearly two years. I have missed only two days of class during this period. According to Duolingo's statistics, this makes me a good student of the language. Still, I haven't learned to speak Spanish with any degree of fluency. But, I have grasped something else from my inability to learn how to speak Spanish fluently using just Duolingo – how hard it is for students of English in India to learn English, and why.

Tricky languages

Spanish may well be one of the easiest languages on earth to learn. Unlike most other languages, it is spoken exactly the way it is written. Few other languages are like this. In French, often, what you write is not what you say. The same goes for English, Hindi, Gujarati, Marathi, and Tamil. Languages that are spoken exactly the way they are written are easier to learn to speak. But it takes more than this for a learner to become fluent in a language. Many English words like, for instance, 'many' are not spoken the way they are written. That is why, English is such a tricky language to learn. Spanish is not as maddening. That said, even if you learn Spanish for many years, you will not be able to speak it with any degree of fluency, unless you have a few Spanish speakers around to speak it with. Learning how to speak a language well has everything to do with having people to converse with you in the language than the fact that it is easy to read and write and utter.

In French, often, what you write is not what you say. The same goes for English, Hindi, Gujarati, Marathi, and Tamil. Languages that are spoken exactly the way they are written are easier to learn to speak. But it takes more than this for a learner to become fluent in a language

This means that if learners have to attain fluency in English, it is imperative that they are placed in an English-speaking environment. If not, they may learn the rules of the language, but will not have much success speaking it. Put simply, you will learn more French if you stay for a year in a predominantly French-speaking environment, than if you went for several years to a daily, hour-long class in, say, Bengaluru. This is a reality English teachers in India have to grapple with, when evaluating how to help their English students learn the language faster and better.

Even the greatest English teacher in the world will not be able to deliver students who can speak English well if those students don't have the opportunity to speak it with others who can speak the language with some degree of fluency. If they step out into a non-English speaking world as soon as they're done with English class, much of what has been taught in English class is diminished or lost. As an English teacher and language learner, this is what I have discovered from trying to learn to speak French, first, in India, and then in Montreal, Canada, and Spanish without having anyone who speaks it well to speak it with. Merci and Gracias.

- DUOLINGO IS A GREAT APP TO STUDY AND LEARN LANGUAGES, IN-DEPTH
- SPANISH IS SPOKEN EXACTLY AS IT IS WRITTEN
- FOR LEARNERS TO BE FLUENT IN ENGLISH, THEY MUST BE IN AN ENGLISH-SPEAKING ENVIRONMENT

BIENNALE VIEW

PRINCESS NAIK

ENRICHED by ART

Art has the power to evoke powerful emotions among the youth, making them curious,to question the world around them

SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

As a first time visitor to the Kochi-Muziris Biennale, the experience was exhilarating and there was not enough time to absorb the entire content provided there. But the most interesting aspect I could notice, apart from the exhibits, was the enormous crowd of youngsters gathered at these venues of the old Cochin port area – the Aspinwall House, the Pepper House, David Hall and the other smaller places selected for the purpose.

What started as curiosity, slowly became focused observation. They came in different age groups, from various backgrounds, colourful as can be, adding fun and frolic to the otherwise sombre air. Many had their cell phones, covering the exhibits with photographs and some were more professional with sophisticated cameras in hand.

There was excited conversation but not the noisy disturbance for the others. There was a sense of purpose in them, which led me to conversations with a few to understand the reason for their participation. "We came to see the art as we believe art has the power to change things", "We like the entire idea of having this huge show in our place, which has a rich culture and tradition", "Many of these expressions are similar to what we feel, to undo many repressive ideas, whether they are about the gay activism or the shackles of female supression," and the topics shared were endless.

The effect

The many queries were discussed with no fear or anxiety of being misquoted as they seemed aware of their power in changing the world. After all, isn't it true today that the youth of India is 50 percentage of its total population below the age of 25, and 65% below the age of 35, are waiting to set the rules of tomorrow?

This is a positive trend as youngsters are exposed to art and culture, history and traditions as an ever-changing society is being formed anew, based on these, yet remaining and retaining its values.

This also gave the thought of how responsible the other half of the generation should be, in setting up patterns and discourses for them, or is it wrong even to present any? The answer is yes and no. Yes, because, we have a responsibility towards what is coming in the future and no, as in, the thinking of J. Krishnamurthy it is for them to find for themselves.

The larger thought process is how the art forms can impact our youth. Tremendously, I must say, and in the right spirit too. For, those who are veterans and exposed to many of the work exhibited, it is the meaning of what the authors want to express; from this years exhibits and from the curator Anita Dube's words, "Possibilities for a non-alienated life asks and searches for questions in the hope of dialogue".

And for the others who are new comers to the idea of art and exhibitions like this, be the Kochi Biennale or the Chennai Photo Biennale, it is the introduction to the idea that is essential. How the person takes it, and utilises it, in his or her thoughts and actions, is purely up to that individual; as a collective responsibility we only facilitate that atmosphere and encourage the young and the old to participate and be enriched by such experiences.

- A SENSE OF PURPOSE WITHIN THE YOUTHS LED TO THE NEED TO UNDERSTAND THE REASON FOR THEIR PARTICIPATION.
- ART FORMS HAVE A TREMENDOUS IMPACT ON THE YOUTH.
- FACILITATING AN ATMOSPHERE AND ENCOURAGE THE YOUNG AND THE OLD TO PARTICIPATE AND BE ENRICHED BY THESE EXPERIENCES.

VOICES

Free to be flexible

RA Podar College, Nirmala Niketan's College of Social Work, and SNDT's MMP Shah College have joined the bandwagon of autonomous bodies in Mumbai. Will this move impact the quality of higher education?

NEHA RUPEJA

AASHRITH B ARUN, IV, CS, NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF ENGINEERING, MYSURU

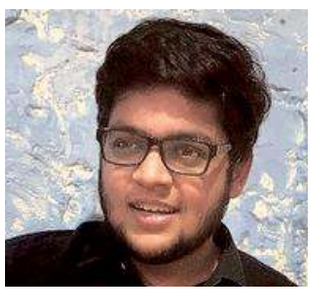
Granting autonomy status to institutions is always highly debated. One faction feels that the number of entrance exams a student has to take will increase. The others, talk about its benefits by associating autonomy with progress. However, autonomous institutions are expected to be self-financed, which in turn might make education more expensive. This where the government needs to step in. Existing autonomous institutions have had a good run so far, and hence provide a ray of hope for the upcoming ones.

YASH BARDIA, I PGDM, VESIM BUSINESS SCHOOL, MUMBAI

A university becoming autonomous is now emerging as a trend, but in a good way. Backed by funding from the central government and existing credibility, a new autonomous college can do wonders.

Constant change in syllabus is needed, for students to keep pace with the fast developing world.

A flexible syllabus and an opportunity to learn new things will help the youth make creative progress. So, in a way, colleges going autonomous can prove beneficial.



VAIBHAV DWIVEDI, I, M.A. ENGLISH, AMBEDKAR UNIVERSITY, DELHI

The 'Goldrush' for autonomy in higher education is on an unprecedented high, as more colleges are looking for academic and administrative liberty. The result may be diverse assessment patterns, experimental curriculum, and less cumbersome administrative structures. However, institutions must not exist in complete isolation from each other. A balance must be struck between autonomy and providing a well-connected academic network to students.

CHIRAG SEHGAL, I, PGD IN BROADCAST JOURNALISM FROM INDIAN INSTITUTE OF JOURNALISM AND NEW MEDIA, BENGALURU

Autonomy of colleges may be a great step towards academic independence. But, at the same time, there is a serious concern that after becoming autonomous, a college may not get as much funding from the UGC as before. Therefore, it may try to make up for it by increasing students' fees. Will all students be able to pay more?

Postcard

The Hindu EDGE invites Indian students in foreign universities to share their experiences about the campus, course, quality of education, city life and adapting to changes abroad. The article should be not more than 500 words. Send three different pictures of yourself on campus (each should be minimum 2MB size, JPG/JPEG format), and a short video (horizontally shot, if you're using your mobile device) featuring a walking, talking three-minute campus tour (pick your favourite spots!) to goalpost@thehindu.co.in. When recording the video, use your headset's microphone so we can get the best quality recording of your tour commentary!

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OFFBEAT...AEROSPACE ENGINEERING

Take off

The rising popularity of air travel and space exploration are fuelling opportunities in the field of aerospace engineering

SUDHIR G. ANGUR

REUTERS

A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, Ram Narain Agarwal, S. Srinivasan, and Kalpana Chawla all have something in common apart from being Indians who have brought glory to the country. In addition to serving as the President of India, Directors of DRDO, and an astronaut respectively, they are renowned aerospace engineers.

Aerospace engineering is a challenging and coveted branch, that includes the design, construction, testing, and maintenance of air and space crafts. The development of new technology in aeronautical and astronautical fields is also under the aegis of aerospace engineering.

Aerospace engineers work in teams to design, assemble, and test the performance of air crafts and space crafts.

Some duties of an aerospace engineer include:

Modify design to incorporate safety features and new functions.

Perform ground and in-flight tests on prototypes.

Estimate the feasibility and production time of civil and military aircraft and missiles.

Conduct reliability studies, operations research, and cost analysis.

Study impact of atmospheric stress and behaviour of loads and weights under different atmospheric conditions.

Assess the quality of materials used for the manufacture of aircrafts.

Collaborate with clients and technical team to ensure the right product specification and performance.

If you are interested and driven towards building a career in this discipline, you can start working towards it right after you pass class XII. There are Bachelor's, Masters, and Ph.D. programmes in aerospace engineering that you can enrol in. Having a strong interest and grasp over physics and maths is an advantage as both subjects have significant applications in this field.

The academic aspect of aerospace engineering covers in-depth study of modules like fluid mathematics, thermodynamics, design optimisation, and flight testing.

Mushrooming opportunities

Some significant developments within this sector have taken place in India with the groundbreaking work of DRDO, HAL, and ISRO along with private initiatives by Airbus and Boeing, putting India in the league of global aeronautical greats. These notable achievements aside, aerospace is a still growing sector in India offering vast potential to budding engineers to build dynamic careers in this industry.

The government has supplemented this progress by implementing a number of liberal economic reforms which have sky-rocketed the scope of aerospace engineering in India. With an increase in foreign direct investment resulting in greater interest by multinationals, more engineers have the opportunity to work in collaboration with them on joint projects. The government is also investing in research and development of indigenous aerospace products thereby attracting leading companies from across the world.

The demand for aerospace engineers is high in both government and private sectors. These engineers are required in a number of roles in the air force, airlines, corporate research companies, defence ministry, aviation companies, aeronautical laboratories, aircraft manufacturers, and government-owned air services among many others. Abundant opportunities also await thermal design engineers, mechanical design engineers, aerospace technologists, aircraft production managers, consultants, assistant technical officers, and aerospace design checker.

- AEROSPACE ENGINEERS DESIGN, ASSEMBLE, AND TEST THE PERFORMANCE OF AIR CRAFTS AND SPACE CRAFTS.
- THE DEMAND FOR AEROSPACE ENGINEERS IS HIGH IN BOTH GOVERNMENT AND PRIVATE SECTORS.
- TOP RECRUITERS INCLUDE HAL, DRDO, ISRO, CIVIL AVIATION DEPARTMENT, AND AIR INDIA.

Some significant developments within this sector have taken place in India with the groundbreaking work of DRDO, HAL, and ISRO...

Top recruiters in the aerospace industry include Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL), Defence Research and Development Laboratories (DRDO), Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), Civil Aviation Department, and Air India.

Large private and government-controlled companies are dedicating resources to develop new technologies to improve the quality of human life. Such initiatives along with the rising popularity of air travel and space exploration which require aeronautical expertise, are fuelling the demand for aerospace engineers making this the best time to launch your dream career.

The writer is Chancellor, Alliance University, Bengaluru.

EMERGING TRENDS

Order within disorder

The role of a school counsellor is crucial — from adopting a proactive role to sensitising students and faculty towards mental health issues, and dealing with them

DR. SAMIR PARIKH

K.R. DEEPAK

A guide: The ability to identify and reach out for help

With rising awareness about mental health, especially in the context of young children and adolescents, it is a welcome change to note that the need for counsellors has been recognised across schools in the country. At the same time, however, there is often a lack of clarity associated with the actual role and responsibilities of a school counsellor.

Before delving into the role of a school counsellor, it would be pertinent to note the pure disproportional nature, with a single school counsellor (in most systems) who is hired for an entire school, which comprises at times of 2,500 to 3,000 students! And given the increasing prevalence of mental illnesses globally, coupled with the presence of psychosocial stressors in the form of academic workloads, peer pressures, bullying and aggression, tendencies of substance use and risk taking behaviour and the ever-increasing exposure to various forms of unfiltered media, and so on, recognising the potential role of a school counsellor to single handedly ensure the psychological well-being and safety of all the students in the school is definitely an unrealistic expectation.

Building bonds

Keeping these factors in mind, we must remember that one school counsellor alone cannot address the emotional well-being of the entire school, one student at a time. What is now required is for school counsellors to take a more pro-active approach, to work towards preventive mental health, rather than focusing on treatment alone. What we need is a collective effort of the entire school system which encourages sensitivity towards mental health and psychological well-being, with the school counsellor spearheading the initiative as an ambassador and as an advocate of mental health.

- CREATING AWARENESS AND ENCOURAGING CONVERSATIONS ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH
- ENCOURAGE SENSITIVITY TOWARDS MENTAL HEALTH
  INTRODUCE MODULES OF LIFE SKILLS TRAINING WITHIN THE EXISTING CURRICULUM
- ADOPT A SENSITISED APPROACH TOWARDS MENTAL HEALTH

One of the most crucial roles of a school counsellor is to ensure that mental health is given the same importance given to general health, hygiene and nutrition. Contrary to common misconceptions, mental illnesses, like any other physical ailment, also have biological basis too.

The efforts of a school counsellor, therefore, could be directed at ensuring sensitivity to mental health within the existing teaching system and curriculum, which can be done simply by creating awareness and encouraging conversations about mental health, reducing hesitation and students feel comfortable in talking about their feelings and seeking help in an open environment. They will be able to identify when they need to reach out for help, and also feel more empowered when someone reaches out to them for help.

In addition, a focus on introducing modules of life skills training, within the existing curriculum, can help students be more equipped to deal with the psychosocial challenges they are likely to experience not just during the schooling years but subsequently as well. Such training is not imparted as an addition to academia but is an experiential learning about dealing with bullying and aggression, assertiveness training to respond to peer pressure, gender sensitivity, as well as skill building for improving their emotional regulation, instilling empathy or building an emotional resilience.

Ensure that mental health is given the same importance given to general health, hygiene and nutrition.

What we must remember is that psychological well-being and life skills can't be taught in the form of textbooks, and assessed by way of annual exams. Counsellors must engage in dialogue, make use of teaching moments as they occur in society, and encourage group activities and discussions. With the school counsellors ensuring such a transformation within the existing educational paradigm, it will be possible to envision a future in which people are not just informed and educated, but are also sensitised towards mental health, making it a priority for all.

The writer is the Director at Department of Mental Health and Behavioural Sciences at Fortis Healthcare.

Resilient Futures India Initiative

Queen Mary University of London has launched the Resilient Futures India Initiative in New Delhi. Experts from India and the U.K. were invited to discuss complex challenges facing vulnerable communities, in areas such as urbanisation, gender equality, health and environmental sustainability. The initiative aims to harness local and global knowledge to tackle critical challenges with policy makers, entrepreneurs and civil society leaders in both countries.

Lord Patel of Bradford, who travelled to New Delhi for the launch in his capacity as member of the advisory council to Queen Mary's Global Policy Institute, said, "This is an exciting initiative that will help address complex challenges facing humanity. Universities can provide real power for positive change, and there is nowhere better to start than India."

UPGRADE

DIWAKAR CHITTORA

GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

In the times of AI and ML

Graduates and professionals need to equip themselves with artificial intelligence and machine learning skills, to remain relevant

There are at least two clear trends that show a demand-supply mismatch in tech jobs, in cutting-edge IT fields such as artificial intelligence and machine learning. One is through industry predictions that estimate growth in the AI market from $21.46 billion to $190.61 billion between 2018 and 2025. Year on year growth is projected to be an impressive 36.62% during the same period. The second trend is more subtle. Big Indian IT firms in the U.S. are reportedly 'hoarding' employees in these two fields as they foresee a shortage in skilled experts. They also fear a corresponding rise in the cost of hiring employees for tech contracts they have bagged for the future.

Using AI and ML

Unlike the exaggerated robots of the 2001 Steven Spielberg movie of the same name, artificial intelligence (AI), in reality, is tamer. AI is understood to mean ways of making computers, computer-controlled robots or programmes think intelligently mimick the manner in which humans think intelligently. A computer programme with AI can solve generic problems it is programmed to, instead of just specific ones. They can accommodate new modifications to input without breaking structure. Traditional programmers would have to sort, sift and debug thousands of lines of code to make modifications.

AI finds applications in strategy games such as chess or poker where advance moves are determined by heuristic logic, natural language processing, virtual assistant technology, image and speech recognition and automated robotics. General AI systems which can solve any given problem are rare. Insurance and banking organisations regularly use AI to monitor fraud. Marketers use AI every time you shop online to gather your browsing habits and predict what you are most likely to buy. They will then advertise those products through pop-ups and logos. Self-driving cars, auto-pilot modes and smart homes using sensors all rely on AI and affect daily lives of consumers.

- A COMPUTER PROGRAMME WITH AI CAN USE CAN SOLVE GENERIC PROBLEMS IT IS PROGRAMMED TO
- MATHEMATICAL AND PROGRAMMING SKILLS ARE CENTRAL TO ACQUIRING COMPETENCY IN AI
- ANALYSIS OF PROFESSIONAL NETWORKING SITE LINKEDIN.COM HAS SHOWN THAT INDIA IS THE THIRD BEST-PLACED ECONOMY AFTER THE US AND CHINA TO CRACK AI JOBS AND CAREERS

There is also a difference between AI and machine learning (ML), although a number of articles on the web club them together or use them interchangeably. "ML is the study of computer algorithms that improve automatically through experience" according to Tom Mitchell of Carnegie Mellon University. It is simply one of the ways we use to achieve AI or something closer.

Acquire skills

. Nearly all forms of enterprise software, factory automation, transport and other industries are increasingly using AI-based interfaces in their daily operation. In fact, by 2030, AI may end up offering $ 15.7 trillion to the global economy.

Mathematical and programming skills are central to acquiring competency in this field. However, for seasoned tech professionals, it is important to develop excellent communication skills. An understanding of how business works and the common processes used in day-to-day operations will help you better utilise your core competencies to improve organisational workflows. For complete beginners, programming using C++ is a mandatory requirement. Also necessary is an understanding of how algorithms are created and executed.

Typically, knowledge and expertise in Bayesian networks, neural networks, cognitive science theory, engineering, physics, robotics, undergraduate algebra, calculus, statistics and probability are essential to hone your talents in ML. Computer science graduates need only supplement their knowledge of math and computing with a specialised course in AI and ML.

AI is understood to mean ways of making computers, computer-controlled robots or programmes think intelligently mimick the manner in which humans think intelligently.

Opportunities galore

Analysis of professional networking site Linkedin.com has shown that India is the third best-placed economy after the US and China to crack AI jobs and careers with high penetration of AI awareness. AI is a big part of investments into startups at an estimated by private players alone in 2016.

Among the more exciting opportunities one can expect in 2019 is the rising application of AI in healthcare to detect and diagnose health issues in individuals. Smart infrastructure to help balance rapid growth in urban centers in India is also an option being explored by the government. B. Tech programmes now mandatorily have AI, IoT, ML and some other essential components of emerging technology. However, constant changes in this dynamic field have made it mandatory for professionals to keep upskilling through noted institutions to remain relevant and job-worthy.

The author is CEO and founder, Intellipaat

IN BRIEF

Antarctic Fungi

Researchers at the Indian Institute of Technology, Hyderabad have found Antarctic fungi that could help in treating Leukemia. After working with scientists from the National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research (NCPOR), Goa, they have isolated Antarctic fungi that contain L-Asparaginase, an enzyme-based chemotherapeutic agent used to treat Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia. The isolation of L-asparaginase containing fungi from extreme environments could lead to development of new chemotherapeutic treatment methods that have fewer side effects than the existing methods.

Annual showcase

Microsoft India hosted AXLE, a Microsoft Academia Accelerator which is an annual showcase of collaboration between Microsoft and academia. This year's AI for Good theme showcased innovative ways of using technology to solve real world challenges. The event brought together computer science faculty, Microsoft leaders and employees, industry influencers, and students from top engineering colleges of India who showcased innovative ways of building state of the art technology to predict or manage natural disasters better. The winning team project was awarded to IIT Madras's UAVs for Disaster Management project.