



Telangana RTC
employees allowed to
rejoin duty from today
page 8



SC reserves verdict
on Chidambaram's
bail plea
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Maldives ex-president
Abdulla Yameen jailed
for money laundering
page 14



Jeevan to make debut
as India takes on
Pakistan in Davis Cup
page 18

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NEARBY



Gotabaya in Delhi, to
meet Modi today

COLOMBO
Sri Lanka's newly elected
President Gotabaya
Rajapaksa, who arrived in
New Delhi on Thursday on his
maiden state visit abroad,
will meet Prime Minister
Narendra Modi at noon on
Friday. Officials said national
and regional security,
development cooperation
and economic assistance are
likely to come up at the
high-level bilateral
discussion that comes a
fortnight after Mr. Rajapaksa
clinched the presidency.

NEWS ▶ PAGE 13

JNUSU to protest outside
HRD Ministry today

NEW DELHI
The Jawaharlal Nehru
University Students' Union on
Thursday said it will hold a
protest outside the HRD
Ministry on Friday and
demand that the
recommendations of a
committee, constituted to
restore the smooth
functioning of the varsity, be
made public.

CITY ▶ PAGE 2

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FRIDAY REVIEW ▶ 8 PAGES
(TABLOID)

BJP acts against Pragya as furore rocks House

MP out of parliamentary party meetings & defence panel

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

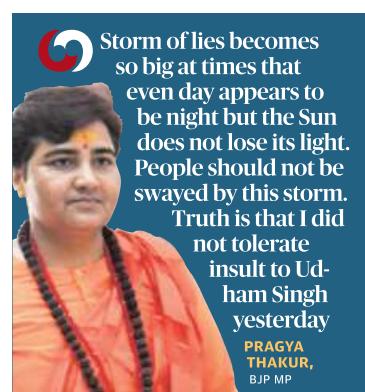
The BJP on Thursday barred its Lok Sabha MP from Bhopal, Pragya Singh Thakur, from attending any meeting of the parliamentary party and dropped her from the consultative committee on defence after she praised Mahatma Gandhi's assassin Nathuram Godse.

The ruling party's action against Ms. Thakur, who continues to be an accused in the Malegaon blast case, came amidst an Opposition uproar that prompted Defence Minister and Deputy Leader of the Lok Sabha, Rajnath Singh, to assert that "the BJP's philosophy had no place for any glorification of Godse".

Punitive action

In damage control mode, BJP's working president J.P. Nadda announced the disciplinary action against Ms. Thakur, who on Wednesday described the Mahatma's assassin as a *deshbhakt* (patriot), while speaking in Parliament. Her remarks have been expunged.

"The BJP never supports such statements and we do not support this ideology. We have decided that Ms. Thakur will not attend meetings of BJP parliamentary party during the session," he



Storm of lies becomes so big at times that even day appears to be night but the Sun does not lose its light. People should not be swayed by this storm. Truth is that I did not tolerate insult to Uddham Singh yesterday

PRAGYA THAKUR, BJP MP

What Pragya Thakur is saying is the heart of the BJP and the RSS

RAHUL GANDHI,
CONGRESS LEADER

Mahatma Gandhi was our guide earlier and will continue to be a guide in future as well

RAJNATH SINGH,
DEFENCE MINISTER

told reporters.

Ms. Thakur, however, took to Twitter to defend herself. "Storm of lies becomes so big at times that even day appears to be night but the Sun does not lose its light. People should not be swayed by this storm. Truth is that I did not tolerate insult to Uddham Singh yesterday," she tweeted in Hindi.

Opposition parties attacked the government, especially Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and claimed that the party's "inaction against her [Ms. Thakur] proved its tacit support to her and supporters of Godse".

Former Congress chief Rahul Gandhi, speaking to reporters, said Ms. Thakur's remarks represent "heart and soul" of the BJP and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) philosophy.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 12

Woman vet killed, set afire in Telangana

ABHINAY DESHPANDE
HYDERABAD

A 27-year-old veterinarian on her way home after a medical check-up at Gachibowli in Hyderabad was abducted and burnt alive by unidentified persons at Chatanpally near Shadnagar, 60 km from here in Telangana, late on Wednesday.

The Cyberabad police investigating the murder, suspect the victim was also sexually assaulted and that at least two persons were involved in the crime.

Congress leaders were collecting signatures of other Opposition MPs to petition Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla for a censure motion against Ms. Thakur and asked for a formal apology.

Congress leads charge
As soon as proceedings started, Opposition members strongly protested the controversial remarks made by Ms. Thakur during the debate on the Special Protection Group (Amendment) Bill. Congress leader in the House Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury stood up and said the BJP MP had called "the Congress a terrorist party and Godse a *deshbhakt*".

He accused the ruling party of trying to take away the legacy of leaders like Jawaharlal Nehru and Gandhi.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 12



A note of thanks: Uddhav Thackeray greeting supporters after taking oath as Maharashtra Chief Minister at Shivaji Park in Mumbai on Thursday. ■ PTI

Uddhav sworn in as CM; 6 Cabinet Ministers take oath

Two each from Shiv Sena, Congress and NCP join Ministry

SHARAD VYAS
TANVI DESHPANDE
MUMBAI

Shiv Sena leader Uddhav Thackeray took oath as Maharashtra's new Chief Minister on Thursday in front of a packed Shivaji Park, the iconic grounds where his father late Bal Thackeray was cremated.

"They reached the spot and based on the scarf, handbag buckle and Lord Ganesh's gold pendant on her body, the family members identified the victim," said Shadnagar Assistant Commissioner of Police V. Surender.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 12

'Will defeat BJP's manipulations'

minutes after Thackeray stopped at the iconic Siddhivinayak temple for thanksgiving.

The Cabinet discussed a resolution calling for a special session of the Assembly to prove its majority. Sources in the government said the Ministers also discussed possibilities of a farm loan waiver as its very first decision.

Senior government officers said the Chief Minister in a first decision in the Cabinet has ordered a white paper on the works done by the previous government in the farm sector.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 12

MORE REPORTS ON ▶ PAGE 12

Not a holiday



Army personnel patrolling the Srinagar-Jammu National Highway at Qazigund amid fresh snowfall on Thursday. ■ NISSAR AHMAD

+ Pakistan SC
extends Army
chief's tenure

MEHMAL SARFRAZ
LAHORE

The Supreme Court of Pakistan on Thursday allowed a conditional extension of the Army chief's term for six months, during which Parliament will have to legislate on the terms of service of the top general. On Tuesday, it had temporarily suspended a government notification granting a three-year extension to Army chief Qamar Javed Bajwa.

DETAILS ON ▶ PAGE 14

Lok Sabha passes Bill to regularise Delhi colonies

Once enacted, it will benefit 40 lakh people

BINDU SHAJAN PERAPPADAN
NEW DELHI

The Lok Sabha on Thursday passed the National Capital Territory of Delhi (Recognition of Property Rights of Residents in Unauthorised Colonies) Bill, 2019, which will grant ownership rights to residents living in 1,731 unauthorised colonies. The Bill was passed by voice vote.

Union Housing and Urban Affairs Minister Hardeep Singh Puri said the "historic" Bill will benefit 40 lakh Delhites. "It has been moved keeping only the welfare of people in mind," he said.

Digital mapping
The process of digital mapping of the 1,731 colonies of Delhi will be completed by December 31 this year. "In the next few weeks, digital maps of 1,731 colonies will be uploaded on the new portal which is being created. We are putting up boundaries of these colonies as they are intermingling," Mr. Puri said.

The Minister said the government has kept the registration rates nominal, but several members demanded

that charges be removed altogether. Issues pertaining to 69 affluent unauthorised colonies in Delhi will be taken up later, Mr. Puri said.

Bill timing
Participating in the debate, MP Manoj Tiwari, BJP's Delhi unit chief, said that the State government is doing nothing but "spreading lies and confusion". "Many generations of Delhi will thank [Prime Minister Narendra] Modi for this decision," he said. While several Opposition MPs questioned the timing of the Bill given that Delhi Assembly elections are round the corner, Mr. Tiwari said its passage would trigger a new process of redevelopment of the colonies.

South Delhi MP Ramesh Bidhuri of the BJP said successive Delhi governments, including the present one, failed to extend ownership rights to people residing in unauthorised colonies.

Rajya Sabha Deputy Chairman Harivansh informed the House on Thursday that the Business Advisory Committee had allocated three hours for discussion on the Bill.

Google warned 500 Indians on phishing

It sent 12,000 warnings in three months

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Google sent out over 12,000 warnings to users globally, including about 500 in India, during the period from July to September this year, alerting them to "government-backed" phishing attempts against them.

This comes close on the heels of the Facebook-owned WhatsApp disclosing that an Israeli spyware, Pega-

sus, was used to spy on journalists and human rights activists globally, including 121 people in India.

In a blog post, Google said

from Israeli company NSO Group. Responding to specific questions from the Opposition, the Minister told the Rajya Sabha that there had been "no unauthorised interception" as far as he knew.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 12

its Threat Analysis Group (TAG) works to counter targeted and government-backed hacking against Google and its users. The TAG, it

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 12

added, tracks more than 270 targeted or government-backed groups from more than 50 countries.

"These groups have many goals, including intelligence collection, stealing of intellectual property, targeting dissidents and activists, destructive cyberattacks, or spreading coordinated disinformation," Google added.

As per the data shared on the blog post, about 500 warnings were issued to users in India.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 12

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Councillors demand release of funds

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Councillors of all three civic bodies of Delhi marched from the civic centre to Delhi Secretariat on Thursday demanding release of funds.

Around 180 councillors marched carrying placards reading, "Shame on you Kejriwal, release the funds of the MCD". They also claimed that a total of ₹9,195 crore is due to the civic bodies under various heads.

Standing Committee chief of the North Delhi Municipal Corporation, Jai Prakash, said that the councillors had to take to the streets as the Chief Minister "is not being able to see what the civic bodies are going through". Bhupendra Gupta of the South Delhi Municipal Corporation said that the councillors would continue to stage protests as long as Delhi's development stayed stalled due to shortage of funds.

Air quality of Delhi-NCR			
Delhi	106	Gurugram	112
Ghaziabad	105	Faridabad	110
Noida	101	Greater Noida	110
Good	50-100	Satisfactory	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

DELHI TODAY

Talk: River Dialogues - a new series of talks will feature a conversation by Sanjoy Hazarika, Director, Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative and scholar; Neha Sinha, Conservation Biologist and author; and Harsht Singh Bal, journalist with Sucharita Sen, Professor, Centre for the Study of Regional Development, School of Social Sciences, JNU at India International Centre (IIC), 6:30 p.m.

Music talk: Choral music and its influence on the development of Western European classical music, a presentation by Nadeeba Balyan, Director of the Piano Forte School of Music and Conductor of Delhi Chamber Choir. This presentation will look into choir history and how it influenced other genres of music in different time periods at IIC, 6:30 p.m.

Dance: "Samanyam," an evening of Kathak and Odissi by Dr. Swati Subodh, a disciple of Guru Ramkumar and Anikita Nayak, a disciple of Guru Madhumita Raut at Triveni Kala Sangam, 205, Tansen Marg, Mandi House, 7 p.m.

Exhibition: "Cocktail on the wall II", an exhibition by Winnie Singh and Khushroo Kalyanwala at, India Habitat Centre (IHC), 11 a.m. - 7 p.m.

Exhibition: "Live Unbound", an art exhibition curated by Sugandha Chagi at Modern Art Gallery, Chanakyapuri, 11 a.m. - 7 p.m.

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

Chief Minister flags off 100 standard-floor buses

These are equipped with GPS trackers, CCTVs, hydraulic lifts

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Thursday flagged off 100 new standard-floor buses, which will be operated under the cluster scheme, from the Rajghat bus depot here.

Part of the fourth lot of such vehicles out of a total of 1,000 standard-floor buses that started being delivered in October this year, these buses, the government said in a statement, are equipped with "ultra-modern facilities" and features such as GPS trackers, panic buttons, CCTVs and hydraulic lifts for the differently abled.

With the addition of 100 more vehicles to the lot of 229 buses which have been flagged-off in previous months, the total number of buses now plying under the cluster scheme in Delhi has gone up to 2,008, the Delhi government said in a statement.

"I want to congratulate the people of Delhi for 100 new buses. Several new buses have arrived in recent months and the rest are also coming soon. I believe that



The buses were flagged off from Rajghat bus depot in New Delhi on Thursday. ■ PTI

with the induction of new buses, the lack of and irregularity in public transportation in Delhi will be reduced," Mr. Kejriwal said.

"Just like the transformations that have happened in the health and education sectors in Delhi, we want the public transport sector to become technologically advanced and be recognised internationally. The people of Delhi will be proud of our transport sector," he said further.

According to the government, the new buses will ply on seven routes: 10 of these will ply from Mubarakpur Dabas to Old Delhi Railway Station, seven from Nilothi Village to Old Delhi Railway Station, 15 from Qutubgarh

to Palika Kendra, seven from Bakoli Temple to Old Delhi Railway Station, 11 from Rohini Sector 23 to Old Delhi Railway Station.

As many as 20 of these, the government said, would ply between Uttam Nagar and the Delhi airport in addition to six between Lumpur Border and Old Delhi Railway Station.

While 25 such buses joined the fleet in August, 100 were flagged off in September and 104 in October.

The government added that 60 new buses are scheduled to be inducted into the Delhi Transport Corporation's own fleet in January next year, 104 in February, 130 in March, 160 in April and 19 in May.

HC seeks reply on plea for one policeman each in DTC buses

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Thursday sought response of the city government, its Transport Department and the police on a petition seeking directions to install CCTV cameras and deploy one policeman each in all DTC and cluster buses in the Capital.

A Bench of Chief Justice D.N. Patel and Justice C. Hari Shankar issued notice to the Delhi government, the Transport Department and Delhi Police seeking their stand on the plea which has alleged that passengers, especially women, are not safe in the buses which have become a "hub" of eve-teasing, snatching and theft.

Anti Corruption Council of India, in its petition, has claimed that the Delhi government and the Transport Department have done "nothing" to ensure security of women commuters. The petition also sought installation of tracking devices in the buses and urged the court to direct the government to run more buses exclusively for women.

Delhi-NCR's air quality best in 55 days

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Delhi recorded its best air quality in 55 days on Thursday, courtesy rains and high-velocity winds that kept pollution in check.

The city recorded its overall air quality index at 106, the best since October 5, when it was 98. On Wednesday, the overall AQI was 134.

In Delhi and National Capital Region (NCR), the level of PM2.5 – tiny particulate matter less than 2.5 microns in diameter that can enter the lungs and the bloodstream – was 37.5 microgram per cubic metre at 7.30 p.m., which is within the safe limit of 0-60. Most of the monitoring stations in Delhi recorded AQI in the "satisfactory" category.

The Opposition BJP, on its part, accused the AAP-led Delhi government of not making any demand for the supply of onions from the Centre.

Mr. Hussain said that the National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India (NAFED) had stopped supplying onions stating it would be able to make onions available to the Delhi government after procuring from markets in Alwar and later from the stock of onions to be imported from Egypt.

CAMPUS 'FEE'VER | JNU students on why fee hike should be rolled back

If fee increases, I would not be able to pursue my PhD



VIVEK KUMAR
MA student,
German Studies

I am pursuing my master's in German studies from Jawaharlal Nehru University. Coming from an underprivileged socio-economic background, it was unimaginable for me to be a part of such a prestigious university.

My father, who is a street vendor, is the sole earning member of my family and makes a maximum of ₹10,000 per month. After completing school education, I too faced a scenario where other students my age were preparing for engineering colleges. I didn't want to burden my father with engineering college fee, so I decided to take admission in a central university. JNU was my first choice and I started preparing for it. Thankfully in 2016, I cleared the JNU entrance exam and joined.

Despite all the controversies being spread about JNU, I understood what the university actually is and how it shapes a person into a responsible citizen. Since I did not put the burden of my university fee on my family, I was able to concentrate more on my academics. Throughout this journey I have experienced my development as well as my family's. If this Inter-Hall Administration manual is cleared and the fee increases, I would not be able to pursue my PhD from here, which has been my dream. I would be forced to quit academics and look for a job.

As told to Kallol Bhattacharjee | NEXT ▶ PRITI BARNAWAL, NIVASH PRAKASH

I joined JNU for academic excellence, affordable education



CHAKETI RAJU,
Doctoral student in
Political Science

I come from a Dalit family in Telangana and joined JNU's master's programme in political science. Though I had cleared post-graduate entrance exams at JNU, University of Hyderabad, Banaras Hindu University and Pondicherry University, I opted for JNU because of two reasons – one, academic excellence, and two, affordable quality education.

Today, I am in the final stage of my PhD because of the low fee structure of JNU, otherwise, I would have become a nightmare to pursue higher education in this premier institution. When I look at the scenario after fee hike, the dream of "equitable and affordable higher education" seems to be completely shattered. This sort of irrational act, even though they are justifying it in the name of rationalisation, eliminates students from socially marginalised backgrounds like us.

The allocation of funds for higher education is anyway minimal, and now, in the name of financial autonomy, the marginalised students who comprise 40% of the JNU crowd are being forced to pay high fees by coercive administration tactics. This not only affects the students financially, but also raises the question of "right to education for all". The government has to know that we are students, not customers, and education is not a commodity that one can buy in the market.

JNU students to stage protest outside HRD Ministry today

It wants report of high-power committee to be made public

a strike for a month against the hostel fee hike.

They said the administration is responsible for the academic loss suffered by the students and the semester should be increased.

They said time should be given for all the academic losses incurred. The students also demanded the removal of Vice-Chancellor Mamidala Jagadesh Kumar.

Teachers' demand

Meanwhile, the JNU Teachers' Association (JNTA) on Thursday sought an urgent appointment with Union HRD Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' to press upon the Ministry's intervention in ensuring that the impasse over hostel fee hike is resolved.

The JNTA said neither the report submitted by the

Ministry-constituted high-power committee has been officially made public, nor has the ministry announced any follow up action, despite the urgency that the situation demands.

The teachers' association also alleged that the Vice-Chancellor made "another shameless attempt" of scuttling any real resolution to the issue by announcing a new set of hostel charges decided upon through a "completely arbitrary and illegal process", which "didn't even have the saving grace" of addressing the concerns raised by the students or the JNTA.

"Giving more time and space to the V-C therefore will only push the university into a deeper crisis and therefore it is imperative that the HRD Ministry act immediately," they said.

Rai chairs meet on revised minimum wages

Labour Minister asks officials to ensure strict compliance of new rules

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Labour Minister Gopal Rai on Thursday chaired an interactive meeting with heads of government departments and contractors at the Delhi Secretariat here to evaluate the status of the implementation and compliance of the AAP-led Delhi government's decision to revise minimum wages for various categories of workers in the Capital.

The meeting, according to the Delhi government, was attended by a total number

of 138 representatives, including 65 heads from government departments and 71 contractors, where they were advised by Mr. Rai to ensure strict compliance of new rates of minimum wages, disbursement of arrears and also payment of bonus in case not paid so far.

Next meet on Dec 16 "The meeting was attended by Secretary-Cum-Commissioner [Labour] and other senior officers. Some issues regarding tender document

were raised by the contractors concerning some of the departments which were taken note of. The next interactive meeting is scheduled to be held on 16.12.2019 wherein all contractors shall be submitting their status report on these issues," the government said in a statement.

The Labour Department revised minimum rates of wages for various categories of workers in Delhi which is expected to benefit about 55 lakh workers working in Delhi both in the formal and informal sectors, the statement said further.

The Supreme Court, vide its order dated October 14, 2019, the statement said further, had upheld the rates proposed by the Labour Department which were notified on October 22, 2019 impacting approximately 29,000 outsourced workers or personnel engaged in various departments of the Delhi government through various contractors and agencies.

Make onions available at ₹15.6 per kg: Delhi to Centre

Imran Hussain writes to Paswan; BJP accuses AAP of not raising any demand

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Opposition BJP, on its part, accused the AAP-led Delhi government of not making any demand for the supply of onions from the Centre.

Mr. Hussain said that the National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India (NAFED) had stopped supplying onions stating it would be able to make onions available to the Delhi government after procuring from markets in Alwar and later from the stock of onions to be imported from Egypt.

In a memorandum to the President of National Commission for Safai Karmcharis, Manhar Valibhai Jhala, to take action against Mr. Jain.

Leader of Opposition in the Delhi Vidhan Sabha, Vijender Gupta, in a tweet, alleged that the AAP government had cancelled an order of four truckloads of daily onion supply in the first week of October.

those were being retailed to the residents at ₹23.90 per kg to counter the rise in their prices. He argued that the Centre's decision to make onion available at such high price will adversely affect the supply of onions to the people of Delhi.

Meanwhile, Leader of Opposition in the Delhi Vidhan Sabha, Vijender Gupta, in a tweet, alleged that the AAP government had cancelled an order of four truckloads of daily onion supply in the first week of October.

BJP stages dharna over sanitation worker's death

Party demands Satyendar Jain's arrest

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The BJP on Thursday staged a dharna against "negligence" of the AAP government, following the death of a sanitation worker in north-west Delhi last week.

Alleging that Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's "negligence" continued to result in deaths of sanitation workers, the BJP demanded that Public Works Department and Urban Development Minister Satyendar Jain be arrested.

Protesters from the Delhi BJP SC Morcha staged the demonstration at Valmiki Temple on Mandir Marg headed by the unit's president, Mohan Lal Gihara.

Mr. Gihara handed over a

memorandum to the President of National Commission for Safai Karmcharis, Manhar Valibhai Jhala, to take action against Mr. Jain.

Leader of Opposition in the Delhi Vidhan Sabha, Vijender Gupta, said: "News of the death of sewer workers keeps on coming but the Chief Minister neither pays attention to this nor does he provide proper assistance to the sanitation workers. There is a system of measuring gas pressure before cleaning sewer which comes under the Manual Scavengers Rules 2013, issued by the Central government, but that has not been implemented by the Delhi government yet."

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JANAKPUR B-1/2, Main Najafgarh Road, Opp. Metro Pillar 543

NOIDA, Nirula's Sec-2, Near Metro Station, Sec-15, Noida, UP

LAJPAT NAGAR, 49, Main Ring Road, Adj. Haldi Ram, Near Moolchand Crossing

Chadha claims AAP govt. first proposed idea; Tiwari credits Modi

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) traded barbs over the regularisation of unauthorised colonies in the Capital even as the Lok Sabha on Thursday passed the National Capital Territory of Delhi (Recognition of Property Rights of Residents in Unauthorised Colonies) Bill, 2019, which will grant ownership rights to residents living in 1,731 such colonies.</

Youth, minor held for robbing people

Accused were involved in 4 criminal cases

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

A 19-year-old youth has been arrested and his minor associate apprehended for allegedly robbing people by grabbing their neck and leaving them gasping for breath in central Delhi, the police said on Thursday.

DCP (Central) Mandeep Singh Randhawa said that the accused has been identified as Jitender, a resident of Anand Parbat.

The accused were previously involved in four criminal cases and four mobile phones were recovered from them, the police said.

The police said that on Wednesday, a man approached the Anand Prabat police station and reported that he was robbed while coming home from Nehru Nagar on Tuesday. "He said when he reached Buddha Mandir in Teliwala Basti, a person kicked him from be-

hind after which he fell down. Another person then choked him and took away his mobile phone. They then beat him and fled away," Mr. Singh said.

A case was then registered under Section 392 (punishment for robbery), 394 (voluntarily causing hurt in committing robbery) and 34 (common intention) of the IPC and investigation was taken up.

During probe, the police got a tip-off about the accused after which a trap was laid near Anand Prabat. They were nabbed around 7 p.m. on Wednesday, the DCP said.

During interrogation, it was revealed that Jitender and his juvenile accomplice used to target old people or children. They follow them till they reach an isolated spot after which they pounce upon them, choke them and rob them of their belongings, the DCP said.

Man held for smuggling firearms in the Capital

20 pistols, 100 bullets seized: police

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

A 25-year-old man was arrested for allegedly smuggling firearms in the Capital, the police said on Thursday, adding that 20 pistols and 100 bullets were seized from his possession.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (Special Cell) Pramod Singh Kushwah said that the accused, identified as Raju Deshi, is a resident of Burhanpur district in Madhya Pradesh.

The police said that an information was received that Deshi would come near Akshardham Temple to deliver a consignment of arms on Tuesday evening. A trap was laid and he was arrested.

He used to procure pistols at the rate of ₹6,000-₹9,000 and sell them for ₹15,000-₹20,000 per piece

PRAMOD SINGH KUSHWAH
DCP, Special Cell

The officials said that Deshi was involved in smuggling firearms for the last two to three years.

"He used to procure pistols at the rate of ₹6,000-₹9,000 and sell them for ₹15,000-₹20,000 per piece. The accused used to sell the bullets at the rate of ₹250-300 per piece, which was bought for ₹150-175," Mr. Singh said.


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Fake call centre busted, 45 arrested

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Forty-five people were arrested after a fake call centre, which allegedly duped people in the guise of popular shopping portals such as Flipkart and Myntra, was busted here on Thursday, the Noida police said.

The fake call centre, operating from Sector 6, was busted by a team of the Cyber Cell and Knowledge Park police station, a senior officer said.

"Forty-five people have been arrested and 16 wakie-talkies, 29 mobile phones and two computer systems have been recovered from the spot," SSP, Gautam Buddh Nagar, Vaibhav Krishna said.

The police said the modus operandi adopted by the gang was to dupe people in the name of cash-back, security money and lucky draw using popular online shopping sites. The SSP said the gang has duped "thousands of people".

ED attaches ₹8.82 crore assets of Noida-based firm

Company involved in online Ponzi fraud

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

A Noida-based multilevel marketing firm's assets worth over ₹8 crore have been attached in connection with an alleged online Ponzi fraud case, the Enforcement Directorate said on Thursday.

A provisional order under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) has been issued by the federal agency against the company - Webwork Trade Link Pvt Ltd.

The case dates back to 2017 when the Noida police had filed an FIR against the firm and its directors Anurag Garg, Sandesh Verma and others for allegedly perpetrating an online fraud and cheating gullible depositors. The ED subsequently took cognisance of the complaint to file a case under the PMLA.

"The attachment consists of fixed deposits, mutual funds, balances in savings and current accounts of entities who had received money on account of selling the immovable properties and ornaments or providing services but due to the business shutting down and consequent fraud cases against the company, these funds remained with the beneficiaries," the agency said in a statement.

The total value of the attached assets as part of the latest order is ₹8.82 crore.

The agency claimed, the multi-level marketing company diverted large amounts to the accounts of different persons and companies associated with them. This is the second attachment of assets action by the ED in this case as it had earlier frozen properties worth ₹27.66 crore.

Chaos at Kherki Daula toll plaza as FASTag deadline nears

With just two days to go, hassled motorists huddled around toll plaza office. While a few returned as tags were in short supply, some others didn't bring necessary documents due to lack of information

ASHOK KUMAR
GURUGRAM

This is Manoj Kumar's third visit to a point-of-sale (POS) at Kherki Daula toll plaza office here on Wednesday over the last ten days to buy a FASTag for his car. Commuting between his workplace and home, he crosses the toll twice a day and is jittery with just three days to go before FASTags are made mandatory at all National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) toll plazas from December 1.

"I took a few hours break from my office to come here and buy a FASTag. But the tags were in short-supply on my first two visits. The tags are available today [Wednesday], but now I found that copies of PAN, Aadhaar and registration certificate must all belong to the vehicle's owner. The vehicle belongs

A last selfie that gave away a murder plot

Nancy's tear-soaked face alarmed her parents, made police suspect foul play in her disappearance

SAURABH TRIVEDI
NEW DELHI

A last selfie sent to a friend by a 20-year-old woman whose semi-decomposed body was found near Panipat refinery in Haryana helped the Delhi police crack the murder case.

On Wednesday, the police had recovered Nancy Chopra's body 17 days after she went missing from her husband Sahil Chopra's house.

Mr Chopra (21), a second-hand car dealer, and his employee Shubham (24) were arrested from Delhi while the third accused, Badal, (26), a cousin of Shubham, was arrested from his village in Karnal. The three allegedly planned the murder and took Nancy to Panipat, where Mr. Chopra allegedly shot her in the head, said the police.

Chat with friend

Additional DCP (West) Sameer Sharma said that Nancy had sent a selfie of her tear-soaked face to a close friend on November 11, the



The accused in police custody; (inset) the last selfie sent by the victim, Nancy Chopra. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

day she left the house with her husband for Panipat. "In an online chat with her friend, Nancy told her that if her phone remained switched off for more than three days, she should inform her parents and send them the selfie as a proof that something bad had happened to her," said Mr. Sharma.

When the friend realised that Nancy's mobile phone was switched off, she informed her parents about their daughter's fears and sent them her last selfie. Nancy's parents then approached Mr. Chopra's parents to find out the whereabouts of their daughter, said Mr. Sharma.

When they did not get any satisfactory response from Mr. Chopra's parents, they approached the Janakpuri police station with a missing

person complaint.

"Sahil had informed his parents that he was going out of Delhi for some business deal. The police traced his location with the help of his mobile phone. When he was questioned about his wife, he gave misleading replies but when his phone locations for last the 17 days were checked, his and Nancy's phone locations were found to be in Panipat at the same time [on November 11]. Sahil broke down and confessed to his involvement in the murder," said Mr. Sharma.

'Shot point-blank'

During interrogation, Mr. Chopra allegedly revealed that on November 10, the couple had a huge fight and the next day he called Nancy and asked her to get ready to go to Panipat where he had to collect some payment. He also asked her to bring a gun kept in the house with her. He purchased liquor from a shop in Paschim Vihar.

"The couple was on the back seat, while Shubham

was driving and Badal was sitting next to him. When they were on Panipat flyover, Sahil shot Nancy in the head and she died on the spot. They shifted the body in the car's boot and later dumped it by the roadside and returned to Delhi," said a police officer.

In Delhi, Mr. Chopra allegedly checked in into a lodge and informed his parents that he was out of the city. While Mr. Shubham took the car to Muzaffarnagar to dispose of it, Mr. Badal left for Karnal, his home town, said the police.

"Sahil said he was fed up with the daily fights with Nancy. They met each other at a common friend's birthday party around three years ago. They were in a live-in relationship for around 20 months before getting married in court in March this year. Their parents accepted their marriage and the couple started living with Sahil's parents. The fights started soon after the marriage," said the officer.

Man steals cables from news agency office, held

Theft disrupted Internet services

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

A 37-year-old man has been arrested for allegedly stealing cable wires from a news agency's office on Parliament Street, the police said on Thursday.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (New Delhi) Eish Singh said that the accused has been identified as Shokeen, a resident of Sita Ram Bazar.

The police said that on Monday, Chief Administrative Officer of the news agency, M.R. Mishra, reported that they appointed a scrap dealer to remove the furniture from the first floor of their office on Parliament Street.

Work affected

"However, after completion of the work, the internet services were abruptly interrupted. As the normal working of the news agency got affected, immediate fault finding exercise was initiated during which it was

found that some of the underground cables going from the main hall to the server room had been removed," Mr. Singh said.

Cables cut off

During investigation, CCTV footage was obtained and it was revealed that while removing the furniture, three workers of the scrap dealer entered the server room and cut-off the system cables lying under the floor of the main hall and server room and took away the wires in a plastic bag.

The police said that the scrap dealer was then contacted, who told them that the work was sub-contracted to Shokeen. He was traced and arrested on Tuesday.

During interrogation, the accused allegedly told the police that he stole the cables as there is copper inside it, which can be sold at a high rate. He has no previous criminal record, the police said.

Widow of self-employed man awarded ₹26 lakh

Victim died after being hit by motorcycle

NIRNIMESH KUMAR
NEW DELHI

A Motor Accident Claims Tribunal has awarded a compensation of ₹26 lakh to the widow of a 45-year-old self-employed man in a 2018 road accident death case.

The man died on the spot after being hit by a motorcycle. He was standing on the roadside for a conveyance to reach home.

Initially, there was no clue either about the vehicle or its owner. The police had lodged an accident case against an unknown person.

The victim's wife, the complainant, came to know about the offending vehicle when she visited the spot three days after the accident where a man told her that he had noted down the registration number and knew the driver. He also gave his evidence but the court found contradiction in his statement.

Interestingly, the driver himself gave away while defending himself in reply to the claim petition.

"The driver himself has come to the rescue of contention of petitioners with regard to accident having been caused by him. The defence taken on his behalf in written statement was that he was plying his vehicle properly and it was the deceased who was negligent in plying his vehicle," Presiding Officer of the tribunal Savita Rao said.

"The driver, thereby, admitted regarding the accident of deceased having been caused by the vehicle being driven by him, though in his anxiety to put the burden upon the deceased and to save himself from the clutches of law, he mentioned regarding the negligence of deceased in driving the motorcycle without looking into the fact that the deceased was on foot," Ms. Rao further said.

The tribunal directed the insurer of the vehicle to pay the compensation amount on behalf of the driver and owner of the offending vehicle.

'Too many vehicles behind snarls on city roads'

Minister says vehicles increased by 179% against 15.7% of road length during 1991-2017

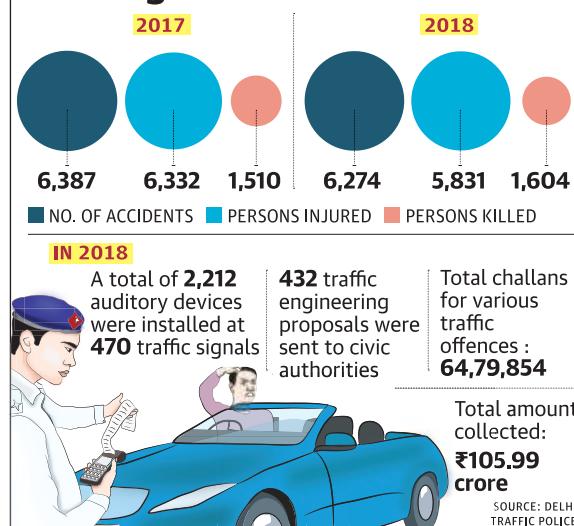
SAURABH TRIVEDI
NEW DELHI

The unmitigated growth in the number of registered motor vehicles is the primary reason for traffic congestion in the national capital, Union Minister of State for Home G. Kishan Reddy said on Wednesday.

In his reply to a question in the Rajya Sabha on whether the government is aware of the worsening traffic situation in Delhi causing inconvenience to the public, Mr. Reddy said that according to Delhi police records, the primary reason for traffic congestion in the national capital is the unmitigated growth in the number of registered motor vehicles, which has increased by nearly 179% between 1991 and 2017, while the total road length has gone up by about 15.7% during the same period.

"The Delhi police are constantly engaged in regulation, enforcement and education of road users in the NCT of Delhi with an objective to ensure safe and smooth flow of traffic on city

Tracking the numbers



roads," Mr. Reddy said.

Mandi House protest

While replying to another question on whether the Delhi police had allowed protesters to sit on a dharna at the Mandi House roundabout.

"In one particular instance, differently abled protesters squatted at the Mandi House roundabout without any prior information from October 23 to 25," said Mr. Reddy.

The differently abled job

aspirants have again been sitting on a dharna at Mandi House for the last two days, leading to major traffic snarls in Central Delhi area.

When asked why the traffic situation in NDMC's Lytton's area had become worse, Mr. Reddy replied that the protesters were constantly persuaded to move to Jantar Mantar, the designated area for demonstration, to continue their agitation.

"The Delhi police are making all efforts to ensure that minimum inconvenience is caused to the public in the NDMC area," the Union Minister said.

'Evolve robust mechanism to check green clearance'

Lack of data on compliance shocking: NGT

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has directed the Union Environment Ministry and the Central Pollution Control Board to convene a meeting to evolve a "robust mechanism" for effective monitoring of compliance of conditions imposed on environmental clearances granted for various projects.

While noting that "no satisfactory mechanism exists at present," a Bench headed by NGT Chairperson Justice Adarsh Kumar Goel said, "There has to be speedy monitoring and speedy action wherever necessary. There has to be a robust plan for the purpose which is the responsibility of the government departments concerned. We place on record our disapproval for the present sorry state-of-affairs and expect meaningful improvement."

The tribunal also said that the frequency of post environmental clearance monitoring should be on a quarterly basis and no less than twice a year, while adding that the "present scenario of monitoring once in 4.5 years is a farce."

The directions came when the green panel was hearing a plea moved by petitioner Sandeep Mittal seeking stricter mechanisms to ensure compliance of conditions mentioned in environmental clearances granted for projects.



IN THE FAST LANE

Around 85,000 vehicles cross Kherki Daula toll every day, including 30,000 with FASTags or PassTags

- All lanes of Kherki Daula toll plaza except one on each side will be dedicated to FASTag users from December 1
- Any vehicle without FASTag entering the dedicated lanes will be charged double the toll fee
- The PassTags, the discounted tags issued by Millennium City Expressway Private Limited, will also be allowed in FASTag lanes at the Kherki Daula toll plaza for the time being. But PassTags are not valid at other NHAI toll plazas
- FASTags have to be pasted on the vehicle
- FASTags cannot be transferred and should be used strictly for the vehicles they are issued for
- Motorists must maintain a speed of 20-25 kmph when approaching the boom and keep safe distance from other vehicles

in queues at the counters waiting for their turns to buy tags. "It took me around one-and-a-half-hour to buy the tag. Now I don't know where to paste it in the car," said DLF Phase-III resident Anil Kumar, 65, a former Survey of India employee.

While many were carrying the passport size photographs to be attached with the documents, a few, especially the elderly, had difficulty in filling the details online through their mobile phones. Pawan Kumar, who works at Bhawali, said he could not find any POS in

Delhi. He stays in East Punjab Bagh.

Sumit Kaushik owns a fleet of trucks, but had to return disappointed since the tags for commercial vehicles were not available. Many of the buyers were also confused about different bankers - ICICI, IDFC First, Paytm and Airtel - supplying tags at different prices.

ICICI representative Rakesh Kumar said the rush had increased over the last 4-5 days and he was selling around 60-70 tags every day. He conceded that the waiting time was long due to fre-

quent slowing down of servers and short supply of tags.

Rajendra Bhati, project head of Skylark, the company that operates the toll, said Kherki Daula was the busiest. Around 85,000 vehicles cross the toll daily and is the most sensitive among all NHAI toll plazas. Hence all eyes are on this toll plaza to see how the plan is rolled out.

In a bid to create awareness among the motorists on the new rule, the toll authorities have been making regular announcements through public address sys-

tem, putting up hoardings, distributing pamphlets and also printed the information on the toll receipts, but certain issues remain.

Trial flopped
Several trials have also been conducted at the toll beginning November 6, dedicating a few of the lanes to FASTag users for a few hours, but it had resulted in huge chaos. "Of the 14 lanes on Delhi-Jaipur carriageway, we dedicated five lanes to FASTag vehicles around noon on Thursday, but the traffic piled up in no time. We had to then abort the trial. What would the situation be if all lanes are dedicated to FASTag users is anyone's guess," wondered Mr. Bhati.

The free passage facility granted to around 17,000 vehicles of 31 villages remains another vexed issue. Hari Ram, a Shikhopur resident, said they had to frequent the city many times a day and it would be a financial burden for them if they are made to pay the toll fee. It should be noted that the scuffle between the locals and the toll collectors are a routine at Kherki Daula.

NGT Project Director Ashok Sharma said necessary changes would be made in the software to ensure that vehicles of villagers fitted with FASTags are allowed to pass without deduction of toll fee and hoped that the system would be in place before December 1. He added that PassTags, issued by Millennium City Expressways Private Limited (MCEPL), would also be valid for the time being.

"With a view to plan such monitoring, the percentage of compliance must be ascertained. Trend over a period of time in terms of increase in compliance or otherwise must be studied so that there can be corres-

ponding review of mechanism based on correct data," the Bench said.

Statuing that there is a "dire need for revamping the monitoring mechanism," the Bench added, "There is need to

Reference to RSS triggers uproar in Rajasthan Assembly

BJP members take exception to remarks by Parliamentary Affairs Minister

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

JAIPUR Reference to the ideology of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh and the claim that it posed a threat to democracy with the help of the "political support" it enjoyed, led to a ruckus in the Rajasthan Assembly during a special session here on Thursday to mark 70th anniversary of the adoption of the Constitution.

The two-day session was convened to discuss the working of the Constitution and the responsibility of elected representatives to strengthen democracy by following constitutional norms.

Speaker C.P. Joshi said a healthy debate in the House would help identify challenges and evolve a balance bet-

ween rights and duties.

Opening the debate, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Shanti Dhariwal said constitutional values were under attack from forces that had weakened public institutions and curtailed freedom of the media. "Those who act on the lines of a certain ideology in a hidden manner will not be forgiven by the people," he said.

Golwalkar's book

Mr. Dhariwal referred to RSS ideologue M.S. Golwalkar's book, *Bunch of Thoughts*, and said it had listed Muslims, Christians and Communists as the "three biggest threats." "Moreover, the Tricolour is never hoisted in the RSS shakhas.... Are they really nationalists?" he asked.

BJP MLAs and former Ministers, Vasudev Devnani and Madan Dilawar, took strong exception to the remarks and created an uproar in the House.

Leader of the Opposition Gulab Chand Kataria joined them and said the BJP, which could "expose the Congress," would like to maintain the dignity of the session, which had been called to work together for strengthening the Constitution rather than attacking each other.

Deputy Chief Minister Sachin Pilot said visionary leaders of the Independence movement had framed the Constitution and it was the duty of every citizen to preserve its spirit. He said the Supreme Court had rightly

intervened in the formation of government in Maharashtra in order to protect the Constitution. On BJP MP Pragya Thakur's remarks on Mahatma Gandhi's assassin Nathuram Godse, he said every nationalist should condemn them.

New members sworn in

Newly elected Congress leader Rita Chaudhary and Rashtriya Loktantrik Party's Narayan Beniwal took oath as MLAs.

Ms. Chaudhary won from Jhunjhunu district's Mandawa constituency and Mr. Beniwal from Nagaur district's Khinsar seat in the Assembly by-elections held in October. The Speaker administered the oath to both of them.

Ties with BJP limited to Bihar, says LJP chief

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

PATNA Apparently taking a cue from NDA ally JD(U), headed by Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, the Lok Janshakti Party on Thursday asserted that its

ties with the BJP-led coalition was "limited" to the State and it was looking forward to expanding its national footprint by contesting Assembly polls in Delhi, Jammu and Kashmir and West Bengal.

At a function organised here to celebrate the party's foundation day, Chirag Paswan, LJP president and son of de facto leader Ram Vilas Paswan, however insisted that the ambitions must not

be construed as a disaffection with the NDA. "Our ties with the BJP are stronger than ever.. we are committed to working together and helping Nitish Kumar return as CM next year," he said.

Two constables arrested in Hapur custodial death case

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

GHAZIABAD

More than six weeks after Pradeep Tomar, a security guard from Lakhuan village, died allegedly due to torture at a police post in Pilakhuwa town of Hapur district, two constables have been arrested. "Manish Singh and Sonu Kumar were arrested on Wednesday. They were produced before a magistrate and have been sent to jail," Hapur (City) CO Rajesh Kumar Singh said.

Mr. Singh said the other accused, SHO Yogesh Ballayan, Sub-Inspector Ajay Singh and two other consta-



Constables being taken to court in Hapur. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

bles (Anil and Jaswant), who are under suspension, are still on the run.

According to police sources, DSP Santosh Mishra, who was also named in the FIR and was transferred

out of the district, has been given a clean chit.

Mr. Tomar, 35, died on the intervening night of October 13 after he was picked up by the police from the Chhijarsi toll booth in Pilakhuwa. The police had claimed that he was picked up for questioning in connection with the murder of the wife of his brother-in-law.

However, Mr. Tomar's family, including his 10-year-old son, who was allegedly present when his father was picked up, alleged that he was tortured by the police personnel.

DELHI Timings

FRIDAY, NOV. 29

RISE 06:54 SET 17:24

RISE 09:22 SET 19:56

SATURDAY, NOV. 30

RISE 06:55 SET 17:24

RISE 10:15 SET 20:51

SUNDAY, DEC. 01

RISE 06:56 SET 17:24

RISE 11:03 SET 21:48

Delhi Weather max min

Delhi City 22 16

Safdarjang 22 16

Palam 23 15

Delhi Palam Today

26°C Shallow fog/mist during cool morning is likely. Day will be sunny and comfortable. Air quality may get poor.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow

25°C Drop in night temperature is likely and shallow fog would prevail. Dry and sunny day is likely.

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EDMC's Citizens Helpline No. : 155303

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निवादा स्थगन सूचना

इस कार्यालय के अल्पकालीन E—Tender No.WRD/MID/Gumla-F2-26/2019-20 Renovation of Kerajhriya M.I. Scheme जिसका P.R.N. 218926 M.I.(2019-20) है, अपरिहार्य कारणों से Tender date में संशोधित किया गया था जिसका प्रकाशन P.R.N.219982 M.I. (2019-20)D है, इस योजना का पुनः Tender date में निम्न प्रकार संशोधित किया गया था जिसका P.R.No.221405 M.I. (2019-20)D है।

इस निवादा का अपरिहार्य कारण से अगले प्रकाशन तक स्थगित किया जाता है।

कार्यपालक अधिकार्यान्ता, लघु सिंचाई प्रमंडल, गुमला

PR 222308 (Minor Irrigation)19-20#D

GOVERNMENT MEDICAL COLLEGE, SECTOR 32, CHANDIGARH

E-TENDER NOTICE

e-Tender (Online tenders) are invited from the manufacturers or their sole authorized distributors/ sole agents for the purchase of following items :

S. No. Ref. No.	Equipment/ Tender Id	Quantity	Department	Earliest Money (In Rupees)	Due date of receipt of EMD & Bid	Due date of Opening of tender
1	Anaesthesia Workstation 2019_GMCH_53010_1 GMCH-PB-II/PA-III/ET/19/631	03 Nos.	Psychiatry, Ophthalmology & Radiotherapy	1,80,000/-	19.12.19	20.12.19
2	Inj Normal Saline 3ltr pack (Irrigation Fluid) 2019_GMCH_52926_1 GMCH/PB/PRO/Med-168/2019	5400 bottles	Pharmacy	20,730/-	19.12.19	20.12.19
3	Flourescence Microscope 2019_GMCH_52828_1 GMCH/PB-II/PA-I/ET/19/2(47)	01 No.	Pathology	30,000/-	20.12.19	23.12.19
4	Tab Clozapine 0.5 mg 2019_GMCH_52824_1 GMCH/PB/PRO/Med-5282/2019	75000 Tab.	Pharmacy	11250/-	20.12.19	23.12.19
5	Fractional CO2 Laser 2019_GMCH_52826_1 GMCH/PB-II/PA-I/ET/19/2(47)	01 No.	Dermatology	1,40,000/-	23.12.19	24.12.19
6	Povidone Iodine Solution 10 percent 500 ml 2019_GMCH_52760_1 GMCH/PB/PRO/Med-45/19	4000 bottles	Pharmacy	16350/-	23.12.19	24.12.19
7	Anatomy Museum Stainless Steel Rack 60x22x62 2019_GMCH_52841_1 GMCH-PB-II/PA-VII/ET/19/624	08 Nos.	Anatomy	20,000/-	24.12.19	26.12.19
8	Tab Clozapine 100 mg 2019_GMCH_52350_1 GMCH/PB/PRO/Med-35/2019	160000 Tabs.	Pharmacy	15150/-	24.12.19	26.12.19
9	Deep Freezer (-80 C) 2019_GMCH_52729_1 GMCH/PB-II/PA-V/ET-19/82	01 No.	Transfusion Medicine	12000/-	26.12.19	27.12.19
10	Cap. Iron with Folic Acid (Elemental Iron 100mg and 0.5mg folic acid) 2019_GMCH_51616_1 GMCH/PB/PRO/Med-88/2019	1125000 Tabs.	Pharmacy	32130/-	26.12.19	27.12.19
11	Pediatric Ventilators 2019_GMCH_52711_1 GMCH/PB-II/PA-VII/ET/19/2(56)	04 Nos.	Pediatrics	1,60,000/-	27.12.19	30.12.19
12	Inj Glycoprotein 200mcg/ml 1 ml amp 2019_GMCH_52585_1 GMCH/PB/PRO/Med-106/2019	5400 Ampules	Pharmacy	14666/-	27.12.19	30.12.19
13	Binocular Microscope 2019_GMCH_52842_1 GMCH/PB/PA-I/ET/19/2(46)	06 Nos.	Pathology	30,000/-	30.12.19	31.12.19
14	Inj. Uceronium Bromide 10 mg Vial 2019_GMCH_51168_1 GMCH/PB/PRO/Med-35/2019					

Bus strike called off in Odisha's Ganjam district

STAFF REPORTER
BERHAMPUR

Private bus owners association in Odisha's Ganjam district called off their indefinite strike on Thursday evening following discussions with State Transport Minister in Bhubaneswar.

Since November 26, over 600 buses were off road due to impasse between bus owners and administration over the new bus stand for Berhampur.

OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE

DEATH ANNIVERSARIES

Sixth Anniversary



Shri. Radha K. Raman

*A fountainhead of knowledge and always a source of inspiration, your strong leadership, hard work, ethics, principles and values will continue to guide us.**Your vision will motivate us forever.*

Fondly remembered by Saroja Raman & family

MIL Industries Limited

Directors & members of the MIL family

DEATH

DEATH



Brahma Sri Venkatachala Sastry (Adyay Vadyar)

Attained Mukti on 18.11.19 at 8.12pm, Shubham on 01.12.19 at S.Srinivasan, G303, S & P Essense, Kamarajar St, Ayyanambakkam, Chennai-95. Mobi 93800 33500

Mr. M V S JANARDHANAM (62), Retired Senior Supervisor, Office Aides, The Hindu, Chennai, passed away on 27-11-2019. Address: Plot No. 51, Door No: 12, Shivaji Street, VOC Nagar, Pammal, Chennai - 600075. Contact : 9940355686.

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Odisha extends deadline for MV Act enforcement

Heavy rush at RTOs behind decision

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BHUBANESWAR

The Odisha government on Thursday further extended the deadline for enforcement of the Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Act, 2019, by another three months in view of the heavy rush at regional transport offices across the State.

After the issue was raised in the State Assembly by both Opposition and ruling

party members, State Transport Minister Padmanabha Behera informed the House that Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik has directed for extension of the deadline so that vehicle owners could get their papers ready.

Asserting that the extension is being given for the last time, Mr. Behera said there will be strict enforcement against life-threatening actions like drunken driving.

SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED



Nisha

General public is hereby informed that a girl namely Nisha, D/o: Dharmendar Sah, R/o: H. No. 5, Gali No. 7, Raksha Enclave, Mohan Garden, Delhi has been missing/kidnapped since 11.11.2019 from the area of P.S. Ranholi, Delhi. In this regard FIR No. 693/19 u/s 363 IPC dated 12.11.2019 has been registered at P.S. Ranholi, Delhi. Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the missing/kidnapped girl but no clue has come to light so far. The description of missing/kidnapped girl is as under:**Name: Nisha, Age: 16 Years, Height: 4'6", Face: Oval, Complexion: Shallow, Wearing: Blue jacket, red-white dharidasht, blue pajami and black jutti in feet.**

If anyone have any information about this missing/kidnapped girl please inform P.S. Ranholi, Delhi.

Web: <http://cbi.nic.in>, Email: cib@cbi.gov.in
 Ph.: 011-24368638/24368641, Fax: 011-24368639 SHO Police Station, Ranholi, Delhi DP/2900/OD/19 Ph: 011-28363001, 28363002, 28363003

MCG MUNICIPAL CORPORATION GURUGRAM

Memo No:MCG/EE(S)/2019/48246 Dated: 25.11.2019

INVITATION FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI)

The Municipal Corporation, Gurugram invites EOI for "Preparation of report of landfill site Bandhwadi including Quantity calculation of solid waste & Leachate and preparation of existing site plan and proposed layout plan including Leachate collection tank with Size etc." from Interested firms/Society/NGOs/Registered Body/ Individual Body engaged in the same type of work at Bandhwari Plant situated on Gurugram-Faridabad Road in the revenue of village Bandhwari. The application Form/Eligibility Criteria along with terms and conditions and work to be carried out can be obtained from the office of undersigned before submission date or can also be downloaded from Municipal Corporation, Gurugram website i.e. www.mcg.gov.in and submit their proposal to the Executive Engineer (Sanitation), Municipal Corporation, Gurugram, Info City, Sector-34, 2nd Floor, Gurugram upto 02.12.2019 from the date of publication in working hours from 09:00 AM to 05:00 PM. In case of Holiday next working day will be considered.**Executive Engineer (S)
Municipal Corporation,
Gurugram.
Mob. #9821395105
Email:ees@mcg.gov.in**

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110018 OF AFGHANISTAN is applying to

the Secretary to the Government of India

in the Ministry of Home Affairs for

Naturalization and that any person who

knows any reason why Naturalization

should not be granted should send a

written signed statement of the facts to the

said Secretary.

PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE is hereby given that HARMEET

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said Secretary.

PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE is hereby given that HARMEET

MVA could move focus from asset creation to farmer distress

Infra companies might remain under pressure before clarity on policy: Macquarie

ASHISH RUKHAIYAR

MUMBAI

With a change of political guard in Maharashtra, large farm loan waiver might be on the cards and development around infra projects need to be watched closely, according to global financial major Macquarie, which also believes that while real estate in Mumbai might get some incentives and Metro, along with the airport project will continue, the Mumbai-Ahmedabad bullet train project could face high risk.

"The focus is likely to move from asset creation to farmer distress. Infra companies might remain under pressure in the near term before clarity emerges on the policy priorities for the government," stated a report from Macquarie while adding that State-owned banks "have a problem of moral hazard being created."

Large farm loan waiver is very likely which adds to the



Upbeat: Crowds cheer as Uddhav Thackeray takes oath as Chief Minister at Shivaji Park on Thursday. ■ VIVEK BENDRE

moral hazard of the financial system and gets political parties into competitive populism, it said.

Incidentally, in the common minimum program (CMP) of the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) that was released on Thursday, the coalition government has stated that "immediate loan waiver will be granted to farmers" while adding that crop insurance scheme will be revised to "ensure immediate compensation to the farmers who have lost their crops".

infra projects with the high-speed rail at high risk of getting stalled for the time being".

"Mumbai Ahmedabad high-speed rail along with Mumbai Nagpur Expressway projects could be at immediate risk of getting stalled," stated the report.

In the context of the ongoing Metro and airport project, Macquarie says that the "pace of execution could be impacted in the short term due to longer timelines on approvals".

However, it adds that the Mumbai real estate might get a push and possible measures could "involve incentives to real estate developers to allow early liquidation of inventory or improve economics of existing projects".

As per the CMP, eligible slum dwellers will get tenements of 500 sq. ft. instead of the current provision of 300 sq. ft. under the Slum Rehabilitation Programme.



Usha Jadhav receiving the Best Actor (Female) award for *Mai Ghatt: Crime no 103/2005* at the closing ceremony of the IFFI in Goa on Thursday. ■ ATISH POMBURFEKAR

Blaise Harrison's *Particles* wins Golden Peacock at 50th IFFI

Pellissery bags Best Director for *Jallikattu*

KENNETH ROSARIO

PANAJI

Amid unexpected showers, the golden jubilee edition of the International Film Festival of India came to a close with Blaise Harrison's *Particles* winning the Golden Peacock.

Described by the International Competition jury as "an ambitious yet modest film about the mysteries of being a teenager", the film won a cash prize of ₹40 lakh, to be shared equally by Harrison and producer Estelle Fialon.

Accepting the award over a video message from Paris, Mr. Harrison introduced the audience to his three-week-old baby and said, "I wish I could be there since this is my first feature film, and this award gives me strength and confidence to make what I believe in."

Lijo Jose Pellissery bagged the Best Director Award for the Malayalam film *Jallikattu*. The jury honoured the "intricate and complex choreography of this very original and anarchic film". In an interview with *The Hindu*, filmmaker Robin Campillo, who was on the International Competition jury, said he was very impressed by the film and Pellissery's strong hold over his craft.

The Centenary Award for Best Debut Feature Film of a Director was shared between Marius Olteanu for *Monstr* and Amin Sidi Boumediene for *Abou Leila*. "I dare to hope, judging by the

reaction of the audience and in light of this accolade, that the film will find distribution in India," Mr. Olteanu told *The Hindu*. Pema Tseden's *Balloon* won the Special Jury Award for the "beauty of the film language and the authenticity of the actors".

The Best Actor (Male) award was given to Seu Jorge for his portrayal of Carlos Marighella in the Brazilian film *Marighella*. The jury described his performance as "a powerful and charismatic portrayal of a revolutionary, very relevant in our increasingly authoritarian times". For her "understated and powerful performance of a mother defending her child's honour against the injustice of a corrupt system", in Marathi film *Mai Ghatt: Crime No. 103/2005*, Usha Jadhav received the Best Actor (Female) award.

National Award-winning Gujarati film *Hellaro* directed by Abhishek Shah earned special mention from the jury for the "incredible music, its colour and graceful choreography". Italian film *Rwanda* directed by Riccardo Salvetti won the ICF-UNESCO Gandhi Medal instituted by the International Council for Film, Television and Audiovisual Communication, Paris and UNESCO. The festival closed with Mohsen Makhmalbaf's *Marghe and her Mother*, which is the renowned Iranian filmmaker's first movie set in Italy.



Seu Jorge receiving the Best Actor (Male) award for *Marighella* at the closing ceremony of the IFFI in Goa on Thursday. ■ ATISH POMBURFEKAR

CM YK

CK

Don't withhold information sought under RTI : DGP

GAUTAM S. MENGLE

MUMBAI

The office of the Director General of Police (DGP), Maharashtra, has issued instructions for information on ongoing cases, sought under the Right To Information Act, to be given out to applicants provided it can be established beyond doubt that giving out the information will not hamper the case.

The circular, signed by Special Inspector General of

Police Milind Bharambe, Law and Order, on behalf of Subodh Kumar Jaiswal, DGP, refers to repeated observations about police officers refusing point blank to share information about ongoing cases, saying it will hamper the investigation.

"It has been brought to the notice of the State Information Commissioner that applications filed under the RTI that seek information about registered cases are

summarily dismissed, with the only reason given being that the information can not be revealed as it is an ongoing investigation. Police officers have been observed to refuse or avoid giving information using this reason," the circular states.

It further says that following these observations, instructions were issued by the State Information Commissioner about making information available about re-

cords, case diaries and reports, and CCTV footage as requested under the RTI.

The circular also instructs police personnel to save a copy of every footage released to applicants.

When contacted, Mr. Bharambe said,

"We have observed ample examples of RTI applications being filed for frivolous reasons, which is why it is important to consider each application based on its merit."

Onions worth ₹25,000 stolen in Surat

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

AHMEDABAD

With onion prices breaching the ₹100 per kg ceiling, thieves in the country's Diamond City decided to steal five onion bags worth ₹25,000 on Thursday morning.

The incident occurred outside a vegetable shop in the Palanpur Patiya area of Surat on Thursday.

"As per our daily routine, we kept five sacks of

onions, each weighing 50 kg, outside the shop on Wednesday night. However, for the first time, someone stole those onions worth ₹25,000," said Amit Kanodia, a vegetable vendor, who is yet to file an FIR regarding the theft.

In Gujarat, a prominent onion-producing State, prices in the retail markets at all major cities are currently fluctuating between ₹90 and ₹100.

NH7 Weekender takes queer affirmative action

The 10th edition of the festival aims to create a safe experience for LGBTQI+ people

DEBORAH CORNELIOUS

MUMBAI

The tenth edition of the NH7 Weekender festival has partnered with The Humsafar Trust, an LGBTQI+ organisation and 6 Degrees, a Mumbai-based business and networking venture. The collaboration aims to ensure a safe space for women and queer people who attend the three-day festival which begins in Pune on Friday.

In the last year, NH7 Weekender's parent company, Only Much Louder (OML), has been embroiled in several cases of sexual misconduct. "Since there is an ac-

tive culture of correcting whatever was not been done earlier for prevention of sexual harassment, it also now reflects in temporary spaces," says Praful Bawejha who has co-founded 6 Degrees along with queer rights activists Harish Iyer and Sushil. "OML wants to make the festival safe for queer people and have implemented it in three ways." Mr. Bawejha's company has worked with The Humsafar Trust – that promotes and protects queer rights – to execute these safety guidelines.

The entry point of the festival will feature a neutral

entry point system, eschewing regular gender binary separation between male and females. "This will help gender-queer, non-binary and even people in drag feel comfortable about their gender identity," said Mr. Bawejha who added that there will be steps to address frisking as well. Some people don't feel comfortable being checked and NH7 Weekender will offer them a chance to pick who they'd prefer to be patted down by. Lastly, the festival grounds at Mahalaxmi Lawns in Pune will also have a tent with four counsellors. Attendees can

get information on what do as a bystander to sexual assault or gender-based violence and harassment or report if something untoward has happened. "There's alcohol flowing freely and lot of people will be attending the festival, we are making sure people can report, process and take action," said Mr. Bawejha.

The Humsafar Trust and 6 Degrees have involved everyone on the ground, from food vendors to volunteers and employees in sensitisation training to be queer affirmative and aware of women's safety.

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION



General public is hereby informed that this person
Named: Unknown, **S/o:** Unknown, **R/o:** Unknown, **Age:** 50 years, **Sex:** Male, **Height:** 5'6",
Complexion: Wheatish, **Wearing:** Wearing: Orange Colour Jersey & Blue Colour Pant was found Area of PS. Lahori Gate, he was admitted in Trauma Centre, Civil Lines after treatment doctor declared him dead.

In this regard a FIR No. 233/19, dated 22.11.2019 has been lodged at P.S. Lahori Gate, Delhi. Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out information about this person but no clue has come to light so far. Any person having any information or clue about this person may kindly inform to the following.

SHO
P.S. Lahori Gate, Delhi
DP/684/N/19

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION

General public is hereby informed that an unidentified dead body of male **Age:** 28 years, **Complexion:** Wheatish, **Height:** 5'7", was wearing Blue colour Jeans Pant & Blue colour Sweater & Bare feet, was found dead hanging on tree near Shiv Kund, Kabir Basti, Malka Ganj, Subzi Mandi, Delhi. In this regard a **DD No. 23-A, dated 23.11.2019 has been lodged at P.S. Subzi Mandi, Delhi.**

Any person having any information or clue about the deceased may kindly inform to the undersigned on the following address or telephone nos.

SHO
P.S. Subzi Mandi, Delhi
DP/686/N/19

HIMACHAL PRADESH PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

e-Procurement Notice

INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB)

1. The Executive Engineer, Gohar Division, HP.PWD.Gohar, on behalf of Governor of H.P invite the online bids on item rates, in electronic tendering system, in 2 Cover System for the under mentioned works from the eligible and approved contractors/Firms registered with HPPWD Department.

Sr. No. **Name of Work** **Estimated Cost** **EMD** **Cost of Tender** **Eligible class of contractor** **Time limit**

1.	C/o 40.00 mtr. Span PSC Box Girder Single Lane bridge over Jeuni Khad on Sian Panglur road at R.D. 1/085 (SH:-C/o Sub-Structure, Super Structure & both side approaches) Under SCSP)	63,04,229/-	95,542/-	2000/- Class C & above	One year
2.	C/o 40.00 mtr. Span PSC RCC Box Girder Bridge Daul over Jeuni Khad on Sian Daul Ropa road at RD 0/050 (SH:- C/o Sub-Structure, Super Structure & both side approaches)	1,82,79,268/-	2,15,500/-	5000/- Class B & above	One year

2. Availability of Bid Documents and mode of submission:-The Bid documents are available online and bid should be submitted in online mode on website <https://hpntenders.gov.in>.Bidders would be required to register in the web-site, which is free of cost. For submission of bids, the bidders are required to have Digital Signature Certificates (DSC) from one of the authorized Certifying Authorities (CA).

"Aspiring bidders who have not obtained the user ID and password for participating in e-tendering in HPPWD may obtain the same from the website: <https://hpntenders.gov.in>. Digital signature is mandatory for participating in the e-tendering process. Bidders already possessing the digital signature issued from authorized CAs can use the same in this tender.

3. Key Dates:

1. Date of Online Publication	16-12-2019 17.00 HRS
2. Document Download Start and End Date	16-12-2019 17.00 HRS to 30-12-2019 17.00 HRS.
3. Bid Submission Start and End date	16-12-2019 at 17.30 HRS upto 30-12-2019 17.00 HRS.
4. Physical Submission of EMD and Cost of Tender Document.	31-12-2019 upto 11.00 HRS
5. Date of Technical Bid opening, Evaluation of Technical Bid followed by Opening of Financial Bid.	31-12-2019 11.30 HRS

4. TENDER DETAILS:

The Tender Documents shall be uploaded online in 2 Covers:

i) Cover 1: shall contain scanned copies of all the "Technical Documents/ Eligibility Information".

ii) Cover 2: shall contain "BOQ/Financial Bid", where in the contractor will quote his offer rate for each item of the work.

5. SUBMISSION OF ORIGINAL DOCUMENTS:

The bidders are required to submit (a) original demand draft towards the cost of bid document and (b) original bid security/Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) and other Technical Documents in the O/I Executive Engineer, Gohar Division, HP.PWD.Gohar as specified on the Tender Opening Date, failing which the bids will be declared non-responsive.

6. BID OPENING DETAILS:

The bids shall be opened on 31-12-2019 at 11.30 HRS in the office of Executive Engineer, Gohar Division, HP.PWD.Gohar.

In their interest the tenders are advised to be present along with the original documents at the time of opening of tenders. If the office happens to be closed on the date of opening of the bids as specified, the bids will be opened on the next working day at the same time and venue.

7. The bids for the works shall remain valid for acceptance for a period not less than 120days.

8. Other details can be seen in the bidding documents. The officer inviting tender shall not be liable for any delays due to system failure beyond its control. Even though the system will attempt to notify the bidders of any bid updates, the Employer shall not be liable for any information not received by the bidder. It is the bidder's responsibility to verify the website for the latest information related to the tender.

On behalf of Governor of Himachal Pradesh

Executive Engineer
Gohar Division,
HP-PWD. Gohar.

HP/3184/19-20 HIM SUCHNA AVAM JAN SAMPAK

IN BRIEF



Ramadoss serves notice on DMK leader

CHENNAI
PMK founder S. Ramadoss has served a defamation notice on DMK leader R.S. Bharathi for the remarks made against him after a hearing at the National Commission for SCs/STs on the allegation that Murasoli building was built on panchami land.

Army test-fires Israeli anti-tank missile

NEW DELHI
The Army on Wednesday successfully tested two newly-acquired Spike long-range anti-tank guided missiles at the Infantry School at Mhow, Madhya Pradesh. The Army has recently procured a small batch of 12 launchers and 250 missiles from Israel using its new financial powers to make emergency procurements.

Cases filed against two former Karnataka CMs

BENGALURU
Former Karnataka Chief Ministers Siddaramaiah and H.D. Kumaraswamy are among the 17 persons who have been booked for staging a protest in front of the Income Tax head office to oppose "politically motivated" searches on properties linked to party leaders ahead of the Lok Sabha election.

Reimbursement for higher education in A.P.

VIZHAWADA
All the students pursuing higher education in A.P. will get complete reimbursement of their fee, Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy has said. "This apart, they will also be given an allowance of ₹20,000 towards meeting their boarding and lodging expenses," Mr. Reddy said.

Nod for defence purchase worth ₹22,800 cr.

Rajnath Singh chairs Acquisition Council meeting

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI
The Defence Acquisition Council (DAC), chaired by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, met on Thursday and approved the procurement of weapons and equipment worth ₹22,800 crore.

Among them are six additional P-8I long-range patrol aircraft to be procured from the U.S. for the Navy and additional indigenous Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS) aircraft for the Indian Air Force (IAF).

As a follow-up to the successful indigenous Airborne Early Warning and Control (AEW&C) programme, the

A shot in the arm

The Navy and Air Force are to get more equipment for surveillance and early warning



P-8I

The DAC approved procurement of six more P-8Is, while the proposal from the Navy was for 10 aircraft.

Indian Navy currently operates 12 P-8Is procured in two batches.

The aircraft are part of the 312A Naval Air Squadron based at Arakkonam in Tamil Nadu.

The P-8I is a long-range maritime surveillance aircraft based on Boeing 737 commercial airliner

AWACS

The new AWACS will be larger than the current three Netra AEW&Cs in service which are mounted on Embraer-145 aircraft. The IAF also operates three Israeli Phalcon A-50 long range AWACS mounted on Russian IL-76 aircraft.

A proposal for two more long-range Phalcon AWACS is awaiting a nod from the Cabinet Committee on Security



DAC revaluated the Acceptance of Necessity (AoN) for the procurement of additional AWACS aircraft, the Ministry said. "The mission system and sub-systems for these aircraft would be indi-

genously designed, developed and integrated into the main platform by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)." The IAF now operates three Israeli Phalcon AWACS

and three smaller indigenous Netra AEW&C systems mounted on Embraer aircraft. A shortage of these force multipliers was felt during the aerial engagement with the Pakistan Air

Force, a day after the Balakot air strike in February.

These platforms would provide on-board command and control and 'early warning', which would assist the IAF in achieving effective air space dominance in the least possible time, the statement said. The new systems are likely to be mounted on Airbus aircraft.

Indigenous design

The DAC approved the indigenous design, development and manufacture of 'thermal imaging night sights' for assault rifles, and these will be made by the "Indian private industry and used by troops deployed on the front line."

It also approved the procurement of twin-engine heavy helicopters for the Coast Guard.

WEATHER WATCH

RAINFALL, TEMPERATURE & AIR QUALITY IN SELECT METROS YESTERDAY



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD; RAINFALL: PCPB; MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 18.00 HRS)

Forecast for Friday: Thunderstorm accompanied with lightning very likely at isolated places over coastal Andhra Pradesh, Yanam, Rayalaseema, Kerala, Mahe, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and Karaikal.

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	... -	30.8	17.2	Kozhikode	... -	24.8	33.0
Ahmedabad	... -	31.8	19.1	Kurnool	... -	32.2	22.2
Aizawl	... -	23.6	11.7	Lucknow	... -	29.7	17.0
Allahabad	... -	31.3	16.7	Madurai	5.0	31.9	23.7
Bengaluru	... -	28.4	19.2	Mangaluru	... -	38.8	23.6
Bhopal	... -	30.3	16.6	Mumbai	... -	34.7	22.4
Hubballi	... -	29.9	19.2	Mysuru	... -	27.7	20.1
Chandigarh	9.6	22.8	14.6	New Delhi	... -	22.0	16.2
Chennai	22.3	30.8	24.7	Patna	... -	29.8	16.7
Coimbatore	2.0	29.9	23.0	Port Blair	... -	32.4	26.8
Dehradun	7.0	18.4	13.3	Puducherry	56.4	30.2	22.2
Gangtok	... -	25.4	19.6	Pune	... -	30.7	15.3
Goa	... -	34.8	23.1	Raipur	... -	30.0	18.2
Guwahati	... -	29.4	16.2	Ranchi	... -	28.6	13.8
Hubballi	... -	29.0	21.0	Shillong	... -	23.4	9.5
Hyderabad	... -	30.3	18.8	Shimla	... -	13.7	4.2
Imphal	... -	24.9	10.0	Srinagar	... -	24.4	10.0
Jaipur	... -	26.4	15.4	Tiruvananthapuram	1.3	34.7	24.8
Kochi	... -	33.0	26.0	Tiruchi	... -	30.0	23.6
Kohima	... -	24.2	9.4	Vijayawada	... -	31.2	23.8
Kolkata	... -	30.7	19.1	Visakhapatnam	... -	30.8	23.5

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

Yesterday

CITIES SO. NO. CO PM2.5 PM10 CODE

Ahmedabad	... -	115	40	62
Bengaluru	03	47	48	68
Chennai	08	12	30	83
Delhi	11	134	46	87	73
Hyderabad	17	56	40	201
Kolkata	15	62	23	222	196
Lucknow	19	48	50	415
Mumbai	05	64	47	121	127
Pune	84	16	49	202	135
Visakhapatnam	11	31	26	92	90

In observation made at 6.00 p.m., Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of indicating a dangerous level of pollution. In contrast, Shillong, Meghalaya recorded a healthy AQI score of 16

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

SO: 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: 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

SC reserves verdict on Chidambaram's bail plea

Former Finance Minister says there is no proof against him



P. Chidambaram

committed by persons who occupied high offices were viewed with a "permissive eye" by the court.

Mr. Chidambaram had moved the appeal against the Delhi High Court's decision to deny him bail on November 15.

The public would surmise that economic offences, which were a class apart,

"Do we show that we view economic offences with a permissive eye? The High Court says no. He was not an unknowing bystander... We have sent letters rogatory to various banks. Material collection has been complex in this case, but we still have a strong case... Involves money laundering, creation of shell companies," Mr. Mehta argued.

Senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for Mr. Chidambaram, rebutted that all the ED had done till now was make empty allegations against Mr. Chidambaram in court. They had not shown a shred of evidence to back their claim, he said.

Karti speaks on 100th day of Chidambaram's remand

'Legal experts shying away from issue'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

As former Finance Minister P. Chidambaram spent his 100th day in custody on Thursday, his son and Lok Sabha member Karti Chidambaram said "independent legal experts should debate if a pre-trial remand for investigation should extend this long".

Congress president Sonia Gandhi, too, expressed her solidarity with the former Union Minister when she told Congress MPs that it was "sheer vindictiveness that has kept Chidambaram in prison for 100 days".

"The environment in the country is such that not many people are willing to

comment in public," Mr. Karti said in an interview with *The Hindu*.

Following allegations of corruption in the INX Media case, the former Finance Minister has been lodged in Tihar Jail. After being in the custody of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), the Enforcement Directorate arrested him for custodial interrogation.

"Can you incarcerate someone for 100 days for a pre-trial investigation? It is disappointing that independent legal and Constitutionalist experts are shying away from openly talking about issues concerning individual liberty, right to reputation and freedom," he said.

Expert panel bars release of Bhopal tragedy research findings

+ Report on congenital deformities in children born to women exposed to the 1984 gas leak is inconclusive, says committee

JACOB KOSHY

NEW DELHI
An expert committee explicitly barred the publication of the findings of a research study that said babies born to women – who as children were exposed to the 1984 gas leak in Bhopal – were significantly more likely to have

"congenital malformations" than those born to women unexposed to the gas.

The study had methodological flaws, was poorly designed and its findings were inconclusive, the committee ruled. First conceived in 2012, the study underwent design and methodology re-

views by multiple committees before it was commissioned at a cost of ₹48 lakh.

The expert committee consisted of scientists from the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, Delhi; the National Institute for Research in Environmental Health (NI-REH), Bhopal; and the Indian

Council for Medical Research (ICMR).

The findings emerged in response to a question under the Right To Information Act and were made public at a press conference in Bhopal on Thursday by an association of activists fighting for those affected by the leak of

methyl isocyanate from the Bhopal factories of Union Carbide (now Dow Chemicals) in December 1984.

The activists alleged that the ICMR, the parent body of the NI-REH, suppressed the data.

"If the study design was indeed flawed, how was it approved at three successive

meetings over two years? If mistakes have been made, why hide them from people?" asked Rashida Bee, president of the Bhopal Gas Peedit Mahila Stationery Karmchari Sangh. ICMR Director-General Balram Bhargava could not be reached for comment.

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पृथ्वी विज्ञान मंत्रालय, भारत सरकार



Widening gap

India must use green technologies to boost growth and become a climate leader

The UN's Emissions Gap Report comes as a sharp warning to countries preparing to meet in Madrid in December, under the aegis of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, that every year of inaction is jeopardising the main goal of the Paris Agreement: to keep the rise in global temperature over pre-industrial times well below 2°C, and ideally at 1.5°C. Emissions gap represents the difference between current actions to reduce greenhouse gases (GHGs) and what is needed to meet the target. In quantitative terms, the UN report estimates that there would have to be a 2.7% average annual cut in emissions from 2020 to 2030 for temperature rise to be contained at 2°C, while the more ambitious 1.5°C target would require a 7.6% reduction. But countries with large emissions, such as the U.S., China, the European Union (EU) nations and India, will face more challenging demands if corrective measures to decarbonise are not implemented now. Climate warnings issued over the years have failed to impress most politicians, but the EU is considering an emergency declaration, and the British Parliament adopted a resolution earlier this year. What the emissions gap findings make clear, however, is that symbolism can do little to mitigate the effects of dangerous climate change. Hundreds of millions of people could face the extreme impacts.

In the U.S., the Trump administration has initiated the process of withdrawing from the Paris Agreement, but there is considerable sub-national support for climate action. The EU, where public pressure to act on climate change is high, is working on legislation to bring about net zero emissions. The U.K., responsible for a large share of historical emissions, has turned its net zero 2050 goal into a legal requirement. For these rich nations, the road to lower emissions is mainly through innovation and higher efficiencies in energy use. China and India, on the other hand, have to reconcile growing emissions with development needs. Their best options are a scaling up of investments in renewable energy, leapfrogging to clean technologies in buildings and transport, and greater carbon sequestration. Here, as the UN report points out, India could do much more. It needs to provide more consistent support for renewable energy, have a long-term plan to retire coal power plants, enhance ambition on air quality, adopt an economy-wide green industrialisation strategy, and expand mass transport. In the key area of buildings, the energy conservation code of 2018 needs to be implemented under close scrutiny. With a clear vision, India could use green technologies to galvanise its faltering economy, create new jobs and become a climate leader.

The PM in his labyrinth

Pakistan must ensure civilian command and control of its armed forces

The Pakistan Supreme Court's decision to grant six months' conditional extension to Chief of Army Staff Gen. Qamar Javed Bajwa has averted an immediate crisis in the country, but the whole affair is still an embarrassment for Prime Minister Imran Khan's government. The government's ineptitude and incompetence, if not complete disregard for procedural formalities and the Constitution, were on display from the day the notification on extension was issued. It was first issued, on August 19, by the Prime Minister, while Article 243 of the Constitution clearly states that the authority to appoint the Army Chief rests with the President. When the President also issued the notification, extension became reappointment of Gen. Bajwa, whose term was otherwise set to end on Thursday night. When the Supreme Court pointed out these inconsistencies and raised questions about Cabinet approval, the government called an emergency Cabinet meeting and issued another notification, stating that the General's term was being extended according to Army Regulation 255. The court didn't accept this notification either, saying Army Regulation 255 doesn't apply to the Army Chief. Finally, the government argued that the Army Chief can be reappointed by the President in accordance with Article 243. The Supreme Court wanted the government to issue another notification in this regard and give an undertaking that Parliament would pass legislation to avoid legal ambiguities on the issue. It is after the government produced these documents that the three-member bench agreed to the extension.

The Supreme Court stated that it could not find any provision relating to the tenure or reappointment of the Army Chief "under the Constitution or the law". Therefore, it left the matter to Parliament to specify the terms and conditions of service of the Army chief through legislation in six months. This is another challenge to Mr. Khan. It's hardly a secret that the current government and the military establishment are close. Mr. Khan must have wanted the extension to come into effect without any controversy so that he can continue to enjoy the confidence of the establishment and vice versa. But now, Gen. Bajwa's continuing at the top of the military beyond six months from Thursday is dependent on what Parliament decides. In effect, the court has enabled Parliament to clearly define the Army Chief's tenure, which is a critical issue in a country known for civil-military conflicts. Mr. Khan would do well to tread cautiously on the legislation. He should reach out to the Opposition and try to build a consensus in Parliament as this is a historic opportunity for the civilian class to uphold its authority and ensure, as the Constitution states, that the federal government has control and command over the Armed Forces.

Not as you say, but as you do

India will now find it difficult to tough-talk leaders in the neighbourhood, all with strong mandates of their own



SUHASINI HAIDER

early and frequent high-level exchanges will become an important pillar on which to base India-Sri Lanka ties. But summity is no guarantee of a better relationship, unless a number of other pillars are also strengthened.

Putting the past behind

To begin with, despite the clear desire among both sides to move ahead, it remains to be seen whether the Modi government and the Rajapaksa regime, comprising President Gotabaya and Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa, will actually be able to shrug off the deeply bitter history they have shared for the last few years, including following Mr. Rajapaksa's allegation that Indian intelligence agencies had conspired for their electoral loss in 2015. This may be easier said than done with the new Sri Lankan President, a military man who became the Defence Secretary later.

In February 2018, the then External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj had made a similarly remarkable trip to Kathmandu, where she met K.P. Sharma Oli two weeks before he had even been sworn in as Prime Minister, to invite him to New Delhi; Mr. Oli made his first visit abroad in his tenure to India around two months later.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has also travelled to Bhutan, Maldives, and Sri Lanka at the beginning of his tenure. He had, in 2018, attended the swearing-in ceremony of Maldives President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih and, later, also invited leaders from the neighbourhood to his own ceremony this year. However, given that the countries in the subcontinent that India engages with now have elected leaders with big political mandates, New Delhi has a new set of challenges to its policy.

Following Mr. Gotabaya's visit,

One area that is likely to help that process and hold New Delhi-Colombo ties in good stead is the rapid improvement in intelligence sharing between the two countries, especially since the Easter Sunday terror attacks; something Mr. Gotabaya made a campaign issue as well. It is important to remember, however, that despite the early outreach to Mr. Oli in Nepal, relations between the two governments never fully recovered from their rough patch during the Nepal trade blockade of 2015, and therefore, the history of ties remains an important factor.

Another pillar of bilateral ties in the region rests on development projects and economic relations. On this, the task before both New Delhi and Colombo should be easier, as they only need to complete projects that have already been announced in the last few years to



show a breakthrough. India has already evinced interest in building infrastructure in the Northern and Eastern Provinces, including upgrading the Jaffna-Colombo rail track and other railway lines, providing electricity transmission lines for power imports from India, and rebuilding the Kankesanthurai port. Each of these projects is an opportunity to showcase New Delhi's delivery ability and Colombo's desire to cooperate for the benefit of its less-developed areas.

Completion of projects

In the Eastern Province, little progress has been made on projects that former Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe had signed through MoUs in New Delhi in April 2017. Completion of these

should become a priority, including India's plan to develop Trincomalee port and oil tank farms, and LNG terminals near Colombo. Finally, India's plans to counter Chinese investment will be tested by the pace of the joint India-Japan agreement to develop the East Container Terminal at Colombo harbour, and other projects like the offer to operate the Mattala Airport.

Not just in Sri Lanka, but also across the subcontinent, India has lagged behind in investment figures, as data collated from the

Central Bank of Sri Lanka, Bangladesh Bank and Nepal Rastra Bank showed in a recent study by the Observer Research Foundation ("Looking back, looking ahead: Foreign policy in transition under Modi"). According to the report, while India's Foreign Direct Investment in Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Nepal was more than that by China in 2014-2015, the order was reversed by 2017-2018. This is also true of the Maldives, where despite the ouster of the pro-China regime a year ago, and a four-fold increase in New Delhi's aid to Male since then, no Chinese project has yet been cancelled (Mr. Solih, during his campaign, had originally promised to cancel some of these projects). In Sri Lanka, while Mr. Gotabaya has suggested that the lease that gave Beijing control of Hambantota port will be renegotiated, there is little indication that any other loan or project will be reversed.

Nepal has, in fact, stepped up its engagement with China after President Xi Jinping's recent visit, with a number of road, rail, infrastructure projects and dry port access in the works. Bangladesh, arguably India's closest partner in the region, saw \$3.6 billion in FDI from China last year, along with 'Belt and Road promises' of \$50 billion. As these figures climb, it will be harder for New Delhi to

tough-talk leaders in the neighbourhood, as it once did, on investments from China, especially as the government itself seeks to attract the same into India.

Most importantly, Mr. Modi's government is likely to lead much more by the power of example, than by any wise counsel it gives. India's internal issues like the dilution of Article 370, the Citizenship Amendment Bill, the National Register for Citizenship and detention centres for illegal residents, and cases of mob lynching are all being discussed intensely in capitals in the neighbourhood, from Male to Dhaka and Naypyitaw, and will impact their conversations with New Delhi.

Mr. Jaishankar's statement that India "expects" Mr. Gotabaya to keep constitutional promises to bring "equality, justice, peace and dignity" to the minorities in Sri Lanka may, hence, not be taken seriously, amidst concerns over the treatment of India's own minorities. Similarly, protests that India made in the past with the Maldives over political arrests or efforts pushing for elections in Afghanistan will hold less water in the future, given the Modi government's failure to hold elections in Jammu and Kashmir and the prolonged incarceration of the Valley's political leaders. And, it will be hard for New Delhi to lecture Nepal on constitutional rights for Madhesis; Pakistan and Bangladesh on treatment of their Hindu and Sikh minorities; and Myanmar on Rohingya, when the government is not seen upholding those ideals itself.

On most of these issues, strongmen (and women) in the region are likely to do not as New Delhi says, but as New Delhi does.

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India's food basket must be enlarged

Agrobiodiversity can help improve the country's poor ranking in the Global Hunger Index



C. THOMSON JACOB & N. ANIL KUMAR

merical and presentation skills, care for living organisms and team work, besides being used in the noon-meal scheme. Students also learn to cultivate fruits and vegetables in their homes and this could address micronutrient deficiencies.

Agrobiodiversity – relating to diversity of crops and varieties – is crucial in food security, nutrition, health and essential in agricultural landscapes. Out of 25,000 globally identified plant species, about 7,000 have historically been used in human diets. Today, only 30 crops form the basis of the world's agriculture and just three species of maize, rice and wheat supply more than half the world's daily calories.

Genetic diversity of crops, livestock and their wild relatives, are fundamental to improve crop varieties and livestock breeds. We would not have thousands of crop varieties and animal breeds without the rich genetic pool. India is a centre of origin of rice, brinjal, citrus, banana, cucumber species.

Across the world, 37 sites are designated as Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS), of which three are Indian – Kashmir (saffron), Koraput (traditional agriculture) and Kuttanad (below sea-level farming). In India, over 811 cultivated plants and 902



of their wild relatives have been documented. Our promising genetic resources include rice from Tamil Nadu (Konamani), Assam (Agni bora) and Kerala (Pookkali), Bhalia Wheat and mushroom (Guchhi) from Himachal Pradesh and rich farm animal native breeds – cattle (42), buffaloes (15), goat (34), sheep (43) and chicken (19). Agrobiodiversity helps nutrition-sensitive farming and bio-fortified foods. For instance, moringa (drumstick) has micro nutrients and sweet potato is rich in Vitamin A. There are varieties of pearl millet and sorghum rich in iron and zinc.

The UN Sustainable Development Goal 2 advocates for Zero Hunger and the Aichi Biodiversity Target focuses on countries conserving genetic diversity of plants, farm livestock and wild relatives. It emphasises that countries develop strategies and action plans to halt biodiversity loss and reduce direct

pressure on biodiversity.

The Centre for Biodiversity Policy and Law (CEBPOL), a policy advocacy unit of the National Biodiversity Authority, came out with recommendations to increase India's agrobiodiversity in 2019. These include a comprehensive policy on 'ecological agriculture' to enhance native pest and pollinator population providing ecosystem services for the agricultural landscape. It suggested promotion of the bio-village concept of the M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation (MSSRF) for ecologically sensitive farming; conserving crop wild relatives of cereals, millets, oilseeds, fibres, forages, fruits and nuts, vegetables, spices etc. for crop genetic diversity healthier food; providing incentives for farmers cultivating native landrace varieties and those conserving indigenous breeds of livestock and poultry varieties.

The recommendations also include encouraging community seed banks in each agro-climatic zone so that regional biotic properties are saved and used by new generation farmers; preparing an agrobiodiversity index, documenting traditional practices through People's Biodiversity Registers, identifying Biodiversity Heritage Sites under provisions of the Biological Diversity Act, 2002;

and strengthening Biodiversity Management Committees to conserve agrobiodiversity and traditional knowledge. Developing a national level invasive alien species policy is required to identify pathways, mapping, monitoring, managing, controlling and eradicating the invasive species and prioritising problematic species based on risk assessment studies.

Loss of crop genetic resources is mainly a result of adopting new crop varieties without conserving traditional varieties. Similarly, there are concerns on high output breeds for production of meat, milk and egg. The consumption pattern and culinary diversity must be enlarged to increase India's food basket. To conserve indigenous crop, livestock and poultry breeds, it is recommended to mainstream biodiversity into agricultural policies, schemes, programmes and projects to achieve India's food and nutrition security and minimise genetic erosion.

C. Thomson Jacob is a former consultant at CEBPOL, National Biodiversity Authority; N. Anil Kumar is Executive Director, M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation. These insights were generated under CEBPOL, a bilateral programme between India and Norway focusing on biodiversity studies

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.

Chief Minister Uddhav

The swearing-in of Uddhav Thackeray as Chief Minister of Maharashtra was a very grand occasion. It was nice to see that farmers were made the guests of honour. The coalition government must prove itself to be worthy of the people of the State. First and foremost, the three parties, Shiv Sena, the Nationalist Congress Party and Congress, will be tested on their capability to ensure the stability of the government. They can succeed only if they work as one team to improve the living conditions of the common people, and keep their divergent ideologies out of the picture. The MLAs of these parties must remain steadfast in their determination to ward off and escape the ignominy of the disqualified MLAs in Karnataka. The coalition should follow its

common minimum programme, with the thrust on mitigation of farmer distress through measures like loan waiver and fair price for agricultural produce and crop insurance scheme.

G. DAVID MILTON,
Maruthancode, Tamil Nadu

Wrong priorities
The BJP government's priorities for governance seem to be heading in a direction detrimental to the growth and stability of the country. The economy has slowed down beyond all expectations, unemployment has reached its highest in 45 years and prices of essentials are on the rise. Instead of focusing its attention on these issues and, more importantly, on health and education of its citizens, the government's priority now is for a National Register of

Citizens, a step that's bound to create more problems than solutions. As a senior citizen, I fear the nation is going through a traumatic phase with people at the helm having no clue about how to set things right. There appears only muddled thinking, complacency, and above, all hubris (Editorial page, "The misadventure of a new citizenship regime," Nov. 27).

MUNEEM ATTHER,
Bengaluru

Taking stock
Even as the Finance Minister admitted to a slowing down of the economy, the Sensex touched an all time high (Front page, "It is not recession yet, says Finance Minister," Nov. 28). The decline in growth is at a seven-year low at 5%. The erosion in the economy is

wide ranging – pertaining to banks, businesses, exports and, hence, job creation. The unemployment rate is the highest in decades. Gross revenue collection is likely to be 25% short this fiscal. And yet, our proverbially overrated stocks are chasing new highs, driven by raw speculation than by real capacity addition. Has the management of the economy been outsourced to speculative investors?

R. NARAYANAN,
Navi Mumbai

Sabarimala verdict
Harping on the perceived inviolability of the 4:1 Sabarimala judgment misses the essential principles of jurisprudence which state that there is no such thing as an irrevocable verdict (Editorial page, "A revival of battles already fought and lost," Nov. 28).

The 2018 verdict caused widespread resentment among believers because many viewed it as unwarranted interference in the customs of a temple. Should judges ignore the disaffection caused by decisions? Are they not obliged to examine why people of a progressive State, where women enjoy an exalted status in society, saw nothing discriminatory in the restrictions? The spirit of the law demands a considered appreciation of the social milieu. The reference of the review petitions to a larger bench is a tacit admission of deficiencies in the 2018 judgment. The invocation of battle metaphors to sanctify a review-worthy judgment is nothing but an apology for judicial absolutism.

V.N. MUKUNDARAJAN,
Thiruvananthapuram

Climate report

The grim findings of the UN Environment Programme's Emissions Gap Report should serve as a wake-up call for the international community to get its act together and ensure that commitments under Paris Climate Pact are met without any alibis. Climate change's debilitating repercussions on the earth and its rich biodiversity are real. It is time the international community took cue from young activists across the globe who consider climate change as an issue beyond politics. Naysayers like U.S. President Donald Trump are doing a lot of harm to environmental protection and need to be ignored.

M. JEYARAM,
Sholavandan, Tamil Nadu

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Should life convicts be denied remission?

PARLEY

No one should be denied the benefit, but proof of reform and sound reasoning are needed

Recently, the Tamil Nadu government released 13 prisoners serving life sentences for the massacre of six Dalit men in the village of Melavalavu in 1997. The move invited a swift rebuke from the Madras High Court for what it saw as the government's haste in releasing them on grounds of 'good conduct', and caused considerable disquiet among activists and Scheduled Castes. In a conversation moderated by Jayant Srinivasan, Anup Surendranath and Nandita Rao discuss the constitutional position on remission and the procedures through which it is exercised. Edited excerpts:

Let's start with the policy of State governments releasing prisoners early. The Tamil Nadu government grants general amnesty to a number of prisoners every year on M.G. Ramachandran's birthday and on some other occasions. Does the practice interfere with the normal process by which prisoners are granted remission of sentence?

Anup Surendranath: The State government has powers of remission under Sections 432 and 433 of the Criminal Procedure Code. Remission works in different ways. Each State has its own prison rules because 'Prisons' is a State subject. Each State has a different way of calculating remission. One way you get remission is for various kinds of conduct or work that you do in prison. You can also get remission [because of] the power of the State government under Section 432 of the CrPC, which is what the government seems to be exercising in this [case]. The Governor, if the State is under President's rule, and the President too can exercise this power.

Nandita Rao: Yes, prisoners are released on the birth or death anniversaries of prominent popular and democratic leaders. But it's not as if you wake up on that particular date and announce that the first 10 names on the roll are going to be released. There is a proper procedure. There is a sentence review board.

Some prisoners are entitled to consideration for early release after

completion of 14 years; certain categories of prisoners are entitled after 20 years. So, six months before they are nearing 14 or 20 years, the prison authorities assess whether the person's potential for crime has ended, whether his family is in socio-economic need, and whether he will be useful to society. The DCP and then the probation officer make an assessment. The CrPC provides for this. That is reformed jurisprudence.

There is still a lot of confusion on the meaning of life sentence. Some people think a life sentence means 14 years; others think it a sentence for life. What is the constitutional position?

AS: I guess the controversy in the Tamil Nadu case is centred on how the government is choosing a bunch of people to be released and whether there are certain politically sensitive cases. But as Nandita said, there is a procedure to be followed and we'll have to see if there was compliance with that procedure in this particular situation.

But on the larger question of life imprisonment, you're right, there is some confusion. When a court says that a person is sentenced to life, that does mean till the end of natural life. That means that the person is no longer going to get any other remedy from the court. And the court's position is that there is no automatic right to release.

Then there's confusion arising from various prison manuals and how different States calculate remission. What is this calculation? If I'm on good behaviour, I get two days of remission per month. So, how do you calculate this for life imprisonment prisoners?

Various prison manuals have 14 years or 20 years as the number they take. From that they start deducting these two days per month and that's why you need to fix a number to life imprisonment to calculate remission right under the prison manuals. Now, of course, the court was concerned that in many cases there was still early release of prisoners. So, as I said earlier, there is the prison manual way of calculating remission and there is the CrPC



way. And it is with the latter that courts became concerned – when prisoners are being released early and you can see the expression of that in Section 433, which brings in a limitation and says you can't be released unless you've served 14 years in prison. But the court has clarified that this does not mean that you are automatically entitled as a matter of right to be released after 14 years; this is just the minimum period. After that, the government can assess based on the processes that Nandita was talking about.

Nandita, in a few instances the Supreme Court has said that a life sentence means till the end of natural life. I think that's also been the case in some instances when a death sentence has been commuted to life, a pronouncement that it is being commuted on condition that the convict spends the remainder of his natural life in prison. It does point towards a trend of handing down this harsher wording of the punishment. What do you make of this trend?

NR: I've also noticed that when a death sentence is commuted to life. Generally, they've said they will not be released or granted remission till 35 years of incarceration. I haven't read anywhere where they say that it's till the end of the prisoner's life. I think this sort of jurisprudence is to do with their own sense of equity between the victim and the accused. And I personally disagree with it because I feel it's a violation of Article 21, which says that your life and liberty can be restricted only by the due process of law. And the

due process of law has to be the statute. And the judiciary can only prescribe law or circumvent a law where none exists.

Sections 432 and 433 of the CrPC are quite clear. There are detailed guidelines for the State. And the sentence review boards only release people after 14 years if they notice that there is regret, reform, if [the prisoners'] families are in need. So, I think there is pressure on judges to balance these two lobbies of capital punishment and anti-capital punishment. Whether in case involving the rape and murder of an infant, if the guy is out 14 years, or in this case [Melavalavu], where there was a heinous offence against a particular community and the guys are out after 14 years, I personally think the solution is not to say till 35 years or till a hundred years. That is the American jurisprudence.

We have to have confidence in our State agencies. And if they make a mistake, this can be challenged in a writ petition about the timing of the release and the considerations which went into the release. Under the Right to Information Act you can ask for an evaluation from the prison authorities – how has this person shown regret or reform? What is the evidence that he will not commit such a crime again, and this can

all be challenged in a writ petition.

AS: I think there is a serious separation of powers issue that the court has waded into. In *Union of India v. V. Sriharan* (2015), who is the person convicted in the Rajiv Gandhi case, the court considered the question of whether the 'court' can exclude the remission powers of the government under Section 432 of the CrPC. As I explained earlier, the court gives a sentence and then the State government can choose, as per the procedure laid down, whether to exercise its remission powers or not. In *Sriharan* the Supreme Court said in all of these cases, the appellate court, that is a High Court or the Supreme Court, can explicitly exclude the remission powers of the State government or the Central government under Section 432 of the CrPC. That's basically saying that courts can now ensure that accused persons can remain for the rest of their natural life in prison. That is a serious infringement of the separation of powers doctrine and that judgment itself has a dissent by two judges. They recognised the problem of this in creating a new punishment. This sort of punishment – that a court can impose life imprisonment and tell the government that you will not exercise the powers that you have been given under the CrPC – is a creation of a new punishment not authorised anywhere in the law. Thinking that harsher punishments and longer sentences will somehow solve serious social problems is a grave mistake.

Are there any instances of types of crimes under which you might say that a reduced sentence or early release is not appropriate?

NR: I am totally in disagreement with this argument that crimes which are coined as terrorist crimes or sedition crimes, or even violence or rape of a child, shouldn't be considered for remission. That's because remission is about the offender, it is not about the offence. And this tendency to make the offender and the offence identical is dangerous because this suggests that if somebody has committed an offence once, that person is to be branded or identified or limited to the offences committed. That person may be other things. He may be a father, a

husband, a Good Samaritan in another respect, but probably because of an ideological indoctrination or financial need or mental distress, the person commits a crime.

AS: I agree. The question of remission is essentially a question of reformation. Has this person reformed in prison and is he ready to be reintegrated into society? And I think where it gets complicated really is that our prisons don't have the infrastructure, investment or the expertise to really make this assessment meaningfully over the years. So, we come out with this perverse solution: because we cannot have proper processes to assess reformation, let's keep a certain category of offenders in prison for as long as we can. And therefore I see this entire move as a failure of another process. We really need to ask the question, as a society why are we sending people to prison? If we are sending people to prison as revenge and we want to express that, then, sure, we can have that social conversation and all of these other considerations go out of the window. But Supreme Court judgment after judgment has said that the aim of our penal system is reform. Right?

And if you see the criminal amendments after the Delhi gang-rape case and the 2013 and 2018 Indian Penal Code amendments, the number of offences that now seem to invite life imprisonment for the remainder of the natural life [seem to have increased]. I agree that we seem to be going down this terrible American route of longer and longer sentences where people will never get out.

NR: In these types of sensitive cases, it is the duty of the state to also release the assessment of this person, the remorse that they have, and the acknowledgement that what they did was wrong. This needs to be done so that it is made clear that the state is not endorsing the convict's conduct. So, if the government is actually doing this in a reformatory spirit, it should make that known, but if the government is insidiously doing it for political reasons, then there is a problem. So, let us not attack the idea of remission and the idea of sentence review boards. Let us attack the Tamil Nadu government for not publicising the reasoning behind this release.



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Nandita Rao
is the Additional
Standing Counsel
(Criminal) for the
Government of
Delhi



Scan the QR code to
listen to the full
interview online

Overcoming dogma

The new foreign policies of the Modi government grew out of the challenges of change

T.P. SREENIVASAN

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar complement each other. One is a natural politician with his hand on the pulse of the people; the other an erudite diplomat with decades of experience around the globe. The elevation of Mr. Jaishankar as Minister of External Affairs was in recognition of not only his capabilities, but also his trustworthiness.

In a recent lecture, Mr. Jaishankar laid out the rationale and indispensability of the foreign policy that had emerged since 2014. His review of the past was objective. He saw failures more as consequences of rapid changes in the world rather than wrong judgments. Successes such as Bangladesh in 1971, the reformist policies of 1992, the 1998 nuclear tests, and the 2005 India-U.S. nuclear deal were remembered as instances of out-of-the-box thinking and courage, while failure to resolve issues with China in the 1950s, the 1962 defeat at the hands of China, the lack of response to 26/11, etc. were seen as missed chances.

Responding to change

The division of the period since Independence into six phases is both convenient and accurate. Each of these phases had its own characteristics depending on the leaders of the time, but continuity and constancy bordering on dogma may have been responsible for India remaining on the sidelines. Those phases led India into the present phase, beginning with 2014, which demanded more energetic diplomacy, particularly on account of dramatic changes in the world and the growth of India as an economic power and a relevant technology leader from which much was expected. In other words, the new policies and initiatives of the Modi government grew out of the challenges of change.

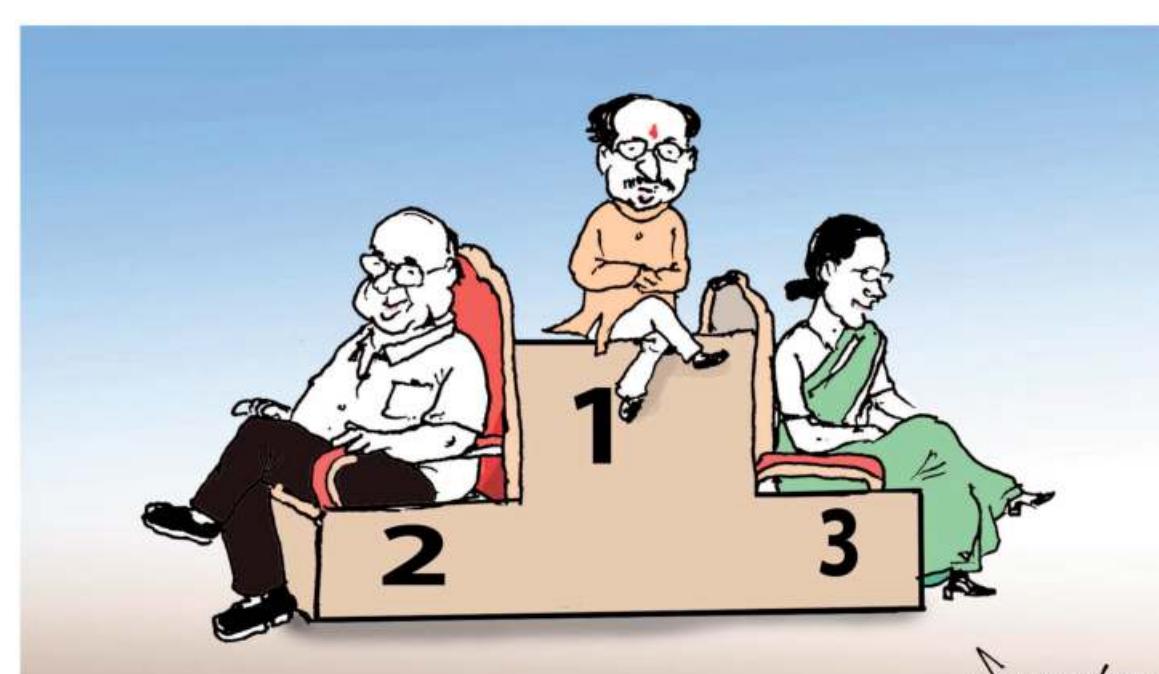
A good part of the lecture was dedicated to identifying changes in the world, hinting at the futility of India doing the same thing repeatedly yet expecting different results. Such changes have made non-alignment an anachronism and multi-alignments essential. India had to align-

self with different countries for different agendas. India's fight against terrorism went beyond mere protestations, and stern action was taken in the face of a nuclear threat from Pakistan.

For a new foreign policy
Mr. Jaishankar identified five baskets of issues, some necessitating a test of wills, some requiring the leveraging of the global environment for economic reasons, some demanding hedging, some requiring high-risk endeavours in diplomacy, and some others making it imperative for India to read the global tea leaves in the backdrop of global contradictions. One surprising element in the lecture was his emphasis that India's problems in formulating and implementing a new foreign policy were not external factors, but the "dogmas of Delhi". Is there a dogma that Mr. Modi has found hard to overcome? Was his disappointment over not being able to manage the neighbourhood or his failure to secure permanent membership of the Security Council or membership of the Nuclear Suppliers Group on account of any dogma? Did any dogma come in the way of his handling #HowdyModi, Mamalapuram and Vladivostok? If anything, there was general support for his foreign policy beyond his support base.

A hint of things to come
Mr. Jaishankar did not outline an agenda except to say that we should expect the unexpected. But he gave a hint of what might come when he asserted that "a nation that has the aspiration to become a leading power someday cannot continue with unsettled borders, an un-integrated region and under-exploited opportunities". But it is not up to India alone to create these conditions. China is in no hurry to settle the borders; for Pakistan, problems with India are an existential need; and regional integration is eluding India's grasp. But the refreshing thoughts in the lecture might lead to constructive action in the future.

T.P. Sreenivasan, a former Ambassador of India, is Director General, Kerala International Centre



NOTEBOOK

Not nine, but twelve lives

Reporting on Douglas Devananda, who has faced a dozen assassination attempts

AMIT BARUAH

A cat is said to have nine lives, but Douglas Devananda, Sri Lanka's newly sworn-in Minister for Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, seems to have 12. A one-time militant leader, Devananda, 62, has survived at least a dozen attempts on his life by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) – from commando-style attacks to suicide bombings. With his return to power, my mind wandered back to nearly 25 years ago when I reported for this newspaper one of the attempts by the LTTE to assassinate him.

Late in the evening of October 9, 1995, the sound of blasts and gunfire carried to our Queens Terrace flat in Colombo. I set off in my Maruti 800 car towards the direction of the gunfire, which turned out to be the area around Havelock

Road. The area was in total darkness. A group of armed men stopped our vehicle and checked our identities – they could have been LTTE attackers or from Devananda's outfit, Eelam People's Democratic Party (EPDP). We will never know.

Going ahead, it became evident that Devananda's home off Havelock Road had been attacked with rocket-propelled grenades and automatic weapons. A small crowd of reporters and policemen gathered outside as it became evident that four EPDP guards had been killed by the LTTE.

There was a twist in the story the next day. Devananda, hearing gunfire, had jumped from the second floor window, along with some of his guards, and hidden in a park the whole night. He feared that the LTTE would be coming back for him. The EPDP chief only called President Chandrika Kumaratunga in the early hours to confirm that he was, indeed, alive.

"I am the only one who has lived to tell the tale," he told me the next day at his

natives, shot the other three EPDP cadres outside and went looking for Devananda inside. But there was no sign of him. My page one report of October 10 was headlined: "4 killed in LTTE attack: EPDP chief missing". Turned out, much to my relief, that the headline and report had been appropriate for the level of information available at that late hour.

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"I am the only one who has lived to tell the tale," he told me the next day at his

Park Road office, adding that the Tigers could not gun him down like other Tamil leaders. "They will have to resort to a suicide killing," he added.

In November 2007, the Tigers used a female suicide bomber to target Devananda, who was then Minister of Social Services and Welfare, at his southern Colombo office. Three people, including the bomber, died, but Devananda survived the suicide attack. Earlier, in June 1998, Devananda lost an eye when attacked by detainees inside the Kalutara prison.

From my time in Colombo, only Devananda and Kumaratunga survived the LTTE's attacks and lived to tell their stories. Tall Tamil leaders and intellectuals like A. Amirthalingam, Uma Maheswaran, Neelan Tiruchelvam, Lakshman Kadigamar and A. Thangathurai didn't.

The Hindu

FROM THE ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO NOVEMBER 29, 1969

Pakistan not a party to Kashmir

The Home Minister, Mr. Y. B. Chavan, declared in the Lok Sabha to-day [Nov. 28, New Delhi] that Pakistan had nothing to do with the Kashmir problem, "except that it has occupied some territory, which we have to deal with." He was replying to Mr. Kanwar Lal Gupta who had asked whether the Government would give a categorical assurance that Pakistan was not a party to the Kashmir issue and there would be no compromise on it with that country. Mr. Gupta had drawn attention to Sheikh Abdullah's statement that there were three parties - Kashmir, India and Pakistan - to the dispute. Mr. Chavan said he had amply made it clear that Pakistan had nothing to do with Kashmir which "is our internal problem." Mr. P. C. Verma referred to the Sheikh's statement at a Press Club meeting here on October 15 and asked in what capacity he had talked about Kashmir when he claimed he was not an Indian citizen. On Kashmir, the Sheikh treated India and Pakistan on the same level, Mr. Verma said. Mr. Chavan said he had read the Press Club statement with great interest. But "reading a matter is one thing and taking official recognition is another."

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO NOV. 29, 1919.

Mr. Tilak's Farewell

From Our Own Correspondent, Westminster, November 6, 1919:—I have just returned from Liverpool Street station where there was a big crowd on the platform to bid farewell to the members of the various delegations returning to India. The most popular figure was Mr. Tilak, if one may judge by the number of friends who gathered around him and the floral decorations with which his person was adorned. He was accompanied by Mr. N.C. Kelkar and other colleagues and appeared to be in very good health and spirits. The failure of the libel action against Sir Valentine Chirol was a regrettable feature of his stay in this country, but apart from that episode, he is well satisfied with his experience here and with the sympathetic hearing which has been given by popular audiences to the Indian claim to Home Rule. He returns to India full of confidence in the early triumph of the cause. He has been criticised by some Indian Nationalists for not having denounced the Montagu Bill more emphatically, but I think he has realised more than some of his critics have the peculiar difficulties which have to be overcome in this country before a completely satisfactory scheme of self-government can be evolved.



'Gotabaya assured us he represents all'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar told the Rajya Sabha on Thursday that the discussions during Sri Lankan President Gotabaya Rajapaksa's visit would demonstrate if his assurance that he represents all Sri Lankans holds.

The Minister was responding to MDMK member Vaiko's allegation that Mr. Rajapaksa, the former Defence Secretary, was "responsible for the genocide of Tamils".

Mr. Vaiko raised concerns about Mr. Jaishankar's recent visit to Colombo.

"I had visited Sri Lanka a day after he was sworn in as President. We discussed our bilateral relationship briefly. The President assured us that he is today the President of all Sri Lankans. We need to look at that assurance and obviously whatever discussions happen during his visit would demonstrate where that assurance holds," he said.

Responding to questions about the government's decision not to sign the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) agreement, Mr. Jaishankar said negotiations were on till the RCEP leadership summit in Bangkok earlier this month, but Prime Minister Narendra Modi decided against signing the deal as India's concerns had not been adequately addressed.

Gotabaya in Delhi, to meet Modi today

Security, development cooperation and economic assistance are likely to come up for discussion

MEERA SRINIVASAN
COLOMBO

Sri Lanka's newly elected President Gotabaya Rajapaksa, who arrived in New Delhi on Thursday on his maiden state visit abroad, will meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi at noon on Friday.

He will later call on President Ram Nath Kovind, according to the External Affairs Ministry.

Colombo-based officials said national and regional security, development cooperation and economic assistance are likely to come up at the high-level bilateral discussion that comes a fortnight after Mr. Rajapaksa clinched the presidency.

Swift outreach

The visit follows India's particularly swift outreach to the region's newest leader. Mr. Gotabaya, a military



New beginning: Gotabaya Rajapaksa being received by V.K. Singh in New Delhi on Thursday. ■ V.V. KRISHNAN

man-turned-bureaucrat, entered politics with a presidential bid and won with a decisive mandate. External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar, the first foreign official to call on him, flew to Colombo as Prime Minister Narendra Modi's envoy, hours after Mr.

Gotabaya formally assumed charge.

Presidential Adviser Lalith Weeratunga, who is on the Sri Lankan delegation to India, said Mr. Jaishankar's visit signalled a "new beginning" in the ties. "The President [Mr. Rajapaksa] is

really looking forward to this visit [to New Delhi]."

National security, a "top priority" for the President, would likely be discussed at length, Mr. Weeratunga said. "The President is also keen that any impediment to Indian investment be ironed out. He is very focussed on every aspect of the partnership with India and wants to look at our close ties in a holistic manner," he told *The Hindu* before his departure.

Sri Lanka's Tamil leadership and people are closely following the visit, especially since the External Affairs Ministry said after Mr. Jaishankar's visit that New Delhi "expects" Sri Lanka to take forward its post-war reconciliation process, ensuring "equality, justice, peace and dignity" of the Tamil people.

Tamil leader R. Sampanthan said he expected Mr.

Rajapaksa's visit to "make a positive contribution" to better relations between the neighbours.

"Better relations will be facilitated by India's concerns being addressed in regard to the process of reconciliation and the resolution of the national question in Sri Lanka," he told *The Hindu*, expressing the hope that both governments would ensure that the past promises to the Tamils were kept.

Referring to Mr. Modi's recent remarks that the Constitution was "a guiding light", he said: "We too look upon the Constitution as the guiding light of our present journey. Our new constitution must be enacted without any further delay, as it will light up the path of Sri Lanka's journey towards, peace, prosperity and progress for all its people."

The statement, made by Ms. Linde in the Swedish Riksdag or Parliament on Thursday in reply to a question, came ahead of a week-long visit (December 1-6) by the Swedish delegation, during which the two sides are expected to announce an important polar research agreement, hold the first "innovation council" dialogue, discuss cooperation in defence, clean technologies, tackling air pollution, and trade.

The statement calling the situation in Kashmir "worrying" follows a shorter statement made in the Swedish Parliament on September 13, and a Twitter statement issued by the then Foreign Minister, Margot Wallstrom, on August 10.



King Carl Gustaf and Queen Silvia will visit India from December 1 to 6.

and communication opportunities are restored," the statement by Ms. Linde said.

The statement calling the situation in Kashmir "worrying" follows a shorter statement made in the Swedish Parliament on September 13, and a Twitter statement issued by the then Foreign Minister, Margot Wallstrom, on August 10.

'Aligned with EU'

Asked about Sweden's position, its Ambassador Klas Molin said Stockholm was fully aligned with the EU that has issued similar statements and held a special hearing on the situation in Kashmir in recent weeks.

"The Kashmir issue is a long-standing one. We see it as emanating from a bilateral dispute and thus has to be resolved through dialogue between India and Pakistan. That is the EU's position. The other main tenet is that Kashmiris should have a say in their own future," Mr. Molin told *The Hindu*.

Trinamool wins in all 3 Bengal bypolls

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

KOLKATA

The Trinamool won the byelections to all three West Bengal Assembly seats, bagging two for the first time. In Uttarakhand, the BJP won the byelection to the Pithoragarh seat.

The Trinamool captured Kaliaganj for the first time, by 2,414 votes.

In Kharagpur Sadar, where the party scored another maiden win, it defeated the BJP by more than 20,000 votes.

In Karimpur, the BJP's Jay Prakash Majumdar lost by over 23,000 votes to the Trinamool candidate.

Following the results, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee accused the BJP of "arrogance and pride".

Ahead of royal visit, Sweden toughens stand on Kashmir

It wants remaining curbs lifted

SUHASINI HAIDAR
NEW DELHI

Three days before the arrival of the Swedish royal couple King Carl Gustaf and Queen Silvia and senior Ministers, including Foreign Minister Anne Linde, Stockholm sent its strongest message on Jammu and Kashmir thus far, urging the government to lift all restrictions placed in the former State, and calling for it to "involve" Kashmiris for a resolution of the issue.

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"We emphasise the importance of respect for human rights, that an escalation of the situation in Kashmir is avoided and that a long-term political solution to the situation must involve Kashmiri inhabitants. Dialogue between India and Pakistan is crucial. Sweden and the EU [European Union] urge the Indian government to lift the remaining restrictions imposed on Jammu and Kashmir. It is crucial that free movement

Citizenship Bill yet to be listed

Give us enough time to study it, Opposition MPs tell Rajya Sabha Chairman

SOBHANA K NAIR
NEW DELHI

The government has so far not listed the controversial Citizenship Amendment Bill (CAB). On Thursday, at the business advisory meeting where the government lays down the legislative business for days ahead, the Opposition asked the government to ensure that the Bill is not sprung as a surprise.

According to rules and procedures of business, MPs must be given two days to read and analyse legislation. However, the Chairman, using his discretion, can allow less time.

On August 5, when Home Minister Amit Shah introduced the Jammu and Kashmir re-organisation Bill and another to dilute Article 370,

Citizenship Act, officials said on Thursday. Those who have been invited for discussions, scheduled for Friday and Saturday, include the North East Students' Organisation, All Bodoland Students' Union and student bodies of Meghalaya, Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh.

the members were taken by surprise. They got copies of the Bill moments after Mr. Shah moved the legislation in the Rajya Sabha.

At Thursday's meeting, sources said, the Opposition parties told Rajya Sabha Chairman M. Venkaiah Nai-

du that they should not be given a similar treatment as in the Kashmir legislation. "We told Mr. Naidu to ensure that we are given adequate time to study the Bill since it has overwhelming implications," said an Opposition leader.

In the 16th Lok Sabha, the CAB 2018 was cleared in the Lower House. It was sent to the select committee, where nine of the 30 members submitted a dissent note. The government, however, failed to move it in the Upper House fearing its defeat, since the numbers were stacked against it.

The Home Ministry has to move a new Bill now, which has to be cleared by the Cabinet before being tabled in Parliament.

"We have enough numbers now in the Rajya Sabha to ensure smooth passage of CAB," a senior BJP Minister said. The BJP has indicated that the Bill will be presented and cleared before the close of the winter session on December 13.

In Karimpur, the BJP's Jay Prakash Majumdar lost by over 23,000 votes to the Trinamool candidate.

Following the results, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee accused the BJP of "arrogance and pride".

ON THE CHIEF ENGINEER, CIVIL DAM SAFETY, PALLOM

Phone : 9496018719, E-mail : cedamsafety@gmail.com

Tender No : KL KSEB DRIPCE -04/2019-20 dt 15-11-2019, Tender ID : 2019_KSEB_321504_1

The Chief Engineer (Civil Dam Safety & Drip), Kerala State Electricity Board Ltd. (KSEBL) is inviting an EoI to assess the present day storage of three of its reservoirs viz. Kallarkatty, Madupetty & Kundala

by generating bed contour of the reservoirs after conducting bathymetric survey using DGPS and Multi Beam Echo Sounder. Date of Publishing of EoI document in the website www.ebidders.kerala.gov.in, 22 November 2019, 5.00 PM.

Last date and time of receipt of application on EoI through email at cedamsafety@gmail.com, 2nd December 2019, 3.00 PM. Last date and time of providing clarifications to the intending firm through Email : 7th December 2019, 3.00 PM. Last date and time of uploading EoI : 28th December 2019, 3.00 PM. Last date and time of receipt of hard copy of EoI : 28th December 2019, 11.00 AM.

Address for communication: Chief Engineer (Civil-Dam safety & Drip) KSEB Board Ltd., 1st Floor, Dam Safety Organisation, Pallom, Kottayam, Kerala Pin 696007.

Email: cedamsafety@gmail.com For details visit www.ebidders.kerala.gov.in & www.kseb.in

PR/MC1/F144/2019

TRANSMISSION CORPORATION OF ANDHRA PRADESH LIMITED VIDYUTH SOUDHA, VIJAYAWADA-520004.

e - Procurement TENDER NOTICE

The Transmission Corporation of A.P Limited invites bidders online for the following works. 1. Spec No. APT-E-19/2019 Name of the Work : Supply, Erection, Testing and Commissioning of Metering & Metering equipment at 32/220KV Railway Traction feeders at both the ends of AP Transco Station & RTSS at Bagal, Tenali, Tadepalli (Krishna Canal) in Guntur District and RTSS Ongan in Prakasam District (Vijayawada Zone Phase-II) on turnkey basis. Date & time of availability of tenders on e - procurement : 28-11-2019 at 17.00 Hrs.

Note : i) Name and address of the officer inviting tenders - Executive Director/Construction.

ii) The contractors / firms are requested to upload the information in the Zip format preferably.

iii) Further details & Bidding document can be seen @ http://www.apaprocurement.gov.in PHONE/FAXNO. 0866-2429231

RO.No: 35/19 Sd/- Executive Director/Construction

KOLKATA MUNICIPAL CORPORATION e-TENDER

DELHI JAL BOARD GOVERNMENT OF N.C.T. OF DELHI
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (SDW)-IV
S.T.P. KONDLI; DELHI-110096
PRESS NIT-N0.10 (2019-20)

S. No.	Name of work	Estimated Cost/ EMD	Date of release of tender in E-Procurement solution	last date/time of receipt of tender through e-procurement solution
1	Rehabilitation & up gradation of existing 10 MGD (45.5 MLD) Sewage Treatment plant Phase II at Yamuna Vihar Delhi based on Conventional Activated Sludge process to achieve treated effluent parameters BOD/TSS ≤ 10 ppm/10 ppm along with Operation & maintenance for Construction period & 12 years thereafter under AlgotEC programme 2019_DJB_184561_1	Item Rate	27.11.2019	26.12.2019 3.00 PM

Further details in this regard can be seen at http://delhi.govtprocurement.gov.in

ISSUED BY P.R.O. (WATER)

Advt. No. J.S.V 593/2019-20

Ex. Engineer (SDW)-IV

ONGC Petro additions Limited

OPAL

TENDER NOTICE

Tender Number: 1905C00730, Tender Description: Procurement of Ball Valves, Tender sale period: 29.11.2019 to 20.12.2019 till 14:00 Hrs., Closing date and time for Bid Submission: 20.12.2019 at 14:00 Hrs.

The tender document can be downloaded from www.opalindia.in. For other details of this tender including corrigendum if any, Bidders should regularly visit OPAL website (www.opalindia.in) for the latest information in this regard. In case of exigencies OPAL at its option may decide to extend tender sale/ bid closing/ opening date/ time in future, which will be posted on the above referred website for information. Bidders should regularly visit OPAL website for the latest information in this regard.

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Block No. 16, 4th Floor, Udyog Bhavan, Sector-11,

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TENDER NOTICE

Expression of Interest is invited for Empangement of Agencies / Firms for conducting Fire and Safety Audit of various Properties, Projects and Events of TCGL. The project requirements, technical specifications, eligibility criteria, selection process, etc. are included in the Tender document published on TCGL website http://www.gujarattourism.com/latest_from_gujarat/tenders.

The last date for submission of the Bid is 18/12/2019 upto 3:00 pm.

Managing Director

Government of Karnataka Water Resources Development Organization

O/o The Executive Engineer,

No1 Irrigation Investigation Division,

WRDO Mysuru-570020, Karnataka

CORRIGENDUM NO. 01/2019-20 DATED 25-11-2019

(Through e-procurement portal only)

Ref : BID REFERENCE :KA

Pakistan SC extends Army chief's tenure

Lawmakers will have to pass legislation on the terms of service of the top general in six months

MEHMAL SARFRAZ
LAHORE

The Supreme Court of Pakistan on Thursday allowed a conditional extension of the Army chief's term for six months, during which Parliament will have to legislate on the terms of service of the top general.

On Tuesday, the court had temporarily suspended a government notification granting a three-year extension to Army chief Qamar Javed Bajwa.

A three-member Bench, comprising Chief Justice Asif Saeed Khosa, Justice Mazhar Alam Khan Miankhal and Justice Syed Mansoor Ali Shah, heard the case and gave a short order on Thursday.

"We, while exercising judicial restraint, find it appropriate to leave the matter to Parliament and the federal government to clearly specify the terms and conditions of service of the COAS [Chief of Armed Staff] through an Act of Parliament and to clarify the scope of Article 243 of

the Constitution in this regard," said the court.

Therefore, the court stated, the current appointment of the Army chief "shall be subject to the said legislation and shall continue for a period of six months from today, whereafter the new legislation shall determine his tenure and other terms and conditions of service".

President's prerogative

Article 243 of the Constitution deals with the President and the federal government's authority over the armed forces. In its latest notification, the government has said that Gen. Bajwa is being reappointed as Army chief in accordance with Article 243, which vests the power to appoint the supreme command of the armed forces with the President.

The Supreme Court, however, said in its order that it could not find any provision relating to the tenure or reappointment of the Army chief "under the Constitu-



General Qamar Javed Bajwa

tution or the law". It wants the new legislation to remove the legal ambiguities in the reappointment or extension of the Army chief.

Faisal Chaudhry, Additional Advocate General-Punjab, doesn't think that there is a need to amend Article 243 for the new legislation. "The terms and conditions of the service of the Army Chief can be regulated by passing a new enactment if the federal government decides so or the Pakistan Army Act 1952 can be amended to that extent and the lacu-

nas – if there are any – can be filled by amending the persisting law," Mr. Chaudhry told *The Hindu*. He said the reason is that unlike other constitutional offices, like the judges of the superior court and the President of Pakistan, the Constitution does not envisage the tenure of the Army chief and therefore, there is no requirement to bring an amendment in it.

There was some confusion regarding the tenure of the Army chief but former Federal Law Minister Farogh Naseem, who had resigned from his Ministry to represent the Army chief, addressed a press conference a few hours after the court order and clarified that his new tenure will begin from Thursday night. Mr. Naseem said the government will bring a law in six months to decide the chief's tenure as it is the right of Parliament.

Prime Minister Imran Khan took to Twitter to give his reaction. "Today must be a great disappointment to

those who expected the country to be destabilised by a clash of institutions. That this did not happen must be of special disappointment to our external enemies & mafias within. Mafias who have stashed their loot abroad and seek to protect this loot by destabilising the country," he tweeted, taking a veiled dig at Opposition.

General faced flak

Since taking power, Gen. Bajwa and the military have been criticised for continuing a crackdown on civil society while also being accused of helping engineer Mr. Khan's victory in the 2018 elections.

The government is facing as it struggles to prop up Pakistan's economy after decades of mismanagement.

The debate over the Army chief's tenure has raised questions over Mr. Khan's ability to stay in office in a country where not a single PM has ever completed his term. (With AFP inputs)

China threatens to retaliate after U.S. passes Hong Kong law

Beijing summons U.S. envoy; agitators hold 'thanksgiving' rally

REUTERS
HONG KONG/BEIJING

China warned the U.S. on Thursday that it would take "firm countermeasures" in response to U.S. legislation backing anti-government protesters in Hong Kong, and said attempts to interfere in the Chinese-ruled city were doomed to fail.

U.S. President Donald Trump on Wednesday signed into law congressional legislation which supported the protesters, despite angry objections from Beijing, with which he is seeking a deal to end a damaging trade war.

Protesters in Hong Kong responded by staging a "thanksgiving" rally, with thousands, some draped in U.S. flags, gathering in the heart of the city.

"The rationale for us having this rally is to show our gratitude and thank the U.S. Congress and also President Trump



In gratitude: People taking part in a 'thanksgiving' rally in Hong Kong on Thursday. • AFP

for passing the bill," said Sunny Cheung, 23, a member of the student group that lobbied for the legislation.

The law requires the State Department to certify, at least annually, that Hong Kong is autonomous enough to justify favourable U.S. trading terms that have helped it become a world financial centre.

The Chinese Foreign Mi-

nistry said the U.S. would shoulder the consequences of China's countermeasures if it continued to "act arbitrarily" in regards to Hong Kong.

Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Le Yucheng summoned U.S. Ambassador Terry Branstad and demanded an immediate halt to interferences in China's domestic affairs.

U.S. to cut spending on NATO budget, Germany to pay more

Berlin to match Washington's contribution of 16.35%

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
BRUSSELS

The U.S. is to cut its contribution to NATO's operating budget, officials said on Thursday, with Germany increasing payments as the alliance tries to appease President Donald Trump ahead of a summit next week.

Mr. Trump has repeatedly criticised European members for freeloading on the U.S., singling out Germany – the continent's economic

powerhouse – for lagging behind on an alliance commitment to spend at least 2% of GDP on defence.

While most of Mr. Trump's anger has been focused on European national defence budgets, American officials have also grumbled about how much Washington contributes to NATO's running costs. "Under the new formula, cost shares attributed to most European allies and Canada will go up,

while the US share will come down," a NATO official said.

Washington currently pays 22.1% of the NATO budget – which totalled \$2.5 billion in 2019 – and Germany 14.8%, under a formula based on each country's gross national income.

Under the new agreement, the U.S. will cut its contribution to 16.35% of the total, Germany's will rise to the same level and other allies will pay more.

Students entrapped in Farmington case: Warren

Homeland Security officials arrested 90 more students after offering them seats in 'fake' university

SRIRAM LAKSHMAN
WASHINGTON

Reacting to a report that an additional 90 students had been arrested in the University of Farmington immigration operation in Michigan over the past few months,

presidential candidate and senator, Elizabeth Warren, said the operation was "cruel" and the students were "entrapped".

"This is cruel and appalling," Ms. Warren tweeted. "These students simply dreamed of getting the high-quality higher education

America can offer. ICE [Immigration and Customs Enforcement] deceived and entrapped them, just to deport them."

The operation, conducted by Homeland Security agents, between 2017 and 2019, offered students the chance to enrol at the fake university, so that they could be seen as making progress to a degree in order to maintain their visa status in the U.S. and get curricular practical training permits on which to work. U.S. agents said the students were in on

the scam. *The Hindu* had reported in February that 129 of the 130 arrested were Indians. The Farmington story was first reported by the *Detroit Free Press*, which reported again on Wednesday that an additional 90 students had been arrested in the March-July period, causing Ms. Warren to react.

Entrapment operations

'Entrapment' is a legal concept and refers to a situation in which law enforcement induces a crime that the defendant would not have otherwise committed. Ms. Warren's reference to students being "entrapped" resonates with the angle Indian embassy officials had taken on the Farmington case earlier this year.

The officials had tried impressing upon the U.S. authorities that the legal environment and law enforcement practices in India did not support such operations, so the students were perhaps unfamiliar with the concept. U.S. officials had, as per Indian diplomats, taken a more lenient view based on

this argument.

The Indian embassy in Washington DC has contacted the U.S. Department of State and Homeland Security after reading the report, an embassy spokesperson told *The Hindu*.

"It will be recalled that the Indian Embassy and consulates were proactive in securing consular access to the students detained in connection with the Farmington case in February 2019. Subsequently, as the article indicates, most students were allowed to return to India."

28 Iraqis killed after Iran's consulate torched

Attack shows intense anti-Iran sentiment

REUTERS

BAGHDAD/NAJAF

Iraqi security forces shot dead at least 28 protesters on Thursday after demonstrators stormed and torched an Iranian consulate overnight, in what could mark a turning point in the uprising against the Tehran-backed authorities.

At least 24 people died when troops opened fire on demonstrators in the southern city of Nassiriya.

Four others were killed in the capital Baghdad.

Iraq is witnessing an uprising that began in October with anti-corruption demonstrations that have since swelled into a revolt against authorities seen as

stooges of Tehran.

In Najaf, a city of ancient pilgrimage shrines that serves as seat of Iraq's powerful Shi'ite clergy, the Iranian consulate was reduced to a charred ruin after it was stormed overnight. Protesters accused the Iraqi authorities of turning against their own people to defend Iran.

"All the riot police in Najaf and the security forces started shooting at us as if we were burning Iraq as a whole," a protester who witnessed the burning of the consulate said.

Another protester, Ali, described the attack as "a brave act and a reaction from the Iraqi people."

Maldives ex-President sentenced to five years in corruption case

Yameen was arrested in Feb. on charges of money laundering

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

MALE

Disgraced Maldives ex-President Abdulla Yameen was sentenced to five years in prison for money laundering on Thursday after a corruption probe into the former strongman's rule of the luxury tourist destination.

Yameen, 60, who ran the Indian Ocean archipelago with an iron fist before his shock election loss in 2018, was accused of illegally transferring one million dollars from one of his bank accounts during an ongoing graft investigation.

He was arrested in February on charges of bribing



Abdulla Yameen

witnesses in the ensuing money laundering trial.

Authorities also froze bank accounts belonging to Yameen that held around \$6.5 million at the end of last

year following accusations he had taken illicit payments. Investigators believe Yameen could have stashed millions abroad and are trying to repatriate the cash.

Yameen's government regularly jailed opponents or forced them into exile during its five years in power, and the leader relied heavily on China for political and financial support as his human rights record faced criticism.

Current leader Ibrahim Mohamed Solih's won elections last year on a pledge to end corruption. Dissidents have since returned to the country.

Sri Lanka to probe Swiss + employee's detention

MEERA SRINIVASAN

COLOMBO

Sri Lankan authorities on Thursday said they are probing a recent incident of a Swiss embassy staffer's detention in Colombo, a day after the Swiss envoy raised the matter with Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa and Foreign Minister Dinesh Gunawardena.

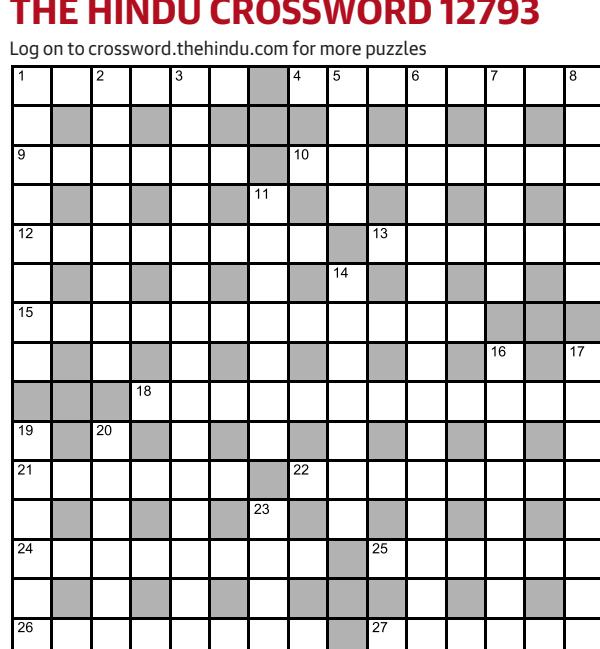
Foreign Ministry issued a statement about a "serious security incident" involving a staff member at the Swiss embassy in Colombo.

"We can confirm that a local employee of the embassy was detained against her will on the street and threatened at length by unidentified men in order to force her to disclose embassy-related information," the Ministry spokesperson said.

Observing that Switzerland regarded the incident "a very serious and unacceptable attack" on one of its diplomatic representations and its employees, the Swiss authorities had sought an immediate investigation by the Sri Lankan authorities.

THE HINDU CROSSWORD 12793

Log on to crossword.thehindu.com for more puzzles



ACROSS

- 1 Father's office group, extremely classy (6)
- 4 Told to jazz up a seaside resort (8)
- 9 Construct, those people have a choice (6)
- 10 Everyone's back inside, stand will give way (8)
- 14 Father (8)
- 16 Gold, get an arm over first (6)
- 18 Rating a small saw (8)
- 20 Fixed war casualties reported (6)
- 22 One's on hand, two on lease (8)
- 24 Kind of triangle which is organic (8)
- 25 Gold, get an arm over first (6)
- 26 Rating a small saw (8)
- 27 Fixed war casualties reported (6)
- 28 Container to keep your money perhaps (5,3)

- 3 Cornering old spy, dealt with appropriately (15)
- 5 Unrest, port city's tense (4)
- 15 Missing line, it's child's play (8,4)
- 18 Second Airport announcement, going down a slippery slope (12)
- 21 Camaraderie of an elfin from bottom to top (6)
- 22 One's on hand, two on lease (8)
- 24 Kind of triangle which is organic (8)
- 25 Gold, get an arm over first (6)
- 26 Rating a small saw (8)
- 27 Fixed war casualties reported (6)
- 28 Container to keep your money perhaps (5,3)

To play an interactive version of this crossword online, scan the QR code

(set by Arden)

SUDOKU

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

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★☆

Solution to puzzle 12792

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

C	A	D	E	E	E	P	E	C

<tbl_r cells="9" ix="3" maxcspan="1

MARKET WATCH

	28-11-2019	% CHANGE
Sensex	41,130	-0.27
US Dollar	71.62	-0.38
Gold	38,535	0.00
Brent oil	63.42	-1.34

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	372.60	-0.35
Asian Paints	1714.60	-0.75
Axle Bank	750.60	-2.30
Bajaj Auto	3196.40	-15.65
Bajaj Finance	9240.10	11.65
Bharti Airtel	4102.05	-16.30
BPLC	510.00	4.10
Britannia Ind	3098.25	7.15
Cipla	468.35	0.35
Coal India	205.85	4.85
Dr Reddy's Lab	2976.75	4.75
Eicher Motors	23091.60	69.95
GAIL (India)	125.80	1.35
Grasim Ind	800.15	12.05
HCL Tech.	1132.65	4.40
HDFC	2309.75	-26.55
HDFC Bank	1265.30	-13.10
Hero MotoCorp	2466.30	-56.95
Hindalco	204.10	1.10
Hind Unilever	2087.15	-6.10
ICICI Bank	519.15	13.65
IndusInd Bank	1568.25	41.90
Bharti Infralet	256.60	31.30
Infosys	701.85	6.10
Indian Oil Corp	132.55	1.45
ITC	246.70	-0.25
JSW Steel	263.95	11.00
Kotak Bank	1615.00	-2.90
L&T	1349.90	14.40
M&M	541.95	2.00
Maruti Suzuki	7261.25	-33.15
Nestle India Ltd.	14659.55	96.85
NTPC	115.55	-0.20
ONGC	133.15	0.50
PowerGrid Corp	196.15	1.05
Reliance Ind.	1580.30	10.45
State Bank	349.30	5.75
Sun Pharma	457.35	-1.40
Tata Motors	164.80	-1.10
Tata Steel	432.10	10.75
TCS	2077.35	23.05
Tech Mahindra	766.25	-1.30
Titan	1169.50	2.35
UltraTech Cement	4294.70	60.05
UPL	579.90	28.05
Vedanta	147.40	0.45
Wipro	239.80	-0.25
YES Bank	70.05	1.80
Zee Entertainment	311.00	-8.50

EXCHANGE RATES

CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	71.41	71.73
Euro	78.58	78.94
British Pound	92.34	92.76
Japanese Yen (100)	65.24	65.53
Chinese Yuan	10.15	10.20
Swiss Franc	71.46	71.78
Singapore Dollar	52.28	52.52
Canadian Dollar	53.71	53.96
Malaysian Ringgit	17.11	17.19

Source: Indian Bank

BULLION RATES CHENNAI

November 28 rates in rupees with previous rates in parentheses

Retail Silver (1g) 47.9... (47.9)

22 ct gold (1g) 3614... (3612)

Auto firms see smoother ride in Dec.

November turned out bumpy, but year-end usually good in terms of sales, says industry

YUTHIKA BHARGAVA
NEW DELHI

Even as November – a seasonally low-sales month for passenger vehicles – has seen a dip in customer enquiries at dealers' following the festive season, the industry expects retail sales in December to be in the positive territory.

"Things are not great as of today," Vinkesh Gulati, vice-president, Federation of Automobile Dealers' Associations, told *The Hindu*.

"November started on a good note... the first 15 days of the month were good as far as passenger vehicles and two-wheeler sales are concerned. This was mainly [due to] a lot of spillover from festive sales or in some cases some model mix was not available with the dealers during Dhanteras and Diwali," he added.

He added that November



Wholesales, dependent on stock position at dealerships and industry, could be flattish, says HMIL's Vikas Jain. • PTI

sales predominantly comprised enquiries from before the festive season which were converted in the first 15 days of November, so the sales number might not be drastically low. "Post that, however, the enquiry levels are down. No good walk-ins

are also there in the market."

An industry expert who did not want to be named echoed similar views. "The sense that we are getting from the vehicle manufacturers is that retail sales have not done very well." Also, given that last year's festive

season fell in November, year-on-year sales could see a decline due to base effect.

Vikas Jain, national sales head, Hyundai Motor India Ltd, pointed out that seasonally, November was a low-sales month if the festivals do not fall during the month. "So, if I see seasonality-wise, it has been a little better for us than what we had expected... enquiries and walk-ins are good. Customers are seeking offers... deliveries are also positive... so it's good."

Asked about dealers seeing a decline in customer enquiries, Mr. Jain said decline in November is very normal as customers usually wait for December or year-end offers to buy their vehicle. In December, however, sales are expected to bounce back.

"In December, there are two aspects – retail and wholesale. Retail should be

very good. Generally, what we see is that December retail exceed sales done in every other month of the year. So this year, sales could be even better than in October," Mr. Jain said. He added that wholesales – which is dependent on stock position at dealerships and industry – could be flattish.

Mr. Gulati also noted that December is a good month usually in terms of sales being the year-end, so inventories pile up at dealers should not be a problem for now.

Mr. Jain added, "So, we are seeing some positivity in November. December will be, as usual, good in retail... but industry should be on a recovery path... the days of -20, -30% decline seem to be over."

For Hyundai, he pointed out that discounts have come down slightly during the current month.

RIL first to cross ₹10 lakh cr. m-cap

Firm denies reports of stake sale in news assets to BCCL

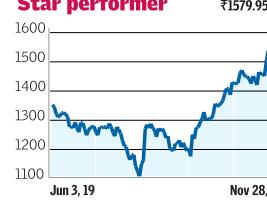
PIYUSH PANDEY

MUMBAI

Reliance Industries Ltd. (RIL) has become the first Indian firm to cross market capitalisation (m-cap) of ₹10 lakh crore, with its shares touching a 52-week high of ₹1,584 before closing at ₹1,579.95 on Thursday, valuing the company at over ₹10,01,555.42 crore.

It took only 25 trading sessions for the oil-to-retail conglomerate to reach an m-cap of ₹10 lakh crore from ₹9 lakh crore, while it took 284 trading sessions to go from m-cap of ₹8 lakh crore to ₹9 lakh crore.

Investors are bullish on RIL after its chairman announced plans to make the



company debt free by FY2021 as the company comes to the end of a huge capex cycle of more than ₹3.5 lakh crore over the last three years.

The company is reportedly in talks with Sony Corp. and Bennett Coleman & Company Limited (BCCL), also known as The Times Group, to sell stakes in RIL's entertainment and news channels, respectively.

On talks with Sony Corp., an RIL spokesperson said, "As a policy, we do not comment on media speculation and rumours. Our company evaluates various opportunities on an ongoing basis. We have made and will continue to make necessary disclosures in compliance with our obligations under Securities Exchange Board of India (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations 2015 and our agreements with the stock exchanges."

On the talks with Times Group, the spokesperson said, "Reliance Industries firmly denies.... to sell news assets to Times group. The story is baseless and false."

IL&FS group firm to get ₹118 crore in claim share

Settlement pertains to a road project

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI

A group company of troubled infrastructure firm IL&FS is to get ₹118 crore towards its share of claim amount awarded by an arbitration tribunal.

IL&FS said in a statement that Bangalore Elevated Tollway Private Ltd. (BETPL) has been awarded an amount of ₹492 crore towards claims filed by the company against the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI).

Thus, IL&FS Engineering and Construction Company Ltd., an IL&FS group company, which has 24% stake in

BETPL, is entitled to approximately ₹118 crore from the total claim awarded by the tribunal. BETPL is a special purpose vehicle (SPV) promoted for the development of four-lane elevated and six-lane at grade road from Silk Board Junction to Attibele on the outskirts of Bengaluru.

NHAI had awarded the project to BETPL in 2006. "BETPL had filed a claim against NHAI in the tribunal as per the terms of the contract pertaining to matters related to additional cost incurred due to extension of construction period [prolongation cost]," IL&FS said.

+ BASF to double polymer dispersions capacity

Firm to set up a new production line

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI

BASF India has announced plans to double its capacity for polymer dispersions with a new production line at its site in Dahej in Gujarat.

Through this investment – of an unspecified amount – BASF plans to ensure reliable supply of dispersion solutions to its customers in the Indian and south Asian markets.

"We see a growing need for our latest generation of innovations, including low-VOC and low-odour dispersions for industries such as architectural coatings, construction, paper and adhesives. This capacity increase aims to address customers' needs and support their development in the region," said Jeff Knight, senior vice-president, dispersions and resins, Asia Pacific, BASF.

"This new investment will double the production capacity by early 2021. It will be a driving force to support our customers'

Muthoot Finance to raise ₹790 cr.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

CHENNAI

Muthoot Finance Ltd. will raise ₹790 crore through the issue of secured, redeemable, non-convertible debentures (NCDs) to be used primarily for the lending activities of the company.

The issue opens on November 29 and closes on December 24 with an option to close it earlier or at an extended date as may be decided by the board or the NCD committee.

The issue is rated by Credil Ltd. and Icra Ltd., both of whom have awarded long-term debt rating of AA/stable for the debentures. The rating scale denotes a 'high degree of safety regarding timely servicing of financial obligations and low credit risk'.

"The issue will help the company to have long-term funds and the diversify borrowing basket as well," said George Alexander Muthoot, MD, Muthoot Finance.

Cotton production to be higher this season

'Good rains in areas under cultivation'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

COIMBATORE

Domestic cotton production this season, which began on October 1, is expected to be 360 lakh bales, according to provisional estimates of the Cotton Advisory Board.

In the first meeting for this season on Thursday, the Board estimated the total cotton supply for the period October 2019 to September 2020 at 429.41 lakh bales against 403.91 lakh bales in the previous season.

Though the area under cotton cultivation this year (125.84 lakh ha) is marginally less than that of last year (126.58 lakh ha), production is expected to be higher because of relatively better yield.

"The rains were good this year in the cotton growing areas and that is why we expect higher production," said K. Selvaraju, secretary general of Southern India Mills' Association, who took part in the meeting.

The board estimated im-

ports to decline to 25 lakh bales from 31 lakh bales last year, and exports to go up from 44 lakh bales in the 2018-2019 cotton season to 50 lakh bales this season.

Consumption by textile mills is also likely to be slightly higher at 288 lakh bales from 274.50 lakh bales last year.

The cost of cotton (Shankar-6 variety) on Thursday was ₹38,700 a candy. Cotton prices are lower now compared with the same period last year and are expected to stabilise between ₹39,000 and ₹40,000 a candy this season, said Atul Ganatra, president of the Cotton Association of India.

The acquisition will be acquired for an upfront cash consideration of ₹11.29 million, with potential earn-outs on achieving certain milestones, the Hyderabad-headquartered drugmaker said on Thursday.

The filing by Aurobindo Pharma is expecting a further investment of ₹1,05,898 crore once it is fully developed in the next five years.

The acquisition will provide access to proprietary and innovative technology platforms for prophylactic and therapeutic use along with the global R&D centre, according to the company.

Heavyweight FEATS

HARIKUMAR JS

As Majiziya Bhanu walked to the spotlight and posed during the women's segment of the Mr. Kerala contest in Kochi last year, she was greeted with jeers and hoots. But the hijab-wearing power-lifter was not unnerved, despite this being her first such performance at an event for bodybuilders. "The irony is, I was declared the winner in the end," Majiziya says, pulling no punches.

From being a "shy" girl from an orthodox family, Majiziya has power-lifted her way to the top of the game. With an impressive array of medals under her belt already, the 25-year-old has been smashing stereotypes with her sporting feats.

"Earlier, negative and offensive comments, usually revolving around the hijab, used to pain me. But I have learnt to steel myself. Today, my confidence is sky-high and I feel I am capable of facing anything myself," she says over phone from her hometown in Vadakara, Kozhikode. Majiziya has been busy with preparations to compete in the 56 kg weight class for the World Powerlifting Congress' World Cup to be held in Moscow next month.

She took an interest in sports from a young age, dabbling in athletics and track events before seriously taking up boxing in the second year of college, which became the turning point. "Back then, I was inspired by the achievements of sportswomen such as Serena Williams and Mary Kom. My then coach, Ramesh Kumar sir, motivated me to toss my hat into the power-lifting ring," says Majiziya, a dental surgeon.

Latent powers
Soon, she hit upon her "hidden" strength. "As I started practising, I realised I was improving and gained

**MEDAL TALLY**

Silver in National Powerlifting Championship in Jammu and Kashmir in 2017

Silver in Asian Powerlifting Championship in Indonesia in 2017

Gold medal in National Arm-wrestling Championship in Turkey in 2018

the confidence to take it to the next, competitive level. In between, I also tried arm-wrestling," she says. Majiziya then went on to represent India in the World Armwrestling Championship in Turkey last year. However, she insists that her strong point remains power-lifting.



Power up Majiziya Bhanu will be competing in the World Powerlifting Congress' World Cup in Moscow next month ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Though she has not faced any hurdles over wearing a hijab during power-lifting competitions, Majiziya says there were occasions when she had to "fight" for participation in bodybuilding contests. "If you look at international contests, participants line up in bikinis and it is usually associated with maximum exposure of body and muscles. But what many judges look for is the fitness of the contestants. It is not a skin show," she says.

She believes genetics plays a major role in one's fitness levels. "I am a foodie but, at the same time, I also work out a lot. So I am happy that I can generally eat what I like. But I follow a strict diet while preparing for competitions. The focus then shifts to protein-rich, nutritious food," she says.

Her fitness goals are not impeded during the month of Ramzan, when she observes fasting. "Initially, I was concerned as to how I would work out and whether I

would be able to sustain my energy. But my doubts were soon dispelled. Contrary to popular notions, I feel one of the best times to work out is after breaking the fast in the evening," the sportswoman says, adding that fasting rather helps her "detoxify my body and purify my mind."

The powerlifter says she takes criticisms as challenges and prefers to play to her strengths. "I ask myself this question: If I had not achieved anything, would anyone have bothered me? That keeps me going." Majiziya says her family has been most supportive in encouraging her to scale greater heights, while describing her mother as her "biggest pillar of support".

Despite focussing on power-lifting, Majiziya's dream is to train in weight-lifting and win an Olympic medal. She will soon be training with other participants in the country in Delhi before jet-setting to a Russian winter and turning up the heat on the ring.

**PUNCHING ON**

Boxing was introduced for the first time in Ancient Greece and it was a part of the Olympic Games in 688 BC

Wide assortment Assamese Non Vegetarian Thali ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

peppers and what the menu described as a special sauce. I loved its piquant taste, complemented by the sweet touch of the onions and peppers. The mutton chops consisted of minced meat that had been crumbed and fried to perfection.

The thali was as grand as it looked: rice at the centre, with a fried brinjal (beguni), a bowl of Mung Dal, Posto-Aloo (poppy seeds with potatoes), Tenga Fish (an Assamese preparation), khar (a digestive), Aloo Pitkia (mashed potatoes) and Gu Ka Kheer. The Paas Torkari was a delicious mix of carrots, beans, spinach, capsicum and potatoes, cooked lightly with just a sprinkling of spices.

I love Aloo Pitkia—and this had been nicely sharpened with mustard oil and green chillies. The dal—roasted and then cooked with peas—was superb. I didn't have the fish, but was told it was nice and tangy. And the kheer was finger licking good.

Mindful of a friend's comment that I seldom have a word of criticism, I thought hard about what I didn't like. I realised what it was. In front of me was a wall TV, and on it was an anchor who gives me nightmares. That's one way of curbing one's appetite!

But it was truly a great meal. And I felt as if I had found an old friend.

50 shades of green

Locally-grown produce and foraged greens are making a comeback, as chefs look to reduce carbon footprints and reintroduce native favourites



SANGEETA KHANNA

Are you fed up of the rainbow on your plate? The spectrum of coloured bell peppers, zucchini, broccoli and red cabbage? It could also be the rub-by-red lola rosa lettuce or napa cabbage in your salad, sprinkled generously with rucola leaves or the dark-hued micro greens of purple basil, red cabbage or beetroot if you live in a metro.

We all know that colourful fruits and vegetables are packed with antioxidants; but the rainbow garnish leaves a big carbon footprint in its wake. In fact, the food on our plate is much more than the colours, it can become an instrument for climate change reversal if taken seriously.

Imagine the supply chain of such produce: procuring, packaging and transporting them involves using up a lot of energy and generates immense plastic waste. This produce is grown all year round, using up a lot of water



From the backyard (clockwise from left) Vietnamese Fish on Wilted Water Spinach; Lai Xaak Bhaji; Millet Mooli Paratha • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

gardens. This is a shift that may become a game-changer in an industry that feeds the market-led economy.

On the table

Among the boutique hotels, Narendra Bhawan in Bikaner has a range of regional curries and pickles like *guwar kachri ki subzi*, *kaachra ki subzi*, *chaurai ka saag*, *aloe vera ki subzi* with *bajre ki roti* and *chana kadhi* that are winning guests over for their novelty factor. The hotel sources ingredients from the local vegetable markets and has been growing some of them in the kitchen garden as well.

At JW Marriott Mussoorie Walnut Grove Resort & Spa chefs use foraged stinging nettle to make *kandali ka saag* and use *jakhia* to temper several dishes. Given Uttarakhand's rich flora of wild edible greens, the ingredients available to the hotel are diverse. They use *pahadi kheera* and *pahadi palak*, apart from the local millets to create Garhwali meals.

Even Vivanta Guwahati has a special Assamese breakfast buffet and seasonal Assamese *thalis* that make extensive use of local greens and vegetables, apart from the local fish, shrimp and pork. Local herbs and vegetables like elephant apple, chayote squash, bamboo shoots, fiddlehead

Vegetables and greens such as water spinach, *guwar phali* (cluster beans), *kachri* (wild cucumber), *chaular* (amaranth), moringa and herbs like *jakhia* (dog mustard), *jimbu* (allium), *timur* (red pepper) or stinging nettles are finding their moment in the sun, with chefs procuring them from local markets; some grow them in their own vegetable and herb

gardens. This is a shift that may become a game-changer in an industry that feeds the market-led economy.

ON THE FAST TRACK

Bamboo is the fastest growing plant. It can grow up to three feet in 24 hours under appropriate climate conditions.



ferns, ash gourd, cilantro, skunkvine etc figure prominently in their *thalis*.

Restaurants in the metros follow close on the heels of their counterparts in resort towns. Kitchens now focus on sourcing ingredients directly from local farmers, and chefs take great interest in introducing diners to native produce. Chef Thomas Zacharias at The Bombay Canteen has been actively promoting native produce. He successfully uses the seasonal *moras bhaji* forged from the mangroves in Vasai to make *vada* and a salad.

Under The Neem in Gurugram, has a menu based on whatever grows in their kitchen garden. While their mezze platter uses brinjals and leafy greens, dishes like *jowar paratha* with fresh radish and assorted greens, and the vegetarian mung bean omelette, accommodate seasonal greens like mustard, amaranth and dill.

VietNam in Gurugram has an eclectic Vietnamese menu, featuring herbs and greens sourced from local markets and farmers. Chef Vaibhav Bhardwaj uses locally sourced water spinach or morning glory as a side dish for Grilled Salmon.

Native ingredients are also being reinterpreted in interesting ways by several chefs. Take for instance, chef Manish Mehrotra of Indian Accent, Delhi, who has been using vegetables like *kundru* (ivy gourd) and *lauki* (bottle gourd) in innovative ways in his salads and curries. Similarly, an innovative *bathua* and ricotta ravioli has been a hit at Manu Chandra's Toast & Tonic in Bengaluru.

Sridevi Jasti from Vibrant Living Foods in Hyderabad, caters meal boxes using moringa greens in hummus and dips, *gongura* leaves in chutneys and salads and purslane in *raita*.

While this new wave of innovation is restricted to fine-dining restaurants for now, it is a welcome step into making a dovetail effect that is sure to trickle down to the masses. Small steps count.

Pride of taste

Once a poor man's party fare, the Champaran Meat Curry is now a regional delicacy across Bihar

PRIYADESHINI S

At Old Champaran Meat House in Patna, the crowd waiting is restless. What keeps them engaged, however, is a dramatic kitchen scene. A line of whistling earthen pots sits atop gas burners, with jets of steam gushing out of small openings on their lids.

The mouths of the *handis* or *ahuna* are sealed with kneaded flour, and an aroma of mutton stewing in mustard oil floats over the expectant diners.

This scene unfolds regularly across Patna, where the popularity of Champaran Meat Curry, served in takeaway *handis*, rages. The curry from the nondescript town of Champaran, from where Gandhi famously started the Satyagraha, has recently been making it to the tables of the rich and famous. Gopal Khushwaha, who claims to be its originator in current recipe and form, says it has even made it to the banquet at Raisina Hill.

An innocent query about the dish from a client inspired Gopal to trace the dish to Ghorasahan, a small village 30 kms from Motihari on the Bihar-Nepal border. The dish has its origins in Nepal, where it is cooked in open *handis*. On the Indian side, it is cooked covered, but stirred often. Mutton is marinated in mustard oil mixed with onions, a paste of ginger and spice powders, and cooked slowly over a low flame.

Gopal says the goodness of the curry depends on the quality of mutton, or more precisely, the type of goat used. "Meat of a hilly goat will taste different from one that has grazed on grass; meat of a goat fed on herbs is dark, as is the case of mutton in Champaran. The cooking time for a



goat weighing six to seven kilograms is about an hour, during which the pot has to be tossed six to seven times."

Mohan Thakur, a food connoisseur from Sitamarhi in Bihar, says that migrant workers from the villages of North Bihar brought the dish to Patna. "It was not sophisticated food made in the kitchens of zamindars, and that's why it had not received the kind of exposure it has now found. The farm hands or labourers generally marinated the mutton with whatever spices they had, mixing all ingredients with the meat and cooking it over slow charcoal or wood fire. It is a hearty, thick and strong curry, not subtle but forceful."

Babloo Roy recalls eating it in Barabanki, Uttar Pradesh, prepared on wood fire. He remembers an earthy taste that is absent when the dish is cooked in a pressure cooker on a gas stove. "After cooking on high heat, it is left to stew for a long time on doused charcoal. This slow cooking tenderises the meat and allows it to soak in the spices."

Puja Sahu, who runs Potbelly, a chain of Bihar cuisine restaurants in New Delhi, says the *Ahuna Mutton* is marinated in a mix of ghee and mustard oil, with whole spices, along with onions, garlic and ginger paste. The cooking pot is sealed and tossed frequently in the one-hour cooking time.

In a richer version, it was called Batlohi Mutton and cooked in a bell metal pot, much the same way, but enriched with spices and dry fruits. But even as a discussion on its origin and evolution rages, it is evident that the Champaran Curry began as the poor man's party fare.



Slow simmer The taste is defined by how the pots are sealed and tossed

• SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

POOCH CAFE



HAGAR THE HORRIBLE



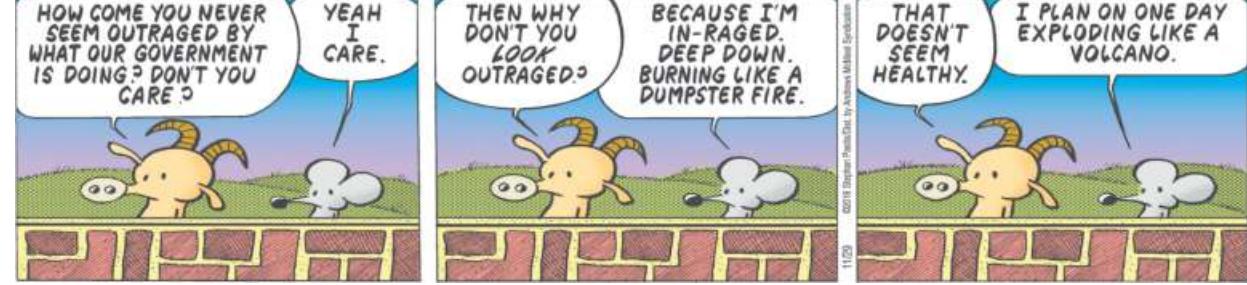
TIGER



WUMO



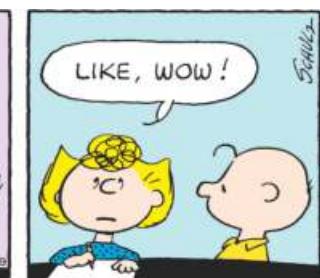
PEARLS BEFORE SWINE



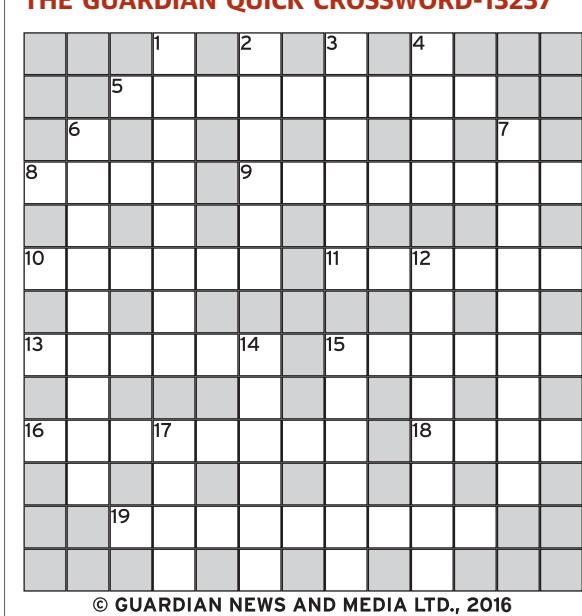
PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBES

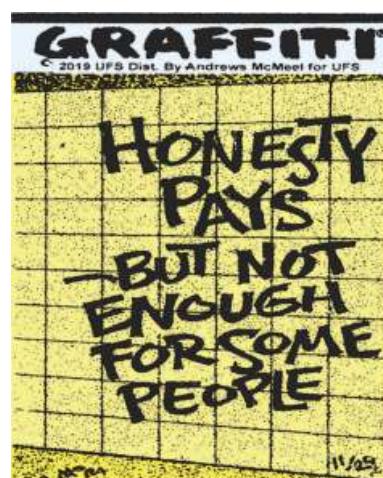


THE GUARDIAN QUICK CROSSWORD-13237

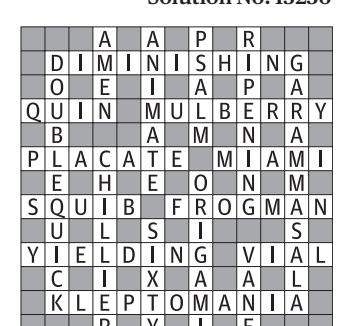


phrase in popular music or jazz (4)
6 Beach vehicle (4,5)
7 Student of living things and their environment (9)
12 In a cheap and flashy way (8)
14 'Tree falling!' (6)
15 Brick bonder (6)
17 Back end (4)

Solution will appear in The Hindu dated November 30, 2019.
Solution No. 13236



- Across
 - 5 Smear (9)
 - 8 Drone – bustle (4)
 - 9 Specific design and printing (9)
 - 10 Friendly (6)
 - 11 Swallow (6)
 - 13 Up to speed (from French) (2,4)
 - 15 Hallucination (6)
 - 16 Sand-filled device traditionally used in the kitchen (3-5)
 - 18 Average (2-2)
 - 19 Verbatim (9)
- Down
 - 1 Kind of Italian restaurant (8)
 - 2 Disorganised (6)
 - 3 Scottish water sprite – Australian sheepdog (6)
 - 4 Short repeated (4)



CMYK

India expected to dominate Pakistan

Ramkumar to open proceedings with Nagal playing second singles

DAVIS CUP

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NUR-SULTAN (KAZAKHSTAN)

A formidable India is expected to demolish the challenge of a depleted Pakistan in the Davis Cup tie to be played in the indoor courts of the National Tennis Center from Friday after the fixture was shifted to a neutral venue following a drama-filled build up.

While security concerns were resolved, the shifting of the match did no good to the competition.

India, with players of the calibre of Sumit Nagal, Ramkumar Ramanathan and veteran Leander Paes, was always expected to win easily, but the pullouts of Pakistan's top players Aisam-ul-Haq Qureshi and Aqeel Khan has made it a no-contest.

Learning experience

It will be a learning experience for Pakistan's junior players, who will lead their country's challenge in the tie, the winner travelling to Croatia in March 2020 for the World Group qualifiers.

The match will offer the 46-year-old Paes a chance to further better his Davis Cup record for most doubles wins. He stands on top with 43 wins, which he achieved last year while playing against China.

Jeevan set to make debut

Paes, owner of 18 Grand



All set: The Indian and Pakistan teams strike a pose after the draw was made on Thursday. ■ COURTESY: TWITTER

The schedule

- Nov. 29 (Fri): Ramkumar Ramanathan v Muhammad Shoib, Sumit Nagal v Huzifa Abdul Rehman
- Nov. 30 (Sat): Leander Paes & Jeevan Nedunchezhiyan v Shoib & Huzifa
- Dec. 1 (Sun): Reverse singles

Slam trophies, will be partnering debutant Jeevan Nedunchezhiyan.

The left-hander will become India's 75th player to figure in a Davis Cup match.

Ramkumar will open the tie on Friday against Muham-

Bhupathi cannot get over the 'hurt'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI

Mahesh Bhupathi on Thursday said he cannot get over the "hurt" caused by AITA's manner of sacking him for refusing to travel to Pakistan for a Davis Cup tie on security grounds.

"I am still in touch with the boys on a daily basis. I

was disappointed with the way the Federation dealt with it. When they wanted me to become captain, they flew down to Hyderabad, had a meeting with me," said Bhupathi. "I don't mind if they think that it is time for me to step out, but a courtesy phone call saying 'listen we think it is time to put

singles, Nagal will take on Huzifa Abdul Rehman.

"We are looking to whitewash them," said India's

someone new in the system' and I would have respected that but I didn't even get that call."

"Honestly, the way the federation has dealt with not only me but everyone in Indian tennis for the last 20 years, there is no surprise.

"But at some level it kind of hurts," he added.

non-playing captain Rohit Rajpal. Matches will start at 1:30 p.m. (IST) on Friday and at 11:30 a.m. on Saturday.

Tamil Nadu and Karnataka start favourites in semifinals

Ashwin and Mayank expected to take the field; Rajasthan will bank on its speedsters; spin trio is Haryana's strength

MUSHTAQ ALI

S. DIPAK RAGAV
SURAT

After close to three weeks of league-style competition spread over two stages, the business end of Desh Mushtaq Ali is on with semifinals to be played at the Lal Bahadur Shastri Stadium here on Friday.

The stakes are high and big reinforcements in the form of Mayank Agarwal for Karnataka and R. Ashwin for Tamil Nadu have arrived with the duo wasting no time in hitting the nets within hours of reaching.

The Dinesh Karthik-led Tamil Nadu takes on Rajasthan and would want to continue its good run in white-ball cricket, having topped its group in both the league stages.

The team will start as the favourite but with the match

Making their presence felt

The Mushtaq Ali Trophy has entered its climactic phase and here's a look at the players who top the batting and bowling charts for their teams:

Haryana

Harshal Patel
11 innings, 340 runs
Harshal Patel
11 matches, 18 wickets

Tamil Nadu

Dinesh Karthik
8 innings, 264 runs
R. S. Kishore
10 matches, 19 wickets

Karnataka

Devdutt Padikkal
10 innings, 461 runs
Shreyas Gopal
10 matches, 16 wickets

Rajasthan

Ankit Lamba
10 innings, 266 runs
Khaleel Ahmed
8 matches, 12 wickets
Aniket Choudhary
9 matches, 12 wickets

starting at 6.30 p.m., the toss will become a crucial factor as the side chasing is bound to have a clear advantage as dew could affect the team bowling second.

It is an area where Rajasthan can neutralise a spin-heavy Tamil Nadu attack and during its loss to Karnataka last week, the Tamil Nadu bowlers found it difficult to hold the ball while defend-

ing. On Thursday, Tamil Nadu went the extra mile in its preparation by shunning nets and instead opting to use the centre wicket at the C.B. Patel Stadium.

Spinners R. Sai Kishore and Hari Nishanth practised with wet balls while the batsmen tried some big-hitting, targeting specific areas.

For Rajasthan, skipper Deepak Chahar, along with

fast bowlers Khaleel Ahmed and Aniket Choudhary, needs to take advantage of Tamil Nadu's opening woes and get quick wickets before leg-spinner Rahul Chahar

can apply the squeeze in the middle overs. In the other semifinal, Karnataka takes on Haryana and both teams have had an identical path to the semi-

nals with a loss each in the league and Super League stage.

Karnataka, which won the Vijay Hazare Trophy, has the edge with its explosive bat-

Bajrang finally gets his Khel Ratna

Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju awards National honours to four



Recognising excellence: Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju with Mohinder Singh Dhillon, Bajrang Punia, Muhammad Anas and Tejinderpal Singh Toor. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

UTHRA GANESAN
NEW DELHI

With the season all but over and the Olympics less than 10 months away, Bajrang Punia is in the final stretch of his preparations for the 2020 Games. And the wrestler is determined to make his maiden outing at Tokyo a memorable one.

Punia, who missed out on receiving the Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna earlier this year due to his preparations for the World Championships, was handed over the same by Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju on Thursday. The Asian and Commonwealth cham-

pion won bronze at the competition in Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan, in September to secure an Olympic spot in the 65kg category.

Increased responsibility

"Any sportsperson feels good after receiving an award and it is the biggest sports award anyone can ask for. My sole focus is on the Olympics now and my responsibility has increased. I have recovered from my injury and have been training on the mat for the last 10-12 days," Punia said after receiving the award.

He was also handed a

cheque of ₹32,70,000. Punia, who was honoured with Padma Shri this year, had caused a stir after being ignored for the Khel Ratna last year but was the unanimous choice this time around. He recently got engaged to fellow-wrestler Sangeeta Phogat.

Also receiving their respective Arjuna Awards on the occasion were National record-holders quartermiler Muhammad Anas and shot-putter Tejinderpal Singh Toor while Toor's coach Mohinder Singh Dhillon was conferred the Dronacharya Award.

Man City owner acquires stake in Mumbai City

NANDAKUMAR MARAR
MUMBAI

The City Football Group (CFG), owner of English Premier League champion team Manchester City, acquired a 65% stake in Mumbai City FC (MCFC). For the first time ever, a club in India will form part of a group of seven football teams worldwide.

The acquisition announcement was made by Nita Ambani, chairperson of Football Sports Development Limited in the presence of Ferran Soriano, CEO of CFG. The majority owners also formed the City

Football Group India (CFG), to be helmed by Damien Willoughby, as the CEO. Ranbir Kapoor and Bimal Parekh, existing co-owners, will own the remaining 35% stakes.

Mumbai City, one of the teams competing in the Indian Super League (ISL), will benefit from the football know-how available with CFG, via operations of clubs in USA (New York City FC), Australia (Melbourne City FC), Japan (Yokohama F Marinos), Uruguay (Athletico Torque), Spain (Girona FC), China (Sichuan Jiuniu) and England (Manchester City).

Landmark event: FSDL chairperson Nita Ambani with City Football Group CEO Ferran Soriano at the Hero ISL press meet. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Sania plans comeback in January

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
NEW DELHI

Sania Mirza on Thursday announced her return to competitive tennis at the Hobart International in January, two years after taking a maternity break.

The 33-year-old, who last played at the China Open in October 2017, will team up with Ukraine's Nadiia Kichenok – ranked 38 in the WTA doubles chart.

Sania, who married former Pakistan cricket captain Shoaib Malik, gave birth to her first child – a son which the couple named Izhaan.

"I am playing in Hobart, then I am playing the Australian Open... I am planning to play a tournament in Mumbai, which is a \$25,000 (ITF women's event) next month, but I am 50-50 about it, so let's see how my wrist behaves. We will see, but Hobart and Australian Open

(for sure)," said Sania.

She added that she had experienced "a lot of change" after having a baby.

"Your routine and sleep pattern changes. I (now) feel fit, my body is where it used to be before I had the baby," Sania said.

The Hobart WTA takes

SCOREBOARD

Afghanistan — 1st innings: 187.

West Indies — 1st innings:

Kraig Brathwaite lbw b Amir 11, John Campbell c Ihsanullah b Amir 55, Shai Hope c Ihsanullah b Rashid 7, Shamarr Brooks b Amir 111, Shimron Hetmyer lbw b Rashid 13, Roston Chase c Ibrahim b Zahir 2, Shane Dowrich lbw b Zahir 42, Jason Holder st Afzal b Amir 11, Rahkeem Cornwall lbw b Rashid 5, Kemar Roach lbw b Amir 3, Jomel Warriac (not out) 4; Extras (lb-12, nb-1); 13; Total (in 83.3): 277.

Fall of wickets: 1-27, 2-34, 3-116, 4-137, 5-150, 6-224, 7-243, 8-260, 9-270.

Afghanistan bowling: Roach 4-2, 5-0, Holder 3-0-18-0, Warriac 12-3-31-0, Cornwall 14-3-41-3, Chase 3-1-10-3.

West Indies names squads for India tour

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
ST. JOHN'S (ANTIGUA)

The West Indies on Thursday announced its ODI and T20 squads for the upcoming series of India. Kieron Pollard will continue to lead both the squads with Nicholas Pooran as his deputy in the shorter format and Shai Hope taking over the role of the vice-captain in the ODIs.

The squads:

ODIs: Sunil Ambris, Shai Hope, Khary Pierre, Roston Chase, Alzarri Joseph, Kieron Pollard (Capt.), Sheldon Cottrell, Brandon King, Nicholas Pooran, Shimron Hetmyer, Evin Lewis, Romario Shepherd, Jason Holder, Keemo Paul and Hayden Walsh Jr.

T20Is: Fabian Allen, Brandon King, Denesh Ramdin, Cottrell, Lewis, Sherfane Rutherford, Hetmyer, Pierre, Lendl Simmons, Holder, Pollard (Capt.), Walsh Jr, Paul, Pooran and Kesrick Williams.



Different ball game: The Karnataka players at a training session on Thursday. ■ VIJAY SONEJ

CFC-Odisha in a thrilling duel

After a barren first half, four goals shared in the second

ISL

K. KEERTHIVASAN
CHENNAI

Chennaiyin FC and Odisha FC dished out an exciting brand of football, making up for a sedate goalless first session and sharing four goals between them in the second half of their Indian Super League (ISL) match at the Nehru Stadium here on Thursday.

Chennaiyin striker Nerius Valskis' brace went in vain as Odisha came back twice from arrears to share the honours.

Just when the home fans were raising the decibel levels for a second successive win came the equaliser from Adriane Santana. The Spaniard's powerful left-footer found the back of the net, silencing the spectators.

Earlier, Valskis repaid the faith coach John Gregory had in him with a double strike. With the match interestingly poised at 1-1, Valskis produced a fantastic finish, heading home off a flag kick from Dragos Firtulsecu.

After a lukewarm first half, largely dominated by the visitors, Chennaiyin showed renewed vigour in the second. It looked much more organ-



In the thick of it: Valskis netted a brace for Chennaiyin.

■ B. JOTHI RAMALINGAM

ised, enjoyed more ball possession and created more opportunities too.

A few minutes into the second half, Chennaiyin tore into the Odisha defence to score the first goal. Rafael Crivellaro's pass from the middle saw Anirudh Thapa square it to Thoi Singh on the right. Thoi's pass saw an unmarked Valskis fire past Odisha keeper Arshdeep Singh.

The draw saw Chennaiyin move to eighth with five points from six matches while Odisha remained sixth with six points from six. The result: Chennaiyin 2 (Nerius Valskis 5 & 71) drew with Odisha FC 2 (Xisco Hernandez 54, Adriane Santana 82).

TV PICKS

New Zealand v England: 2nd Test, SS Select 1 (SD & HD), 3.30 a.m.
Australia v Pakistan: 2nd Test, Sony Six (SD & HD), 9 a.m.
Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy: Semifinals, Star Sports 1 (SD & HD), 2.30 p.m. & 6.30 p.m.
ISL: Star Sports 2 (SD & HD), 7.30 p.m.
NBA: Sony Ten 1 (SD & HD), 10.30 p.m.

IN BRIEF



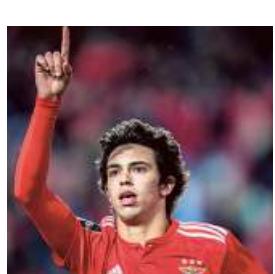
Pelican boos cannot stop Davis

LOS ANGELES Anthony Davis shrugged off the boos that greeted his return to New Orleans on Wednesday, scoring 41 points to power Los Angeles Lakers to a 114-110 NBA victory over the Pelicans.
The results: New Orleans Pelicans 110 lost to LA Lakers 114; Golden State Warriors 104 bt Chicago Bulls 90; San Antonio Spurs 101 lost to Minnesota Timberwolves 113; Toronto Raptors 126 bt New York Knicks 98; Portland Trail Blazers 136 bt Oklahoma City Thunder 119; Phoenix Suns 132 lost to Washington Wizards 140; Houston Rockets 117 bt Miami Heat 108; Memphis Grizzlies 119 lost to LA Clippers 121; Milwaukee Bucks 111 bt Atlanta Hawks 102; Boston Celtics 121 bt Brooklyn Nets 110; Charlotte Hornets 102 bt Detroit Pistons 101; Cleveland Cavaliers 104 lost to Orlando Magic 116; Indiana Pacers 121 bt Utah Jazz 102; Philadelphia 76ers 97 bt Sacramento Kings 91. AFP



Marquez has 'successful' shoulder surgery

BARCELONA World MotoGP champion Marc Marquez underwent his second shoulder operation in the space of a year with the surgery described as "successful" by his Honda team. The 26-year-old Spaniard, who crashed in end-of-season testing at Jerez on Monday, chose to have the operation as a preventive measure after medical consultation. AFP



Portugal's Joao Felix wins 'Golden Boy' award

MILAN Atletico Madrid's Portuguese international Joao Felix was named winner of the 'Golden Boy' trophy on Wednesday, awarded by Italian newspaper *Tuttosport* to the best under-21 footballer in Europe. The 20-year-old forward took the prize ahead of Borussia Dortmund's English winger Jadon Sancho and Bayer Leverkusen's German midfielder Kai Havertz. Felix moved from Benfica this season to Atletico Madrid on a transfer worth around €120 million. AFP



Prosinecki sacked as Bosnia boss

SARAJEVO Former Croatia international Robert Prosinecki was sacked as Bosnia and Herzegovina coach after failing to automatically qualify for Euro 2020, the country's football association announced on Wednesday. Prosinecki, 50, who featured for the Croats when they finished third at the 1998 World Cup, had been in the post since January last year. AFP

Messi masterminds Barca's romp

Last-gasp strikes help Leipzig make the last 16 for the first time; Liverpool held

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE PARIS



The clincher: Emil Forsberg fires in Leipzig's injury-time equaliser past Benfica's goalkeeper Odisees Vlachodimos which ensured the German team's passage into the knockouts. ■ AP

A Lionel Messi-inspired Barcelona booked its place in the Champions League knock-out stages by crushing a desperate Borussia Dortmund 3-1, while RB Leipzig made the last 16 for the first time with an incredible stoppage time comeback.

The Argentine scored one and set up the other two for Luis Suarez and Antoine Griezmann to inflict a punishing defeat on Dortmund and move up to 11 points in Group F, four ahead of the German team and Inter Milan, which won 3-1 at Slavia Prague.

Landmark game
Messi got the ball rolling with a neat pass which allowed Suarez to open the scoring in the 29th minute, before the Uruguayan returned the favour four minutes later to lay on Messi for his 613th Barca goal on his 700th appearance.

Messi, who has scored 10 times in his last nine games, was also at the heart of the

goal which extinguished Dortmund's hopes of a result in the 67th minute, slipping a wonderful through ball for Griezmann.

Leipzig made the knockout stages in dramatic style after Emil Forsberg fired it back from two goals down in the final minute to draw 2-2 with Benfica. Liverpool and Napoli were made to wait for their spots with a tense 1-1 draw at Anfield. In Group H,

The results:

Group E: Genk 1 (Samatta 85) lost to Salzburg 4 (Daka 43, Miamino 45, Hwang 69, Haaland 87); Liverpool 1 (Lovren 65) drew with Napoli 1 (Mertens 21).

Group F: Barcelona 3 (Suarez 29, Messi 33, Griezmann 67) bt

Ajax's 2-0 win at Lille featured the fastest goal of this year's competition when Hakim Ziyech netted after 94 seconds.

Group G: RB Leipzig 2 (Forsberg 90+pen, 90+6) drew with Benfica 2 (Pizzi 20, Carlos Vinicius 59); Zenit Saint Petersburg 2 (Dzyuba 42, Ozoev 84) bt Lyon 0.

Group H: Lille 0 lost to Ajax 2 (Ziyech 2, Promes 59); Valencia 2 (Soler 40, Wass 82) drew with Chelsea 2 (Kovacic 41, Pulisic 50).

Srikanth and Saurabh advance

Shruti, Rituparna bring some cheer as many Indians exit

BADMINTON

RAKESH RAO LUCKNOW



Marching on: K. Srikanth stood strong on a disappointing day for the Indian camp. ■ FILE PHOTO

The lack of polished talent across sections of Indian badminton continues to be a concern. The evidence of the country's empty cupboard was evident in the ordinary display against a none-too-formidable overseas presence in the \$150,000 Syed Modi International badminton tournament here.

Seven of eight losing men's pre-quarterfinalists were Indians. They included fourth seed B. Sai Praneeth, H.S. Prannoy, Ajay Jayaram and Lakshya Sen.

Eventually, third seed K. Srikanth and Saurabh Verma advanced after beating compatriots P. Kashyap and Alap Mishra.

In women's singles, where two Indian qualifiers face-off for a place in the semifinals, 200th-ranked Shruti Mundada provided the bright spot by beating 46th-ranked Belgian Lianne Tan. Shruti's next rival Rituparna Das made it past Tanvi Lad.

In women's doubles, disappointment followed when eighth-seeded Ashwini Ponnappa and N. Sikki Reddy withdrew when trailing 0-2 in their pre-quarterfinals against England's Chloe Birch and Lauren Smith.

A calf-injury Ashwini suffered during the first-round match prompted the pull-out.

The winners of all-Indian pre-quarterfinals – Simran Singh & Ritika Thaker and Kuhoo Garg & Anoushka Sanyal & Lavanya Sharma 21-12, 21-10.

H.S. Prannoy joined the procession despite winning the first game against Chi-Parikh – advanced. Meanwhile, the home presence in men's doubles and mixed doubles ended. In mixed doubles, experienced Pranav Chopra and Sikki Reddy exited along with four other Indian pairs.

Before Olympic champion Carolina Marin won in three games, Srikanth was stretched by Kashyap, who rallied from 8-14 to snatch the first game.

Ajay Jayaram's experience did not help as he squandered a 13-4 lead, besides eight match-points, during the loss to the sixth strongest Chinese, Zhao Juniper 21-18, 14-21, 30-28; Wang Tzu Wei (Tpe) bt H.S. Prannoy 14-21, 21-10, 21-14.

Women: Rituparna Das bt Tanvi Lad 21-16, 21-13; Kim Hyo Min bt Ashmita Challa 21-12, 21-16; Carolina Marin (Esp) bt Sim Yu Jin (Kor) 19-21, 21-13, 21-11; Shruti Mundada bt Lianne Tan (Bel) 21-18, 21-14. **Doubles:**

Simran Singh & Ritika Thaker bt Riyu Mookerjee & Anura Prabhu 21-13, 18-21, 21-17; Chloe Birch & Lauren Smith bt Ashwini Ponnappa & N. Sikki Reddy 2-0 (retd.); Kuhoo Garg & Anoushka Parikh bt Sheshadri Sanyal & Lavanya Sharma 21-12, 21-10.

Mixed doubles: Marvin Seidel & Linda Efer (Ger) bt Pranaav Chopra & Sikki Reddy 21-12, 18-21, 21-13.

It's Lady Legend vs. Areca Legend

BENGALURU: Lady Legend and Areca Legend may fight out the finish of the Bangalore Turf Club Trophy (1,200m), the feature event of the races to be held here on Friday (Nov. 29). False rails (width about 2m from 1,600m to the winning post) will be in position.

GHATAPRABHA PLATE (1,100m), rated 00 to 20, 2-15 p.m.: 1. Erika (3) M. Naveen 60, 2. She's Stylish (9) S. Shareef 60, 3. Estella (4) J.H. Arul 59.5, 4. Above The Rest (12) Chandrashekhar 59, 5. Brightside Of Life (8) Arvind Kumar 59, 6. Majestic Heroine (7) Md. Aliyar 59, 7. Premier Premises (2) Chetan G 59, 8. Simone (11) Ankit Yadav 59, 9. Flying Line (10) Toufi Khan 58.5, 10. Mayurana (6) B. Dharshan 59.5, 11. Lady Diana (5) Naveen Kumar 56 and 12. Hunter Moon (9) Shreyas S 55.

1. SIMONE, 2. SHE'S STYLISH, 3. ESTELLA

2. MANIPAL PLATE (1,600m), rated 15 to 35, 2-45: 1. Radiant Treasure (7) Arshad 60, 2. Back Of Beyond (6) M. Naveen 59.5, 3. Ozark (4) I. Chisty 59, 5. Chula Vista (11) Ankit Yadav 57.5, 6. Cosmic Feelings (2) Chetan G 57.5, 7. Rorito (9) David Allan 57.5, 8. Chantelle (10) Trevor 56.5, 9. Aleef (8) Rayan 56, 10. Track Striker (5) P. Surya 56, 11. Amazing Angel (12) Jagadeesh 54.

1. MEGA ICON, 2. PSYCHIC WARRIOR, 3. CONSTANTINOPLE

5. BANGALORE TURF CLUB TROPHY (1,200m), 3-y-o & over, (Terms), 4-15: 1. Silver Ikon 55.5 and 12. Tiger Returns (3) R. Manish 53.5.

1. RORITO, 2. OZARK, 2. MIGHTY RED

3. RED BARON PLATE (1,400m), rated 30 to 50, 3-15: 1. Karadenz (8) Neeraj 60, 2. Musterion (5) I. Chisty 60, 3. Jersey Legend (9) Antony 59.5, 4. Big Boon (2) R. Anand 59, 5. Alexandre Dumas (6) Trevor 58.5, 6. Lagopus (12) Tauseef 58.5, 7. Roman Senator (1) David Allan 57.5, 8. Cuban Pete (10) Zervan 56.5, 9. Desert Rose (11) Arshad 56.5, 10. Mohican (4) Nazerul 56.5, 11. Schafenberg (3) R. Marshall 56.5 and 12. Tanoura (7) Adarsh 56.5.

1. ALEXANDRE DUMAS, 2. ROMAN SENATOR, 3. CUBAN PETE

4. CHIKKABALLAPUR PLATE (1,200m), rated 45 to 65, 3-45: 1. Fair Warning (5) Antonio 60, 2. Maybe Forever (11) K. Raghu 58, 3. Psychic Warrior (6) P. Surya 58, 4. Reczai (7) Sai Kiran 58.5, 5. Constantine (2) R. Marshall 57, 6. Poseidon (8) Darshan 56.5, 7. Angels Kiss (1) Ankit Yadav 56, 8. Harley Quinn (10) Bhavani Pratap 56, 9. Aaron The Baron (9) N. Rajesh 55.5, 10. Wings Of Desire (4) Zervan 55.5 and 11. Megha (3) Jagadeesh 54.

1. MULTIFACETED, 2. ANGELINO, 3. ESTELLA

7. CHIKKABALLAPUR PLATE (1,200m), rated 45 to 65, 3-45: 1. I. Angelino (3) David Allan 60, 2. Multifaceted (5) Zervan 58.5, 3. Alpha (7) S. Shareef 58, 4. Allsetto (6) J.H. Arul 57.5, 5. Roma Victor (10) Chetan G 57.5, 6. Spanish Beauty (11) I. Chisty 57.5, 7. Animal Queen (2) Mark 57, 8. China One (1) Ivan 56.5, 9. Depth Charge (9) K. Raghu 56.5, 10. Good Time Indeed (8) Bhavani Pratap 56 and 11. Gypsy (4) Rayan 56.

1. MULTIFACETED, 2. ANGELINO, 3. ESTELLA

5. BANGALORE TURF CLUB TROPHY (1,200m), 3-y-o & over, (Terms), 4-15: 1. Silver Ikon 55.5 and 12. Tiger Returns (3) R. Manish 53.5.

1. DAY'S BEST: MULTIFACETED Double: RORITO – MEGA ICON

Jkt: 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7; Tr: 2, 3 and 4; II: 5, 6 and 7.

Can Hamilton make landmark race memorable?

Champion's 250th F1 race will be indication of what the future holds for him

ABU DHABI GP

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE ABU DHABI

Lewis Hamilton heads into this weekend's season-ending floodlit Abu Dhabi Grand Prix seeking to mark his 250th Formula One race with a memorable performance as Mercedes bid to bounce back from an off-form outing in Brazil.

The six-time World champion, whose future beyond 2020 when his current contract expires has been a subject of intensifying speculation, has conceded that he faces a battle with his advancing age next season against the sport's new generation of younger tyros.

"I feel like I'm still able to kick it with these guys right now and so I am excited about the future," said 34-year-old Hamilton. "But you know it's inevitable that the youngsters are going to come through."

Speaking after he finished third on the road in Sao Paulo, before being penalised



Gear'd up: Lewis Hamilton feels he can 'still kick it' with the new generation of younger tyros. ■ AFP

and dropped to seventh for a late clash with Red Bull's Alex Albon, Hamilton made it clear that he still relishes on-track battles and hopes next season will see a multi-team multi-driver scrap for glory.

Hamilton won from pole position last year and has enjoyed four pole starts at the track and four victories, but may not have it all his own way in this weekend's twilight contest scheduled to maximise global viewing potential.

Mercedes has won the last five Abu Dhabi Grands Prix, but knows that both Ferrari and Red Bull will mount a fierce challenge in the season finale, which starts in sunshine and finishes under floodlights.

Hamilton will hope, in particular, to add to his record 8 pole positions after struggling in qualifying, relatively, since taking pole at the German event in July, his fourth this season – a meagre return by his standards.

Hamilton won from pole position last year and has enjoyed four pole starts at the track and four victories, but may not have it all his own way in this weekend's twilight contest scheduled to maximise global viewing potential.

India now has a team qualification in the men's section and an individual quota in the women's event of the 2020 Tokyo Olympics.

Second quota place

It is India's second Olympic quota place in archery after the men's recurve team of Tarundeep Rai, Atanu Das and Pravin Jadhav had secured the first in the World Championships earlier this year.

Double joy for Deepika and Ankita

The two win top medals after securing India an Olympic quota

ARCHERY

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA BANGKOK

The seasoned Deepika Kumari struck gold and Ankita Bhakat bagged a silver after securing India an Olympic quota place at the Continental Qualification Tournament held on the sidelines of the 21st Asian archery championships here on Thursday.

IN BRIEF



Shorts to beat the heat in Malelane

MALELANE (SOUTH AFRICA) With temperatures set to reach 40°C during the Alfred Dunhill golf championship, organisers allowed shorts to be worn for the first time at an EPGA event. While golfers wear shorts during practice rounds and at pre-tournament pro-ams, they were not permitted during competitions until the searing heat brought a change of heart this week. Women may wear shorts on the various professional circuits, including Europe, Asia and the United States. AFP



Federer to compensate for cancelled match

BOGOTA A cancelled exhibition tennis match featuring Roger Federer in Bogota could be rescheduled for March next year, the Swiss legend's agent has said. A planned clash between Federer and Germany's Alexander Zverev on November 22 was called off after a curfew was declared following anti-government protests. Federer's agent said: "Either we find a new date or the fans will get their money back." He added the match could be played before the Miami Open, which runs from March 23 to April 5. IANS



Abbas set to bowl with the pink ball

ADELAIDE Pakistan was set to recall paceman Mohammad Abbas for the second Test against Australia as it looks to add consistency to its bowling attack under lights at the Adelaide Oval. Skipper Azhar Ali will also drop down the order and bat at No. 3 in the day-night Test starting on Friday, with Imam-ul-Haq set to open the innings alongside Shan Masood and Haris Sohail getting the axe. Seamer Abbas has taken 66 wickets at just 18.86 in his 14 Tests but was a surprise omission for the opening clash in Brisbane, where Pakistan was crushed by an innings and five runs.

Ministry forms expert committee to review Sports Code

Narang, Bhutia and Gopi Chand among the panelists

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI Olympic bronze-medallist shooter Gagan Narang, former football captain Bhaichung Bhutia and national badminton coach P. Gopi Chand have been named in a 13-member expert committee formed by the Sports Ministry to review the controversial Draft National Sports Code 2017.

Besides the trio, the committee will also have World Championships bronze-medallist long jumper Anju Bobby George. The expert committee will be headed by Supreme Court judge Justice (Retd.) Mukundakam Sharma as its chairman.

The panel will also feature a representative from the Indian Olympic Association (IOA), which has rejected the document in current form as it seeks to put an age and tenure cap on sports administrators.

Striking a balance

"The committee will try to strike a balance between autonomy of NSFs vis-a-vis need for transparency and autonomy," the Sports Mi-

Indian pacers role models for younger lot'

As a group, probably this is one of the best fast bowling attacks we have ever had: Dravid

SHAYAN ACHARYA

Not long ago, the Indian team would dominate visiting sides with its spin bowling prowess. But with time and a changed mindset, the country's fast bowlers have come to the fore across formats.

This home season, India's three spinners took 37 wickets among them, while the three fast bowlers took 59 – in the absence of premier operator Jasprit Bumrah.

Motivation

Former India captain and National Cricket Academy (NCA) director Rahul Dravid believes that with the senior team bowlers becoming role models, the younger crop is motivated to follow suit.

"What Ishant, Shami, Umesh, Bhuvneshwar (Kumar) and Bumrah are doing is they are actually in a way becoming role models for a younger generation of boys, who believe now they can be successful as fast bowlers in India. I think it is great to



Making a point: NCA director Rahul Dravid is confident of India's chances at the next edition of the Under-19 World Cup. ■ FILE PHOTO: K. MURALI KUMAR

see," Dravid said on Thursday on the sidelines of India under-19 team's fourth one-dayer against Afghanistan under-19 side at the Ekana Stadium in Lucknow.

"Obviously we had people like Kapil (Dev), Sri (Javagal Srinath), Zaheer (Khan) in the past. But now, as a group, probably this is

one of the best fast bowling attacks we have ever had. I think that's a great inspiration for a lot of these young boys," Dravid said.

Having coached the India under-19 team that won the World Cup last year, Dravid is confident of India's chances at the next edition in 2020. "Now, at the under-19

level, we have very good fast bowlers. Last time (during the 2018 under-19 World Cup), we had three of them – Kamlesh (Nagarkoti), Shivaam (Mavi) and Ishan (Porel).

"This year, you will also see some good fast bowlers in the team. That's been fantastic. I think when you have

role models and you have heroes like the senior team (it's encouraging)..." the former India captain said.

Indian coaches in IPL

After quitting the game in 2012, Dravid was associated with Indian Premier League (IPL) franchises Rajasthan Royals and Delhi Daredevils as a mentor.

Having watched the IPL scene closely, Dravid believes the franchises should utilise Indian coaches more.

"I believe we have got some very good coaches, a lot of good people. I'm fully confident (in their ability). Just as we have a lot of talent in the cricket department, we have a lot of talent in the coaching department.

"We need to give them confidence and time to flourish. I'm sure they will do it."

"It does sometimes disappoint me when a lot of our boys don't get opportunities as assistant coaches in the IPL," Dravid said.

Dev rallies past Dragos

ITF JUNIORS

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Dev Javia showcased his all-court game again, bouncing back from a sedate start to outplay Dragos Petre Popeanga of Romania 4-6, 6-2, 6-1 in the quarterfinals of the ITF grade-4 junior tennis tournament at the DLTA Complex on Thursday.

In the semifinal, Dev, the only Indian to progress thus far, will meet Ekansh Kumar of the United States. The other semifinal will be between Rostislav Galfinger (Kaz) & Samir Banerjee (IND) 3-6, 6-4, 6-3, [10-8].

Doubles (semifinals): Samir Banerjee & Ekansh Kumar (IND) bt Rostislav Galfinger (Kaz) & Dragos Petre Popeanga (Rou) 6-4, 6-4; Jack Loutit (NZL) & Jaishivin Sidana bt Nikhil Nirajan (USA) & Aryaan Bhatia 5-7, 6-3, [10-8].

Under-18 girls (quarterfinals): Mei Hasegawa (Jpn) bt Maria Sholokhova (Rus) 6-7(6), 6-4, 6-1; Lanlana Tararudee (Tha) bt Liu Qianyu (Chn) 6-2, 6-0; Sanjana Sirimalla bt Chao-Yi Wang (Tpe) 6-1, 6-4; Salakthip Ounmuang (Tha) bt Mi Tianmi (Chn) 6-2, 6-4.

Doubles (semifinals): Zijun Jiang & Xiaoyan Xue (Chn) bt Sayaka Ishii (Jpn) & Liu Qianyu (Chn) 6-2, 6-2; Kirara Morioka (Jpn) & Maria Sholokhova (Rus) bt Sarah Dev & Prerna Vicahare 1-6, 6-3, [10-3].

Sanjana progresses

In the girls' section, Sanjana Sirimalla sustained her good form and remained the lone Indian hope, defeating Chao-Yi Wang of Chinese Taipei 6-1, 6-4. She will play Salakthip Ounmuang of Thailand in the semifinals.

Mei Hasegawa of Japan ousted the top seed Maira Ssholokhova of Russia in

Anirudh-Adil in last four

INDIANS ABROAD

SPORTS BUREAU
NONTHABURI

Anirudh Chandrasekar and Adil Kalyanpur beat Kuan-Yi Lee and Wei-De Lin of Chinese Taipei 6-3, 5-7, [10-8] in the quarterfinals of the \$15,000 ITF men's Futures tennis tournament on Thursday.

The results:

\$15,000 ITF men, Cairo, Egypt: Singles (pre-quarterfinals): Pol Martin Tiffon (Esp) bt Sahil Gawre 6-2, 6-2.

Doubles (quarterfinals): Atharva Sharma & Dhruv Sunish bt

Adrian Exposito & Carles Hernandez (Esp) 6-3, 6-4.

Pre-quarterfinals: Atharva & Dhruv Sunish bt Franco Feitt & Facundo Juarez (Arg) 3-6, 6-4, [10-8].

\$15,000 ITF men, Nonthaburi, Thailand: Doubles (quarterfinals): Anirudh Chandrasekar & Adil Kalyanpur bt Kuan-Yi Lee & Wei-De Lin (Tpe) 6-3, 5-7, [10-8].

\$15,000 ITF women, Cairo, Egypt: Singles (pre-quarterfinals): Clarissa Gai (Ita) & Mariya Poduraeva (Ukr) bt Diana Maria Mihai (Rou) & Sri Vaishnavi Peddi Reddy 6-7(4), 7-5, [10-7].

Vikas returns to amateur fold with SAG

'Focus on claiming a spot for Olympics' +

BOXING

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Indian boxer Vikas Krishan has made his first breakthrough in the amateur circuit since putting his professional career on hold by getting selected for the upcoming South Asian Games (SAG) in Nepal in December in a new weight category.

The 27-year-old, who fought two winning bouts in the US pro circuit before returning to the amateur fold earlier this year, said he would not attempt another professional stint until after the 2020 Tokyo Olympics.

Vikas also revealed that he will now compete in the 69kg category instead of 75kg, the division in which he won a gold in the Commonwealth Games last year in Gold Coast.

"I have decided to compete in the 69kg category because that is my division in the professional circuit as well," Vikas, who won his 2011 World Championships bronze in the 69kg division, said.

Vikas had turned pro after the Asian Games last year, signing up with Hall of Famer Bob Arum's Top Rank Promotions in the USA. He won two bouts before a back injury forced him to reevaluate his goals.

"It wasn't easy. Professional boxing is about hitting continuously in the ring, which requires loads of stamina and I realised that I need to work a bit more on that before considering a full-time stint," he said.

"I will now give it a shot after the 2020 Olympic Games and my focus is only on claiming a spot for Tokyo. I am preparing hard for the Qualifiers in February next year."

Decent run

Asked about the challenge of going down a rung in his weight division, Vikas said he is comfortable with it. The Haryana boxer had a decent run in the category before moving up to 75kg in

2014.

Indian boxing's High Performance Director Santiago Nieva said he expects Vikas to do well despite the recent back injury and the change in weight category.

"Vikas has been in the national camp since July and has shaped up well. The decision to move to 69kg was well thought out and he discussed it with me. He was always a bit underweight for 75kg. So I guess the move should work out fine for him," Nieva said.

India's entry in the 69kg category for the Olympic qualifiers will be decided by a trial as none from the country could fetch a medal at the Worlds earlier this year.

Besides Vikas, the Indian men's team for the SAG also features Manish Kaushik, who claimed a bronze in the Worlds this year. Kaushik, assured of a spot in the Olympic Qualifiers in the 63kg division, will compete in the 64kg category at the SAG.

The six-member women's team will be spearheaded by two-time World silver-medallist Sonia Lather (57kg) and former CWG bronze-winner Pinki Rani (51kg).

The teams: Men: Vinod Tanwar (49kg), Sparsh Kumar (52kg), Sachin (56kg), Varinder Singh (60kg), Manish Kaushik (64kg), Vikas Krishan (69kg), Ankit Khataan (75kg), Sachin Kumar (81kg), Gaurav Chauhan (91kg), and Narendar (+91kg).

Women: Kalavani Srinivasan (48kg), Pinki Rani (51kg), Shiksha (54kg), Sonia Lather (57kg), Parveen (60kg), and Manju Bamboria (64kg).

Formula E getting more competitive

Debutants Porsche and Mercedes claim podium spots

DOMINIC RICHARD

RIYADH

The 2019-20 Formula E (FE) season began with back-to-back races at the Riyadh Street Circuit on November 22 and 23. Two debutants, Porsche and Mercedes, entered the electric racing championship at the Diriyah ePrix.

Both the teams claimed podium spots in their very first race through Andre Lotterer (Porsche, second) and Stoffel Vandoorne (Mercedes, third).

Welcomes additions

Formula One (F1) veteran Felipe Massa, who is in the Venturi Racing FE team, welcomed the addition of new teams. Massa is yet to open his account this season after finishing 12th and 17th respectively in the first two races.

"More top teams want to join the championship. It shows that the competition level in FE is increasing. It's getting more difficult and challenging," he said.

The competitive nature of FE is evident from the results. Defending champion Jean-Eric Vergne hasn't had the best of starts with only four points in his kitty.

Virgin Racing's Sam Bird bagged top honours on Friday, while Alexander Sims of Andretti-BMW claimed victory.



On the go: The Formula E season-opener took place at the Diriyah street circuit in Riyadh recently. ■ COURTESY: PORSCHE FE TEAM

ry on Saturday (November 23).

Qualification process

Another F1 great Mark Webber, Porsche's brand ambassador, credited the qualification process as a reason behind last season's top performers misfiring in the season opener.

"The random nature of different winners in Formula E is due to the qualification process. The higher you are in the championship table, the earlier you go out during qualifying.

"So the favourites on top of the standings will be part of the first qualification group and the track is at its

slowest. This is a parameter which makes everything competitive," said Webber.

The qualification is divided into two – provisional and Super Pole shoot-out. Initially, the drivers are split into four groups of six each. Every group has six minutes to set their best lap.

Super Pole

During Super Pole, the top six drivers in provisional qualifying get another 15-minute session with a clear track each to determine their starting order. The driver with the best timing during group qualification is awarded a point, while the final pole-sitter gets three.

With 12 races to go in 2020, only time will tell if FE can someday get close to matching the fanfare and fame of F1.

(The writer was in Riyadh on an invitation from Porsche).

FE follows the same end-of-race point allocation (25-18-15-12-10-8-6-4-2-1) and fastest lap rule as F1. However, there are other advantages like Fan Boost and Attack Mode.

Credibility questionable

These innovative regulations

do make motorsports interesting but the credibility of these, in the long run, is questionable.

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of-race point allocation (25-

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