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## NEARBY



### Social media makes a comeback to Valley

Srinagar  
Nearly 65 lakh mobile Internet users in Kashmir were able to use social media platforms after seven months on Wednesday. The order issued by the government on Wednesday on Internet connectivity is, however, silent on whether the ban imposed on social media on January 25 has been withdrawn or not.

NEWS ▶ PAGE 12

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### Sengar convicted in two other cases

New Delhi  
A trial court on Wednesday convicted seven persons, including expelled BJP leader Kuldeep Singh Sengar who was earlier handed a life term for raping a minor in Unnao, in two other cases linked to her father. Four other accused were acquitted. Sengar was found guilty of culpable homicide not amounting to murder in the death of the victim's father. The quantum of punishment will be announced on March 12.

NATION ▶ PAGE 9

# COVID-19 cases rise to 29 in India

Paytm employee tests positive in Gurugram; all international passengers to be screened

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Fifteen Italian tourists, including the wife of an already infected person, and eight Indians tested positive for COVID-19 on Wednesday, taking the total number of cases in the country to 29.

Two cases with a high viral load were also detected in Telangana.

A Paytm employee tested positive in Gurugram. The company said in a statement that the person had a travel history to Italy. The Health Ministry also confirmed the case, which came to light in the evening.

"As a precautionary measure, we have suggested that his team members get health tests done immediately. Our Noida and Gurgaon [Gurugram] offices will be shut for two days. We have also advised all our colleagues to work from home for a couple of days, while we get our offices sanitised. However, there will not be any impact on our daily operations and Paytm services will continue as usual," the company said.

Giving details of the cases, Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan said six family members of a 45-year-old Delhi patient had tested positive.

The infection broke out in China's Wuhan city in December and has spread to over 60 countries, killing more than 3,000 and infecting over 90,000.



Fighting the virus: A Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation employee spraying disinfectant inside a bus in Bengaluru on Wednesday. ■ K. MURALI KUMAR

"India, with a significant rise in COVID-19 cases, will start universal screening at all international airports and seaports through the use of thermal imagery equipment as well as mandatory filling of declaration forms of places visited by tourists and travellers returning from abroad. All passengers of international flights will now have to undergo screening, and not just from the 12 countries listed earlier," he said.

**'Cluster approach'**  
The Minister said the government would adopt a cluster approach to contain the virus. "Health authorities will check and sensitise every household within a 3-km radius of the house of the infected person," he said.

"Over 5,89,000 people have been screened at airports in two months, over 10 lakh screened on borders with Nepal and around 27,000 are under community surveillance," he said.

Mr. Vardhan said that of the total cases, "the patient from Delhi has infected six of his relatives in Agra whom he recently visited, and they all are being treated at Safdarjung Hospital. The 24-year-old man from Hyderabad has also tested positive, and has been isolated. Besides, 15 members of a tourist group from Italy and their Indian driver have been

found infected with the virus."

"While an Italian man and his wife are being treated at Jaipur's SMS Hospital, the other Italians who have tested positive are being treated at designated hospitals and some others are in preventive isolation at a different location. The Italian tourists wanted to go back to their country after the first person in their group tested positive in Jaipur, but the authorities advised them to stay in India. Three persons, infected earlier in Kerala, have already been discharged," he said.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 12  
MORE REPORTS ON ▶ PAGES 8 & 9  
IRAN TOLL UP TO 92 ▶ PAGE 14

## President, PM to skip Holi

In the wake of the COVID-19 outbreak, President Ram Nath Kovind and Prime Minister Narendra Modi said they would not attend any gathering to mark Holi (March 10). Mr. Kovind wrote on Twitter: "With alertness and safeguards, we all can help contain the outbreak of COVID-19 Novel Coronavirus. In a precautionary measure, the Rashtrapati Bhavan will not hold the traditional Holi gatherings." ▶ PAGE 9



Towards normalcy: A peace meeting in progress at Garhi Mendum village that suffered during the riots. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

## SC asks HC to list Delhi riots cases on March 6

Delay in hearing pleas 'unjustified'

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL  
NEW DELHI

REDACTED

## Haryana govt. requested to restore normalcy, keep vigil in Nikhil Vihar

Muslim families were allegedly told to vacate houses by Holi

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

GURUGRAM

A joint delegation of representatives of mass outfits has urged the Haryana government to take immediate steps to prevent any untoward incident from happening in light of threats to Muslim families in Bahadurgarh's Nikhil Vihar to vacate their homes before Holi.

The delegation, comprising former CPM State secretary Inderjit Singh, Kisan Sabha's Capt. Shamsher Malik, and Janwadi Mahila Samiti's Savita and Mummun, among others, on Wednesday submitted a memoran-

**C**A delegation has asked the Rohtak Divisional Commissioner to instal streetlights, and has requested the Delhi govt. to deploy adequate policemen

The delegation had visited the colony on Tuesday and spoke to affected families. They found that some families had already left the village while others had sent away their children.

The report prepared by the delegation expressed surprise and anguish that streetlights were not installed even three days after the incident, and that the Delhi Police had not tried to identify any of the roughly 50 men that had threatened the families.

A large chunk of the unauthorised colony falls in Haryana's Jhajjar district, but a few houses are in Delhi.

dum to Rohtak Divisional Commissioner, which sought immediate identification of communal elements, installation of streetlights in the colony, and request to the Delhi government to deploy adequate police force to restore the minority community's feeling of security.

### HIMACHAL PRADESH PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB)

Tel. 01972-288041

Email: ee-bar-hp@nic.in

The Executive Engineer HPPWD Division Barsar on behalf of Governor of H.P. invites/reinvites the item rate bids, in electronic tendering system from the eligible class of contractors registered with HPPWD for the works as detailed in the table.

Sr. No.	Name of work	Estimated cost	Starting Date for downloading Bid	Earnest Money	Deadline for submission of Bid
1.	C/O link road from Jansooch to Majra km. 0/0 to 2/060 (Sh:- ROFD for 5/7 mtr.wide road, R/wall, C.D., Soling, wearing & Tarring, Drain & Parapets in between km. 0/0 to 2/060) Under NABARD RIDF-XXV Time :-Nine Month Cost of form:-5000/- Eligible class of contractor:- Class B	1,05,48,732=00	12-03-2020 From 10:30 A.M.	1,38,000=00	25-03-2020 up to 10:30 A.M.
2.	Up-gradation of Rural Road infrastructure in Nadaun Constituency Linking of Habitation's Manipur Gauna Karoun Basaral, Sera Kitpal Dhaneta, Kangoo Kashmir Galore ,Gahli Phahal etc. ( Sh:- Providing and Laying interlocking concrete block pavement, drain, crash barriers and road signage's on various road Linking of Habitation's Manipur Gauna Karour Basaral, Sera Kitpal Dhaneta, Kangoo Kashmir Galore ,Gahli Phahal etc.) Under NABARD RIDF-XXV Time :- One & half year Cost of form:-5000/- Eligible class of contractor- Class A	4,91,06,183=00	12-03-2020 From 10:30 A.M.	5,23,600=00	25-03-2020 up to 10:30 A.M.

The bidders are advised to note other details of tenders from the department website [www.hptenders.gov.in](http://www.hptenders.gov.in)

Executive Engineer  
HPPWD, Division Barsar  
District Hamirpur H.P.Pin. 174305  
on behalf of Governor of Himachal Pradesh

HP/5213/19-20

HIM SUCHANA AVAM JAN SAMPAK

### e-Procurement Notice INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB)

1. The Executive Engineer Seraj Division HP.PWD Janjehli Distt. Mandi on behalf of Governor of H.P invites the online bids on item rate, in electronic tendering system, in 2 Cover System for the under mentioned work 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
1.	C/o CHC building at Balichowki in Tehsil Balichowki Distt. Mandi (SH: C/o building portion, WS&SI, Septic Tank, rain water harvesting system and site development)	5,27,48,549/-	5,00,000/-	5,000/-	Class A
2.	C/o Community Center at Bharari in GP Murhag in Tehsil Thunag Distt. Mandi (SH: Civil work, WS&SI)	1,14,29,224/-	1,46,800/-	1500/-	Class A-B
3.	C/o Science Lab in Govt. Sr. Sec. School Bagachanogi in Tehsil Thunag Distt. Mandi HP (SH: C/o building portion, WS&SI, RWH System and site development)	1,33,85,303/-	1,20,300/-	1500/-	Class A-B
4.	C/o Additional Accommodation in Govt. Sr. Sec. School Shankardehra in Tehsil Thunag Distt. Mandi HP (SH: C/o building portion, WS&SI, RWH System and site development)	1,04,76,034/-	1,40,800/-	1500/-	Class A-B
5.	C/o Additional Accommodation in Govt. Sr. Sec. School Bagachanogi in Tehsil Thunag Distt. Mandi HP (SH: C/o laboratory, class room, library, computer room and Art&Craft room i/c stair case) under RMSA	41,36,583/-	69,600/-	1500/-	Class B-C
6.	C/o Science Lab in Govt. Sr. Sec. School Bara in Tehsil Chachyot Distt. Mandi HP (SH: C/o building portion, WS&SI, RWH System and site development)	1,19,25,927	1,51,800/-	500/-	Class A-B
7.	C/o Govt. Sen. Secy School Bharari in Tehsil Thunag Distt. Mandi (SH: Construction of building portion and Site development)	1,47,12,705/-	1,85,000/-	5000/-	Class A-B
8.	Balance work for PWD Rest House at Thachi in Sub- Tehsil Balichowki Distt. Mandi (SH: C/o building portion with WS & SI septic tank and rain water harvesting system)	51,57,653/-	85,700/-	1500/-	Class B-C
9.	Balance work for PWD Sub-Division office combined with sub Treasury office building at Balichowki in Sub- Tehsil Balichowki Distt. Mandi (SH: C/o building portion with WS & SI in ground floor and 1st floor)	37,29,944/-	63,500/-	1500/-	Class B-C
10.	Balance work of Govt. Senior Secondary School at Ghaniyan in Sub- Tehsil Bal Chwki Distt. Mandi HP (SH:-SH- Construction of Laboratory and class room, Library, Computer room and Craft room including Stair cases) under RMSA	26,27,921/-	47,100/-	1500/-	Class D-C
11.	P/L interlock paver block on Mandi Gagal Chail Janjehli road (SH: Providing paver block in different areas km. 35,000 to 82,000)	31,14,833/-	54,300/-	1500/-	Class B-C
12.	C/o road from Raindhar Helipad to Draun (SH: P/L GSB in km.0/000 to 2/000)	9,09,122/-	20,000/-	500/-	Class D-C
13.	C/o road from Thatta Bekhali to Katwanu road km. 0/000 to 7/500 (SH: ROFD in different SRDs from km. 0/000 to 2/000, C/o HPC at RD 0/135, 0/270, 1/105 & 1/780)	18,23,992/-	35,700/-	500/-	Class B-C

2. Availability of Bid Document and mode of submission: The Bid document is available online and bid should be submitted in online mode on website <https://hptenders.gov.in>. Bidder would be required to register in the web-site which is free of cost. For submission of bids, the bidder is required to have Digital Signature Certificate (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://hptenders.gov.in>. Digital signature is mandatory to participate in the e-tendering. 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	23-03-2020 1130 HRS
2. Document Download Start and End Date	23.03.2020 1130 HRS upto 04.04.2020 09.00 HRS
3. Bid Submission Start and End Date	23.03.2020 1130HRS upto 04.04.2020 09.00 HRS
4. Physical Submission of EMD Cost of Tender Document and original technical document	04.04.2020, 1030 HRS
5. Date of Technical Bid opening, Evaluation of Technical Bid followed by Opening of Financial Bid.	04.04.2020 1100HRS

#### TENDER DETAILS:

The Tender Documents shall be uploaded online in 2 Cover:

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

ii) Cover2: shall contain "BOQ/Financial Bid", where contractor will quote his offer for each item.

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/o Executive Engineer Seraj Division HP.PWD Janjehli Distt. Mandi as specified in Key dates Sr. No. 4 on Tender Opening Date, failing which the bids will be declared non-responsive.

6. BID OPENING DETAILS: The bids shall be opened on 04.04.2020 at 11:00 HRS in the office Executive Engineer Seraj Division HP.PWD Janjehli Distt. Mandi HP by the authorised officer. In their interest the tender are advised to present along with 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 work shall remain valid for acceptance for a period not less than 120 days after the deadline date for bid submission.

8. The Bidder are advised to quote rates inclusive of GST as applicable. GST shall not be paid extra

9. Other details can be seen in the bidding documents. The officer inviting tender shall not be held 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 bidders' responsibility to verify the website for the latest information related to the tender.

Sd/-  
Er. K. K. Kaushal)  
Executive Engineer  
Seraj Division HP.PWD  
Janjehli Distt Mandi H.P.

HP/5213/19-20

HIM SUCHANA AVAM JAN SAMPAK

## Garhi Mendum residents 'agree to forget past', return to village

Decision taken at a peace meeting, but questions about the incident remain

SIDHARTH RAVI  
JATIN ANAND  
NEW DELHI



A gutted house in Garhi Mendum village on Wednesday. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

asked Jai Gurjar, a local resident.

Located across the main road from the New Garhi Mendum village – which came into existence to compensate mostly Gurjars of the Old Garhi Mendum village for their flood-prone properties – the village chief, Bikhari Pradhan, said a few of the 15-odd Muslim homes in the village happened to be among the oldest ones in the area.

However, according to many Muslim families who had fled the area, the worst incidents happened on February 24.

Meanwhile, a vehicle with some of the Muslim elders from the village pulled up outside the residence as preparations for the peace meeting gathered steam. At the meeting, overseen by Seelampur SDM Ajay Arora, the official encouraged the formation of "Aman Committee" which could meet regularly to ensure that the situation in the village remained calm and any rumours were quickly quelled.

"There are around 15 Muslim homes in the village – some which are owned by those who live in them and others which were rented to other Muslim families – which have been damaged. We were living like one family earlier and will do so in the future," he said.

#### Outsider claim

"It was around midnight of February 25 when I witnessed a mob enter the village from the main road and later set houses on fire. I couldn't recognise

anyone...which means that they were outsiders...they did

what they wanted to do and then left. They seem to have come with adequate planning. They knew which homes belonged to Muslims," he claimed.

Members of the Hindu community said that they would help the Muslim residents rehabilitate and would provide extra beds and other materials if needed. In an odd turn of events, village elders of both the communities agreed that the women of their communities "had to be kept in check" if peace were to be maintained.

"If there are any problems,

we are there and we can sort them out," said one of them.

"Whatever happened has happened. We all have to live together after all," said another member at the meeting.

Lawyers ask police chief to ensure accused get legal access

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

A group of lawyers on Wednesday wrote to the Delhi Commissioner of Police seeking legal access to those under arrest or in custodial detention following violence that erupted in north-east Delhi last week. The request comes after reports surfaced that several lawyers were denied information of detainees.

"Take all measures to ensure that the right of access to legal counsel for persons under arrest or custodial detention is honoured and that strict remedial action is taken against any further illegal deprivations of this invaluable Constitutional and statutory rights," read the letter.

Meanwhile, lawyers' collective 'Lawyers for Detainees' have set up legal aid camps in areas of north-east Delhi, including Musafafabad and Indira Vihar.

Mishika Singh, a lawyer who is part of the collective, said on Twitter: "In the last four days, we have initiated legal work for over 500 people in various capacities like processing of compensation forms, recording damage to property and injury to self, filing of complaints, pursuing missing persons reports and so on."

"Apart from this, lawyers in the field are also helping with legal work in hospitals – getting their MLCS, making sure post-mortems are conducted as per law, bodies are released on time. We are stretched beyond imagination but there is satisfaction in the work that is being done," Ms. Singh added.

## HC rejects plea against + govt. compensation

'Court won't interfere in policy decision'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Wednesday said there was "nothing wrong" with the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government's decision to announce compensation for victims of the recent riots in north-east Delhi.

A Bench of Chief Justice D.N. Patel and Justice C. Hari Shankar declined to entertain a PIL which had challenged the compensation announced by the Delhi government, saying "it is a policy decision" and "we will not interfere in it".

The court said, "This is not a compensation given on fault basis. The compensation is being awarded on a no-fault basis. There is nothing wrong with it."

The petitioner, BJP leader and former MLA Nand Kishore Garg, contended that victims of the riots should be first identified before payment of compensation to ensure those who "perpetrated" the violence

do not get the relief.

The Bench disagreed with the contention, saying if the petitioner's suggestion was accepted, then the scheme "would become totally unworkable".

"It would be impossible to implement," the court said, adding that it was a policy decision of the Delhi government and "we will be extremely slow in interfering with it". "We expect the Delhi government's assistance scheme for helping riot victims will be for assistance of riot victims only... We see no reason to entertain the writ petition," the Bench said while dismissing the plea.

## Ensure security at exam centres, HC tells police

# Unclean toilet at camp adds to woes of displaced women

The makeshift bathroom is nothing but a tent covered by cloth on three sides

HEMANI BHANDARI  
NEW DELHI

Rukhsar\*, a 14-year-old Class IX student and a resident of Sherpur Chowk, had shifted to the Idgah ground in Mustafabad on Tuesday along with many others from her locality. As she was menstruating, she was provided sanitary napkins and innerwear. But that didn't solve the problem. The biggest worry for many like her was to find a place to change.

"It is embarrassing. Once I went to change at the makeshift bathroom where all the women and children bathe. Another woman walked in and I didn't know how to react. There are hundreds of us here using that one tent," she said.

Rukhsar said that once she went to a local neighbour outside the Idgah ground. "I had to tell the woman that I needed to change. It was embarrassing because we don't usually tell anyone about it. It is not considered good," she said.

However, the women are still filled with gratitude be-



Some of the women who are staying in the camp set up in Mustafabad, on Wednesday. ■ HEMANI BHANDARI

cause "this is the only option they have".

Sameena (38), mother of three, said that her date is due in three-four days and she is worried. "We don't go to the two public toilets set up for women outside the ground. Men are outside all the time and it doesn't feel good," she said, adding that she prefers walking out of the ground to a local's house to urinate or defecate.

Rifat Khatoon is four months pregnant. At the relief camp, her strategy to ensure minimum usage of toilet is eat and drink less.

"Because of pregnancy, I have to use the toilet a num-

ber of times and it's tough for me to keep walking out. I try not to eat and drink much," she said.

#### Unhygienic conditions

When this reporter visited the makeshift bathroom, which is nothing but a tent covering three sides against the wall, someone had openly defecated and a woman was bathing her two children there. Right next to the bathroom lay a mattress where women were sitting.

"It is so dirty. We are living together and people should take care of the hygiene as well," said a woman, who did not wish to be identified.

(\*name changed)

Recalling the violence, Rifat said that she, along with others like Sameena, Rukhsar, Gulafsha and Gulshan from Sherpur Chowk, fled their houses on Monday evening when their neighbours' houses were being burnt by a mob.

"We hopped from one terrace to the other and finally reached a house which was inhabited by Hindus. They sheltered us safely for a couple of hours and then ensured we reached Mustafabad safely," said Gulafsha.

"We are grateful to everyone who is helping us but living in the relief camps is tough, especially for women. We just want to go home," she lamented. There are also regular announcements that mothers should take their daughters wherever they go for their own safety.

In the wake of COVID-19 outbreak, women from different NGOs were seen informing the inhabitants of relief camps about usage of their dupattas and ensuring cleanliness.

(\*name changed)

# CRPF helps ex-jawan whose house was gutted in riots

I feel proud that even after retirement, my dept. cares for me'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) handed over a cheque for ₹11 lakh to a retired head constable whose house was looted and burnt down when a wave of communal violence hit the northeast part of Delhi from February 23 to 25.

Aish Mohammad, 58, said that in the evening of February 25, his three-storey house in Bhagirathi Vihar was surrounded by around 250 men, some of them armed.

"They threw stones, fired gunshots and flung petrol bombs at the house. I was trapped in the house with my son. Panditji, my neighbour, and his wife, tried to reason with the mob. They were pushed away. The mob then looted and burnt the entire house," Mr. Mohammad, who took voluntary retirement from the CRPF in 2001, told *The Hindu*.

Mr. Mohammad said that after the NDTV TV news channel aired his story, CRPF Commandant P.K.



CRPF DG A.P. Maheshwari presents a cheque to retired head constable Aish Mohammad on Wednesday. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

tired personnel of the force are our family," CRPF Spokesperson Deputy Inspector General Moses Dhinakaran said.

When the incident took place, the other members of Mr. Mohammad's family had gone to attend a wedding at Bulandshahar in Uttar Pradesh.

Mr. Mohammad said he made three calls to the police but no one came.

"When the mob set the ground floor on fire, we ran towards the terrace. Sensing trouble we jumped on to the terrace of an adjacent building and fled for our lives. Had we not fled, they would have killed us," he recounted.

He said said the area in which he lives is a mixed neighbourhood.

"Hindus and Muslims have been living here peacefully. The mob was comprised mostly of outsiders. They would have got some help from the local criminals," he said.

"The CRPF stands committed to the welfare of its personnel and their families. This act is a gesture to say that all serving and re-

Johri contacted him and gave him ₹20,000 as immediate relief.

On Wednesday, Mr. Mohammad was taken to the CRPF headquarters where Director-General A.P. Maheshwari presented the cheque.

"I feel proud that even so many years after my retirement, my department cares for me. The DG even hugged me. I was overwhelmed," he said.

Mr. Mohammad said that after the NDTV TV news channel aired his story, CRPF Commandant P.K.

Hindu

man during the riots, to Shamli for recovery of the pistol, car and mobile phone used by him during the crime. The pistol is yet to be recovered, added the police.

An officer said they are also verifying whether any police cases are registered against him outside of Delhi.

Meanwhile, a Delhi court on Wednesday deferred till Thursday the hearing of the anticipatory bail application of the suspended AAP councillor.

Over 500 FIRs lodged, 1,647 people held

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police has registered 531 FIRs and arrested or detained 1,647 people in connection with the riots, an officer said on Wednesday. Forty-seven of the cases were registered under the Arms Act, the officer added.

According to the police, the police control room has not received any calls of rioting in the past seven days. The situation in the riot-affected areas is under control, the police added.

#### Division of work

Meanwhile, sources said that the Delhi Police Crime Branch will only investigate murder cases filed after violence broke out in north-east Delhi, sources said on Wednesday. They added that cases related to the riots, including murder, will be investigated by a special investigation team (SIT) and the local police will investigate the rest of the cases.

"We will be investigating all murder cases, role of [Aam Aadmi Party councilor] Tahir Hussain and Shahrukh Khan [arrested for shooting at a policeman during the riots]. The remaining cases of rioting, arson and vandalism will be investigated separately by the local police," said a police officer.

## Police Commissioner avoids questions on AAP councillor Tahir Hussain



Lookout notice soon against AAP leader: police

SAURABH TRIVEDI  
NEW DELHI

Delhi Police Commissioner S.N. Shrivastava on Wednesday avoided answering questions regarding the role of the Delhi Police in 'rescuing' Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) councillor Tahir Hussain from his residence in Chandbagh during the riots last week.

Mr. Shrivastava had gone to Parliament to brief Home Minister Amit Shah about the law and order situation in north-east Delhi.

During a press conference on Tuesday, Additional Commissioner of Police Ajit Kumar Singla had said that on February 24, around 11 p.m., some people had informed the police about a councillor being stuck and feeling insecure, and Mr. Hussain was later rescued.

Within an hour of the press conference, the Delhi Police issued a clarification stating that Mr. Hussain "did not require rescuing" that night. "News of the councillor being stuck was received by the police but upon investigation it was found that the councillor was safe in his house," the police stated.

The police registered four FIRs against Mr. Hussain on February 25. In the first FIR, registered at Dayalpur police station, the councillor has

been charged under murder, rioting and arson. In the second FIR, he has been charged under rioting and destruction of evidence. The third FIR has been registered at Khajoori Khas and has charged the councillor under attempt to murder. The fourth FIR charges him under rioting and arson.

The FIR in Khajoori Khas police station was registered on the complaint of a policeman, which mentions that miscreants were throwing stones and petrol bombs from the terrace of Mr. Hussain's residence.

"We have also moved a file for issuing a lookout circular against Mr. Hussain to prevent him from escaping abroad. The order may be issued by [Wednesday] night," said a police officer.

#### Shahrukh taken to Shamli

Meanwhile, the Delhi police on Wednesday took Shahrukh Khan, who has been arrested for firing at a police

#### TO ADVERTISE PLEASE CONTACT

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INDRAPRASTHA AUTOMOBILES GOKULPUR:

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SHIVA AUTO

DILSHAD GARDEN:

INDRAPRASHTA AUTOMOBILES

Court to hear plea on traffic penalties today

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Wednesday said it will hear on Thursday a PIL seeking direction to the government to issue notification empowering officers for compounding traffic violations on the spot.

The plea was mentioned before a Bench of Chief Justice D.N. Patel and Justice C. Hari Shankar which agreed it to list for hearing on Thursday.

The petition stated that after the September 2019 amendment in Motor Vehicle Act, public is facing difficulty in compounding the challans issued to them for traffic violations as the violators cannot pay the penalty on the spot and they have to approach the court or make online payment on virtual court (traffic) website.

Due to this, the courts have been overburdened and even the public at large is suffering as they are not able to compound the petty violations at the spot and have to revisit the circles offices for collection of impounded documents even after disposal of challans in virtual court (traffic), the petition filed by advocate Amit Sahni said.

Compounding offences are those for which the violator is allowed to pay the fine on the spot and the driver does not need to visit a court. The violator can pay fine to the designated officials after the States notify them.

The plea added that with the Motor Vehicle (Amendment) Act, 2019, the penalties for traffic violations have been raised multi-fold and the Delhi government's transport department has not yet notified the authorised officers and the compounding fee.

## AAP MLAs of riot-hit areas sit with victims, appeal for peace

Legislators talk to locals, hear grievances; visit relief camp in Mustafabad

NIKHIL M BABU  
NEW DELHI

At 2.30 p.m. on Wednesday, AAP Seelampur MLA Abdul Rehman rushed out of his house and made his way through the narrow lanes of Jafraabab to reach his car parked on the main road. "[Deputy Chief Minister] Manish Sisodia ji has reached," he told his aide, as they got into the vehicle.

Mr. Rehman is one of the three AAP MLAs of the riot-hit north-east Delhi. Mustafabad MLA Mohammad Yunus was "down with fever", and Gokalpuri MLA Surendra Kumar was on his way back to the area from Rouse Avenue court where he had gone in the morning.

As the car stopped outside the government school in Jafraabab, Mr. Rehman jumped out to meet Mr. Sisodia, who spent about 15 minutes in a school talking to students and parents.

After the Minister left, the AAP MLA spent a further 20 minutes talking to the people, and asked them not to believe any rumours. He then left for his house.

Around 3.30 pm, Mr. Kumar joined the Deputy Chief Minister for a visit to a school



Riot victims seen at a relief camp in north-east Delhi's Mustafabad on Wednesday. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

in Gokalpuri. He left soon after Mr. Sisodia departed.

### Consoling the bereaved

At 4.45 p.m., Mr. Yunus left his house in Mustafabad as he was "feeling better".

He got off his vehicle near street number 5 of Babu Nagar. Inside the narrow street lined with open drains, an under-construction building was being used as a site for public viewing of Jamaludeen, who was killed in the riots.

"The MLA will get you the ₹1 lakh on Thursday and the rest ₹9 lakh will be deposited in the bank account. Do not worry, the MLA will take care of everything," a man standing next to Mr. Yunus

told Kamaludeen, the brother of the deceased.

"The situation is under control but things are not completely over," the MLA told the people gathered in the area.

After spending 10 minutes consoling the family members, the MLA told the gathering: "Any time you need any help, you can call me. I will come."

"Jamaludeen was killed by the son of an ex-BJP councilor. They killed him with swords and knives," Mr. Yunus told *The Hindu*, as he left the area.

By 5.20 p.m., Mr. Yunus reached the relief camp in Idgah ground in Mustafabad, where the other two AAP

MLAs were already present.

"We have been working a lot since the violence began. On February 24, we were in touch with the DCP and other police officers. It was not safe for us to go out. From February 25, we have been in touch with the people," said the Gokalpuri MLA, when asked whether they were visiting people in riot-hit areas apart from the camps.

"On Tuesday, [Social Welfare Minister Rajendra Pal] Gautam ji was here and we met people in different areas. We are asking people about their problems and assured students that there will be peace and urged them to focus on studies.

Seeing the overcrowded camp, Mr. Rehman discussed solutions with a volunteer. "We are making IDs for the people who have taken refuge here, and also for the volunteers. Others will not be allowed to enter the camp," said the MLA as a volunteer introduced Mr. Rehman to a reporter.

By 6 p.m. it started to get dark at the camp, Mr. Rehman and Mr. Yunus sat on plastic chairs surrounded by volunteers discussing the situation in the area.

## Sisodia visits schools, assures students of peace, security

I just want my citizenship, 16-year-old tells Deputy CM

NIKHIL M BABU  
NEW DELHI

Around 3 p.m., Education Minister Manish Sisodia entered a classroom of a government girls school in Jafraabab, where a parents-teachers meeting was on going. The Minister smiled at students and parents before he asked: "The students are looking a little tense. Are you all fine?"

Many replied "yes" with a weak smile.

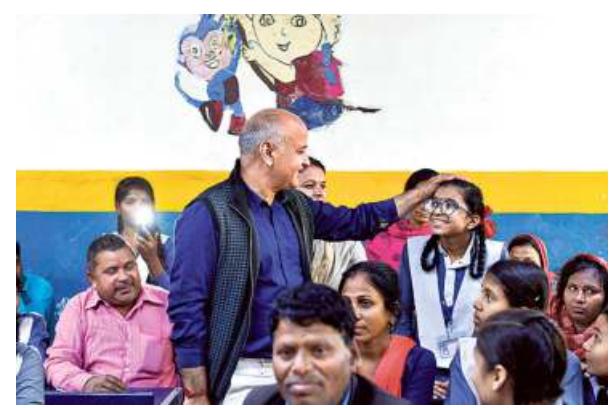
On Wednesday, Mr. Sisodia interacted with students and parents in three government schools in riot-hit areas of north-east Delhi and assured students that there will be peace and urged them to focus on studies.

Inside the classroom, as Mr. Sisodia asked 16-year-old Izna Khan whether there was violence in her mohalla, she replied in the affirmative. "We just want our citizenship, nothing else," Ms. Khan said. "She is just a child," her father said as he put his arm around her outside the classroom.

"The parents are still a little afraid but most of them said that they will send students for examinations," the teacher told Mr. Sisodia.

"There was heavy stone pelting in our area but they did not burn any houses," Fatima later told *The Hindu*.

The teenager said that it was good that the Minister was visiting schools as it sent a message to them that things



Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia interacts with students at GBSS School in Gokalpuri on Wednesday. ■ PTI

were "peaceful".

"I told the Minister about NRC that we only want our citizenship. We do not have any problem with Modi ji," Ms. Khan said. "She is just a child," her father said as he put his arm around her outside the classroom.

The Delhi government had organised the special parent-teacher meeting in the riot-affected areas with a motive to restore confidence in students.

"The students were told that if they miss the CBSE board exam on March 7, they can appear for it later. For new dates, they can contact their schools after March 7," an official statement read.

## IIT-Bombay and Delhi ranked among world's top 50 tech institutions

Jawaharlal Nehru University is India's best in Arts and Humanities category; Delhi University best in Social Sciences and Management category

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

In fact, five IITs - including Kharagpur, Madras and Kanpur - made it into the top 100 list in that category of the QS (Quacquarelli Symonds) World University Ranking by Subject for 2020. IIT-Bombay was ranked at 44, while IIT-Delhi stood at 47.

However, engineering and

technology was the only major subject group where Indian institutions were able to crack the elite top 100 tier.

### Twelve institutes in list

Overall, 12 institutions from the country were ranked in the top 500 in this category alone.

The Centre has recently launched an Institutes of Eminence scheme in a bid to push more Indian institutions into the top tiers of global rankings.

In the Natural Sciences category, three Indian institutions made it to the top 200: IIT-Bombay at 108th rank,

followed by the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore at the 111th position, while IIT-Madras scored at the 195th rank.

Jawaharlal Nehru University remained the country's top institution in the Arts and Humanities category, with a global ranking of 162, followed by IIT-Delhi at 183.

There are no Indian institu-

tions in the world's top 200 when it comes to Life Sciences and Medicine. The top institution in the country is the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, which had a global ranking of 231.

### Improvement area

However, Delhi University topped the Social Sciences and Management category, with a global ranking of 160,

followed at a distance by Delhi University at 231.

## SPECIAL PTM FOR NORTH-EAST DELHI SCHOOLS



Schools and parents to come together to support each other and rebuild the confidence of children and resume normal school activities

**COME LET US REBUILD THE CONFIDENCE OF EACH OTHER**

**Date: March 5, 2020**

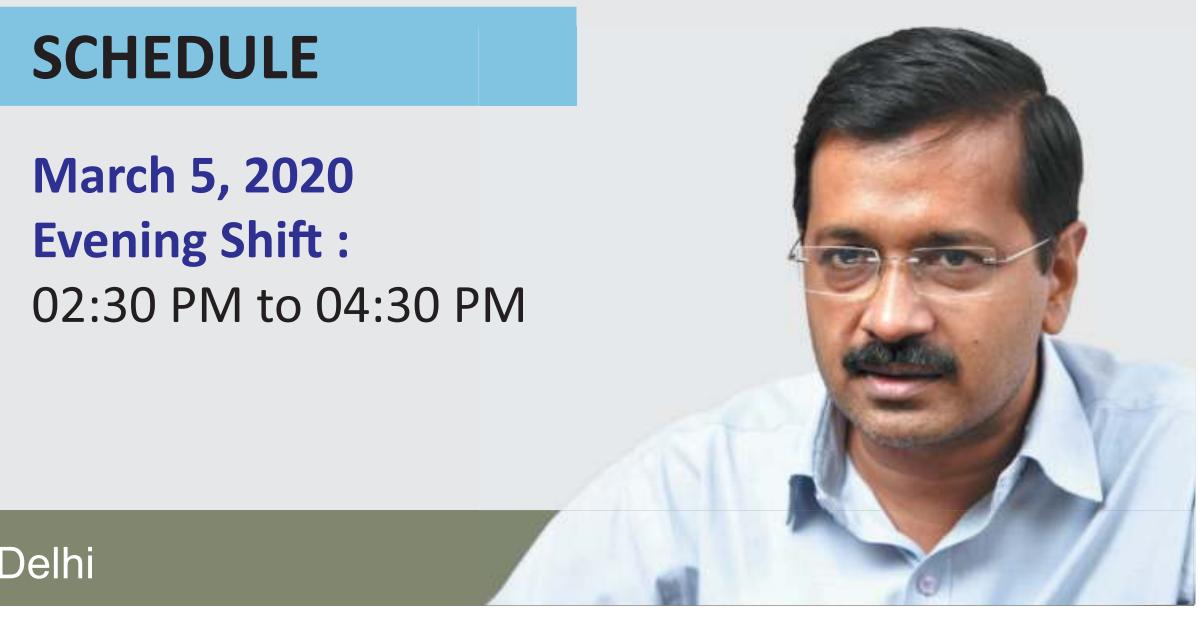
**Schools:** All evening schools of Delhi (Government and Govt. aided) of District North East and affected area of District East

### SCHEDULE

**March 5, 2020**

**Evening Shift :**

**02:30 PM to 04:30 PM**



IN BRIEF

COVID-19: NDMC forms teams to screen people

NEW DELHI  
The New Delhi Municipal Council has formed two rapid response teams for screening of residents who had visited COVID-19-affected countries after January 15 and has already screened 56 houses. "Two rapid response teams consisting of doctor, paramedical staff and public health specialist have been formed for awareness generation and screening of persons who visited COVID-19-affected nations," an official said.

Light rain, strong wind turn weather pleasant

NEW DELHI  
Light rain and strong wind turned weather pleasant and improved the national capital's air quality on Wednesday. PTI

Air Quality of Delhi-NCR		
Delhi	195	Gurugram 152
Ghaziabad	228	Faridabad 1
Noida	243	Greater Noida 197
■ Good	■ Satisfactory	■ Moderate
0-50	51-100	101-200
■ Poor	■ Very Poor	■ Severe
201-300	301-400	>400

Air Quality Index at 4 pm yesterday  
(Average of past 24 hours) [Source: CPCB]

DELHI TODAY

Talk: Lecture on "Colorectal Cancer in India - The rising trend and how to curb it" by Dr. Deepak Govil, Senior Consultant and Head, Dept. of Surgical Gastroenterology and GI Oncology, Intraaprastha Apollo Hospitals, at Gulmohar Hall, India Habitat Centre (IHC), 7 p.m.

Exhibition: "Living Between the times 2020", a solo paintings exhibition by Milburn Cherian at Visual Arts Gallery, India Habitat Centre (IHC), 11 a.m. - 7 p.m.

Exhibition: "Hindu Deities and Sanskrit in Japan", an exhibition of photographs by Benoy K. Behl, well-known photographer and Culture Historian at Kamaladevi Complex, India International Centre (IIC), 11 a.m. - 7 p.m.

Exhibition: "Yuj Samadham", a solo painting exhibition by Prasanth Appadaveetil at Convention Centre Foyer, India Habitat Centre (IHC), 11 a.m. - 7 p.m.

Exhibition: "Many Indias III", a rare collection of indigenous art curated by Tulika Kedia at Must Art Gallery, Panchsheel Park, 11 a.m. - 8 p.m.  
(Mail your listings for this column at cityeditor@thehindu.co.in)

# No need to panic, Kejriwal tells residents amid COVID-19 fear

State-level task force headed by Chief Minister formed to tackle situation

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Addressing the growing fears over the spread of COVID-19, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal urged the public not to panic and to take precautionary measures and avoid public places.

Addressing the media at the Secretariat, Mr. Kejriwal said that efforts are on to check and screen 88 people who came in contact with the Delhi man who has tested positive for COVID-19 and that a State-level task force headed by him has been formed to tackle the situation.

"We are concerned about the situation, but there is no need to panic. We are doing whatever we can to control the COVID-19 from spreading... members of all the important departments in Delhi, State officials, and police officers have been included in the task force," he said.

Isolation wards in 19 go-



Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and Health Minister Satyendar Jain at a press conference on Wednesday. ■ SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

vernment and six private hospitals that were equipped to deal with swine flu are being prepared in case of need for isolation wards, Mr. Kejriwal said.

Testing lab

He added that apart from the two available testing centres, COVID-19 testing lab will be set up at Lady Hardinge Hospital and also at Lok Nayak Hospital, if necessary.

The Chief Minister said

that 1,16,579 patients have been screened at the airport by thermal scanners and if any passenger shows symptoms, they will be referred to RML Hospital. The municipal corporations and the New Delhi Municipal Corporation (NDMC), he said, have been given the task of contacting and screening tourists who have arrived from countries where cases of COVID-19 have been reported.

The teams, he said, would

visit hotels and guest houses in the city to ensure that none of them have developed any symptoms after reaching Delhi.

Residents of Delhi who have not shown symptoms after landing from the four most-affected countries would also be screened as symptoms can show up after a period of 14 days, Mr. Kejriwal said.

The Chief Minister appealed to Delhites to come together to fight corona outbreak just as they came together to fight dengue and brought down the number of cases in the city last year.

He said the Education Department would spread awareness regarding the threat of the virus.

Mr. Kejriwal said that he would keep away from Holi celebrations next week on account of COVID-19 threat as well as due to the violence in north-east Delhi.

# City pharmacy owners face shortage of masks, sanitisers

Will look into reports of products being sold at higher rates: CM

AISHWARYA TRIPATHI  
NEW DELHI

Pharmacies across the Capital have seen a huge rush over the last two days with customers queuing up to buy masks and hand sanitiser as measures to protect themselves from COVID-19. Pharmacies across the city have run out of stock of N95 masks and hand sanitiser while many who have stock are selling them at inflated rates.

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said that the Delhi government had enough stock of N95 masks but added that he would look into reports of them being sold at inflated prices in private shops.

"Almost 90% of the people in a day are either here for sanitiser or masks. They are also emphasising on the 60% alcohol content in sanitiser," said Jaswinder Pal Singh of Preet Medicos in Khan Market. The signage at the entrance of his shop - 'No Masks, No sanitiser' - went unnoticed as visitors poured in to purchase the same. He added that preventive medicines for cold and fever are available on a limited basis.

"The lack of suggested



Women wear N95 masks purchased from a medicine shop in the Capital on Wednesday. ■ SANDEEP SAXENA

DMRC issues advisory, to step up cleaning

NEW DELHI

The Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) on Wednesday said it would increase the frequency of cleaning on its premises in view of the COVID-19 outbreak. DMRC has also issued Do's and Don't's in both English and Hindi regarding the virus. PTI

"The earlier sale of sanitiser was one bottle in two days. Yesterday, I sold 30 bottles in less than an hour and turned away almost 30 people because we weren't able to get it from the distributor," said Satish Singh Chauhan of Sri Ram Medicos at Kota market.

"I had placed an order for 1 lakh bottles of sanitiser and have received only 100. Everything is being sold at a higher price than usual," said Ajay Mittal of a pharmaceutical distributor shop, Durga Pharma in Chandni Chowk.

N95 is pushing people to choose from low-quality cloth mask and surgical 3-ply mask which have been declared ineffective to fight the deadly virus. People are not even asking for the price of the masks. Expensive pieces worth ₹2,500 each are getting sold," said Vishal of Fortis Healthworld here.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Wednesday stayed the NAPA order directing Johnson & Johnson to deposit over ₹230 crore it allegedly profited by not passing on benefits of GST reduction in over 306 items, including baby products, through commensurate price cut.

The service had received a "commendable initiative award" from the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs last year for "Best City Bus Service" project.

A Bench of Justices Vipin

Sanghi and Sanjeev Narula also restrained the National Anti-Profiteering Authority (NAPA) and the Centre from initiating any penalty proceedings against healthcare major Johnson & Johnson Pvt Ltd. It also said that prima facie the methodology used by the NAPA to arrive at its finding of profiteering was "flawed".

The court issued notice to the Centre, NAPA and director general of Anti-Profiteering seeking their stand on the company's petition challenging the direction to deposit the allegedly profited amount in a consumer welfare fund.

Apart from quashing NAPA order, J&J has also sought setting aside of a penalty notice issued to it by the authority on January 27.

ment with shareholding from Gurugram Metropolitan Development Authority, Municipal Corporation of Gurugram, and Haryana State Industrial and Infrastructure Development Corporation. Chief Minister Manohar Lal had launched the service on September 2, 2018.

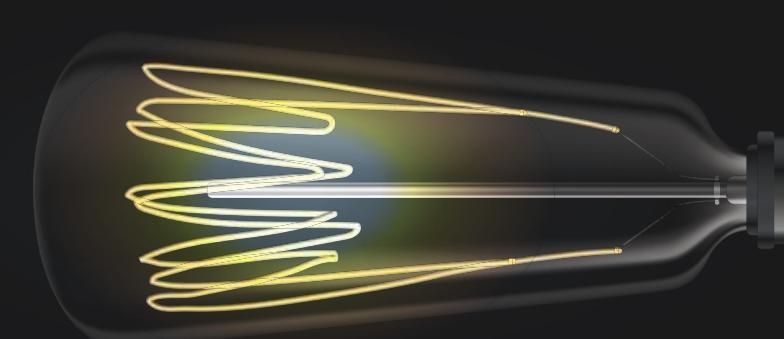
Special drives have been undertaken under the guidance of Ms. Goel to promote safe and fearless travel for women, including Women Special Service, the CEO herself taking a ride on the bus, pasting Women Helpline 1091 stickers and 'You are un-

der CCTV surveillance' stickers inside buses.

"From February 2020, we are ferrying an average of 583 passengers per bus which compares very favourably to the most efficient U.S. transit systems. In February 2020, bus routes 11A, 21B, 11IB, 134B and 238 carried more than 600 passengers per bus," said Ms. Goel, a 2008-batch IAS officer.

The service had received a "commendable initiative award" from the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs last year for "Best City Bus Service" project.

A Bench of Justices Vipin



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**LEGAL NOTICE**

IN THE COURT OF THE HON'BLE  
II ADDITIONAL JUNIOR CIVIL  
JUDGE AT VIJAYAWADA,  
ANDHRA PRADESH.  
O.S NO: 70/2018.

Between:  
M/s. International Health Care Limited, Represented by its  
GPA Holder Areppalli Siva Suresh Babu .... Plaintiff  
And  
M/s. Sri Ram Distributors, Represented by its Proprietor Sri  
M.Durga Prasad .... Defendant

DEFENDANT ADDRESS: M/s. Sri Ram Distributors, Represented by its Proprietor Sri M.Durga Prasad, S/o Ramavtar, C/o. Neroar No:2, Pilibhit Road, Bareilly, Uttar Pradesh State.

The above Suit is filed by Plaintiff before the Hon'ble Court against Defendant. The Suit is posted for your appearance on 13/03/2020 at 10.30 AM.

Defendant is advised to appear in person or with his Advocate for objections if any in the suit. Failing which the Hon'ble Court may, pass appropriate order against you.

This notice is issued according to the Orders of this Hon'ble Court.

DATE OF ADJOURNMENT : 13/03/2020, AT 10.30 AM

YSV PRATAP, SPR KUMAR Advocates, Rao & Rao Associates, Door No-24-28-6/5, FF-1, Nagendra Towers, Edupuganti Lakshmana Rao Street, Durgapuram, Vijayawada-520 003, Andhra Pradesh Ph: 85000 14509

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This is for the information of General Public that the captioned property is being purchased by Mrs. Varsha Sethi W/o Late Vijay Sethi, Mrs. Nitika Sethi W/o Mr. Ajay Sethi & Mr. Ajay Sethi S/o Late Vijay Sethi from its owners Mr. Rajeev Chawla S/o Late Ramesh Chander Chawla & Mrs. Rita Gandhi/o Late Ramesh Chander Chawla, Mr. Ramesh Chander Chawla has now died.

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## IN BRIEF



## Swathi music award for violinist L. Subramaniam

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Violinist and music composer L. Subramaniam has been selected for the Swathi music award for 2017 instituted by the Kerala government. The award comprises a cash prize of ₹2,00,000, a citation and a statuette. Dr. Subramaniam has been chosen for the award for his versatility spanning the Carnatic and western music genres and his techniques and compositions in orchestral fusion, according to a press note.

## Kerala transport strike: man dies waiting for bus

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

A 60-year-old commuter died, hundreds were stranded and traffic was disrupted in Thiruvananthapuram on Wednesday for five hours when employees of the Kerala State Transport Corporation (KSRTC) went on a flash strike, demanding the release of three personnel taken into custody by the police. Surendran, who was waiting for more than two hours to get a bus, fainted and collapsed. He was rushed to hospital but was declared dead on arrival.

## Seven TDP activists held on murder charge

SRIKAKULAM

Seven TDP activists were arrested on Wednesday on the charge of killing YSRCP leader Kalyan Atchaya on February 24. According to the police, Atchaya, who was in TDP for two decades, joined the YSRCP in 2019 and allegedly insisted that his supporters follow suit. As they refused to do so, differences widened. Later, they allegedly attacked him and his family. Atchaya died during the attack.

## A.P. Cabinet decides to keep NPR process 'in abeyance'

'Centre should allay apprehensions in the minds of people'

## STAFF REPORTER

VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh Cabinet has decided to keep the National Population Register (NPR) process "in abeyance" in the State till the Centre reverts to the 2010 questionnaire.

The Cabinet, which met under the chairmanship of Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy on Wednesday, also adopted a resolution requesting the Central government to change the NPR questionnaire and also remove the apprehensions among "crores of people".

Disclosing the details of the Cabinet meeting, Information and Public Relations (I&PR) Minister Perni Venkataramaiah said people were apprehensive of questions in the NPR. New questions had been added in the present NPR. People wanted



A.P. Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy at the Cabinet meeting in Vijayawada on Wednesday. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

the government to continue the questions listed in the 2010 NPR, but the Central government decided to go ahead with its plans.

**Need for awareness'** The Cabinet felt it was not just to impose the NPR on the people. "The onus is on the Centre to remove the apprehensions and create

awareness among people on the NPR. We are only asking the Centre to fulfil its responsibility," he said.

The Minister said the Centre had made a decision and was asking the States to implement it. "When crores of people of the State are scared, we have the right to safeguard people's interests", he said.

## 11 surgical needles found on the lower body of boy in Telangana

His aunt inserted them to kill him and grab his father's land

## STAFF REPORTER

HYDERABAD

Eleven surgical needles were found on the lower body of a three-year-old child in Vepangandla village of Wanaparthy district in Telangana.

When the boy's parents noticed needles poking out of his back, they rushed him to a hospital, where doctors took an X-ray and found needles in his body, which were later removed.

Speaking to *The Hindu*, a senior police officer said the boy's aunt Aliveluamma inserted the needles on his buttocks and thighs to kill

him, with an ulterior motive of grabbing the 1.5-acre agricultural land belonging to the boy's father.

"Initially, doctors of a private hospital managed to take out some needles, which could be seen protruding from his backside.

Later, he was shifted to the government hospital in Wanaparthy, where doctors performed surgery and removed a few needles. They are yet to remove two more," the officer said.

Police said the boy was unwell for the past five to six months, and every time he

cried, the parents used to take him to a local hospital. But on Sunday, his mother found a needle poking out of his buttocks and rushed him to a private hospital.

The victim's parents are farm labourers and whenever they go out for work, Aliveluamma used to take care of him.

"Our investigation revealed that Aliveluamma hatched a conspiracy to kill the boy so that she can grab the agricultural land of her brother," police said.

Police are likely to arrest Aliveluamma on Thursday.

Police said the boy was unwell for the past five to six months, and every time he

## Cong. MPs walk out of Kannada Development Authority meeting

They object to RSS reference in the memorandum

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Congress MPs from Karnataka on Wednesday walked out of a meeting of the Kannada Development Authority (KDA), objecting to a RSS resolution mentioned in a memorandum submitted to the Union government. The KDA prepared the memorandum on the State government's key proposals to promote Kannada in education and employment. The meeting was organised at Union Minister D.V. Sadananda Gowda's residence. It was attended by MPs of both the BJP and the Congress from Karnataka. Union Minister Suresh Angadi, also from Karnataka, was present.

Rajeev Gowda, a Congress member of the Rajya Sabha, said his party was upset at the use of a private organisation as a reference in the

memorandum. "The entire memorandum has the reference of official documents supporting each proposal, but one document, related to a RSS resolution, was not required at all," he said.

The resolution was adopted by the Akhil Bharatiya Pratinidhi Sabha of the RSS in March 2018. It said primary education should be in Indian languages alone.

The Congress members put forth their objections, but no convincing response was given by KDA chairman T.S. Nagabharana.

"The KDA had never referred to any private organisation earlier. There are many organisations working for the protection and promotion of Kannada. The RSS works for promoting Hindi and Sanskrit. This shows the intention of the government," former KDA Chair-

man Hanumanthaia said.

Mr. Gowda said the KDA and the Ministers agreed that the two pages would be removed from the memorandum, but the Congress MPs walked out as a mark of protest.

## Defends inclusion

The KDA, however, defended the inclusion of the RSS resolution, pointing out that it called for promoting all Indian languages.

Mr. Nagabharana said the content of the resolution was about the "need to protect and promote Indian languages" and there was nothing wrong in using it as a reference.

"English may be a working language, but the State languages and the mother tongue need to be promoted in order to protect our culture and tradition," he said.

## Holding on



Play time: Women employees playing kabaddi as part of the district level games and sports competitions conducted ahead of Women's Day in Vijayawada on Wednesday. ■ K.V.S. GIRI

## 'We want to be worthy of the uniform we wear'

First batch of women recruits to the Army talk about their determination to be the best

## TANU KULKARNI

BENGALURU

Young women in khaki uniforms and bright red caps march proudly oblivious to the scorching heat at the CMP Centre and School in Bengaluru.

They have been recruited as the first women soldiers and will be inducted into the Army in April 2021 after undergoing a rigorous 61-week training programme. There are 100 recruits – aged between 17 and 21 – who will be part of the Corps of Military Police. While many have convinced their families to allow them into this traditional male bastion, some are following in the footsteps of their fathers.

Ahead of International Women's Day on March 8, the Army opened its doors to



Raring to go: Women recruits marching at the CMP Centre and School in Bengaluru on Wednesday. ■ SUDHAKARA JAIN

the media to interact with the new recruits.

## Dropped out of B.Com'

Bheemakka M. Chavhan, 19, from Karnataka's Dharwad district, whose parents are daily wage workers, said her entire village got together to felicitate her before she

came here for training. She dropped out of a B.Com course and has no regrets. "Within weeks, I learned the importance of discipline, punctuality, and how to optimise every minute," she said. The group is completing seven weeks of training.

Anitha K., 21, from Tamil

Nadu, is aware of the importance of being in the first batch of women recruits. "We are the ones who shoulder the responsibility of being a good example for the next few batches," she said.

The 61-week programme is similar to that of their male counterparts and includes basic military, weapons, maintenance and signals training. They also have to undergo a gender sensitisation programme.

Prashantha M.S., an instructor for the drill square test practice, said the recruits grasp concepts more quickly than men. "The morale among the first batch is very high," he said.

Eighteen-year-old Pooja from Bhilwara district in Haryana, who dropped out of a B.Sc. course, said it took a lot

## COVID-19 scare grips Telangana

All eyes are on the results of the two samples that will be announced today

## STAFF REPORTER

HYDERABAD

The coronavirus scare gripped Telangana on Wednesday as the attention of the entire State was on the COVID-19 status of two persons, including a software employee with travel history to Italy, whose samples were tested at the Gandhi Hospital.

Though messages of a software employee testing positive for COVID-19 spread on social media platforms faster than any virus, one will have to wait till Thursday for official confirmation on whether the samples tested positive or negative.

The Telangana Health Minister Eatala Rajender said the department had sent the two samples to the National Institute of Virology (NIV), Pune for more clarity. These two are among the 47



Preventive measure: Students wearing protective masks in the wake of COVID-19 scare in Hyderabad. ■ NAGARA GOPAL

samples tested at the ICMR's laboratory at Gandhi Hospital, Musheerabad, on Tuesday. The remaining 45 test negative.

As per protocol, if a sample collected from a person in the State tests negative, it is announced by the State Health department. In case a sample tests positive for COVID-19, the sample has to be sent to NIV-Pune for con-

fimation. If it tests positive again, the announcement is made by the Central government.

Principal Secretary of I-T and Industries Jayesh Ranjan confirmed the developments at a joint press conference with Cyberabad Police Commissioner V.C. Sajjanar, and Director of public health G. Srinivas Rao.

Mr. Ranjan appealed to all I-T companies not to take such decisions without consulting the government.

## Andhra Pradesh sees 8 suspected cases in a day

## STAFF REPORTER

VIJAYAWADA/GUNTUR

airport are being sanitised and fumigated regularly. "We are actively driving an awareness campaign among passengers arriving from all countries and not just the affected ones will be screened at airports, ports and harbours across Karnataka for symptoms of COVID-19," said a spokesperson of the Bangalore International Airport Limited (BIAL), the operator of KIA.

Chief Secretary T.M. Vijay Bhaskar asked the airport authorities to take a declaration from passengers about their visits abroad, sojourn and the people who came in contact with them to facilitate necessary prevention measures.

He asked the authorities to make in-flight announcements about the procedure to be followed on arrival.

All of the five suspected cases in Visakhapatnam have a travel history – three of them had visited Singapore while two had visited Bahrain in the recent past. Those in Kakinada, Vijayawada and Eluru had arrived from South Korea, Germany and Muscat respectively, officials said.

"Isolation wards have been set up in all 13 districts, and protocols for transport of samples, screening have been tightened. Waste disposal systems too have been strengthened," Health Minister Alla Kali Krishna Srinivas said.

## Two detained for leaking PU paper

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

VIJAYAPURA

Two persons were detained after the II PU physics question paper went viral on social media, an hour after the exam commenced at the Shantewar College here in Karnataka on Wednesday.

Deputy Commissioner of Vijayapura Y.S. Patil said one of the accused, Bagappa Sagar, jumped the compound wall of the college to reach the hall where a student, Murugendra Hiremath, was writing the exam. "He asked him to hold the question paper for taking photos, which he circulated." The student has been detained. The college has been directed to suspend exam supervisor M.D. Narayankar. Since the paper became public after the exam started, it could not be treated as paper leak, Mr. Patil said.

## Kerala college sets up panel to probe B.A. student's death

He was not allowed to write exam due to lack of attendance

## STAFF REPORTER

KOZHIKODE

The management of Malabar Christian College, Kozhikode, has set up a committee to probe the circumstances that led to the suicide of Jaspreet Singh, a third year student of B.A. Economics on Sunday.

Asked what had changed since the training began, Ms. Pooja instantly points to her hair: "I had hair till my waist. I cried when I had to cut it but now I'm glad I did as it would have been difficult to manage it."

Some like Ms. Deepika from Haryana have taken inspiration from their family. Her father is a retired Armyman. As she reassembles her gun, she said: "Everyday we are trying to make ourselves worthy of the uniform we wear."

Calicut University's regulations to write the final semester exam. His family members have accused the college authorities of being unsympathetic to his plea for a relaxation in the norm.

It is learnt that they are now planning to file a complaint with Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan.

Sabu Mathew, vice-president of the Parents Teachers Association, sought action against the teachers who allegedly denied him attendance. "Jaspreet was a lively student, active in extra-curricular activities. He lost his life due to the unethical actions of some teachers. They have not even bothered to visit his house," Mr. Mathew

said. He alleged that the PTA had not met after the incident.

The general secretary of the college union has been included in the three-member panel set up by the college staff council to inquire into the suicide.

Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee vice-president T. Siddique has sought a crime branch probe into the incident. He told the media here on Wednesday that charges pertaining to abetment of suicide should be registered against Godwin Samraj, college principal, and teachers.

He alleged that the principal had discriminated against students on the basis of their political affiliation.



Raring to go: Women recruits marching at the CMP Centre and School in Bengaluru on Wednesday. ■ SUDHAKARA JAIN

the media to interact with the new recruits.

## Dropped out of B.Com'

Bheemakka M. Chavhan, 19, from Karnataka's Dharwad district, whose parents are daily wage workers, said her entire village got together to felicitate her before she

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Nadu, is aware of the importance of being in the first batch of women recruits. "We are the ones who shoulder the responsibility of being a good example for the next few batches," she said.

The 61-week programme is similar to that of their male counterparts and includes basic military, weapons, maintenance and signals training. They also have to undergo a gender sensitisation programme.

# COVID-19: govt. for universal screening

Testing facilities to be opened at district level

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI

Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister P.K. Mishra on Wednesday chaired a crucial meeting called to discuss ways to combat the deadly COVID-19, where it was decided to introduce universal screening at all international airports in the country.

The meeting was attended by the Cabinet Secretary, the Foreign Secretary, the Secretaries of Ministries of Health, Civil Aviation, Information and Broadcasting, Shipping, Tourism, the Chairman (Airport Authority of India) and the Secretary (Border Management),



**Mounting concerns:** Members of the Italian tour group being taken to the ITBP's quarantine facility at Chhawla camp in Delhi on Tuesday. ■ PTI

MHA. Officials from defence forces, National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), NITI Aayog and the Prime Minister's Office also attended.

Two major changes have been made to further en-

hance the government's level of preparedness. These include introduction of universal screening at all international airports and seaports through use of thermal imagery equipment and mandatory filling of declara-

tion forms of places visited by tourists and travellers returning from abroad.

It was also decided to rapidly implement opening of proper testing, isolation and quarantine facilities down to the district level, in partner-

ship with State governments.

Ministries such as Home, Defence, Railways and Labour would work with the Ministry of Health through the use of their facilities and hospitals, the meeting decided.

While efforts to contain the spread were appreciated, it was decided to enhance effectiveness of the steps taken by adopting a pan-government approach, in partnership with the States.

The meeting took note of the confusion among the people over lack of proper knowledge of the virus. The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting is entrusted with disseminating information in a timely manner, including relevant advisories and 'dos and don'ts'.

## President, PM say they will avoid Holi gatherings

Amit Shah's rally likely to be put off; govt. dealing with the situation proactively, says Javadekar

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

India currently has only 29 known cases of COVID-19, but the political class has taken the pandemic seriously. President Ram Nath Kovind and Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Wednesday that they would not attend any gathering to mark Holi

(March 10). Union Home Minister Amit Shah's rally in Hyderabad, scheduled for March 15, is likely to be postponed.

Mr. Kovind wrote on Twitter: "With alertness and safeguards, we all can help contain the outbreak of COVID-19 Novel Coronavirus. In a precautionary measure,

the Rashtrapati Bhavan will not hold the traditional Holi gatherings."

The tweet followed Mr. Modi's own, declaring his intention to keep away from Holi events.

"Experts across the world have advised to reduce mass gatherings to avoid the spread of COVID-19 Novel

Coronavirus. Hence, this year I have decided not to participate in any Holi Milan programme," he said. BJP president J.P. Nadda also said that he would not celebrate Holi or hold any Holi Milan function.

Mr. Shah has reportedly postponed his rally in support of the Citizenship

(Amendment) Act because of the outbreak of the disease.

Meanwhile, Union Minister Prakash Javadekar said over six lakh people had been screened for COVID-19 at 21 airports, and asserted that the government was dealing with the situation proactively.

## 7 Rajasthan districts on alert

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
JAIPUR

Seven districts in Rajasthan were put on high alert after a 69-year-old Italian tourist and his wife tested positive for COVID-19. The State has also cancelled the Dholandi Mahotsava in Jaipur and Kapda Phaad Holi in Pushkar next week in view of the advisory against large gatherings at public places.

## 3 Delhi-NCR schools closed

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI

Three schools in the National Capital and adjoining areas on Tuesday announced holidays for students and staff to prevent the spread of COVID-19, while two schools advanced their spring break, a day after the Union Health Ministry confirmed two fresh cases in the country, with one in Delhi.

## Isolation wards in all rly. zones

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Railways on Wednesday said every divisional and sub-divisional hospital of railway zones should have isolation wards. It said the Centre and the States were conducting training programmes on prevention, and railway doctors and paramedical staff should be nominated for these programmes.

## J&K HC bats for students in Iran

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
SRINAGAR

The J&K High Court on Wednesday directed the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) to "identify the protocol" and take steps to evacuate Indian students stranded in Iran. Around 300 students from J&K are believed to be in Iran. Many students in the past two weeks uploaded SOS videos online, seeking help from the Centre.

## Masks allowed during exams

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Students appearing for their Class X and XII Board Examinations conducted by the Central Board of Secondary Education will be allowed to carry face masks and hand sanitizers into the examination hall to contain the spread of the COVID-19 infection, said a notification. The examinations will conclude by March-end.

## 15,000 infants die in Gujarat in two years

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
AHMEDABAD

In Gujarat's government hospitals, over 15,000 infants died in the Special Newborn Care Units (SNCUs) and health centres in the past two years.

In a reply to questions about the total number of children born in government hospitals by Congress MLAs in the ongoing Budget session of the State Assembly, Deputy Chief Minister and Health Minister Nitin Patel said 1,06,000 infants were born in government hospitals in major cities of the State in 2018 and 2019.

Of this, 71,774 infants were admitted to the SNCUs. Over the period, 15,013 infants died during treatment, which is approximately 21% of the admitted children.

The maximum number of deaths – 4,322 – were reported from Ahmedabad city and district, the largest city and district in the State.

## IIT-M launches probe into hacking of servers

'An e-mail server was down, no data lost'

S. VIJAY KUMAR  
CHENNAI

The Indian Institute of Technology Madras (IIT-M) has launched an investigation into the hacking of one of its servers that resulted in a temporary shutdown of its e-mail services last month.

Confirming that one of its e-mail servers was "down" temporarily, the institution said that the issue was resolved and normalcy restored. "All e-mails on the server are being backed up and no e-mails have been lost. The backup of e-mails will be completed shortly. The cause is being investigated," the IIT-M director's office said on Wednesday.

**Research work**  
Responding to a query on whether the alleged ransomware had targeted and accessed the research work of students, researchers and academicians, the institution said that "no other services were affected".

The media relations divi-

sion chose not to comment on whether a criminal complaint was lodged with any law-enforcing agency.

The issue surfaced after a researcher posted a screenshot of a message he received after logging into the IIT-M server, on social media. The suspected ransomware message claimed that all files were encrypted and to recover them, the data had to be decrypted. The user was asked to send an e-mail to a particular account for the decrypted file that would be made available on payment.

## E-waste recycling has doubled, says Centre

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Centre said it doubled the electronic waste (e-waste) it recycled in 2018-19 over 2017-18, according to a response to a question in the Rajya Sabha this week.

In 2017, the Centre passed the E-Waste Management Rules, which require companies to collect a certain percentage of e-waste generated from their goods once they have reached their "end-of-life".

In FY 2017-18, 7,08,445 tonnes of waste was generated, of which 69,414 tonnes were recycled, compared to 1,64,663 tonnes of recycled waste from 7,71,215 tonnes in FY 2018-19 – meaning a 10% recycling rate in 2017-18 rising to a little over 20% in 2018-19.

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For application Proforma and other details regarding qualification and experience, etc., please refer to [www.nie.gov.in](http://www.nie.gov.in)

## Expedite COVID-19 claims: IRDAI

N. RAVI KUMAR  
HYDERABAD

The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) wants insurers to expeditiously handle hospitalisation claims pertaining to COVID-19.

"Where hospitalisation is covered in a product, insurers shall ensure that the cases related to coronavirus disease (COVID-19) shall be expeditiously handled," the regulator said. On Wednesday, it issued guidelines for handling such claims, which came into immediate effect.

The costs of medical expenses during the course of treatment, including the treatment during quarantine, should be settled in line with the applicable terms and conditions of the policy contract and the extant regulatory framework, general manager (Health), D.V.S. Ramesh said in the circular.

The IRDAI also advised the companies that all the claims ought to be "thoroughly reviewed by the claims review committee before repudiating them."

### IN BRIEF



₹11,096 cr. spent on LCA and Kaveri, says Centre

NEW DELHI  
A total of ₹11,096 crore has been spent till date on the indigenous Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) and the Kaveri jet engine development programmes, the government informed Parliament on Wednesday.

**320 officials retired prematurely since 2014**

NEW DELHI  
The Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions on Wednesday informed the Rajya Sabha that 320 government officials had been given premature retirement since July 2014. The Ministry said that as on February 27, 2020, provisions of the Fundamental Rules FR 56(j)/similar rules had been invoked against 163 Group 'A' officers, including the all-India services officers and 157 Group 'B' officers, from July 2014 till January this year.

### ISRO postpones launch of GISAT-1

BENGALURU  
India on Wednesday postponed the launch of its earth observation satellite "GISAT-1" onboard powerful geosynchronous rocket due to "technical reasons", a day before its scheduled lift-off from Sriharikota in Andhra Pradesh, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) said in a statement. PTI

### Nature of warfare has changed: Gen. Naravane

NEW DELHI  
The nature of warfare has changed, with geostrategic realities being altered without a shot being fired. China's island reclamation in the South China Sea was a prime example, Chief of the Army Staff Gen. Manoj Naravane said on Wednesday. He referred to the Balakot air strike as an example where military escalation could be managed if played with skill.

### Central Electricity Regulatory Commission

4th Floor, Chandrik Building, 36 Janpath, New Delhi-110001  
Phone: 23353503, FAX: 23753923  
**Petition No. 46/TL/2020 Dated: 26.2.2020**  
**NOTICE UNDER CLAUSE (a) OF SUB-SECTION (5) OF SECTION 15 OF THE ELECTRICITY ACT, 2003**  
An application under sub-section (1) of Section 15 of the Electricity Act, 2003 (the Act) has been made by Jam Khambaliya Tansco Limited, C-105, Anand Niketan, New Delhi-110 021 to establish "Transmission System for Jam Khambaliya pooling station for providing connectivity to RE Projects (1500 MW) in Dwarka (Gujarat) and installation of 400/220 KV ICT along with associated bays at M/s CGPL Switchyard" comprising the following elements:  

Sr.	Name of Transmission Element	Completion Target
A) Jam Khambaliya pooling station for providing connectivity to RE projects (1500 MW) in Dwarka (Gujarat)	Establishment of 4x500 MVA, 400/220 KV Jam Khambaliya PS (GIS) • 4x500 MVA, 400/220 KV • 400 KV ICT bays-4 • 220 KV ICT bay-4 • 400 KV line bay-1 (no 400 KV bay from M/s Vaayu) • 220 KV line bay-7 (no of 220 KV bay for future developers) Future provisions: 400/220 KV ICT along with bays: 4 nos. 400 KV line bays: 8 nos. 220 KV line bays: 9 nos. 420 KV bus reactor along with bays: 1 no.	17 months (March, 2021)
1	1x125 MV Ar, 420KV Bus reactor at Jam Khambaliya PS along-with reactor bay • 1x125MVA, 420 KV • 400KV Reactor Bays-1	
B) Interconnection of Jam Khambaliya Pooling Station for providing connectivity to RE projects (1500 MW) in Dwarka (Gujarat)	Extension of Essar-Lakadia/Bhachau 400 KV D/C (triple snowbird) line upto Jam Khambaliya PS	
2	2 nos. of 400 KV line bays at Jam Khambaliya PS for termination of Jam Khambaliya PS-Lakadia 400 KV D/C (triple) line	
3	63MVA switchable Line Reactor at both ends of Lakadia-Jam Khambaliya 400 KV D/C line (triple snowbird) along with 500 Ohms NGR on both circuits & at both ends of Lakadia-Jam Khambaliya 400 KV D/C line • 4x63MVA • 420KV Reactor Bays-4	17 months (March, 2021)
C) Installation of 400/220 KV ICT along with associated bays at M/s CGPL Switchyard	1x500 MVA, 400/220 ICT at CGPL Mundra Switchyard • 1x500 MVA, 400/220 KV • 400KV ICT bay-1 • 220KV ICT bay-1	17 months (March, 2021)
1	The applicant has been selected as the Transmission Service Provider with the lowest levelized transmission charges of Rs. 336.68 million per annum on the basis of the competitive bidding carried out by REC Transmission Projects Company Limited in accordance with the Guidelines issued by the Central Govt. under Section 63 of the Act.	
3	The Central Transmission Utility has recommended for grant of transmission licence to the applicant to establish the proposed transmission system.	
4	Based on material available on record, the Commission vide order dated 24.2.2020 in Petition No. 46/TL/2020, has proposed to issue transmission licence to the applicant for establishing the transmission system as noted in para 1 above.	
5	A copy of the application, along with its annexures and enclosures, made by the applicant for grant of inter-State transmission licence to Jam Khambaliya Tansco Limited before the Commission can be accessed at the website <a href="http://www.adanitransmission.com">www.adanitransmission.com</a> or inspected by any person in the Commission's office by following the laid down procedure.	
6	Notice is hereby given in pursuance of clause (a) of sub-section (5) of Section 15 of the Act that suggestions or objections, if any, to the Commission's proposal to grant transmission licence to the applicant, as aforesaid, be sent to the undersigned by 16.3.2020 at the above noted address. The suggestions or objections received after the specified date shall not be considered.	
7	The application shall be taken up for further hearing by the Commission on 19.3.2020. Any person who files suggestions or objections may in his/her discretion attend the hearing, for which no TA/DA shall be paid by the Commission.	

## Sengar convicted in two other cases

He was found guilty in the death of victim's father

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI



K



## Rights or wrong?

UN body's CAA move may be unwarranted, but govt. must abide by its equal protection duty

The application on behalf of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, seeking to be heard as *amicus curiae* in the pending litigation in the Supreme Court against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019, is undoubtedly an unusual step. As expected, the government sees it as unwarranted interference. It does appear that the move is unnecessary as the global human rights perspective that High Commissioner Michelle Bachelet Jiria hopes to present is most likely to be raised by some of the petitioners themselves. After all, most of the 140-odd petitions argue that the CAA fails to extend the equal protection of law to all immigrants in the country. But, to be fair, the High Commissioner is not seeking to be a petitioner. On the contrary, she is offering the undoubted expertise that the premier UN body possesses in aid of the Court. She has appreciated the amendment's positive side, noting its potential to redress the "irregular" condition of some migrants through a quicker citizenship process. It must be noted that the Court has relied on principles contained in international legal instruments in some of its judgments. The moot question is whether the UN High Commissioner ought to be given an opportunity to assist the Court in the matter, or whether, even without such assistance, the Court will countenance arguments based on the salutary provisions of international conventions that India is a party to. Needless to say, the *amicus* brief may not be necessary in the latter situation.

The Modi government may be unhappy with the UN rights body's "overreach", but it will have to be underscored that the CAA's flawed structure and the aggressive manner in which it was initially linked with a post-implementation exercise to purge the country of illegal immigrants have contributed to the present situation. The political Opposition, sections of the legal fraternity, academics and commentators have made a strong case that making religion a factor to include certain categories for a fast-tracked naturalisation process is violative of secular principles. The government's stout defence of the CAA is that no current Indian citizen would be affected, and that it was meant to help persecuted minorities in countries where Islam was the state religion. In addition to having to discharge the burden of proving that the CAA does not contravene the Constitution, the government would have to demonstrate that it is not in violation of provisions of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Ms. Bachelet's application marshals significant aspects of global humanitarian law to buttress her point. The Court may probably not take her assistance, but there is little doubt that the Centre cannot evade its obligation to enact non-discriminatory legislation, grant all migrants equal protection and abide by the non-derogable principle of non-refoulement.

## Advantage Bibi

Another term for Netanyahu bodes ill for West Asia and Palestinians

No bloc managed to win a clear majority in Monday's Israeli parliamentary election, the third in 12 months, but Prime Minister Netanyahu has emerged the clear leader to bid for government formation. When 99% of the votes were counted, his Likud party won 36 seats, while its rival, former General Benny Gantz's Blue and White got 33. The Prime Minister's right-religious coalition, which includes Shas, United Torah Judaism and Yamina, has 58 seats, three short of a majority in the 120-member Knesset. Yisrael Beiteinu, led by secular nationalist Avigdor Lieberman - kingmaker after the last two polls but who chose not to support any side - got 7 seats. For Mr. Netanyahu, this was a referendum of sorts. If he fought the last two polls under the threat of being charged for corruption, this time he had already been charged. He is expected to appear in court later this month. Still, Likud improved its tally from 32 in September to 36 now. While Mr. Netanyahu, as leader of the largest party and the coalition, is expected to be invited to form the government, it will not be easy for him to prove a majority in Parliament. Mr. Gantz has ruled out a unity government under Mr. Netanyahu's leadership. Mr. Lieberman too has dismissed joining the Likud coalition, not wanting to share power with the bloc's Jewish religious parties. The Joint List, the coalition of Arab parties, has won 15 seats, but Israel's mainstream Zionist parties will not have any tie-up with them.

Despite these challenges, there are two factors favouring Mr. Netanyahu. One, unlike the September election in which Mr. Gantz's party got more seats, this time only Mr. Netanyahu is in the race to form the government. It is either a Likud government or a fourth poll. Second, after three back-to-back elections, some rival lawmakers could actually back Mr. Netanyahu's claim to avoid another round of polling. Likud leaders have already signalled that their coalition would prove a majority in the Knesset with dissenters' votes. While Mr. Netanyahu remains the only option for providing Israel a stable government, his return to power with a majority could spell more trouble for the Palestinians. The peace process has been stalled for years. The Palestinians have rejected the U.S.'s peace plan, which they say favours the Israeli positions. During the campaign, Mr. Netanyahu had pledged to annex Jewish settlements on the Palestinian West Bank. If his coalition returns to power with a clear majority, he is likely to press ahead with the annexation, deepening the crisis. If he fails to win the vote of confidence, Israel will go to another election and during the campaign, Mr. Netanyahu and his allies will step up their right-wing agenda and attacks on the Palestinians, like they did during the last two campaigns. Either way, troubled times lie ahead for the region.

# The sum and substance of the Afghan deal

The United States is on its way out and this does not ensure peace for the people of Afghanistan



RAKESH SOOD

The long-awaited deal between the United States and the Taliban was finally signed in Doha last Saturday by U.S. Special Envoy Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad and former Taliban deputy leader Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar. On the same day, U.S. Defence Secretary Mark Esper visited Kabul to conclude the Joint Declaration for Bringing Peace to Afghanistan between the two governments. Gaps and inconsistencies between the two only add to the confusion. But two facts are clear. The U.S. is on its way out and second, this does not ensure peace for the Afghan people. As former U.S. Defence Secretary General Mattis put it, "The U.S. doesn't lose wars, it loses interest." But since a major power cannot be seen to be losing a war, certainly not in an election year, a re-labelling of the withdrawal becomes necessary.

### Shades of Vietnam

Nearly a half century ago, U.S. President Richard Nixon had faced a similar dilemma. With more than half-a-million U.S. soldiers deployed in Vietnam, it was clear that a military solution was out of question. Seeking an exit, his National Security Adviser Henry Kissinger, during his secret visit to Beijing in July 1971, assured Premier Zhou Enlai that the U.S. was prepared to withdraw completely from Vietnam in return for release of U.S. prisoners of war and a ceasefire lasting "a decent interval". Kissinger and Nixon knew that the deal would leave their ally, the

South Vietnamese government led by President Thieu, vulnerable. In declassified 1972 White House tapes, Nixon and Kissinger acknowledge that "South Vietnam is not going to survive and the idea is to find a formula that can hold things together for a year or two". The ploy worked.

Nixon was re-elected with a record margin in November 1972 on the platform that peace was at hand. In January 1973, the Paris Peace Accords were signed, and by end March, the U.S. had completed its withdrawal ending direct military involvement. U.S. prisoners of war were released but by end-1973, the ceasefire was in tatters. Saigon fell to the North Vietnamese forces on April 30, 1975. Approximately 20,000 U.S. soldiers died during 1972-73 (Nixon cemented the understanding during his visit to China in February 1972) and 80,000 South Vietnamese soldiers died after the collapse of the ceasefire, following the decent interval. To win his re-election, Nixon had promised an honourable peace and delivered a delayed defeat, but by then the world had moved on. Dr. Kissinger won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1973 (joint winner). The secret assurances of 1971-72 only surfaced after four decades.

Mr. Khalilzad is no stranger to Washington politics having served in Republican administrations since the Reagan era. He understood his job perfectly when Secretary Pompeo appointed him the Special Envoy for Afghan Reconciliation in September 2018. An Afghan by birth (he came to the U.S. in his teens) and having served as U.S. Ambassador in Afghanistan, he knew full well that he was not negotiating an Afghan peace deal; he was negotiating a "managed" U.S. exit. The time line too was clear. U.S. President Donald Trump had repeatedly de-



clared that "great nations do not fight endless wars"; his re-election is due in the fall of 2020.

### The road to Doha

Mr. Trump's 2017 policy aimed at breaking the military stalemate in Afghanistan by authorising an additional number of up to 5,000 soldiers, giving U.S. forces a freer hand to go after the Taliban, putting Pakistan on notice and strengthening Afghan capabilities. Within a year, it was clear that the policy was not working because no insurgency can be defeated as long as it enjoys safe havens and secure sanctuaries. Pakistan's help was necessary to get the Taliban to the negotiating table.

A three-way negotiation ensued. First was the Doha track with the Taliban; a second was with Islamabad/Rawalpindi and the third was with Kabul to ensure that the Afghan government would accept the outcome. The dice was loaded because Taliban and Pakistan negotiated as a team. Within six months, they had whitewashed down Mr. Khalilzad's four objectives: a ceasefire, an intra-Afghan peace dialogue, cutting ties with terrorist organisations such as al-Qaeda, and finally, U.S. troop withdrawal – to just the last one, with some palliatives regarding the third.

The deal was ready to be signed last September when Mr. Trump abruptly called it off, stalling the process. National Security Adviser John Bolton's dismissal (he was op-

posed) and the release of three high-level Taliban militants including Anas Haqqani (Sirajuddin Haqqani's brother) in November helped smoothen issues.

The key features of the Doha deal are: i) U.S. troops to be reduced from the current 14,000 to 8,600 by June 15 (in 135 days); ii) withdrawal of all remaining U.S. and foreign forces by April 29, 2021 (in 14 months); iii) Removal of the Taliban from UN Security Council sanctions list by May 29; iv) Up to 5,000 Taliban prisoners and 1,000 Afghan security forces prisoners to be released from Afghan and Taliban custody respectively by March 10; v) U.S. sanctions against Taliban leaders to be lifted by August 27; vi) intra-Afghan talks to begin on March 10.

### Whither Afghanistan?

Nothing reflects the fragility of the deal signed between the U.S. and the Taliban in Doha better than the title: "Agreement for Bringing Peace to Afghanistan between the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan which is not recognised by the United States as a state and is known as the Taliban and the United States of America". This is repeated more than a dozen times in the agreement. Ironically, the U.S. has committed to getting UN Security Council endorsement for the deal with an entity that it does not recognise.

The leader of the Haqqani network and the number two of the Taliban, Sirajuddin Haqqani, who recently wrote an op-ed in *The New York Times*, remains on the U.S.'s wanted list with a reward of \$10-million for information leading to his capture or death. This hardly squares with the notion that the Taliban is now a U.S. counter-terrorism partner against the Islamic State.

The Kabul Declaration states that Afghan government will "par-

ticipate in US facilitated discussion with Taliban on CBMs, to include determining the feasibility of releasing significant number of prisoners on both sides". There is no reference to numbers to be released or a deadline of March 10 linking it to commencing intra-Afghan talks, as in the Doha deal. No wonder President Ghani angrily declared a day later that release of prisoners will be part of the agenda for the intra-Afghan talks, provoking the Taliban to declare that the truce would no longer cover Afghan security forces, creating the first of many obstacles ahead.

There is no mention of what will happen to the Taliban fighters whose numbers have suddenly inflated from earlier range of 30,000 to 50,000 to 60,000 to 1,50,000. Are they to be disarmed and demobilised, prepared for civilian life or integrated with the Afghan security forces? Who is expected to provide stipends to those opting for peace? Mr. Trump maintains that it is "time that the war on terror is fought by someone else" so it will not be the U.S.. The U.S. has described itself as a "facilitator", a responsibility that it will be glad to share with others.

The idea of a ceasefire, which is normally the starting point for any peace process, has been made an outcome of the intra-Afghan dialogue, together with a political road map for the future, but without any time frame. There is no reference to preserving the gains of the last 18 years and with the Taliban intent on reviving the Islamic Emirate, the shape of things is clear.

Remember the duck test – if it looks like a duck, walks like a duck and quacks like a duck, it probably is a duck.

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

## Dark tales in Andhra Pradesh's IIT success story

A study on secondary education in the State shows coaching starts too early amid immense pressure on students



RASHMI SHARMA

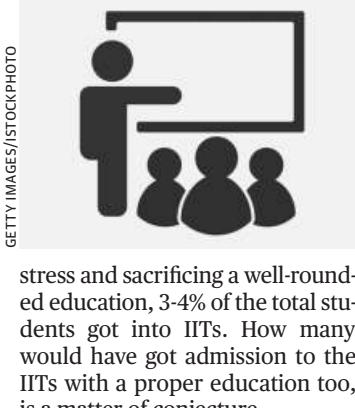
As the examination season rolls in, nearly 1.5 crore students in India prepare to sit for the board examinations. They are more fortunate than nearly half their cohorts, who will never get to that stage. Among the happiest students will be those who will get admission to the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs), and among the States, the largest number will be from Andhra Pradesh (AP). Subsequently, many will earn the kind of money that they, and their families, may not even be aware of.

But underlying these grand successes is an ugly story, which emerged during a study on secondary education I conducted in AP in 2018-19. The State owes its distinction in producing the largest number of IIT entrants to two major chains of 'corporate schools', which focus on preparing students for the IIT, and failing that, other engineering colleges. These schools had initially been established for Classes XI and XII, but now cover the whole school cycle. Many are residential schools.

Ignoring the children's learning

stages, the schools have distorted the curriculum. A principal of a corporate school revealed that coaching for the IIT examination began as early as Class VI. The school focused on physics, math and chemistry, while the mother tongue and social sciences were sidelined. Further, as the school had to 'complete' the syllabus prescribed by the State government along with IIT coaching, the syllabi for Classes XI and XII was taught from Class VI onwards too, with 10% of the syllabus being 'covered' each year. During interviews, government officials and teachers said that students in such schools did little or no physical or extra-curricular activities, and got little rest.

The pressure on students was enormous. As per the principal, students were divided into three 'levels' according to ability, and taught separately. There were fortnightly exams and cumulative exams every month, and students were re-allotted to different levels after the latter. The atmosphere was very competitive. The school hours stretched up to nine hours or more, and there were few holidays. There were several cases of student suicides each year, usually following a demotion in the 'level'. As per the principal, around 20% students were placed at the top level, and of them 15-20% were likely to get admission to the IITs. In other words, after a high level of



stress and sacrificing a well-rounded education, 3-4% of the total students got into IITs. How many would have got admission to the IITs with a proper education too, is a matter of conjecture.

### A childhood lost

All the students in such schools lost the chance to be children, explore and grow, develop their special talents, and form their unique identity.

But for those who did not get admission to engineering colleges, the loss was manifold. They got little support in the school, as the best teachers were deployed to teach the top-level students. Reportedly, the students in the bottom layer were pejoratively called 'patrons' by the management, as their parents paid high fees, while their chances of getting into an engineering college were negligible.

Behind this story of lost childhoods, and for many students, lost career opportunities too, lay corporate greed and state failure. Corporate greed was visible in aggressive campaigns to enrol students. Teachers at a government school

said private school representatives came to the school in January, made lists of good students, contacted parents, and encouraged students to join. An individual who once worked in a corporate school reported that teachers were given targets to enrol students and collect fees, and their salary was withheld if they did not meet them. Norms regarding minimum infrastructure, such as space, sanitation, play-grounds, fire safety etc. were flouted. The maximum fees a school was allowed to charge was ₹4,000 per year, but corporate schools charged extra as coaching fees and for facilities, adjusting the fees to the paying capacity of the area.

### In cahoots with government

Government officials, teacher educators, and even panchayat representatives interviewed were aware that the educational practices of corporate schools were questionable, and that they fooled and exploited students and parents. However, regulating such schools was beyond the capacity of the government system. One, at inter-college, or the Classes XI and XII stage, where corporate schools first began, the number of government educational institutions was inadequate. Two, the manpower available for regulation was deficient. At the district level, the senior-most principal of government inter colleges was designated the

Regional Inspection Officer (RIO), and was responsible for regulating private schools, in addition to his existing duties. Moreover, because of a lack of manpower, some RIOs had charge of more than one inter-college. For Classes IX and X, education officials remained busy with government schools, and had little time to inspect private schools.

Three, the corporate school management exercised considerable influence at the very top levels of government. They were reported to contribute funds during elections, and some had begun political careers themselves. Officials described several instances of political pressure to prevent action against corporate schools. So much so that representatives of small private schools complained that the government favoured corporate schools and discriminated against them. Not surprisingly, little effort had been made to inform people about the problems with corporate schools.

This nasty tale of state collusion with uncaring profit-makers remains hidden as the faces of successful entrants of IITs stare at us from newspaper advertisements every year.

Rashmi Sharma is Senior Visiting Fellow, Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations (ICRIER) and a former Indian Administrative Service Officer

## 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.

### UN body on CAA

The step by the Geneva-based Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), of planning to move the Supreme Court on the Citizenship (Amendment) Act is a blatant case of 'overreach' (Page 1, March 4). As the External Affairs Ministry has said, the CAA is an internal matter. If the OHCHR is genuinely concerned about rights, it can cast its net outside – its very first priority should be to stop the inhuman treatment being meted out to the Palestinians by Israel for years. The UN would do well to remember that Palestinians are stateless people and their hardships and travails are quite unlikely to end in the foreseeable future.

C.G. KURIAKOSE,  
Kothamangalam, Kerala

With due respect to the OHCHR official and her quest to protect all human rights for all people", I would like to ask her a few questions:

Where was the OHCHR and its concern for human rights when countries were being ravaged and generations of people continue to suffer in Syria, Yemen, Iraq, Libya or even in nearby Afghanistan? Has the OHCHR ensured accountability when a few powerful nations were unilaterally bombing these countries including civilian institutions? Where was the OHCHR when much of Europe refused to accept dingsies of immigrants fleeing persecution and war and left them adrift in the high seas? Why has the OHCHR never spoken out against countries in West Asia that deny citizenship but also residency rights to outsiders? Even without

these analogies, India is a sovereign nation and is well within its rights to legislate on internal matters.

T. NAGARAJAN,  
Thiruvananthapuram

While there may be much argument about how right the move is from a legal angle, the point is that it has dented the image and prestige of India on the international stage. Already nations such as Malaysia, Turkey, Iran, the United States (some leaders) and the European Parliament have expressed their concerns over the CAA.

D. SETHURAMAN,

Chennai

### Reservation issue

There is no denying the fact that reservation has helped

in the uplift of the Backward Classes and Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Editorial page, "A blow against social justice", March 4).

There is the other side to this too. There is a conspicuously inadequate representation of SCs and STs in the higher echelons of government services and judiciary as well. We all agree that the caste system is a sort of social evil that creates social hierarchy and divisions in society.

We make efforts to fight the discrimination created by the caste system – reservation is a tool for the same – but do nothing to get rid of the caste system itself.

It has been 70 years since the adoption of the policy of reservation and I feel it is time to get rid of the caste system. It would be a very difficult task especially having been a social system

in place for long. Having served as the basis for several social, economic and political activities, it would be difficult for it to be dropped overnight using legislation.

Nonetheless, it is time that we at least start asking ourselves: Can we do it? If yes, then how?

ANAMICA BHARTIYA,  
Patna

# What Kejriwal should have done

The Delhi Chief Minister's lack of response and status quo-ist stance led to further spread of violence



ANNE ZAIDI

That we should be at a loss for words is understandable. It should be no surprise if ordinary citizens were struck dumb by the brazenness with which the violence in Delhi was instigated, then perpetrated, and the participation – active or passive -- by those who are sworn to protect us. However, there is little explanation for the verbal caution exercised by those who claim to represent citizens – MLAs and MPs, foremost among them Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal.

It was on the strength of the word, after all, that they rode into power. They gave tongue to promises of battling corruption. They know how to frame services – water, electricity, education, women's safety – as a matter of rights. They are not ignorant of what ails us, or what the remedies might be. How, then, should we interpret the lassitude of the political response in Delhi?

#### How they failed to act

On the strength of the same tongue, Mr. Kejriwal could have prevented or minimised the loss of life and property in Delhi. When politicians affiliated with rival parties were making threats, he could have activated his cadre and motivated them to stand guard. Hours after goons were reported burning parts of northeast Delhi, he remained silent. He could have stepped in, with the security that is due to him as Chief Minister. It was inevitable that the violence would reude. If the police refused to listen, his Ministers could have organised citizen patrols. They have the support of millions, after all. If even one per cent of these supporters had been encouraged to organise themselves into patrol groups, the violence would have been contained.

If he could not do even this, Mr. Kejriwal could have made a speech in any public spot that was not on fire – perhaps during that infamous visit to Mahatma Gandhi's memorial? He could have said that citizens have the



Policemen standing in front of vandalised shops following clashes in Bhajanpura, Delhi, on February 24. ■ AFP

right to work hard to improve their own economic status without having their homes set on fire merely because they followed a particular religion. He could have said that peaceful protest is an inalienable democratic right. If he had said it before, or even after winning the State Assembly, it may have given pause to millions of people who were being told repeatedly that protesters deserved to be attacked simply for opposing the policies of the Central government. After all, Mr. Kejriwal himself has, in the past, done everything in his power to topple those elected to Parliament.

**Speaking up for the oppressed**  
When he saw footage of CCTV cameras being smashed to prevent the recording of evidence while students were attacked in libraries, he could have said that his government would, anyhow, make sure that the guilty were punished. He could have said that his government would ensure that mosques are re-built, and that interfaith meetings will be held every single day until the community can find its way back to harmony. He could say, even now, that we must resist ghettoisation, for it can only lead to a greater gulf between communities. He could say that ghettoisation is not just the outcome but the purpose of such violence, that it is venom in the body of our republic.

He could say to doctors: treat riot victims gently, and do post mortems honestly. He could say to teachers: counsel children so that they may not be drawn to future acts of violence, and may learn not to discriminate. He could say to members of Residents' Welfare Associations: for India's sake, stop discriminating. He could even ask that meetings be conducted in every colony to discuss the imperative of citizenship, and understand why so many Indians are feeling vulnerable.

There is a long list of things that need saying, urgently, but beyond taciturn appeals for peace – and those worded in miserly fashion – nothing has been said or done that demonstrates true leadership. The crisis in Delhi, and all over India, is that our leaders appear to think that their role is limited to winning elections. When they speak, they weigh their words against the weight of public opinion. They act as if they were a mirror for potential voters, however ill-informed, self-serving, narrow-minded the latter be.

The notion that a leader is someone who 'leads', in thought and in deed, seems to have collapsed. There is no Gandhi or Nehru, Ram Manohar Lohia or Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi – men willing to risk the displeasure of caste groups, their own party members, or the fury of a mob. There is no Amrit Kaur or Aruna Asaf

Ali either. Can we imagine that any one of these leaders would have sat around tweeting 'peace' during last week's events in Delhi? Would they have drawn a polite curtain of silence over the behaviour of the police force?

#### Failing to walk the talk

A leader is not a status quoist. A leader gives direction to public morality, gives voice and shape to new ideas that challenge an ailing system. In India, the only leadership in evidence lately has been to the far right of the political spectrum. There, we see leaders, some of them voicing dangerous ideas that run counter to democratic values like equality and freedom of speech. The parties belonging to the rest of the spectrum, including broadly centrist parties like the Congress, have watched, waiting to see whether or not voters buy into the rhetoric, and often followed suit instead of leading in a different direction.

Those who claim to be leaders of a new sort of politics are not leading people into the sunshine of universal love and brotherhood. They are not leading any marches. They are not going door to door, demanding that people give up hate. They are not writing to their voters, explaining the dangers posed by legalised inequity, reminding them of the world's history of apartheid, of racism and resistance. They are not acting on reports that document widespread bigotry in the police force, so they may challenge and address it through institutional means. Instead, they are repeating exhausted tropes such as demanding answers in Parliament, when it is already clear that it does not help stem violence.

Therefore here we are, stuck with a polity where electricity may be cheap, but acid is freely available for use against dissenting students and religious minorities; where CCTVs stand agast and rioters record their own crimes on high resolution mobile phone cameras; where data packages are cheaper than books and online rape threats abound; where the bodies of murder victims lie rotting in drains in the national capital and citizens are encouraged to take pride in a clean India.

Anne Zaidi is a writer of essays, stories, poems and scripts for stage and screen

# Trump 2.0 may see more slash-and-burn unilateralism

India should be prepared for more arbitrary duties

#### SOURABH GUPTA

Not since Richard Nixon's 24-hour state visit 50 years ago has a U.S. President spent as little time on Indian soil as Donald Trump did.

During that first term in office, Nixon had proceeded to throw the international monetary order under the bus – tearing down the gold-dollar link that had sustained the Bretton Woods system. With equal alacrity, Mr. Trump has gone about gutting the international trading order with his beggar-thy-neighbour mercantilism and flagrant disregard for multilateral trade law. Given India's post-1990 globalising reforms and the imperative for an enabling and development-friendly external environment, the country will find it hard to escape unscathed.

The government has already, fleetingly, been burnt by Mr. Trump's slash-and-burn unilateralism. In March 2018, 'national security' tariffs of 25% and 10% were imposed on \$1.01 billion worth of Indian steel and aluminium exports, respectively.

#### 'National security' claim

This use of Section 232(b)-based 'national security' authority was clearly at odds with WTO/GATT law, which requires that such action be "taken in time of war or other emergency in international relations" and should touch upon the member state's "essential security interests." The tariffs were followed by New Delhi's eviction from the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) programme in June 2019 – in turn, affecting an additional \$5.7 billion of exports.

In December 2019, Mr. Trump took his wrecking ball to Geneva, incapacitating the World Trade Organization's (WTO) dispute settlement function. As a result, a successful Indian challenge against the U.S.'s imposition of countervailing duties against Indian steel exports, which was pending a final compliance panel appeal, has now been kicked into the long grass. With the U.S. Commerce Department recently publishing a new – and wildly WTO non-complaint – regulation that treats an undervalued currency as a countervail-

able subsidy, more such arbitrarily arrogated duties on Indian primary goods exports can be expected.

On February 10, at the same time as the White House was announcing Mr. Trump's visit, the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) was stripping India of its 'developing country' classification for 'special and differentiated treatment' purposes. A U.S.-European Union-Japan-led effort is currently underway to introduce stark new industrial subsidies and technology transfer disciplines that will inevitably crimp India's development policy space – even as the trio luxuriate in multi-billion-dollar trade distorting agricultural subsidies.

**More punitive action**  
"We can have a trade deal with India, but I'm saving the big deal for later on ... we're not treated well by India, but I happen to like Prime Minister Modi a lot." Similar words were uttered by Mr. Trump prior to his Section 301 exaction on China. It matters not to Washington that these unilateral 301 duties violate the very first two articles of WTO/GATT law.

With WTO dispute settlement having been disembowelled, should Mr. Trump get re-elected, the Narendra Modi government could well be staring at punitive Section 301 action. It has escaped the Section 301 dragnet during Mr. Trump's first term – despite the USTR's inclinations, owing to the agency's lack of time and bandwidth. The government may not be as fortunate next time. It must brace for its consequences and craft next moves wisely.

In addition to winnowing the bilateral trade deficit, Commerce Ministry mandarins would be well-advised to thumb through the intellectual property, technology transfer, financial services and agricultural biotechnology product approvals-related chapters of the U.S.-China Phase One agreement.

Sourabh Gupta is a senior fellow at the Institute for China-America Studies in Washington, D.C.

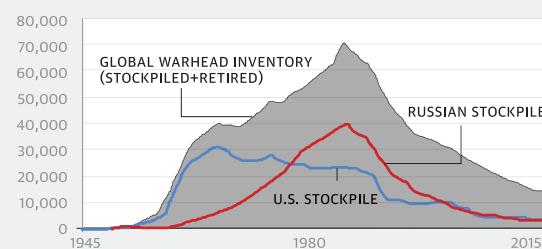


#### DATA POINT

## Nuclear race, slow but steady

The Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons Treaty which became effective on March 5, 1970 has achieved much in the last 50 years, though the pace of change has dwindled recently. The initial progress was rapid, reducing the nuclear weapons in the world by around 90% from Cold War levels, but the final goal of complete disarmament is not on the horizon

**AT A LESSER PACE** | The number of nuclear weapons declined rapidly from the Cold War peak of 70,300 nuclear warheads in 1986 to around 14,000 as of mid-2019. But the rate of reduction has been progressively slowing in the past 25 years. The graph plots estimated global nuclear warhead inventories



**THE NINE NATIONS** | Notwithstanding the former U.S. President John F. Kennedy's prediction that by 1975, there will be 10 to 20 nuclear states, the NPT has helped confine the count to nine. The map plots the number of estimated warheads possessed by these countries as of mid-2019.

■ The U.S., Russia, and the U.K. are reducing their inventories, France and Israel have relatively stable inventories, while China, Pakistan, India, and North Korea are increasing their warheads

# Caught in a bureaucratic web

For Assam residents, the process became the punishment while proving citizenship before courts and tribunals



LEAH VERGHESE &amp; SHRUTHI NAIK

The Gauhati High Court declared Sahijuddin a foreigner on November 13, 2015. He had appealed to the High Court against an ex parte order of the Foreigners Tribunal in Kokrajhar declaring him a foreigner. Mr. Sahijuddin was too poor to afford the services of a lawyer and was not represented before the Tribunal. The High Court found this reason unconvincing and stripped him of his citizenship without even examining the documents he possessed. Mr. Sahijuddin is one of 1.17 lakh people who were declared foreigners by Foreigners Tribunals (as on March 31, 2019), quasi-judicial bodies in Assam that decide questions of citizenship.

In this article, the authors discuss the problems with how appeals from Foreigners Tribunals cases are decided by the Gauhati High Court, based on an analysis of 787 such orders and judgments between 2010 and 2019.

Of the cases analysed, 41% of the appeals were from Morigaon, Barpeta, and Goalpara, none of which share a border with Bangladesh. Around 35% of these appeals were from ex parte orders of Foreigners Tribunals i.e., without hearing the person accused of being a foreigner.

#### Ex-parte judgments

Unlike Mr. Sahijuddin, when Bhanu Biswas received a notice, he hired a lawyer and provided him with all the necessary documentation to prove his Indian citizenship before the Foreigners Tribunal. Mr. Biswas stopped following up with his lawyer after 2009. When the police came to his house to take him to a detention camp in May 2011, Mr. Biswas realised he had been declared a 'foreigner' through an ex-parte judgment in 2003. In a further twist, Mr. Biswas found out that his lawyer had died sometime in the two years prior to his arrest. He was subsequently declared a foreigner by the Gauhati High Court on September 22, 2015.

The burden of proof under the Foreigners Act, 1946 is on the person accused of being a foreigner. If the person accused does not appear before the Tribunal, they will be declared a foreigner without the state having to prove their case. In 99% of the appeals from ex parte orders of the Foreigners Tribunals, the High Court agreed with the findings of the Tribunals. All the persons who appealed to the High Court had some form of docu-

mentation. Around 61% of them produced electoral rolls and 39% of them produced permanent residence certificates/certificates from the panchayat. In 66% of the cases, the Foreigners Tribunals found the documentation unsatisfactory. In 38% of the cases, documentation was rejected because spellings did not match and in 71% of them, the secondary evidence was deemed inadmissible. This means that where people had produced copies of documents, these were not certified copies or the person who had created the document could not certify its contents.

The process is particularly harsh on women. Women who do not have birth certificates and get married before registering as voters do not have any document linking them to their parents. The Supreme Court in *Rupjan Begum vs. Union of India* allowed a certificate from the gram panchayat secretary to be submitted as a link document to prove descent from a person who entered India before March 24, 1971. However, wherever this certificate is produced as evidence, the gram panchayat secretary needs to testify in person. This standard of proof is quite difficult to meet, given that gram panchayat secretaries change over time. In 99% of the cases where such a document was produced, the person was declared a foreigner.

#### Detention and deportation

Overall, in 97% of the appeals before the High Court, the person was declared a foreigner. In 15% of these cases, the High Court ordered deportation. Amongst the remaining cases, in 1%, the Court ordered that the person be sent to a detention centre, and in 80% of the cases, the Court did not specify what steps were to be taken. In a majority of cases, the High Court instructed the Border Police or the Foreigners Tribunal to "do the needful." It is not clear what the Border Police or Foreigners Tribunals did thereafter. Although the Foreigners Act provides for a range of non-custodial options such as restrictions on residence, the prohibition of certain kinds of work, etc., the High Court appears to prefer detention and deportation.

The question of citizenship is nestled in a confusing tangle of documents, bureaucracy, and legal procedures which Foreigners Tribunals and the Gauhati High Court are tasked with resolving. In doing so, courts need to avoid an overly legalistic approach which ignores fundamental contradictions between lived experiences of identity documentation and evidentiary requirements.

Leah Verghese and Shruthi Naik are with DAKSH, a nonprofit based in Bengaluru. The authors would like to thank their interns, Sahana R, Tanya Reddy, and Rasmiika Punnoose for their assistance

#### The Hindu

#### FROM THE ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO MARCH 5, 1970

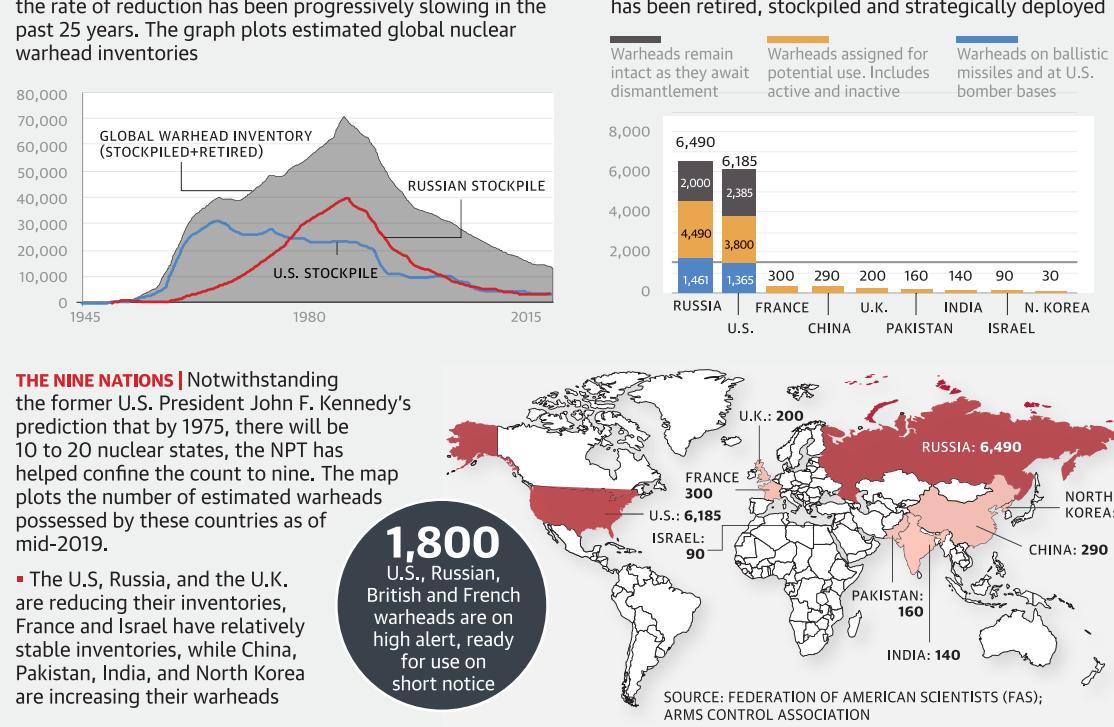
DMK amendment on Hindi rejected

The D.M.K. group's amendment to the motion of thanks to the President was defeated by the Lok Sabha to-day [March 4] by 178 votes to 20, with 4 abstentions. The amendment sought deletion of the constitutional provision for official status to Hindi. The rejection of the amendment has not caused so much surprise as the meagre votes it secured. Although the D.M.K. group's amendment was rejected, the party's leaders here seem to feel that they have gained a point in the propaganda war between the D.M.K. and the Organisation Congress in Tamil Nadu. They gave enough indication that the absence of Mr. Kamaraj and the other two members of his party from Tamil Nadu in the House on this occasion would be fully exploited in their propaganda against the Organisation Congress in Tamil Nadu. The rejection of the D.M.K. amendment was the subject of conversation among M.P.s in the Central Hall of Parliament. It is the view of a section that the D.M.K. has damaged its chief cause and not gained. Protagonists of Hindi are claiming that the voting figures have conclusively proved that not more than 20 members in the Lok Sabha would like Hindi to be removed from its present position as the official language of the nation.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO MARCH 5, 1920

Study of English.

Among the beneficial results that have accrued as the consequence of India's contact with England, the study of English language and literature should be assigned a very big place. It opened up to us a new world of thought and feeling of the freedom loving western mind. It inspired our young and ardent minds to new forms of literary creation and roused a healthy enthusiasm for social and political ideals of a liberal kind. It has afforded articulate India a common press and platform and has been the means of bringing us into close touch with the outside world in trade and commerce and in the fields of scientific research and industry. That most of the educated Indians have received a bilingual education has been fruitful of immense good in the past. At what stage should the study of English commence? It can be laid down as a sound principle that a child should be introduced to the study of a foreign language only after it has received a good training in the use of mother tongue, at least for the first four or five years at school. If English is begun when the children are about ten years old, they would be able to pick it up easily.



FROM PAGE ONE



**Keeping safe:** Workers sporting masks at a medical shop in New Delhi on Wednesday. ■ SANDEEP SAXENA

## COVID-19 cases rise to 29 in India

The Minister said the government would open a laboratory in Iran so that Indians there could be tested for possible exposure to coronavirus before being brought back. An estimated 1,200 Indians, mostly students and pilgrims, are now in Iran. "If the Iranian government lends its support, a testing facility could be set up there as well, so that Indians there can be tested before they can be brought back," he said.

Urging the people to avoid crowded places, Mr. Vardhan said there was no shortage of personal protection gear. "We have ensured that the export of N-95 masks and personal protective equipment is banned... The Ministry has taken adequate measures to ensure that there is no scarcity."

Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister P.K. Mishra chaired an inter-ministerial meeting to review the preparedness.

## SC asks HC to list Delhi riots cases on March 6

"We want to see if peace is possible," Chief Justice Bobde reasoned.

At one point during the hearing, before the decision to revert the petitions to the High Court was made, Justice Bobde took on Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Delhi police.

When Mr. Mehta submitted that the situation in Delhi was presently calm, he asked why FIRs could not be registered immediately. "You had earlier said the atmosphere is not conducive... If it is calm now, there will not be a problem to register the FIRs" he told Mr. Mehta.

### SG's contention

The top law officer countered that the registration of FIRs and arrest of leaders of communities might lead to a flare-up. The CJI persisted, saying, "There may not be a flare-up if the police arrest leaders from both sides... FIRs, after all, do not prejudice anybody's rights. Registration of an FIR does

needed. "Currently, we have 15 laboratories in India which are conducting tests for coronavirus, 19 more laboratories are being established," he said.

Chief Minister Kamal Nath said the BJP was making repeated attempts to destabilise the government. "With the money power of the mafia, it has been planning to come to power in an undemocratic way. Land mafia, organised crime mafia and

spurious drugs mafia had all flourished under the 15-year rule of the BJP. Freeing Madhya Pradesh from them didn't go down well with the BJP," he said.

Mr. Nath said the BJP had "murdered" democratic and constitutional principles in Karnataka, Maharashtra, Haryana and Goa. It now wanted to do that in Madhya Pradesh. "We have full confidence in our MLAs, and don't doubt their allegiance and honesty. Black money

earned through corruption and scams has come out in the open, and the BJP's conspiracies will come to naught," he said.

Senior leader from the State Jyotiraditya Scindia told *The Hindu* that there was no threat to the Congress government in the State. "It is all under control and we are all together," he said.

The Congress, which holds 114 Assembly seats,

claims this is the fourth failed attempt by the BJP, which has 107 seats, to subvert its government that is supported by all the four Independents, a suspended and a sitting BSP MLA and the lone SP MLA.

On establishing contact with two MLAs, senior Congress leader Digvijaya Singh's son Jaivardhan Singh and State Higher Education Minister Jitu Patwari reached the hotel in Haryana past midnight, where they were refused entry allegedly by

## SC frees trade in cryptocurrencies

Besides, the court found that the RBI did not consider the availability of alternatives before issuing the circular.

Again, the April, 2018 circular was issued despite the fact that the central bank could not cite a single instance in which VC exchanges "actually impacted entities regulated by RBI". VCs are digital currencies in which encryption techniques are used to regulate the generation of the currency units and verify the transfer of funds, operating independently of a central bank.

### Centre's failure

Besides, the court referred to the Centre's failure to introduce an official digital rupee despite two draft Bills and several committees. "When the Government of India is unable to take a call despite several committees coming up with several proposals, including two draft Bills, both of which advocated exactly opposite positions, it is not possible for us to hold that the impugned measure [April 6, 2018 circular] is proportionate," Justice Ramasubramanian wrote.

The court expanded on how the Centre had been toying with plans for an offi-

cial digital currency.

On November 2, 2017, the Centre constituted an Inter-Ministerial Committee, which initially recommended the 'Crypto-token Regulation Bill of 2018'. This Bill found a complete ban on VCs as "extreme tool" and suggested regulatory measures. At that point, the committee was even fine with the idea of allowing the sale and purchase of digital crypto assets at recognised exchanges.

The Supreme Court noted how the same committee did a "volte-face" in just two years.

From a permissive draft Bill, the Inter-Ministerial Committee went on to recommend a "total ban" on private cryptocurrencies through a proposed legislation called 'Banning of Cryptocurrency and Regulation of Official Digital Currency Act' in February 2019.

This proposed law contemplated the creation of a digital rupee as official currency and a legal tender by the Central government in consultation with the RBI.

The court said that had this law come through, there would be an official digital currency. The Centre and the RBI would have had monopoly over its creation and circulation.

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## In midnight drama, Cong. 'rescues' M.P. MLAs

Six legislators brought back from Manesar; four are missing

ASHOK KUMAR  
SIDHARTH YADAV  
GURUGRAM/BHOPAL

In a dramatic turn of events past Tuesday midnight, the Congress said it had "rescued" a group of Madhya Pradesh MLAs from a five-star hotel in Manesar, Haryana, from the BJP, which was allegedly holding them hostage to topple the Kamal Nath government.

On Wednesday evening, a special plane carrying six MLAs from the Congress, the Bahujan Samaj Party and the Samajwadi Party arrived in Bhopal along with Madhya Pradesh Finance Minister Tarun Bhambhani.

Chief Minister Kamal Nath said the BJP was making repeated attempts to destabilise the government. "With the money power of the mafia, it has been planning to come to power in an undemocratic way. Land mafia, organised crime mafia and

spurious drugs mafia had all flourished under the 15-year rule of the BJP. Freeing Madhya Pradesh from them didn't go down well with the BJP," he said.

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The Congress, which holds 114 Assembly seats,



**Dousing the fire:** M.P. Chief Minister Kamal Nath leaves after a meeting with party MLAs in Bhopal on Wednesday. ■ PTI

## Congress's internal politics: BJP

NISTULA HEBBAR  
NEW DELHI

Amid reports of a midnight shift and "rescue" of some Madhya Pradesh Congress, non-Congress and non-BJP MLAs from a hotel in Gurugram, State BJP chief Vishnu Dutt Sharma said it was an internal issue of the Congress. Mr. Sharma told *The Hindu* that his party was only "watching" the developments and not behind these moves. "It is the Congress's own internal

politics that has led to this situation. Chief Minister Kamal Nath, Jyotiraditya Scindia and Digvijaya Singh are playing their own games over the coming Rajya Sabha polls. It is convenient to blame the BJP."

"If you look at the comments on record by Congress leaders in the State in the last few months, including Sajjan Singh Verma, who said a 'kitchen cabinet' was running the government; or Ajay Singh,

who said nobody was listening to party leaders; or Scindia himself, who has threatened to hit the streets against the Nath government, it's all clear. Their own leaders are blackmailing the government over Rajya Sabha berths," he said.

As for Independents and MLAs of the SP and the BSP meeting BJP leaders, he said, "If someone wants to have a seat at our place, should we say no?"

seat where the Congress has a clear edge.

Slamming the BJP, Congress spokesperson Randeep Surjewala tweeted: "To trample the Constitution is now the BJP's character. Where they can't form a coalition, they start pulling down governments. They simply can't accept that they have been given a mandate to keep away from power. BJP's attempt to kidnap the mandate in M.P. will never be successful."

policemen in civil dress. They managed to bring back four Congress, one BSP and an SP MLA. But by then, three Congress MLAs and an Independent had already been ferried to Bengaluru, said State Congress media in-charge Shobha Oza.

On establishing contact with two MLAs, senior Congress leader Digvijaya Singh's son Jaivardhan Singh and State Higher Education Minister Jitu Patwari reached the hotel in Haryana past midnight, where they were refused entry allegedly by

## Amid din, Lok Sabha approves tax resolution Bill

Opposition firm on its demand for discussion on Delhi riots

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Direct Tax Vivad se Vishwas Bill that seeks to expedite resolution of pending tax disputes was passed by the Lok Sabha on Wednesday even as proceedings in both Houses of Parliament remain paralysed for the third day in a row over the Opposition's demand for an immediate discussion on the Delhi riots.

Earlier, Union Parliamentary Affairs Minister Pralhad Joshi said the government would debate the issue in the Lower House on March 11, a day after Holi. As soon as the day's proceedings started, Congress members trooped into the Well raising slogans and demanded an immediate discussion.

Even as two questions were taken up during the Question Hour, Opposition MPs were heard shouting slogans including 'Modi sarkar shame shame', 'Pradhan mantri jawab do (Prime Minister give an answer)'.

When the House met at 2 p.m., the government managed to get the tax disputes Bill passed amid the din and introduced another Bill re-

lated to education. The Bill states that 4.83 lakh tax disputes are pending in various appellate fora such as Commissioner (Appeals), Income Tax Appellate Tribunal, the High Courts and the Supreme Court and as much as ₹9.5 lakh crore is locked in these disputes.

Under the proposed scheme, a taxpayer would be required to pay only the amount of the disputed taxes and will get complete waiver of interest and penalty if the amount is paid by March 31. The order issued by the government on Wednesday on Internet connectivity is, however, silent on whether the ban imposed on social media on January 25 has been withdrawn or not, but access has been provided.

"Upon regular assessment of impact of the directions for regulation of the telecom services on the overall security situation and maintenance of public order, the Internet speed shall be restricted to 2G till March 17. Fixed-line Internet connectivity shall continue to be made available with Mac-binding," reads the order of Principal Secretary, Home, Shafeen Kabra.

The order makes no mention of the ban on these platforms

PEERZADA ASHIQ  
SRINAGAR

Nearly 65 lakh mobile Internet users in Kashmir were able to use social media platforms after seven months on Wednesday.

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**White-listed sites**

The J&K Home Department on January 25 issued an order to restore the 2G mobile service, the first time since August 5, but "allowed access to the 301 white-listed sites and not to any social media applications allowing peer-to-peer communication and virtual private networks (VPNs) applications".

Since then, the Home Department orders repeated the ban on use of social media and VPNs.

The latest order is silent over the social media platforms and the use of VPNs

## RS adjourned as debate on riots is pushed to March 11

Government accused of delaying discussion

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Rajya Sabha was adjourned within minutes of convening on Wednesday as Chairman M. Venkaiah Naidu pushed the debate on the Delhi riots to March 11, a day after Holi. The Opposition parties accused the government of delaying the debate because of its active role in the Delhi riots. They slammed the decision, saying the Centre had effectively reneged on its promise.

Leader of the House Thawarchand Gehlot had on Tuesday said the government was ready for a discussion. Deputy Chairman Harivansh had said that a time would be fixed for the debate.

**Rule 267 motions**  
Leader of the Opposition and Congress member Ghulam Nabi Azad, Trinamool Parliamentary Party leader Derek O'Brien and Samajwadi Party floor leader Ramgopal Yadav had filed motions under Rule 267 to suspend

all business to debate the riots. But Mr. Naidu refused to admit them. "I will be discussing with the Leader of the House, the Leader of the Opposition and others and will decide the time and the rule under which this issue has to be taken up. We will take it up on 11th after the Holi is over peacefully," the Chairman said, leading to vociferous protests.

A few Trinamool members even trooped into the well of the House.

Parliament will have a

two-day Holi break early next week and resume functioning on March 11.

Mr. Naidu adjourned the House after reprimanding the members, saying there were 16 Zero Hour mentions, including one on the spread of COVID-19, but the Opposition had decided not to allow any business.

Outside Parliament, Mr. Azad said, "We have told the government clearly that whenever the House functions it has to start with a debate on the Delhi riots."

## 'IBC Bill discriminates against homebuyers'

Three panel members file dissent note

SOBHANA K. NAIR  
NEW DELHI

The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (Second Amendment) Bill, 2019, is discriminatory as it does not treat homebuyers on a par with other financial creditors and violates a Supreme Court ruling, three members noted in dissent notes filed by them to the report on the Bill tabled by the Standing Committee on Finance, headed by BJP leader Jayant Sinha, in Parliament on Wednesday.

The Bill has introduced a new clause that sets a threshold of 100 homebuyers, or 10% of the buyers, in a residential project, whichever is less, as a requirement to jointly take the developer to an insolvency court. This means that an individual homebuyer, who is a financial creditor, cannot file an insolvency application.

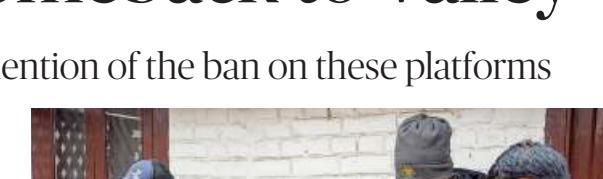
Out of the committee's 32 members, three MPs – Manish Tewari of the Congress, T.K. Rangarajan of the CPI (M) and Rajeev Chandrasekhar of the BJP – filed dissent notes.

Mr. Tewari accused Mr. Sinha of not recording the committee's sentiment that this clause should be

dropped. "The draft report of the Standing Committee had proposed the same but due to opposition from within, it is being now deleted from the final report," Mr. Tewari said.

Mr. Rangarajan, in his two-page note, noted that the Bill denies homebuyers their relevant rights. "The entire amendment is completely illogical and is against the very principle of the Insolvency Code to treat incipient sickness," Mr. Rangarajan said. He also observed that no relief had been offered to homebuyers from repayment of bank loans if the developer failed to deliver.

Mr. Chandrasekhar said the new law was a case of "distortion of the principle of equal rights guaranteed under the Constitution".



**Back in action:** People using Internet services on their mobile phones in Srinagar. ■ PTI

# Riots burnt nation's values, says Rahul

Congress leader visits school and meets people in violence-hit areas in northeast Delhi

JATIN ANAND  
NEW DELHI

The ruined remains of a school in riot-hit northeast Delhi symbolised the "burnt and destroyed" values of brotherhood, unity and love which were the strengths of India, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi said here on Wednesday.

Mr. Gandhi, along with a party delegation comprising K.C. Venugopal, Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury, K. Suresh, Mukul Wasnik, Kumari Selja, Gaurav Gogoi and Randeep Surjewala, paid a brisk visit to the Arun Modern Public Senior Secondary School in the evening.

The Tricolour was visible on several damaged homes near the school in the Mustafabad-Brijpuri area.

"When violence occurs in India, when violence occurs in the capital, India's reputation in the eyes of the world takes a hit. What was India's



**Hard knock:** Congress leader Rahul Gandhi visiting a school that was burnt in Brijpuri during the recent violence in northeast Delhi. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

strength, what was our strength – brotherhood, unity and love – that has been burnt, that has been destroyed here," he said after ex-

amining the school premises allegedly vandalised last Tuesday.

"This kind of politics not only translates into loss for

this school, but for Hindutau and Bharat Mata. Our reputation in this world, which is very important for our future, that has been

## SC bars Harsh Mander from hearing on FIRs

'Activist made remarks about court'

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday stopped activist Harsh Mander from participating in a hearing on petitions seeking immediate registration of FIRs against leaders who instigated communal violence in Delhi with their hate speeches.

Mr. Mander was accused of making disparaging remarks about the Supreme Court in a public speech.

The Delhi police said it had transcripts made from the video of the speech. Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta, for the police, said Mr. Mander was seen "instigating people" and goading people that "ultimate justice" could be got only on the streets rather than from the Supreme Court or Parliament.

Advocate Karuna Nundy, for Mr. Mander, said the allegations were false. She sought a copy of the transcripts so that a proper reply could be filed by Mr. Mander against the accusations.

In fact, it was a judge on the Bench, Justice B.R. Gavai, who first referred to the alleged speech made by Mr. Mander. Mr. Mehta immediately picked up the issue,



Harsh Mander

and said it raised a "pertinent" issue. "If this is what you [Mander] feel about the Supreme Court, then we have to decide what to do with you," Chief Justice of India S.A. Bobde told Ms. Nundy.

She was asked to sit down and not participate in the hearing until the issue regarding Mr. Mander's remarks were sorted out. The court went on to hear in detail the petition filed separately by Delhi riots victims.

The police later filed an affidavit terming Mr. Mander's speech "seriously contemptuous". The affidavit refers to a May 2, 2019 order passed by the Supreme Court in connection with an Assam NRC case to allege that Mr. Mander "is known for his contemptuous stand and bringing the judiciary as an institution and individual judges to disrepute".

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## T.N.'s outreach to neighbours raises river-linking expectations

CM keen on clinching consensus with A.P., Telangana

T. RAMAKRISHNAN  
CHENNAI

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami's outreach to his Andhra Pradesh and Telangana counterparts over the linking of Cauvery and Godavari rivers has raised expectations of the project taking off soon.

Speaking at an event in Salem on Wednesday, Mr. Palaniswami said he was keen on arriving at a consensus with Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy and Telangana CM K. Chandrasekhar Rao on the details regarding the sharing of water resources at the earliest. His task may turn out to be easy, given the fact that Mr. Reddy and Mr. Rao had, during a six-hour-long meeting in Hyderabad in mid-January, already arrived at an understanding on the diversion of Godavari water to Krishna river, according to an official of the National Water Development Agency (NWDA), a



Edappadi K. Palaniswami

Central government organisation entrusted with the task of preparing proposals for linking rivers.

As per NWDA's draft detailed project report (DPR), Tamil Nadu will get 83 thousand million cubic feet (tmc ft) at its border with Andhra Pradesh. The quantum will be 57 tmc ft at the Grand Anicut – a major regulator on the Cauvery. The State government would prefer the Kattalai barrage in Mayanur to the Grand Anicut, as it feels it can optimise the benefit of water transfer.

burnt here. That is why I am here," the Congress leader said.

### Security concerns

Near the school, he spoke to some of the residents who suffered losses in the violence.

His cavalcade then moved towards the Shiv Vihar area, but turned back owing to security concerns expressed by the Delhi police officials.

This, even as relief material from civil society groups, NGOs and individuals continued to be distributed to those affected by the violence which erupted in the locality around a fortnight ago.

"Bodies continue to be fished out from the Shiv Vihar drain which is located near an area which saw the most violence between February 24 and 25," alleged Sultan Mirza, a resident of Mustafabad.

BJP suspends two leaders for anti-CAA/NRC activity

SHARAD VYAS

MUMBAI

The State unit of the BJP said it would take disciplinary action against party workers found participating in activities against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) and the National Register of Citizens (NRC). The move followed the suspension of two functionaries from drought-hit Maharashtra on Wednesday.

The party suspended Balasahab Ganesh Rokde, city president of Palam municipal council, and Vinod Haribhai Borade, city president of Selu city council, both in Parbhani district, for moving an anti-CAA/NRC resolution in their respective local bodies.

The suspension letters were signed by party's State president Chandrakant Patil.

## Mosque attack pre-planned: Cong. MLA

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
GUWAHATI

The NWDA's draft report talks of diverting, through a canal-cum-pipeline, the surplus water of the Godavari, either from the Inchampalli barrage or the Janampet barrage, from where water will be conveyed to the Nagarjuna Sagar on the Krishna and then to the Somasila dam on the Pennar. The proposed alignment will also pass through Swarnamukhi, Araniar, Palar and Pennaiyar rivers before terminating at the Grand Anicut on the Cauvery.

Non-Muslims living around the Kalapani Anchalik Mosque on Tuesday gifted copies of the Koran.

The attack on the mosque and burning of copies of the holy Koran followed the murder of some minority leaders in BTC. These have been pre-planned and the police have not been able to catch any of the culprits involved in the incidents," said Mr. Huda, who represents the Rupahihat constituency in Nagaon district. BJP Ministers and legislators objected to Mr. Huda's statement before Speaker Hitendra Nath Goswami tried to restore order.

## India committed to two-state solution'

Centre tells UN team on Palestine

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI



June 2019 which ended the consultative status for a Palestinian NGO that Israel claimed had terror links, the committee members said those actions were not reflective of India's stand on the resolution of the Israel-Palestine conflict.

They pointed to several other votes by India, including the UN General Assembly vote, that had sharply criticised the United States for recognising Jerusalem as the Israeli capital in December 2017. India had also voted in favour of another UNGA resolution "deplored the use of excessive, disproportionate and indiscriminate force by Israeli forces against Palestinian civilians" in June 2018.

"The best way to test India's commitment is the way India votes," Mr. Niang told *The Hindu*. "India has consistently voted in favour of those resolutions that promote the two-state solution with a Palestinian claim to East Jerusalem. We have not seen any weakening of the position."

## SC directs AIIMS review of convict Sajjan Kumar

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI

appear before the board at 10.30 a.m.

The Bench was hearing a bail plea filed by Kumar on the grounds of his medical condition. "It appears that there is a certificate by Dr. Randhir Sud, Chairman, Institute of Digestive & Hepatobiliary Sciences, Medanta The Medicity, to the effect that Sajjan Kumar, who is the appellant, needs to be hospitalised.

A Bench comprising Chief Justice S. A. Bobde and Justices B. R. Gavai and Surya Kant directed Kumar to

appear before the board at 10.30 a.m.

The Supreme Court Wednesday directed former Congress leader Sajjan Kumar, serving life sentence in a case related to the 1984 anti-Sikh riots, to appear before an AIIMS Board on Thursday to determine whether he needs to be hospitalised.

A Bench comprising Chief Justice S. A. Bobde and Justices B. R. Gavai and Surya Kant directed Kumar to

**NMDC Limited**  
(A Government of India Enterprise)  
10-3-311/A, Castle Hills, Masab Tank, Hyderabad-500 028. email : kvbhaskar@nmdc.co.in; nvyadagiri@nmdc.co.in; bsama@nmdc.co.in CIN : L13100TG1958G001674

### e-PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTICE

Tenders are invited from reputed manufacturers directly or through their accredited agents in India for the following Equipments / Spares for our NMDC Limited as per the details furnished in the tender document.

Sl. No.	Description	Qty. (No)	Display & Sale of Tender Documents	Last date & Time for submission of offer	Tender fee in Rs. / US \$	Earnest Money Deposit in Rs. / US \$
1	Supply of Spares for WHIMS AND LIMS	06 Items	DRAFT 05.03.2020 to 20.03.2020 FINAL 01.04.2020 to 24.04.2020	24.04.2020 By 2.30 PM (IST)	Rs. 5900/- or 100 US \$	Rs. 2,00,000/- 3000 US \$

Tender Ref :	HQMM/7001-19/17UN18/284 Date:	05/03/2020, Pre-Bid Meeting - 20.03.2020 at 11AM
1	Supply of Spares for WHIMS AND LIMS	DRAFT 05.03.2020 to 20.03.2020 FINAL 01.04.2020 to 24.04.2020

Tender Ref :	HQMM/0057-16/28B-01/NISP/051 Date:	07/03/2020
2	Supply and E & C of CNC Turning Centers for CWS of NISP, Nagarnar, C.G.	02 Items 07.03.2020 to 05.04.2020

The detailed information of the tenders can be obtained from our websites under e-procurement section [www.nmdc.co.in](http://www.nmdc.co.in); [www.eprocure.gov.in](http://www.eprocure.gov.in) and [www.mstccommerce.com/eprochome/nmdc](http://www.mstccommerce.com/eprochome/nmdc) and will not be published. Prospective bidders should visit the above NMDC website from time to time to note the corrigendum, if any.

General Manager (Materials)

### हर एक काम देश के नाम

**Semi-conductor Laboratory**  
अंतरिक्ष विभाग, भारत सरकार/Department of Space, Government of India,  
सेक्टर-72, स.आ.सि.नगर(मोहाली) - 160071, बैंडीगढ़ के रासीप(पंजाब) भारत  
फोन/फैक्स +91-172-2296166/83 फैक्स: +91-172-2237410

ईमेल/ Email: hps@sicl.gov.in, website: [www.siclod.gov.in](http://www.siclod.gov.in)

निविदा सूचना संख्या. एससीएल/पीटी/171,172 &173/TENDER NOTICE NO. SCLPT/171,172 &173 दिनांक/Dated: 03.03.2020  
अनुशोध नं. 1 / Addendum-1

निम्नलिखित निविदाओं को दो भागों में प्रस्तुत करने वाली निविदाओं को खाली की तिथि एवं समय को दो साताह के लिए बदला जा सकता है।  
Date & time of submission of Tender in two parts and opening of Tender against our following Tender Reference No. is being extended or 2 weeks:

क्र.सं. Sr.No.	निविदा संख्या Tender Number	विवरण Description	संख्या Quantity
1	एससीएल/पीटीस/ 2019/0167901 SCL/PS/2019E0167901	निविदा दस्तावेज में दी गई विवरों के अनुसार टैंकर एवं लॉट में निविदाकाल आसानी से लानी वाला 2,40,000 लीटर छोड़ता है। Supply of Liquefied Oxygen (In Tankers & Lots Qty. 2,40,000 Liters)	मात्रा/Qty. 2,40,000 लीटर/Liters

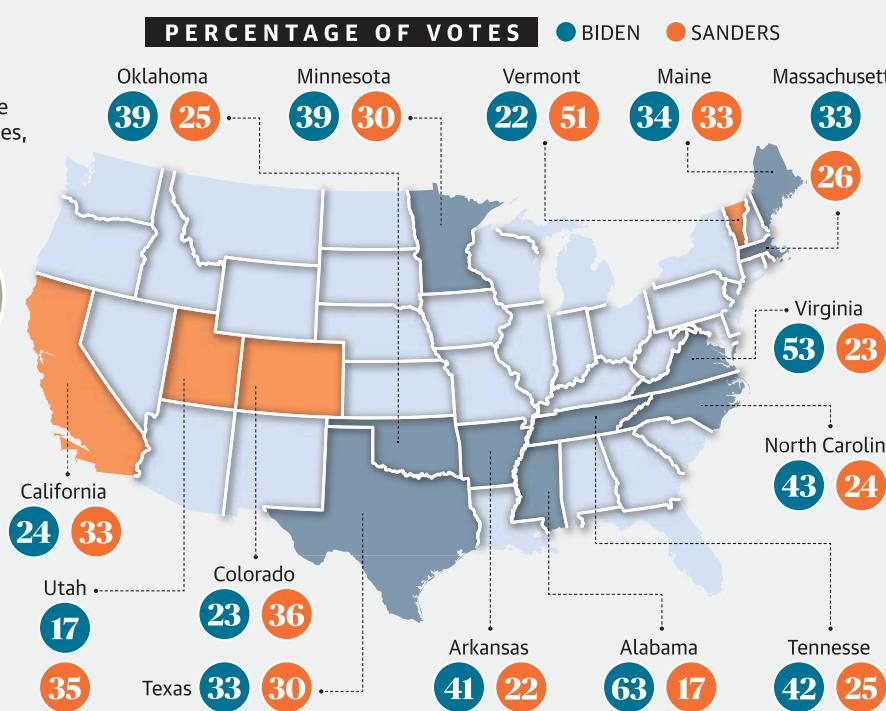
2	एससीएल/पीटीस/ 2019/0164901 SCL/PS/2019E0164901	एस सी एल , एस.ए.एस. नगर में रासायनिक भौतिक और इलेक्ट्रिक वर्क्स के लिए एवं एस
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## Narrowing the race

Joe Biden won most States that held primaries on Super Tuesday while Bernie Sanders took California, which has the most number of delegates, narrowing the Democratic race between themselves

### NUMBER OF DELEGATES

	<b>Joe Biden</b>	<b>TOTAL 433</b>
	<b>TODAY 380+</b>	
		■ Super Tuesday results signalled a comeback for Biden, who is projected to win at least nine out of the 14 States that saw elections
	<b>Bernie Sanders</b>	<b>388</b>
	<b>328+</b>	
		■ A key takeaway from Biden's long list of wins was his strong support among African Americans
	<b>Elizabeth Warren</b>	<b>36</b>
	<b>28+</b>	
		■ Michael Bloomberg and Senator Elizabeth Warren did not win any State
	<b>Michael Bloomberg</b>	<b>12</b>
	<b>12+</b>	
		■ Bloomberg has suspended his campaign after the results



It's a good night and it seems to be getting even better! They don't call it Super Tuesday for nothing... People are talking about a revolution. We started a movement  
**JOE BIDEN**

We're going to win the nomination and we are going to defeat the most dangerous President in the history of this country... You cannot beat Trump with the same old, same-old kind of politics  
**BERNIE SANDERS**

## Joe Biden wins 9 States in Super Tuesday race

Bernie Sanders vows to continue the fight for candidacy; Michael Bloomberg drops out of race and endorses Biden

**SRIRAM LAKSHMAN**

WASHINGTON  
Super Tuesday, when fourteen American States voted in the Democratic primaries, was a watershed moment in former Vice-President Joseph R. Biden Jr.'s quest for the nomination, as he surpassed his progressive rival, Bernie Sanders by winning strongly in the south.

The crowded democratic field has now been reshaped into a Biden vs. Sanders contest, and battle of identity for the Democratic party – between its centrist or moderate wing represented by the former Vice-President and its progressive wing led by the independent Senator from Vermont, Mr. Sanders.

Tuesday, however, went to Mr. Biden, who won nine of the 14 States in contest. Buoyed by a win in South Carolina on Saturday and with endorsements from other Democrats, including Pete Buttigieg and Amy Klobuchar,

char, who dropped out of the race in the last few days, Mr. Biden had won at least 433 delegates (so far) to the nominating convention, relative to Mr. Sanders's count of 388 delegates.

Mr. Biden had a surprise win Texas, the State with second most number of delegates, which Mr. Sanders was leading in, according to opinion polls before Super Tuesday. He also won Virginia, and North Carolina.

California, which has the most number of delegates (415), is expected to be won by Mr. Sanders, although by a narrower margin than first expected. Mr. Sanders has won 135 delegates relative to Mr. Biden's 83, with just under 87% reporting, as per the New York Times.

Mr. Sanders also won in Utah, Colorado and his home State of Vermont. Results for Maine – a New England state – have not yet been called.



**Big battle:** An election staffer packing up supplies in California. ■ REUTERS

Mr. Biden performed well with African American voters, moderate, "somewhat liberal" Democrats as well as older (65+) voters and late-deciders, as per a Washington Post analysis of exit polls. Mr. Sanders did well with Hispanic voters, younger and more liberal voters.

"It's a good night," Mr. Biden said at a victory speech in Los Angeles. "It seems to be getting better. They don't call it Super Tuesday for nothing."

Mr. Biden's speech was in-

terrupted by two vegan activists who rushed the stage, shouting, "Let dairy die."

Meanwhile in Vermont, Mr. Sanders called for a different kind of politics.

"You cannot beat Trump with the same old, same old kind of politics," Mr. Sanders told supporters. "What we need is a new politics that brings working class people into our political movement, which brings young people into our political movement..."

Mr. Sanders has counted on his ability to effect a larger voter turnout, especially with younger voters, but Tuesday's impact on this front was limited, based on the results that have come in so far.

### Bad night for Warren

It was a disastrous night for progressive candidate, Senator Elizabeth Warren, who came in third in her home State of Massachusetts,

which was won by Mr. Biden. Mr. Sanders came in second place. Mr. Sanders narrowly lost Massachusetts to Hillary Clinton in the 2016 primary; Ms. Clinton won the State by a large margin in the general election against U.S. President Donald Trump.

Progressive voters had thus far been split between Ms. Warren, who has won a total of 36 delegates and Mr. Sanders, with some criticising Ms. Warren for not dropping out of the race before Super Tuesday in order to consolidate support for Mr. Sanders, who was way ahead of her.

Ms. Warren performed poorly among black voters across States – and had a mediocre performance – just 33% among her core group, college-educated white women in Massachusetts, as per the New York Times.

Former New York Mayor, billionaire Michael Bloomberg, who had spent more than \$687 million on his

campaign so far (and about \$550 million on ads), performed very poorly on Tuesday and decided to suspend his campaign, endorsing Mr. Biden. Mr. Bloomberg won 12 delegates on Tuesday as per some projections, winning American Samoa.

"I've always believed that defeating Donald Trump starts with uniting behind the candidate with the best shot to do it. After yesterday's vote, it is clear that candidate is my friend and a great American, Joe Biden," Mr. Bloomberg said in a statement.

Financial assistance from Mr. Bloomberg could provide a game-changing boost for Mr. Biden's campaign, something Mr. Biden hinted on Wednesday morning.

"This race is bigger than candidates and bigger than politics. It's about defeating Donald Trump, and with your help, we're gonna do it," Mr. Biden said in a tweet.

Schools have been shut, major cultural and sporting events suspended, and working hours reduced.

Meanwhile, Italy on Wednesday closed all schools and universities until March 15 as the death toll hit 107.

Germany warned that the

## In HK, pet dog gets infected

**AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE**  
HONG KONG

The pet dog of a COVID-19 patient in Hong Kong was confirmed to be infected with the disease, in a likely case of human-to-animal transmission, authorities have said. The canine belonged to a 60-year-old woman patient.

## Man locks wife in bathroom

**AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE**  
VILNIUS

Police in Lithuania intervened in a domestic dispute on Wednesday after a man locked his wife in the bathroom over fears that she may be carrying the coronavirus. She later tested negative for COVID-19.

outbreak has turned into a global pandemic. Interior Ministry said it had banned exports of medical protection gear such as masks and gloves to ensure that health workers in the country have enough to deal with the coronavirus outbreak.

## ELSEWHERE



### French pension reforms Bill passed in House

**PARIS**  
President Emmanuel Macron's pension reforms Bill was passed in the National Assembly on Wednesday, clearing the first parliamentary fight after months of protests over the proposal. AFP

### Johnson stands by Patel as bullying claims mount

**LONDON**  
British Prime Minister Boris Johnson came to the defence of Home Secretary Priti Patel on Wednesday, after several civil servants accused her of bullying. "The Home Secretary is doing an outstanding job," he said. AP

## One killed in clashes on Greece-Turkey border

Stun grenades fired at migrants

**ASSOCIATED PRESS**

Greek authorities fired tear gas and stun grenades on Wednesday morning to repulse a push by migrants to cross its land border from Turkey, as pressure continued along its frontier after Turkey said its own border with Europe was open to whoever wanted to cross.

Turkish authorities said one person was killed and five were wounded by fire coming from the Greek side – an assertion the Greek government strongly rejected as "fake news."

Turkey made good on a threat to open its borders and send migrants into Europe last week. Turkish Pre-

sident Recep Tayyip Erdogan's action triggered days of violent clashes at the land border, where thousands of migrants and refugees have gathered.

Meanwhile, the European Union said it will not give in to "blackmail" by Turkey and borders will remain closed to migrants despite Ankara's threat to let them pass. France's Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian said on Wednesday.

"The borders of Greece and the Schengen Area are closed, and we will ensure they stay closed" despite attempts to enter by thousands of migrants who have massed on Turkey's frontier, Le Drian told Senators.

## SUDOKU



### Solution to puzzle 12874

[www.msigmedia.com](http://www.msigmedia.com)

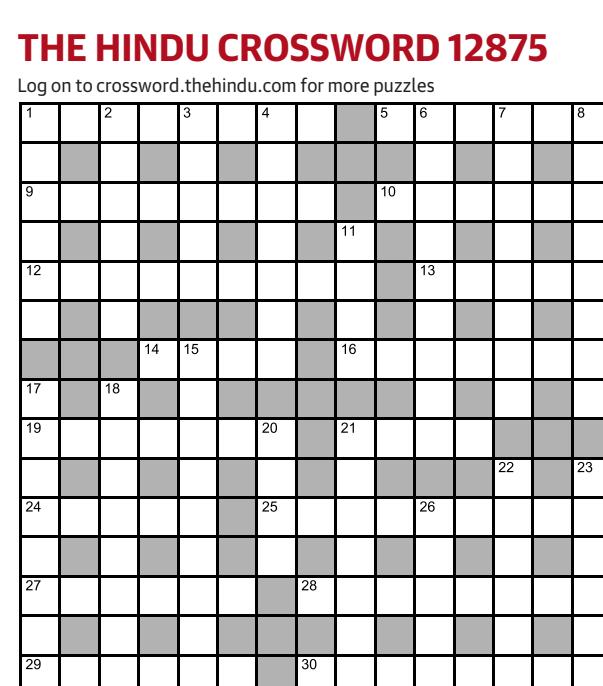
**SOLUTION TO YESTERDAY'S SUDOKU**

- (set by KrisKross)
- 13 KrisKross shredded oats to small pieces (5)
- 14 On the contrary, guns in America could be for men only (4)
- 16 Power punching – goodbye to a bit of excess fat (7)
- 19 Lawbreakers in US state destroyed store (7)
- 21 Nutritionist's starting to feed timid rabbit (4)
- 24 Homicide movie featuring retired doctor (5)
- 25 Chaps near Silverlake zoo (9)
- 27 Small hike, including a run (6)
- 28 They argue for and against bans restricting trade limits (8)
- 29 Some extremely disputatious leaders had to calm down (6)
- 30 Autocrat ran dominion essentially in a haphazard manner (2,6)
- DOWN**
- 1 Beginners in meditation always need to relax, articulating this (6)
- 10 Feed fellow with more rum (6)
- 12 Senora hid criminal from Zimbabwe (9)

- 3 Wild zebra, striped in the middle (not black) somewhere in Africa (5)
- 4 At the corner, Rob making a cosy home (7)
- 6 Common statement – mostly, "India Transformed" (9)
- 7 Charlie quits bad habit – it's an improvement (8)
- 8 Forces top-secret locks (8)
- 11 Old currency of Indian nation (4)
- 15 Cutting half of tree near entrance (9)
- 17 President negligent to protect European property (8)
- 18 Forced to control crowd finally in ground (8)
- 20 Problem when talking to a few (4)
- 21 Setting a phishing message? (7)
- 22 Partner cooked holding base of spoon (6)
- 23 Drunken set in trouble – they are really wasted (6)
- 26 Fruit from University in Spanish city (5)

## THE HINDU CROSSWORD 12875

Log on to crossword.thehindu.com for more puzzles



**ACROSS**

1 Mother to look over fashionable publication (8)

5 Squeal excitedly in matches (6)

9 Most tense royal contest divides home (8)

10 Feed fellow with more rum (6)

12 Senora hid criminal from Zimbabwe (9)

**DOWN**

1 KrisKross shredded oats to small pieces (5)

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

CMYK

## FAITH

### His name brings joy

Bhishma's instruction of the Vishnu Sahasranama in the Mahabharata is an invaluable gift to posterity. More than the mere number of names, one thousand or ten thousand or infinite, it is the qualitative richness inherent in each of the Lord's Nama that has been conferring unimaginable and subtle benefits on jivatas through the ages, pointed out Mukkur Sri Srinivasan in a discourse. From the scholarly and devoted interpretations of the import and significance of His names, it is clear that what emerges is only the tip of the iceberg. It reflects the same inability expressed by the Vedas when they attempt to explain or describe the Supreme Brahman.

It is claimed that the Namas, when chanted with devotion and sincerity, will guide the ordinary jivatma to tide over life's problems and lead him to salvation through the path of dharma. Apart from this direct and explicit benefit, there is yet another interesting effect experienced by many devout azhwars and acharyas. They have derived unadulterated joy by listening to His names and chanting them, and by meditating on them. This experience is so much fulfilling to them that they claim this itself is sufficient and even preferable to salvation.

Tondaradipodi Azhwar states that there can be no greater enjoyment than uttering His names and experiencing His infinite greatness. He would not prefer anything else, not even a place in Indra Loka with all honours. Vedanta Desika says that this joy of listening to and talking about His greatness can never equal the bliss that is supposed to be experienced in Vaikunta. All these may sound hypothetical, but they express the truth that once one gets hooked to His greatness there is nothing else that can equal this attractiveness.

A ND-NDE

## MARKET WATCH

	04-03-2020	% CHANGE
Sensex	38409	-0.55
US Dollar	73.19	0.05
Gold	44,383	2.67
Brent oil	52.88	0.97

## NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	345.95	-1.35
Asian Paints	1847.95	-0.40
Axle Bank	682.20	-4.95
Bajaj Auto	2711.50	-19.25
Bajaj Finserv	8799.70	-163.95
Bajaj Finance	4286.40	-167.70
Bharti Airtel	516.75	-4.05
BPCL	418.70	-6.30
Britannia Ind	3063.05	36.55
Cipla	447.65	22.35
Coal India	178.10	-0.10
Dr Reddys Lab	3171.35	127.65
Eicher Motors	17254.20	-634.25
GAIL (India)	106.05	2.85
Grasim Ind	689.50	-10.55
HCL Tech	563.10	-1.95
HDFC	2206.05	14.65
HDFC Bank	1148.85	-32.95
Heron MotoCorp	2046.35	-8.50
Hindalco	160.60	1.30
Hind Unilever	2175.85	9.20
ICICI Bank	508.35	-6.40
IndusInd Bank	1065.95	-42.10
Bharti Infratech	221.05	1.70
Infosys	758.75	11.75
Indian Oil Corp	106.60	-0.05
ITC	187.50	-6.35
JSW Steel	245.60	-0.85
Kotak Bank	1607.95	-18.35
L&T	1176.65	-4.65
M&M	474.65	8.40
Maruti Suzuki	6384.35	-1.70
Nestle India Ltd.	16541.50	182.10
NTPC	107.95	-0.95
ONGC	92.80	-0.55
PowerGrid Corp	197.05	5.35
Reliance Ind	1339.70	-3.15
State Bank	285.30	-4.55
Sun Pharma	405.45	11.90
Tata Motors	126.20	-4.15
Tata Steel	377.15	-10.40
TCS	2083.20	47.00
Tech Mahindra	771.30	19.00
Titan	1250.95	3.95
UltraTech Cement	4172.80	-127.10
UPL	511.60	-9.95
Vedanta	119.35	-0.20
Wipro	228.85	5.15
YES Bank	29.30	-1.90
Zee Entertainment	251.75	0.65

## EXCHANGE RATES

CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	73.02	73.34
Euro	81.23	81.59
British Pound	93.54	93.95
Japanese Yen (100)	67.93	68.23
Chinese Yuan	10.55	10.60
Swiss Franc	76.30	76.64
Singapore Dollar	52.74	52.98
Canadian Dollar	54.64	54.89
Malaysian Ringgit	17.46	17.55

Source: Indian Bank

BULLION RATES CHENNAI	March 04 rates in rupees with previous rates in parentheses
Retail Silver (1g)	50. (48.5)
22 ct gold (1g)	4128. (4025)

## IN BRIEF



## Karnad in HDFC Bank's MD search panel

MUMBAI The search panel to find a successor for HDFC Bank's MD Aditya Puri has been reconstituted with Renu Sud Karnad replacing Keki Mistry as the representative of the bank's parent Housing Development Finance Corporation (HDFC) Ltd. Ms. Karnad is the MD of HDFC while Mr. Mistry is the vice-chairman and CEO. "Aditya Puri shall continue to act as adviser to the search committee," HDFC Bank said in a notification to the stock exchanges.

## HDFC cuts home loan rate by 5 basis points

MUMBAI Mortgage lender Housing Finance Development Corporation has reduced the home loan rate for salaried borrowers by 5 basis points (bps). The new rate for loans up to ₹30 lakh will be 8.05%, for above ₹30 lakh and up to 75 lakh, it will be 8.3% and for above ₹75 lakh, the rate will be 8.4%. The rate for women borrowers will be 5 bps lower. While RBI has kept interest rates on hold since December, it has announced measures that have led to lower cost of funds for banks.

## Equitas SFB gears up for initial public offering

CHENNAI Having received the nod from the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) for its initial public offering (IPO), Equitas Small Finance Bank is gearing up to go public as soon as possible, said a top executive. "As of now, we don't have any deadline for the IPO. We are working on going public as quickly as possible," said P.N. Vasudevan, MD and CEO of the bank. The IPO comprises fresh issue of ₹550 crore and an offer-for-sale of eight crore equity shares.

# Nod for changes to Companies Act for decriminalising offences

Priority is to axe sections that criminalise offences having no malafide intent: FM

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI The Centre proposes to amend the Companies Act again, in a bid to decriminalise a number of offences and ease corporate social responsibility (CSR) requirements, especially for smaller companies.

The amendment bill will also enable the listing of Indian companies on stock exchanges in foreign jurisdictions. This is expected to give Indian firms greater access to capital, a broader investor base and better valuations.

On Wednesday, the Union Cabinet approved the proposal to amend 65 sections of the Act. "The priority is to remove sections which criminalise offences which may not have been intended to be malafide," Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman told journalists after a Cabinet meeting.

She outlined proposed changes to 52 out of 66 com-



All smiles: Union Ministers Nirmala Sitharaman and Prakash Javadekar at a press meet in New Delhi. ■ SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

## poundable offences under the Act, either removing them entirely, downgrading penalties from jail sentences to fines or suggesting alternative adjudication mechanisms.

## Recategorise offences

The Centre proposes to recategorise 23 offences so that they can be dealt with through an in-house adjudication framework, while five types of offences will be

dealt with under different alternative frameworks.

Another seven will be omitted altogether. Most of these are procedural or technical defaults, according to an official statement.

For 11 kinds of offences, the provision of imprisonment will be removed, limiting punishment to fines only. Six offences that had already been decriminalised earlier will see a further reduction in the quantum of penalties.

The proposed amendments will also ensure that companies which have an obligation to spend ₹50 lakh per annum or less on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) are no longer required to have a CSR committee. Companies that spend more than the mandatory 2% on CSR in a particular year can carry it forward as credit for fulfilment of CSR obligations for the next few years as well, she said.

The changes are "expected to significantly enhance the confidence of Indian corporates in the government's resolve to provide greater ease [of doing business] and accord highest respect to honest wealth creators in the country and reduce the burden on the justice system," said an official statement. If passed by Parliament, these would be the second set of amendments to the Act over the last year, as the law was already amended last July.

## Cabinet allows NRIs to take 100% in Air India

Move aimed at liberalising FDI policy

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI The Union Cabinet on Wednesday decided to allow Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) who are Indian nationals to own up to 100% stake of Air India, which is bound for disinvestment.

Union Information and Broadcasting Minister Prakash Javadekar said at a press conference that the Cabinet, at a meeting chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, had decided to increase the maximum stake for NRIs from 49% to 100%.

The government is in the process of selling the national carrier, having invited preliminary bids recently.

The FDI (foreign direct investment) policy would be amended to allow NRIs who are Indian nationals to own up to 100% of Air India 'under automatic route', a government statement said.



Provisional figures pegged FDI at \$62 billion in the financial year 2018-2019.

The amendment was meant to 'liberalise and simplify the FDI policy to provide ease of doing business in the country', the statement said. Mr. Javadekar said FDI had increased in the tenure of the NDA government.

While FDI inflows stood at \$45.15 billion in 2014-2015, the provisional figures for FDI had increased to \$62 billion in the last financial year 2018-2019.

## Public sector bank mergers get approval

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI The merger of public sector banks (PSBs) will become effective from April 1, 2020, with the Cabinet giving nod to the proposal on Wednesday.

The consolidation of 10 PSBs into four includes the merger of Oriental Bank of Commerce and United Bank of India into Punjab National Bank, the amalgamation of Syndicate Bank into Canara Bank, the merger of Andhra Bank and Corporation Bank into Union Bank of India, and the amalgamation of Allahabad Bank into Indian Bank. "The banks have submitted their scheme of amalgamation to Cabinet, which has been approved. They are on course to complete the amalgamation without affecting any of their core banking functions," Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said.

The amendment was meant to 'liberalise and simplify the FDI policy to provide ease of doing business in the country', the statement said. Mr. Javadekar said FDI had increased in the tenure of the NDA government.

While FDI inflows stood at \$45.15 billion in 2014-2015, the provisional figures for FDI had increased to \$62 billion in the last financial year 2018-2019.

The impact of COVID-19 in India has been visible in most segments of the markets, including equities, currency and bonds.

Incidentally, the last few trading sessions had seen

the benchmark Sensex shedding more than 3,000 points while the rupee went past the 73-mark on Tuesday and bond yields dropped 11 bps on Wednesday.

**Tax on REIT, InvITs**

On a different note, the capital markets regulator has taken up with the government the issue of taxation with respect to dividends from real estate investment trusts (REITs) and infrastructure investment trusts (InvITs).

A Budget proposal has made dividends from such structures tax-exempt, which market participants believe, would be a huge dampener for the segment.

Incidentally, the last few trading sessions had seen

the broader Nifty settled the day at 11,251.00, shedding 52.30 points or 0.46%.

The market breadth was extremely weak with nearly 1,800 stocks losing ground on BSE, as against only 639 gainers.

**Sharp decline**

"The rise in coronavirus cases dented sentiment and triggered a sharp decline in the middle," said Ajit Mishra, vice-president – Research, Religare Broking. "However, it rebounded in the latter half, considerably trimming losses," he said.

## Sensex falls 2% intraday as virus cases increase

About 1,800 stocks lose ground on BSE

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI Equities witnessed extreme volatility on Wednesday with the benchmark Sensex shedding more than 2% during intraday trading as the number of COVID-19 cases in India jumped to 28, leading to increased concerns that the economy might take a larger hit than previously expected.

The 30-share Sensex lost nearly 780 points during the afternoon session to touch a low of 37,846.10 before closing at 38,409.48, down 214.22 points, or 0.55%.

# Bond yields decline on expectation of rate cut

After Fed action, market sees RBI following suit

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

## MUMBAI

After the U.S. Federal Reserve reduced interest rates on Tuesday to fight the economic slowdown due to the spread of COVID-19, there is growing expectation in the domestic market that the Reserve Bank will follow suit.

Bond yields softened on Wednesday amid rate cut hopes, with the yield on the 10-year government bond dropping 12 bps to close the day at 6.23%.

"We see 50 bps risk to [first half of 2020] growth if the COVID infection worsens. As it is, we see FY20 growth at 4.9% and FY21 at 5.6%," BofaML said in a note, adding that rate cut could happen during the June-August and Oct.-Dec. periods.

"We expect the RBI to inject \$45 billion of durable liquidity in FY21, to pull down lending rates," it added. The rupee, which weakened in the last three sessions, ended 4 paisa higher on Wednesday amid a volatile trading as it hit the day's low of 73.63 a dollar, closing at 73.19.

PRADEEP KUMAR

I cannot even brush my teeth properly in seven minutes. Yet that is all the time Bollywood actor Hrithik Roshan could spare for an interaction.

The star, last seen in the action film *War*, had flown to Chennai to launch Rado's True Square design watches at Express Avenue. I get to meet Hrithik an hour before he sets off to the venue, at Taj Connemara. As his entourage guides the way into a large hall, I come across the man posing for cameras against a black backdrop; he is sporting an unbuttoned denim jacket that reveals a white, round neck vest which he has paired with jeans and a pair of white shoes.

**Striving for excellence**

Now Hrithik, for those who keenly follow his social media accounts, is well aware of his status as a style icon. So, naturally, when I grab a chair and sit next to him, I had to remark that it takes someone of his stature to carry off plain denim so fashionably well in 2020. He smiles. "I don't know, man. I really don't know fashion. I just wear whatever my stylist picks and see if I'm comfortable with it. If I am, then I go with it," he says. That can't be true. "I want to be a fashion student. I want to learn. It needs work and time. It is not easy. I'm picking up things here and there." Perhaps that explains the pictures of him in a towel, which he shared a couple of days ago and for which he cited Ranveer Singh as inspiration.

Into his seventh year as the face of Rado, the actor says that the watches have helped him "articulate" some aspects of his character.

Yet it has taken him over two decades, since making his debut as lead actor in *Kaho Naa... Pyaar Hai* (2000), to realise the possibilities of evolving. The actor confides that he prefers to have less filters about him. "I have a new-found joy in being a little more unfiltered... little reckless too, perhaps, as opposed to becoming the kind of person that you know will be liked," he laughs, and adds: "As actors, you tend to do that. You filter all the negatives out to fit yourself and retain the things that you know have been proven to work, and [make you feel] loved."

One way of him trying to



# Being Hrithik Roshan

The actor discusses his new-found desire to push the boundaries of learning as he looks up to move West, to Hollywood, in search of new opportunities



make a change for himself is by pushing his boundaries. Which is why the actor recently signed up with The Gersh Agency, a talent firm based in Beverly Hills, California.

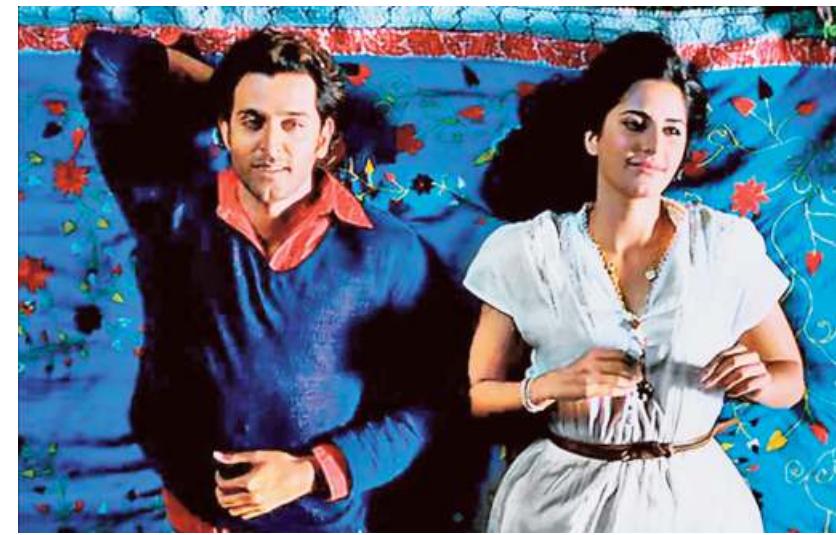
"To be honest, I'm looking at the entire world for a good script. [I want] to be in an environment where I would get to learn something new... one that would challenge me, would make me want to wake up and be wide-eyed... you know, like a student. That is how I want to be on the [film] set. I detest the fact that I could be on a set this day and be the one everyone looks up to," he says.

An interesting comment, I observe, and Hrithik corrects it a bit. "I don't detest it but I think it really mars my personal growth. I want to learn. Hopefully, with Gersh, or with

Hollywood, I may get those chances. I look for them even here and those are the kind of films I end up doing," he adds.

The star asserts that it cannot be misconstrued as Hrithik assuming that he has hit a ceiling in Bollywood. "I'm just looking at the potential. There is a probability that if I'm with people in a new environment, and who have been in the business for far more years than our industry has even existed... there are more chances of me being even more wide-eyed. It is not that I want to be a Hollywood star. That's not my aim at all. I'm just looking for a good script," he notes.

**On safe ground**  
Since last year's *War*, which took the best opening of the star's career,



Hrithik Roshan and Katrina Kaif in a still from 'Zindagi Na Milegi Dobara' (2011); with Vaani Kapoor in 'War' (2019) ■ B. JOTHI RAMALINGAM AND SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

I'm looking at the entire world for a good script... I want to wake up and be wide-eyed... you know, like a student

Hrithik has been on a sort of break, "reading scripts and watching a lot of films". But he is also getting ready to film *Krrish 4*, the third film in the superhero spin-off of his 2003 hit *Koi... Mil Gaya*, though he does not divulge any details. "We are just working on it right now," he smiles. The actor has been known to push his fitness to a superhuman level when filming the franchise. He has also hurt himself in the process of filming stunts for his films. Such freak injuries could be a thing of the past for Hrithik, who last underwent a surgery for subdural haematoma that he sustained in a fly-boarding stunt sequence while filming *Bang Bang!* (2014).

"I've put myself in harm's way a lot of times for films like *Krrish* and *Dhoom 2*. But there is complete safety now. The technology is so wonderful that you never really need to put yourself at risk. You just need to have a certain level of fitness, which is what I'm aspiring for," he says.

Being fit, though, means more for the actor. "It means to be the best version of myself. [Fitness] for me is not really about the biceps and the six pack abs. It is really about living a life that is wholesome. Fitness is the best way to get to that point," he concludes.

**LEARNING CURVE**

Hrithik Roshan likes being a part of ensemble films. "I like the experience. I think all the films that I have done which were two-hero subjects or ensemble films are what I cherish the most... like *Zindagi Na Milegi Dobara*, even *War* with Tiger [Shroff]. It is because you work with good people and you are less alone, as opposed to being alone on the boat and having to row it across the river by yourself," he laughs, and adds: "You have company and you share the responsibility as well."

**PRODUCTS****Coffee to go**

Beanly, a new indie brand that is making coffees accessible and quick to make. Their single serve Dip Coffees and Pour-Overs, which come in filters, like tea-bags, making it commute- and travel-friendly. The brand is promising "French-press quality coffee on the go", with a three-step "soak, stir, and squeeze" process, where you only need hot water in a cup. There are two variants of the blends in each: the Master Blend is made of beans from Baba Budangiri, Chikmagalur, and Coorg, while their Organic Blend comes from Hassan.

A box of 10 single-use bags for Dip Coffee starting at ₹295, and for Pour-Overs, starting at ₹299

Contact us at [delhimetro@thehindu.co.in](mailto:delhimetro@thehindu.co.in)

**IN OUR BACKYARD**

## A visitor from the North

This is the time to catch the Black Redstart, or Phoenicurus ochruros on a low branch near you

ABHISHEK GULSHAN

A general upright stance, and a peculiar quivering motion of its tail makes the Black Redstart stand out. This restless bird frequents backyards and the plains of India, from the end of September through March.

The term 'Redstart' has been picked up from the old English term 'Red' describing the colour, and 'steort' meaning 'tail' in the proto-Germanic language, which is assumed to be the ancestral language of the Germanic group of languages.

The small robin-sized bird (14-15 cm) breeds across the Himalayan Range. It occurs almost



**Reticent creature** Black Redstart at Borit, Gojal, in Gilgit-Baltistan region; (and below) another at Brum Ther ■ IMRAN SHAH/WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

throughout Europe and Asia and in portions of Africa and breed in the high altitude areas of Kashmir, Ladakh, Tibet and the Central Himalayan Range. In their breeding range, the bird is observed to be quite shy and elusive in nature whereas it sees a complete change in character by being one of the most pleasant and friendly of our garden birds during their winter stay here in the city.

In India, the bird essentially sticks to areas near wetlands, open cultivation, scrubs and pleasant gardens and orchards. It savours worms, insects like grasshoppers, or fallen fruits with a curious croaking, a short tsip, tucc-tucc every now and

then. While it mostly forages on the ground for grub, it may also catch insects in flight at times.

The males display black or dark-grey upper parts, black breast, and rufous underparts. The females and younger first-year males however, are almost entirely dusky-brown with rufous-orange wash on their lower flanks and belly. Two races of these birds *P. phoenicuroides* (in Western Himalayas) and *P. Rufiventris* (in Central and Eastern Himalayas), both come to Delhi in the winters. The primary difference between the two races is that the male of the former has a grey crown, nape, and lower back while these are much darker in the latter.

The bird has a black bill (beak)

and legs and the eye colour is mostly dark brown, when seen in good light, else appear dark.

Both sexes display a bright rufous-orange tail that is best seen in flight or when they flash it open while shivering (tail movement) when perched. They do this most often after relishing a meal from the vicinity.

After this month, the bird will return to its preferred breeding grounds. During its stay here, it is generally spread throughout the country, even till the extreme south of the peninsula, frequenting groves of trees, orchards, gardens, and the vicinity of old buildings like the Humayun's Tomb and Hauz Khas in the capital.

The males pair-up and rear their young with females, thereby protecting their partners and offspring against other males. It is not uncommon for these males to also mate with other females in the area. If you're sitting still somewhere, keep an eye out on low branches serve as perches for the Black Redstarts. They tend to have preferred perches they return to, unless disturbed.

*The writer is the founder of the NINOX Owl about Nature, a nature awareness initiative. He formerly led a programme at WWF-India as a naturalist and is the Delhi-NCR reviewer for Ebird, a Cornell University initiative, monitoring rare sightings of birds in the region*

**5 EVENTS WORTH YOUR WHILE****MUSIC**

**Concert**  
India Habitat Centre, in collaboration with Delhi Music Society, is hosting a concert by the Chamber Ensemble of the Symphony Orchestra of India. The band is performing for the first time in Delhi, and will play classical masterworks by Vivaldi, Beethoven, Haydn, and Mozart. Music Director Marat Bisengaliyev will conduct.

**VENUE:** The Stein Auditorium, IHC

**TIME:** 7:30 p.m.

**ART****Mixed media**

An ongoing solo exhibition titled *Metamorphosis of Formations in Tar*, showcases the recent works of artist Simran K.S. Lamba. The artist uses coal tar, ropes, nails, metal discs, and wax to create a variety of mixed-media artwork on canvas, portraits, landscapes, installations, sculptures and figurative works.

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

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

**POETRY****Kavi Sammelan**

All Above Solutions is hosting *Rangotsav 2020*, a *Hasya Kavi Sammelan* this evening. Curated by Ragbab Mandava, Rohan Desai and Shreemayee Das, the event hopes to spread joy on the occasion of Holi. Poets like Dr. Sunil Trivedi, Arun Gemini, Gauri Mishra, and Sardar Manjot Singh will perform and read funny poems.

**VENUE:** Sirifort Auditorium, August Kranti Marg

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

**FESTIVAL****Finding humour**

*Khushwant Singh Humor Fest 2020*, first of its kind, a three-day festival begins today. The fest attempts to look for humour in every aspect of our lives, be it professional or social. The first part will have panel discussions on topics like Humour in Media, while the second part will see acts by stand up comedians.

**VENUE:** Hotel Ambassador, Sujan Singh Park

**TIME:** 12 noon - 10 p.m.

**IAWRT EVENT****Film festival**

The 16th edition of the IAWRT Asian Women's Film Festival begins today. This three-day festival will witness screening of 52 films from 15 countries, all directed by women filmmakers of Asian origin. The festival includes animation, short fiction, documentary and feature films as well as workshops and discussions.

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

**TIME:** 9 a.m. onwards

# Aged to perfection

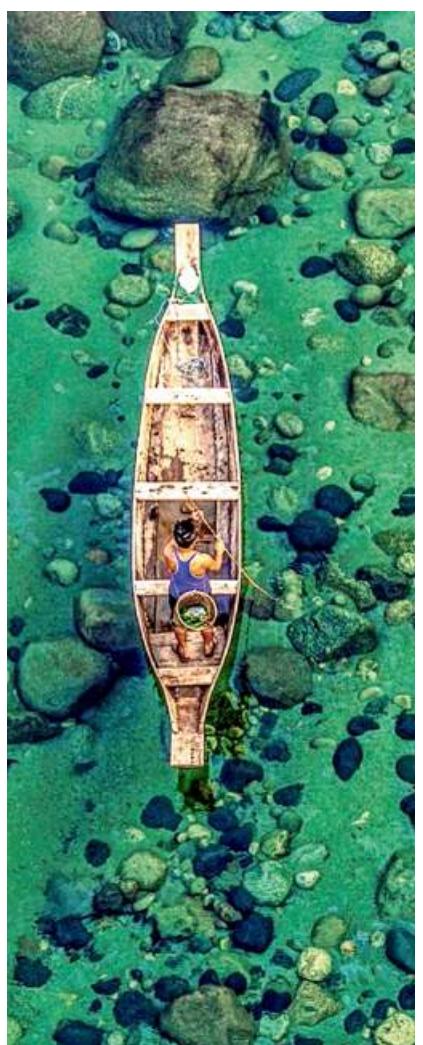
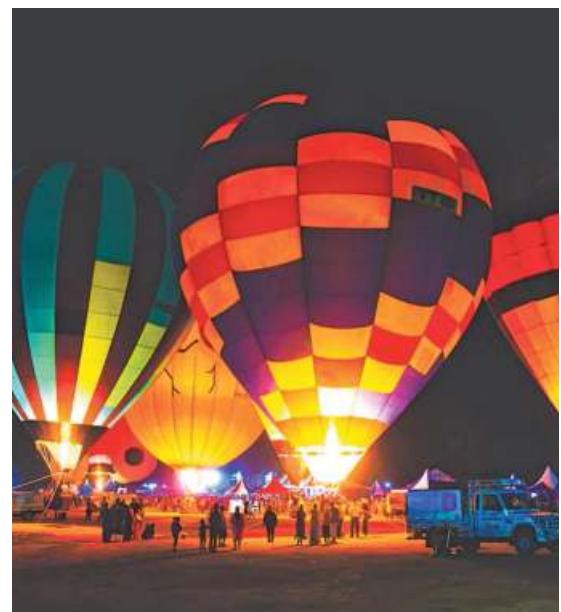
Discover Meghalaya through the maiden edition of a unique tourism festival that will showcase the State's adventure, scenic and cultural hotspots

## FACTFILE

The festival is from March 7 to March 15. For registration and information, look up [www.themeghalayage.com](http://www.themeghalayage.com). Activities and excursions start at ₹5,000 upwards.

**Explore** (Clockwise from right) Dawki; unusual cuisine; root bridge at Mawlynnong and hot air balloon ride

■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT



## REEM KHOKHAR

Explore the world's longest cave systems. Scuba dive in pristine rivers. Wafe through the clouds in a hot air balloon over lush terrain. Glamp in a plush tented colony within the forest. A peek into the lifestyle of the indigenous communities, an example in sustainable living. From March 7 to March 15, the maiden edition of a unique tourism festival will showcase the adventurous, scenic and cultural attractions of Meghalaya in a series of curated experiences.

The Meghalayan Age, an initiative by Meghalayan Tourism and E-Factor, is gearing up for visitors to explore the destination, at varying paces, whether a thrilling excursion through the labyrinth of caves, or a relaxing evening amid the glow of tethered hot air balloons, enjoying some local cuisine and shopping.

Dense forests, dramatic cliffs, mountains cloaked in mist, and gushing streams and waterfalls make up Meghalaya's magnificent natural heritage. The Meghalayan Age aims to promote and position the State as a sustainable tourism hub for conscious visitors from around the globe. "Travellers today want authentic experiences and we want to attract those who are sensitive about our fragile ecology. Unique tourist products like hot air ballooning, caving and glamping are part of new-age experiences designed to immerse the audience in the rare natural and heritage surroundings of this State," says Dr D Vijay Kumar, IAS, Commissioner and Secretary to the Government of Meghalaya.

Hot air balloon rides, with experienced pilots from around the globe will take visitors to the skies in vehicles with quirky names like

Happy Baby Bird and Mellow Yellow. As the sun rises, the balloons will ascend, offering a unique vantage point to admire the rugged and spectacular landscape – a mix of hills, dizzying valleys, plains, shallow dales and startling cliffs.

The extensive cave network that Meghalaya boasts of is still uncharted territory. Carved as water meets limestone and sandstone, the caves have an underground network of magnificent formations and eco-systems, with rare species and fossils from millions of years ago. With expert guides from the Meghalaya Adventurers' Association, avid spelunkers and even virgin explorers, can delve into three of the cave networks as part of the event.

From one of the wettest places on Earth, Sohra, enveloped in mist; to quaint villages like Kudengrim with its old living-roots bridge; from Shnongpdeng, the secret water sports capital; to a cluster of, reportedly, some of the tallest monoliths on earth at Nartiang; and the café culture and shopping in Shillong, the Meghalayan Age includes sightseeing excursions to various parts of the State.

The vibrant music scene will be showcased through live performances by some of the region's most well-known talent, Khasi rock bands, Colours and Strait Brothers; acclaimed blues band, Soulmate; and the 'Bob Dylan of India' – iconic Khasi guitarist, Lou Majaw.

Describing the diverse experiences on offer at the festival, Samit Garg, CEO and co-founder, E-Factor, says "Meghalaya is one of the most amazing undiscovered destinations that offers the perfect balance for travellers, with its young vibrant population, prolific music scene, and an untrdden natural and heritage capital."



## Little-known Angouleme

The south-western city of Angouleme in France is drawing international attention, ever since news broke out that it was the shooting location for Wes Anderson's new film, *The French Dispatch*, the teaser of which was recently unveiled. The city takes pride in its vibrant culture of cartoons and graphic arts, and has also been making a mark for its animation and post-production facilities. Like many European cities, Angouleme also has a historic city centre, old-world architecture and offers breathtaking views from its hills. Reportedly, Wes Anderson's team shot for more than six months in the French city from November 2018. Though international media had an inkling of the shooting in progress, information was not forthcoming from the city officials who were sworn to secrecy. Wes Anderson's story unfolds in a fictional city of Ennui-sur-Blasé in the 1950s, in the aftermath of the Second World War. Angouleme can be accessed from both Bordeaux and Cognac.



## POOCH CAFE



## PEANUTS



## HAGAR THE HORRIBLE



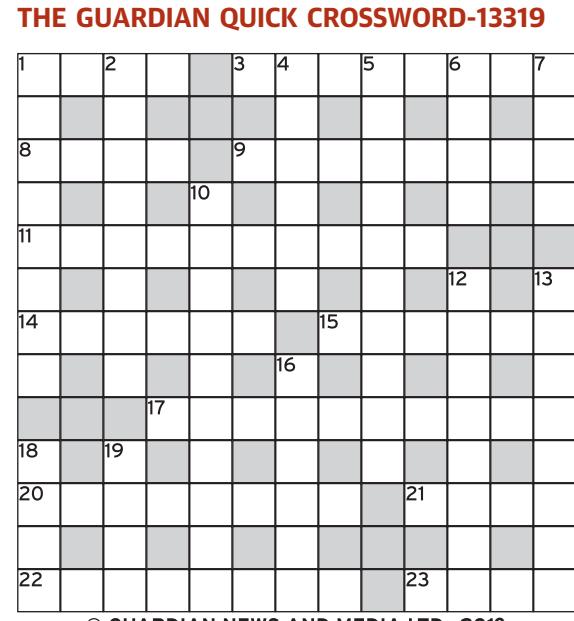
## CALVIN AND HOBBES



## TIGER



## THE GUARDIAN QUICK CROSSWORD-13319

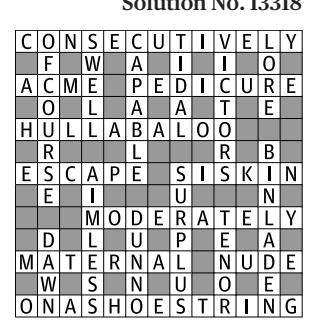


To play The Guardian Quick Crossword, The Hindu Cryptic crossword, Sudoku & other puzzles online, scan the QR code.

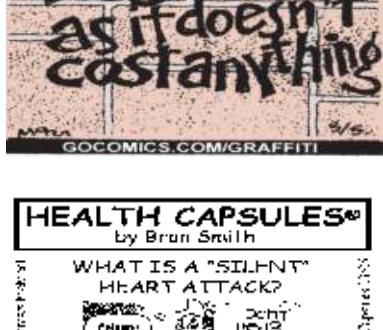
- 7 Milliner's stock (4)  
10 Spent wastefully (10)  
12 Flying (8)  
13 Get together (8)  
16 Young animal (6)  
18 Young animal (4)  
19 Projection to the east end of a church (4)

The solution will appear on March 6, 2020.

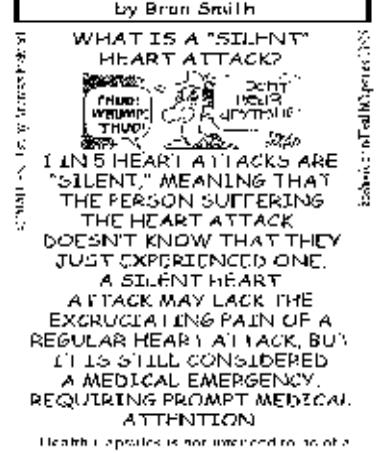
Solution No. 13318



## WUMO



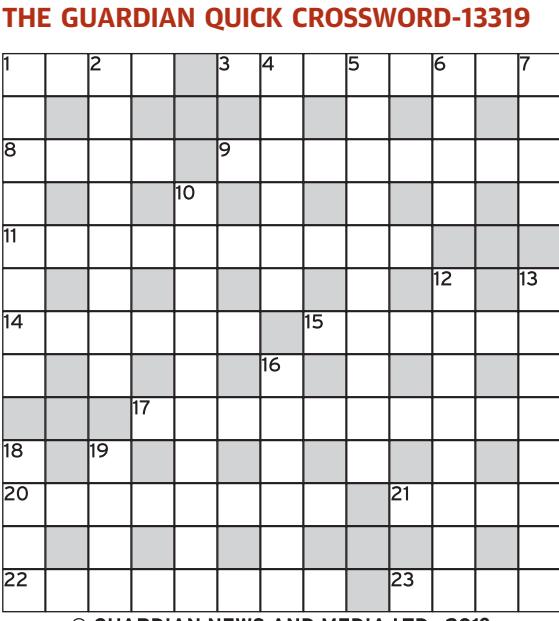
## HEALTH CAPSULES



## PEARLS BEFORE SWINE



## THE GUARDIAN QUICK CROSSWORD-13319



To play The Guardian Quick Crossword, The Hindu Cryptic crossword, Sudoku & other puzzles online, scan the QR code.

- Across  
1 Gone away (4)  
3 Exceed in importance (8)  
8 Informed (4)  
9 Jewellery – clear bet (anag) (8)  
11 Outmoded (10)  
14 Irish county (6)  
15 Tomfoolery (6)  
17 (As evidence in court) valid (10)  
20 Harshness of manner (8)  
21 Beat repeatedly (4)  
22 Tom Jones author, d.1754 (8)  
23 Basic unit of heredity (4)  
■ Down  
1 Torpor (8)  
2 At top speed (4,4)  
4 Clamour (6)  
5 Inquiry (10)  
6 Monty Python's Eric, b. 1943 (4)

N.D.-N.D.

# India seeks maiden spot in the final

After a string of superlative performances, Women in Blue meet England in last-four clash

## T20 WORLD CUP

### PRESS TRUST OF INDIA SYDNEY

Firm title-contender after a sensational unbeaten run in the group stage, India will have to ensure a solid all-round performance to defeat a formidable England in the semifinals of the ICC women's T20 World Cup here on Thursday.

India has been the best side so far and it is seeking a maiden final appearance in the showpiece's history.

India has come up with a string of superlative performances. It began with a win over defending champion Australia and since then has gathered strength with every match, beating Bangladesh, New Zealand and Sri Lanka to top Group A with eight points from four matches.

**England's 100% record**  
The Indians are in red-hot form, but history favours England as it has won all the five matches played between the two sides in this tournament. The last time the two teams met in a T20 World Cup, England won by eight wickets in the semifinals in the West Indies. Before that, India lost in 2009, 2012, 2014 and 2016 editions – all in the group stage.

"After losing the last semifinal, we realised we have to work as a unit. We are not reliant on just one or two players," India captain Harmanpreet Kaur said.

Seven players of this Indian team played in that semifinal and they would be looking to turn the tables on England. India will also take confidence from the victory against England in the tri-series in Australia ahead of the World Cup.

Most of the Indians are in top form with teenage sensation Shafali Verma being the



**Pumped up:** The Indians will hope to take their good form into the semifinal against England. ■ AP

## No reserve day: ICC

### PRESS TRUST OF INDIA SYDNEY

that the apex body declined the request under tournament rules.

"We've asked the question (on a reserve day)," Cricket Australia chief Kevin Roberts was quoted on the radio station SEN. "It's not part of the playing conditions and we respect that," he added.

leading batter with 161 runs from four innings. With an average of 40.25, the 16-year-old is the third highest run-getter in the tournament.

No. 3 Jemimah Rodrigues has made useful contribu-

tions, though she has not scored big so far, with 34 being her highest.

The middle order has also stepped up whenever needed, with Veda Krishnamurthy, Shikha Pandey and Rad-

**G** After losing the last semifinal, we realised we have to work as a unit. We are not reliant on just one or two players.

—HARMANPREET

ha Yadav making their presence felt. Harmanpreet and opener Smriti Mandhana – the two most experienced players – have, however, not lived up to the expectations and the semifinal could be their big comeback.

In bowling, leg-spinner Poonam Yadav is on top of the charts with nine wickets from four matches. She has been ably supported by Shikha Pandey (seven from four).

For England, which quali-

fied for the last four after finishing second in Group B with three wins and one loss, the strength has been its batting.

**The teams (from):** India: Harmanpreet Kaur (Capt.), Jemimah Rodrigues, Shafali Verma, Smriti Mandhana, Shikha Pandey, Poonam Yadav, Deepthi Sharma, Veda Krishnamurthy, Taniya Bhatia (wk), Radha Yadav, Arundhati Reddy, Harleen Deol, Rajeshwari Gayakwad, Richa Ghosh and Pooja Vastrakar.

**England:** Heather Knight (Capt.), Tammy Beaumont, Katherine Brunt, Kate Cross, Freya Davies, Sophie Ecclestone, Georgia Elwiss, Sarah Glenn, Amy Jones (wk), Natalie Sciver, Anya Shrubsole, Mady Villiers, Fran Wilson, Lauren Winfield and Danni Wyatt.

*Match Starts at 9:30 a.m. IST.*

Yes, nobody does it better!

Bowlers win matches and Williamson's smorgasbord of seamers, diverse with different strengths, ambushed India in conditions that assisted swing and on pitches that offered bounce and seam movement.

**Sorting out Kohli**

Just look at the manner New Zealand sorted out Virat Kohli in the series. They had seen videos of the Indian captain, knew he could be vulnerable to deliveries that move either way from the third or fourth stump, and plotted his downfall.

Kohli had run into problems against Southee in the past. So the experienced right-armer was employed against the Indian skipper and he ruthlessly exploited the chink by pitching the ball up and forcing Kohli to play the ball.

Kohli kept dragging his front foot across off-stump and succumbed to deliveries leaving him or darting in.

But the icing on the cake for the Kiwis was how they got Colin de Grandhomme, with his medium-paced swing, to scalp Kohli in the second innings at Christchurch.

The plan was the same but Kohli, aware of the Southee threat, might just have dropped his guard a tad against Grandhomme. But then the ball seamed in, and Kohli was gone.

The Kiwis bowled in partnerships. Cheteshwar Pujara



**Chin music:** On pitches favouring the pacers, the Indian batsmen like Hanuma Vihari were found wanting. ■ AP

has an issue with deliveries nipping back; his defence had been pierced in the past.

And Trent Boult, among the finest left-armers in the business, went round the wicket to swing the ball into him. Pujara, after his conquests in Australia, walked back a defeated man after Boult cleaned him up in the second innings at the Hagley Oval.

**The Jamieson factor**  
And the Kiwis, with cricketing nous, disrupted the footwork of the Indian batsmen. There was Kyle Jamieson, all of 6'8", pushing the batsmen on to the back-foot with his extra bounce.

And after getting the batsmen to travel back with his lift, Jamieson struck with his fuller length deliveries; the batsmen pegged back by bounce, were caught at the crease.

According to Kiwi sources, as soon as Jamieson troubled India in the ODI series with his line, lift and movement, a decision was made to play him in the eleven against India. His batting was a bonus. And Jamieson's four and five-wicket hauls in the Indian first innings at both Wellington and Christchurch opened the Tests for New Zealand. The breach had been made.

And Williamson might have been humming the Carly Simon song!

New Zealand's right and left-arm seamers were all

brilliant in a key aspect. Using the crease and creating the angles. And on the field, the brilliant Williamson had the angles covered.

Indeed, the combination of accurate bowling from both ends and flexible and quickly changing fields with aggressive intent – there were men in the cordon, at short-legs, and fielders in person were L. Sivaramakrishnan, Venkatesh Prasad and Rajesh Chauhan.

**First task**

The rejigged selection panel's first task will be to pick India's squad for three ODIs at home against South Africa, starting March 12. *The Hindu* understands that the selection committee meeting is likely to be convened on March 6 (Friday).

The Kiwi pacemen also psyched out the Indian batsmen with short-pitched bowling in the first Test.

The short stuff's key exponent Neil Wagner was missing in Wellington but Boult and Southee contained and struck with lifting deliveries from different angles. The Indian batsmen went into a

so much so that the Indians decided to hook and pull everything thrown at them in the second Test where the surface was quicker than Wellington.

They fell hook, line and sinker into the Kiwi trap. Though the shot fetched the Indians some runs, it let them down at critical moments of the game; Hanuma Vihari and Pujara, in the first, and Prithvi Shaw and Ajinkya Rahane, in the second, being key examples.

And Williamson might have been humming the Carly Simon song!

New Zealand's right and left-arm seamers were all

## Joshi and Harvinder named selectors

The former, most-capped Test cricketer among the five, will chair the committee

### AMOL KARHADKAR RAJKOT

Former India left-arm spinner Sunil Joshi and his contemporary pacer Harvinder Singh emerged as dark horses in the race for the two vacant national selectors' posts. While Joshi, on the basis being the most-capped Test cricketer, will chair the five-member panel in place of M.S.K. Prasad, Harvinder comes in for Gagan Khoda.

Joshi and Harvinder's appointment was announced by the BCCI secretary Jay Shah in a statement after the Cricket Advisory Committee (CAC) interviewed five shortlisted candidates at the BCCI headquarters in Mumbai on Wednesday. The other candidates who appeared in person were L. Sivaramakrishnan, Venkatesh Prasad and Rajesh Chauhan.

**CAC chief** Madal Lal, former World Cup-winner and India coach, clarified that of the 40-plus candidates who had applied for the two posts, "we only considered those guys – one from South and one from Centre". This confirmed that the BCCI office-bearers, despite president Sourav Ganguly stating that the zonal policy will be discontinued, made a volte-face.

The BCCI statement also



**Bracing up:** Sunil Joshi, Harvinder Singh and Rajesh Chauhan arrive for the interview in Mumbai. ■ PTI

confirmed that Joshi and Harvinder have been offered "one-year" contract which will be reviewed by CAC, while the other three survivors in the selection committee will be replaced "later this year" since their tenure is expiring in September.

### PRIORITY

According to Rudra Pratap Singh, Lal's colleague in CAC along with Sulakshana Naik, "Those who played Test

confirmed that Joshi and Harvinder have been offered "one-year" contract which will be reviewed by CAC, while the other three survivors in the selection committee will be replaced "later this year" since their tenure is expiring in September.

### Priority

According to Rudra Pratap Singh, Lal's colleague in CAC along with Sulakshana Naik, "Those who played Test

## 'Shafali has brought positivity'

When batting with her she's motivating you: Harmanpreet

### PRESS TRUST OF INDIA SYDNEY

Teenager Shafali Verma has not only lit up the ICC Women's T20 World Cup with her explosive batting but also added immense happiness and positivity to the Indian team off the field, feels captain Harmanpreet Kaur.

Ahead of Thursday's semi-final showdown against England at the Sydney Cricket Ground, her captain acknowledged what the fresh-faced 16-year-old has offered India behind the scenes.

"She's very naughty, gets so much happiness and positivity to the team, always wants to enjoy it," Harmanpreet said.

"When batting with her, she's motivating you and releasing the pressure, that kind of player you need in your team. Whoever is playing, wants to give their best, she's enjoying for the team."

Harmanpreet said "now



Harmanpreet. ■ GETTY IMAGES

this team has been together for a long time, we learn a lot from each other, learn a lot of cricket. It makes it easier for players such as Shafali because when anybody enters the team, they see everyone is working together.

They also feel nice and try to do what others are doing."

Harmanpreet insisted that everyone is being handed out their roles to ensure

## Teenager heads T20I rankings

### PRESS TRUST OF INDIA SYDNEY

Shafali Verma on Wednesday rose to the top spot in the ICC women's T20 International rankings.

Shafali takes over from New Zealand's Suzie Bates, who had been the top batter since October 2018.

Poonam Yadav is up four places to eighth.

that the team continues to perform well.

"Right now, what we are trying to do is give individual roles so that everyone can come and perform for the team."

## Have to see how best I can get them along: Joshi

the same page for the betterment of Indian cricket."

The former left-arm spinner from Karnataka, who in the last two years has had stints with Bangladesh and the United States as spin bowling consultant, thanked CAC members for reposing faith in him.

### First task

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The BCCI statement also

## Ngidi, Malan star for SA

### AUSTRALIA IN SA

#### REUTERS

#### BLOEMFONTEIN

Opener Janneman Malan struck a sparkling unbeaten century to guide South Africa to a six-wicket win over Australia in the second ODI here on Wednesday which sealed 2-0 victory in the three-match series.

While Lal stressed that neither president nor secretary interfered in the selection process, it is understood that Joshi emerged favourite once the BCCI office-bearers were a divided lot on the other two candidates from South Zone and Harvinder

pipped Chauhan following a recommendation of a former influential BCCI office-bearer.

## Rutuja, Ankita win it for India

## West Indies beats Sri Lanka

### REUTERS

#### KANDY

West Indies all-rounder Kieron Pollard (34, 15b) became the first player to play 500 T20 matches and only the second player to amass 10,000 runs in the format during the 25-run win over Sri Lanka on Wednesday.

Skipper Pollard, who had 9,966 career runs across both international and franchise cricket prior to this game, joined compatriot Chris Gayle (13,296 runs) in the 10,000 runs club.

West Indies scored 196 for four in its allotted 20 overs while Sri Lanka was bundled out for 171, with fast bowler Oshane Thomas picking up five wickets to give the visitors a 1-0 lead in the two-match series.

**The scores:** West Indies 196/4 in 20 overs (L. Simmons 67 no., A. Russell 35, K. Pollard 34, B. King 33) bt Sri Lanka 171 in 19.1 overs (K. Perera 66, W. Hasaranga 44, Thomas 5/28).

**Rutuja, Ankita win it for India**

### FED CUP

#### SPORTS BUREAU

#### DUBAI

Rutuja Bhosale and Ankita Raina helped India take a 2-0 lead over Uzbekistan in the second league match of the Fed Cup Asia-Oceania group-1 women's tennis tournament on Wednesday.

Rutuja fought her way past Akgul Amanmuradova 2-6, 6-2, 7-5 in the first rubber, and Ankita overwhelmed Sabina Sharipova 7-5, 6-1 in the second rubber, after having trailed 3-5 in the first set.

China beat Indonesia 3-0, while Chinese Taipei beat Korea 2-1.

**The results (league):** India leads Uzbekistan 2-0 (Rutuja, Bhosale bt Akgul Amanmuradova 2-6, 6-2, 7-5; Ankita Raina bt Sabina Sharipova 7-5, 6-1).

# Arun Lal – the man behind Bengal's march

His rigorous coaching method, which came in for criticism, now stands vindicated

**Y.B. SARANGI**  
KOLKATA

Coach Arun Lal, the hard task-master who oversaw Bengal's magical journey in the Ranji Trophy this season, says there is no magic formula and there is no substitute for hard work.

In fact, hard work was the magic mantra that scripted the revival of Bengal. The side found itself in a soup every now and then but found a way to fight back.

"It's the team which matters, individuals don't," Lal kept saying. Six debutants, including 31-year-old seamer Nilkantha Das, got to serve Bengal even as the established ones contributed as well.

The Vision 2020 programme – which extended its sphere to include the Ranji players – helped.

#### Foundation

The foundation of the turnaround was laid in the pre-season. Since July 25, the players have gone through rigorous training to be ready for bigger challenges.

Lal shared how Bishan Bedi once put the Punjab team through a back-breaking pre-season.

"He made the guys run. Even if someone threw up, then he said, 'Okay, now do another round.' The 200-odd boys came down to 120 and eventually to 40."

Lal added, "When I made



**Dream run:** Bengal displayed commendable resilience to overcome tight situations time and again. ■ PTI

these boys run for 25

rounds, there was a lot of contribution. "Lal sir is very upright and speaks from the heart. He keeps everyone under pressure."

Bowling consultant Ranadeb Bose adds, "Lalji has not been talking about winning Ranji Trophy, he has been talking about doing our job well."

Even in the absence of Ashoke Dinda and Mohammed Shami, the lesser-known pacers showed discipline and worked like a team. As a bowling unit, Bengal has given away a maximum of 250 runs in an innings only once.

Ishan Porel (22 wickets) evened his performance, Mukesh (30) showed maturity,

Akash Deep (30) made an impact in his debut season and Nilkantha was exceptional within his limits.

When the top-order batting failed on several instances, the middle order rose to the occasion. Anustup Majumdar (641 runs) and Shahbaz Ahmed (493 runs, 30 wickets) produced some match-winning performances.

Tiwary (672) also played his part in crucial moments.

Ahead of the final against Saurashtra, Lal said, "We have got a fabulous group of boys. Yet we are below our potential.

"God helps the opposition when we get everything right."

## 3x3 Olympic basketball qualification put off

**ASHWIN ACHAL**  
BENGALURU

The FIBA 3x3 Olympic basketball qualification tournament has been postponed, on account of the coronavirus that has affected several

parts of the world.

The tournament was scheduled to commence at the Sree Kanteerava Stadium here on March 18.

The revised schedule has not been decided yet.

A statement from FIBA mentioned that the tournament has been postponed "after careful consideration, due to the ongoing developments of the COVID-19 virus."

Japan, South Korea and Italy – nations badly affected by the coronavirus – were among the competing teams in this tournament.

The postponement causes complications in the Olympic qualification process.

Former captain Manoj Tiwary acknowledges Lal's

contribution.

These boys run for 25

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"God helps the opposition when we get everything right."

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## Adapting to situations is part of an athlete's routine'

Abhinav Bindra optimistic of a good haul by the Indian shooters at Tokyo

**KAMESH SRINIVASAN**  
GURUGRAM

Former World and Olympic champion Abhinav Bindra emphasised that adapting to situations and preparing well for competitions was part of an athlete's routine, and that the current uncertainty caused by the outbreak of the coronavirus, was an added challenge before the Tokyo Olympics.

"Those who accept the challenge and adapt well, will be successful", said Bindra. Addressing the media at the launch of the sixth ABTP (Abhinav Bindra Targeting Performance) Centre in collaboration with Daivam Wellness, Bindra said that the International Olympic Committee (IOC) was monitoring the situation and would take appropriate measures. He sought patience when queried about the possibility of the Olympics getting postponed, and goaded the athletes to prepare their best.

Expressing high hopes about India winning more medals than the six it had won in London in 2012, Bindra was particularly optimistic about a good haul by the Indian shooters as they go to Tokyo as favourites.

Saying that he was delighted with the collaboration, Bindra stressed that he believed "in the holistic well



**Upbeat:** Abhinav Bindra, with Sanjay Sachdeva and Dr. Alok Chopra of Daivam Wellness, at the launch of the sixth ABTP centre in Gurugram. ■ KAMESH SRINIVASAN

nately go past the six medals won in London. So many athletes who have qualified for the Olympics, have won at the highest level. Our shooters will be favourites. They can win multiple medals. It will be interesting to see how potential translates into medals", observed Bindra.

"Am sure our shooters will be well prepared. Some of the young shooters have the experience of competing in the Youth Olympics", said Bindra, as he pointed out the experience of the big stage, especially for the young athletes.

Expressing high hopes about India winning more medals than the six it had won in London in 2012, Bindra was particularly optimistic about a good haul by the Indian shooters as they go to Tokyo as favourites.

"On paper, we can defi-

being of the human being."

#### Looking back

Looking back at his sports career, Bindra recalled that he did have a fair share of injuries and did not deal with them effectively at times.

"The life of an athlete is unique and short. They will be injured. Our focus is to get the athlete back into action quickly. Generally, we treat the symptoms, and don't go to the root cause of the problem. We do now", he said.

The Founder and Medical Director of Daivam Wellness, Dr. Alok Chopra, said that the approach was to make the person strong by tackling lifestyle, nutrition, environment and mental attitude, so as to make the person deal

with anything that affects good health.

#### Holistic healing

The Founder and CEO of Daivam Wellness, Sanjay Sachdeva, also highlighted the "holistic healing" system, by strengthening the human body, both physically and mentally.

On his part Bindra said that it was important to utilise the technology and knowledge both for athletes and normal persons, to benefit all.

"Some of our centres are more focused towards athletes because of their location. It is important to make it available for non-athletes and normal persons. Some centres cater to 90% normal people, and 10% athletes. It helps to achieve commercial feasibility by catering to a larger population", he said.

After it started in Mohali, the ABTP has been set up in Bengaluru, Pune, Bhubaneswar and Delhi.

"Through Daivam, we have found a partner that not only complements the work we do, but also helps the benefit of holistic physical excellence reach Gurugram residents from all walks of life", Bindra said.

## Sakshi advances

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**  
NEW DELHI

tion issued," the Athletics Integrity Unit said.

She had won a bronze in 10,000m at the Federation Cup National Championships in March last year in Patiala. Representing Haryana, she originally finished fourth with a time of 35:49.96 but it was upgraded to bronze after Sanjiv Jadhav was stripped of her gold due to a doping offence.

Kaur had also taken part in the 5000m race in Patiala and finished fifth.

round bout after both the boxers got opening-round bounces.

Sakshi will next be up against Korea's Im Aeji on March 9. Making the semi-finals would assure her of a spot in the Tokyo Olympics scheduled in July-August this year.

**The results:** Men: First round: 57kg: Gaurav Solanki bt Alykbebek Esenbek Uulu (Kyn); 75kg: Ashish Kumar bt Kan Chia-Wei (Tpe). Women: Pre-quarterfinals: 57kg: Sakshi Chaudhary bt Nilawan Techasuep (Tha).

**MARUTI SUZUKI**

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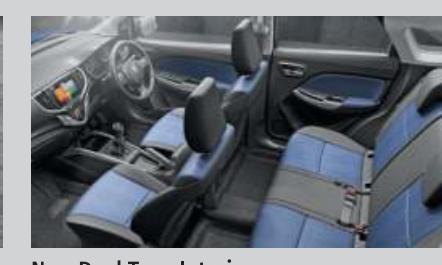
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