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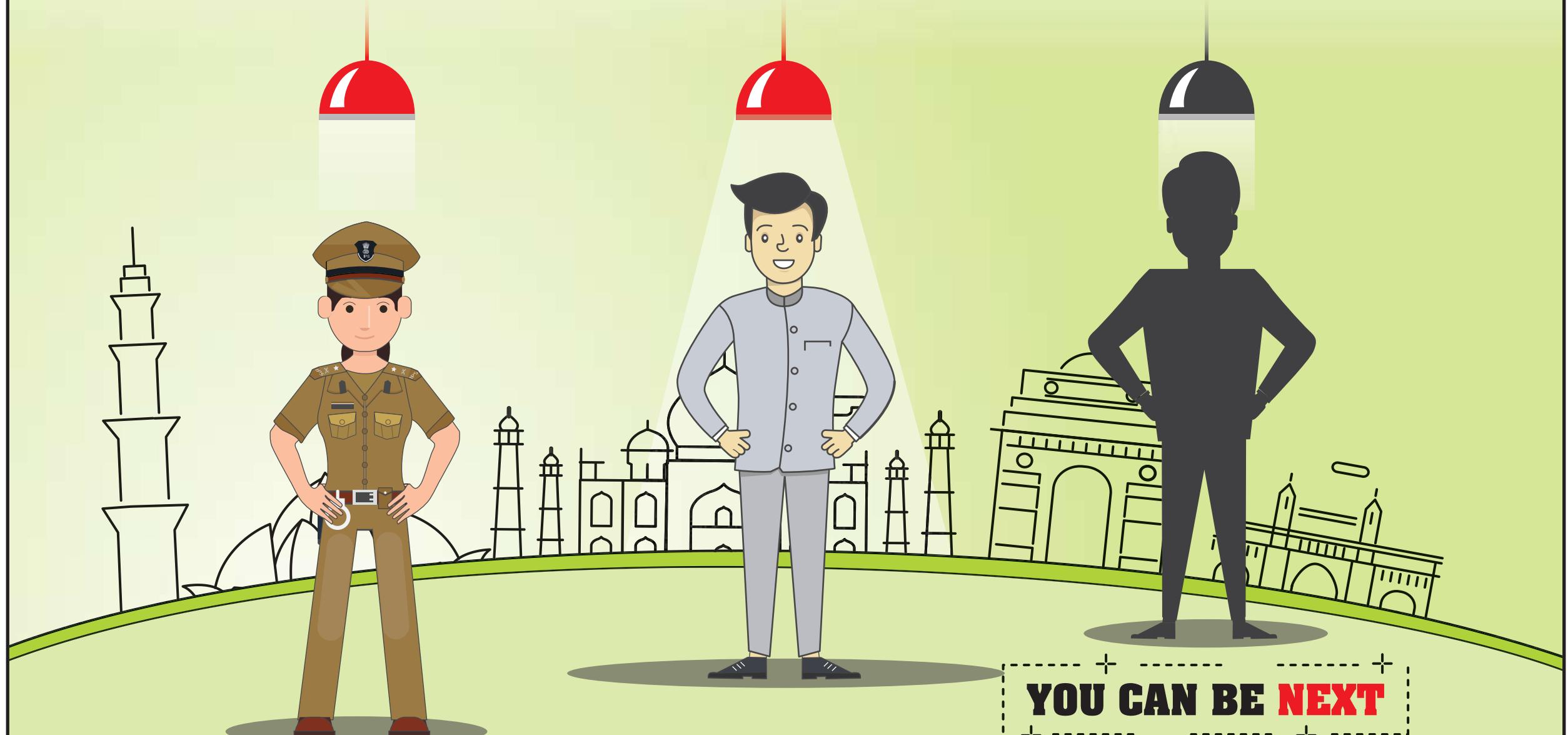


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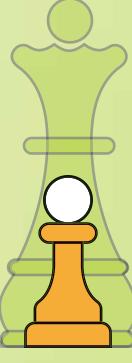
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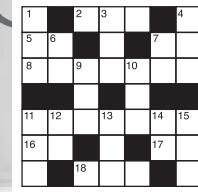
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THE HINDU GROUP

NEARBY



Gujar stir hits life for fourth day

JAIPUR
As the Gujar agitation for 5% reservation in government jobs and education entered its fourth day on Monday, protesters blocked the Jaipur-Agra National Highway at Sikandra in Rajasthan's Dausa district.

NATION ▶ PAGE 7

Bhupen Hazarika's Bharat Ratna tied to Bill

GUWAHATI
Tez Hazarika, the U.S.-based son of Bhupen Hazarika, has said that accepting or rejecting the Bharat Ratna, bestowed posthumously on his father, depends on "how the Centre moves" on the citizenship Bill.

NEWS ▶ PAGE 11

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DELHI METRO ▶ 4 PAGES

Opposition hits out at govt. over Rafale

Rahul leads Congress attack in the light of *The Hindu*'s report; CPI(M) wants the SC to revisit its ruling

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Congress led the Opposition parties in attacking the Narendra Modi government over the Rafale fighter aircraft deal both in Parliament and outside following Monday's report in *The Hindu* that crucial anti-corruption safeguards were dropped from the final agreement.

While Congress president Rahul Gandhi said the government had waived anti-corruption clauses to open the door for Anil Ambani to "steal" ₹30,000 crore, former Union Finance Minister P. Chidambaram said the deal was "unravelling faster than the government thought."

In Parliament, senior Congress leader Veerappa Moily led the charge and said that if anybody had to be held guilty in the deal, "it is the PM and PM alone."

Fit case for Lokpal
During a discussion on the interim Budget, Mr. Moily said, "Now it is crystal clear why the Lokpal [law] is not being implemented. If it had

Government faces the heat

 The Prime Minister became Prime Minister by saying he is going to fight corruption. Have you read *The Hindu* today and yesterday?
RAHUL GANDHI, Congress president

 ...to get to the bottom of this mega scam, it is imperative to conduct a high-level probe
SITARAM YECHURY, CPI(M) general secretary

 The Rafale issue has exposed the chinks in the government's armour
SAUGATA ROY, Trinamool Congress

 The entire truth can be brought out only if it is probed by a Joint Parliamentary Committee
D. RAJAN, CPI leader

A day after *The Hindu* report detailing how the government waived anti-corruption clauses in the Rafale deal, the Opposition parties intensified their attack on Prime Minister Narendra Modi

 Corruption & corrupt defence deal. No problem! Chowkidar is important for the BJP/RSS, not his honesty?
MAYAWATI, BSP president

been in place, the Prime Minister would have been number one accused."

In an apparent reference to Mr. Modi's comments about his "56-inch chest," Mr. Moily said, "When the bullet of corruption is hit, his broad shoulders cannot bear it."

The CPI(M) said that *The Hindu* report showed that the Prime Minister's Office was facilitating the loot of

the exchequer, adding that the Supreme Court should revisit its ruling dismissing calls for an investigation.

"The PMO was conducting parallel negotiations keeping the official negotiating team in the dark. The PMO refused the suggestion of an escrow account. Not only was there no sovereign guarantee from the French government but it now appears that the PMO also batted for no bank gua-

rantees. All this to facilitate the loot of the Indian exchequer by the Prime Minister's crony capitalist friend," the party's Polit Bureau said in a statement.

BSP president Mayawati, a recent entrant to Twitter, tweeted: "Corruption & corrupt defence deal, No problem! Chowkidar is important for the BJP/RSS, not his honesty?" She then said, "People of the country have

'Waived in other pacts'

Air Marshal S.B.P. Sinha (retired), who led India's negotiating team on the Rafale deal, said there was no anti-corruption clause even in the Inter-Governmental Agreements with Russia and the U.S. "Russia's proposal for VVIP helicopters fell through as it declined to give an integrity pact. All the Foreign Military Sales procurements with the U.S. do not have an integrity pact," he said. ▶ PAGE 10

to decide what to do with the Chowkidar and his so-called honesty."

In a tweet tagging *The Hindu*'s report, Mr. Gandhi said, "NoMo anti-corruption clause. The Chowkidar himself opened the door to allow Anil Ambani to steal 30,000 Cr. from the IAF."

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 10
CAG REPORT TO BE TABLED IN LOK SABHA TODAY ▶ PAGE 10

Naidu's fast turns show of strength

All major Opposition parties attend

SOBHANA K NAIR
NEW DELHI

All the major Opposition parties on Monday converged at Andhra Bhawan, where Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu along with all his legislators, MPs and Ministers observed a 12-hour fast protesting against the Narendra Modi government's failure to deliver the promised special category state status to Andhra Pradesh. This was the second time the Opposition got together in a month.

The last such gathering was at a rally by West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee in Kolkata protesting against the CBI's alleged misconduct.

Left parties skip event

The CPI and the CPI (M) skipped the event since they are part of the Pawan Kalyan-led front against the TDP in Andhra Pradesh.

Opening the day-long protest for justice, Mr. Nai-



Leaders of Opposition parties with Chandrababu Naidu in New Delhi. ▶ PTI

du said Prime Minister Narendra Modi did not follow "raj dharma." Atal Bihari Vajpayee said 'raj dharma' was not followed in Gujarat [during the 2002 riots]. Now, raj dharma is not being followed in the case of Andhra Pradesh.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 10
NAIDU'S POLITICAL FORTUNES DECLINING: AMIT SHAH ▶ PAGE 10

Pak. cleric's remarks on Kashmir red-flagged

SUHASINI HAIDAR
VIJAYA SINGH
NEW DELHI

Pakistani cleric Tahir-ul-Qadri's visit to India has run into trouble after security agencies red-flagged his recent speech that "Kashmiris should be able to choose freedom through a plebiscite."

Visa blocked
His visa was cleared by the Ministry of External Affairs, but the Home Ministry is learnt to have blocked it, sources said.

Mr. Qadri has been associated with Prime Minister Imran Khan's campaigns in the past, and his visit was being seen as a confidence-building measure.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 10

Political plunge



Campaign mode: Launching herself into the Lok Sabha poll campaign, Priyanka Gandhi Vadra – Congress general secretary in charge of east Uttar Pradesh – held a roadshow in Lucknow on Monday. Rahul Gandhi accompanied her. ▶ RAJEEV BHATT (PAGE 11)

Ahead of poll, T.N. govt. dishes out ₹2,000 to every BPL family

The post-budget announcement to cost the State ₹1,200 cr.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI

Just days after Tamil Nadu Deputy Chief Minister O. Panneerselvam presented a "financially prudent" Budget without any populist schemes, Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami on Monday *suo motu* announced a one-time, special financial assistance of ₹2,000 for every Below Poverty Line (BPL) family in the State. Sixty lakh families are eligible for the assistance.

Making a statement under Rule 110 of the Assembly, Mr. Palaniswami said the special financial assistance was being extended to the BPL families "in view of the damages caused by cyclone Gaja and the ongoing drought due to the failure of monsoon."

As many as 35 lakh families in rural areas and 25



lakh families in urban constituencies would receive the dole.

Supplementary Budget
"A sum of ₹1,200 crore would be allocated in the demand for grants in the supplementary Budget for 2018-19," Mr. Palaniswami said.

The BPL families include those with agricultural labourers, urban poor, workers involved in the firework industry, fish workers, workers involved in hand looms and power looms, construction workers and those in the laundry sector.

Workers in salt pans, the leather industry and tanneries, conservancy workers, persons involved in pottery, artisans, among others would also benefit, the Chief Minister added.

An old racket surfaces on new sites

Claiming to represent reputed firms, fraudsters prey on the desperate unemployed

SANGEETHA KANDAVEL
SANJAY VIJAYAKUMAR
CHENNAI

Recently Infosys, on its verified Facebook page, posted a notice asking job-seekers not to fall prey to scammers posting about non-existent job openings with the IT major.

The notice said: "We have observed that there has been an increase in #recruitment #fraud involving scammers who post fraudulent job openings or who contact job-seekers with fake #joboffers. Infosys does not charge/accept any amount or security deposit from job seekers during the recruitment process."

In a tight job market, conmen have moved on from asking desperate youth to pay up a security deposit for promised jobs only to vanish with the money. The fraudsters now claim to act



ILLUSTRATION: SATHEESH VELLINEZHI

and agreed to pay ₹15,000 as "training deposit". After I handed over the cash, there was no trace of the agency. It was so embarrassing to tell them I got cheated."

Akash* also faced a similar issue. "I lost ₹20,000 online to a person who even sent me the offer letter but

then vanished. I was scared that no one would recruit me if they found out I had gone to the police," he said.

The Human Resources head of an IT firm, requesting anonymity, said people who are desperate for jobs are soft targets for job racketeers.

Even campus recruitment are not proof against these unscrupulous elements. The placement officer of a reputed college, said three months ago, he had received several suspicious requests from a particular email ID to refer students seeking jobs; for a payment of ₹10,000, the students would get assured jobs, the emailer promised.

HR managers of top firms have suggested that a common helpline be set up to address these issues.

(*Names changed on request)

Former India seamer assaulted by player

Amit Bhandari was conducting selection trials for the Delhi team

VIJAY LOKAPALLY
HEMANI BHANDARI
NEW DELHI

Former India seamer Amit Bhandari was on Monday assaulted by a player and his accomplices at the St. Stephen's College ground near Mori Gate. Mr. Bhandari was conducting selection trials for the Delhi team for Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy when the incident happened.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (North) Nupur Prasad said the police received information about the incident around 1.15 p.m.

"A case under Sections 308 (attempt to commit culpable homicide), 506 (punishment for criminal intimidation), and 34 (common intention) of the Indian Penal Code has been registered and the main accused, Anuj Dheda, and another named Naresh have been arrested," she said.

Mr. Bhandari, in his complaint to investigators, said

vicious. Bhandari was beaten up by this group even as he kept running to save himself," the eyewitness said.

Mr. Bhandari, who is the chairman of the State senior selection committee, was being assisted by co-selectors Sukhvinder Singh, Mohan Chaturvedi and manager of the team Shankar Saini. He had reportedly been receiving threats for some time and had told his colleagues about it.

Delhi coaches Mithun Manhas and Parwinder Awana tried their best to stop the attackers but were overpowered by the group.

DDCA president Rajat Sharma met Mr. Bhandari at Sant Parmanand Hospital.

"He has been grievously injured and received stitches on his head. I have assured him that the DDCA is with him and we will take strictest possible action against those involved in the cowardly attack," said Mr. Bhandari.

Sharma. Mr. Bhandari is said to be out of danger.

Life ban demand
Former India opener Gautam Gambhir, who is also a friend of Mr. Bhandari, tweeted, "Disgusted to see this happen in the heart of the Capital. This can't slip under the carpet and I will personally ensure it doesn't."

To begin with I am calling for a life ban from all cricket for the player who orchestrated this attack post his non-selection."

Terminating it a planned attack, Mr. Saini said it was "scary" and something he had never experienced in Delhi before. "It happened in a flash. I saw Bhandari being beaten up. One of the men threatened to shoot us. We spotted a constable and that kind of saved the day. One of the assaulters was caught at the exit," he said.

SEE ALSO ▶ PAGE 10

CM YK

M-NDE

DELHI Timings	
TUESDAY, FEB. 12	
RISE 07:02 SET 18:09	
WEDNESDAY, FEB. 13	
RISE 07:02 SET 18:09	
THURSDAY, FEB. 14	
RISE 07:01 SET 18:10	
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Delhi Weather

max min

Delhi City 22 07

Safdarjung 22 07

Palam 22 08

Delhi Palam Today

22°C A cold morning is likely.

Shallow fog with moderate fog

is likely in few parts.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow

23°C Rise in day and night

temperatures is likely.

Clouding will increase over the

area.

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Lawyers' strike hits court work**CORRESPONDENT**

CUTTACK

Judicial activities in Odisha were severely hampered on Monday as lawyers of all the Bar Associations of the State, including that of the Orissa High Court, stayed away from court proceedings and joined the two-day nationwide demonstrations in response to a call given by the Bar Council of India.

Shutdown against Bill hits life in Manipur

Six women vendors, one policewoman hurt in clashes

IBOYAIMA LAITHANGBAM

IMPHAL

Normal life was thrown out of gear in Manipur on Monday as a result of protests by various groups against the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2016, which is pending in the Rajya Sabha.

Six women vendors and one policewoman were injured during a clash between the two sides at a city market on Sunday. Hundreds of women vendors were staging protests against the Bill in the four markets within Imphal city. They blocked roads, affecting vehicular movement, and forced traders to close their shops.

'Excessive force'

Police and paramilitary personnel tried to remove them but the women refused to budge. Soon a clash erupted between the two sides and the security personnel had to fire tear-gas canisters and mock bombs to disperse the protesters. The injured women were taken to Regional Institute of Medical Sciences for treatment.

Criticising the use of "excessive force" on the protesters, Y. Dillipkumar, convenor of Manipur People



Manipur Chief Minister N. Biren Singh • FILE PHOTO

Against Citizenship Amendment Bill, said the women were "agitating in a democratic manner".

The assault on the women vendors indicates that the State government is acting under the command of the Union government, he claimed, adding that the agitation will intensify in the days to come.

The women protesters returned to the main market to resume their protest on Sunday night. M. Babyratna, a woman vendor-activist, said their shutdown will continue till 5 p.m. on Tuesday. Some women vendors alleged that those who turned up on Monday morning to sell fish and vegetables were intercepted and their items were thrown away on the roads.

(With inputs from PTI)

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Thiruvananthapuram
08.02.2019

COMMISSIONER FOR ENTRANCE EXAMINATIONS

Now, BJP wants Mamata's sit-in spot

'If the TMC was allowed to organise a dharna there, why can't we do it?'

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
KOLKATA**

The BJP's West Bengal unit has sought permission from the Kolkata police to conduct a dharna later this month at the same spot in the city where Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee had organised a sit-in demonstration last week.

The party has already sent a letter to the city police seeking permission for the dharna at the Metro Channel in the heart of the city between February 21 and 23, BJP State general secretary Sayantan Basu said on Monday. An e-mail would also be sent to the police in the matter, he said.

The "Save Democracy" dharna will raise demand of



West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on a dharna in Kolkata. • FILE PHOTO

"restoring democracy in the State", he said.

Mr. Basu said, "Whenever in the past we had asked for permission to organise a sit-in demonstration at the Metro Channel, the police de-

nied us permission citing

traffic rules. But if the Trinamool Congress was allowed to organise a dharna there, why can't we do it?"

Ms. Banerjee, also the Tri-

namool Congress chief, was on dharna from February 3 to 5 at the Metro Channel in Esplanade area to "Save the Constitution" after the CBI's failed bid to question Kolkata Police Commissioner Rajeev Kumar in connection with the chit fund cases.

"We hope that we will also get the permission. We will not use loudspeakers as it is examination time," the BJP leader said.

When contacted, Kolkata Police officers said they were yet to receive any such application from the BJP.

"If we receive it, we will take a call," said an officer.

The Metro Channel is also the same spot where Ms. Banerjee had held a 26-day fast against the acquisition of farm land for the Tata Motors' small car unit at Singur in 2006.

Naveen asks PM to make Kisan Scheme more inclusive

'Include landless labourers, sharecroppers in the scheme'

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BHUBANESWAR**

Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik on Monday wrote a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi requesting him to consider the inclusion of landless labourers, sharecroppers and vulnerable households under the PM Kisan Samman Nidhi Scheme.

Welcoming the announcement of the new Central scheme for augmenting the income of farmers by providing support, Mr. Patnaik said that the inclusion of landless labourers, sharecroppers and vulnerable households will make the scheme more inclusive.

In his letter, the Chief Minister brought to Mr. Modi's notice that the Odisha government has rolled out the Krushak Assistance for Livelihood and Income Augmentation (KALIA) to further accelerate agricultural prosperity and reduce poverty in the State.

"The KALIA recognises that livestock and fishery-based activities are key drivers of economic growth in rural areas particularly for landless households as the income from wage labour alone is not sufficient," said Mr. Patnaik.

Mr. Patnaik informed Mr. Modi that the KALIA scheme



Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik in Bhubaneswar. • FILE PHOTO

covers 92% of the cultivators, sharecroppers (actual cultivators) and landless agricultural labourers in the State.

"It (KALIA) recognises that livestock and fishery-based activities are key drivers of economic growth in rural areas particularly for landless households as the income from wage labour alone is not sufficient," he added.

Reacting to the announcement of the PM scheme, Mr. Patnaik had said that it would have benefited the farmers more if the quantum of assistance was equal or more than the KALIA scheme which is ₹10,000 pa.

cultivation or the livelihood activities due to various reasons.

The scheme, rolled out in January, has created huge interest and response amongst the farming community of the State, said Mr. Patnaik. "It shall be our endeavour to ensure that all eligible beneficiaries are assisted under the scheme, so that no one who is eligible is left out," he added.

Reacting to the announcement of the PM scheme, Mr. Patnaik had said that it would have benefited the farmers more if the quantum of assistance was equal or more than the KALIA scheme which was necessary.

When the Bench said children are writing their examinations and hinted at dismissing the plea, the counsel offered to withdraw it, which was allowed.

Brand connect initiative

Preventing Youth Suicide

To prevent youngsters from committing suicide, Dr Siva Mathiyazhagan co-founded 'Trust for Youth and Child Leadership' (TYCL) 8 years ago.

"Our organization is 100% run by volunteers and we work

operation soon. TYCL helpline received 288 calls from the people of Puducherry between the ages of 14 to 35 last year, which is three times higher than the number of calls received in 2017. Nearly 50% of the callers

through 13 different programs, and have helped thousands of children, young people and their families. Our current focus is achieving our 'three zeroes' campaign by 2030, which includes zero youth suicide, zero violence against children and zero anti-environmental behaviour amongst youth in Puducherry," says Dr Siva.

They also have the Puducherry Youth Helpline which offers multiple services to address the root causes of suicide. The helpline services include mental health counselling, education loan support, career guidance, job assistance, fellowships, and entrepreneurship training. Services are available from Monday to Saturday, from 10 AM to 7 PM. TYCL aims to have a 24x7 toll-free number line in

directly benefited from the Youth Helpline services.

"Our volunteers have organised extensive outreach activities to sensitize more than 3000 young people from various colleges, schools, communities and club presentations about positive mental health. Our promotional materials and targeted campaign material also reaches over 50,000 people. The youth suicide rate has reduced by 6.8% and the suicide attempts have come down by 55%," says Dr Siva.

They are also working closely and being supported by the honourable Lt Governor of Puducherry, Dr Kiran Bedi. They met her recently to apprise her about their activities and the reduced suicide rate in Puducherry.

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IN BRIEF



Chautala hits out at NDA government

KURUKSHETRA
Former Haryana CM Om Prakash Chautala on Monday hit out at the BJP-led NDA government claiming that the condition of farmers has become worse under its tenure. Chautala was released on furlough last week. PTI

Morphine powder seized in Bihar, two arrested

PATNA
The Sashstra Seema Bal has seized morphine powder and arrested two smugglers in this connection in Bihar's East Champaran district near the Indo-Nepal border, an SSB official said on Monday. The two arrested smugglers are Nepalese, he said. PTI

One killed, three injured in Rajasthan mishap

KOTA
A 23-year-old man was killed and three others were injured after a tractor-trolley overturned in Rajasthan's Kota district on Monday, police said. The injured are undergoing treatment at the Maharao Bhim Singh Hospital here. PTI

Air transport registers 15% growth in Bihar: survey report

State achieved second position in teledensity: Sushil Modi

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
PATNA

There has been a 15% growth in air transport in Bihar since last year, according to the 13th Economic Survey 2018-19 tabled in the Assembly by the State government on Monday. The report also said there was 20% growth in the purchase of two-wheelers and the State had achieved second position in the country in teledensity.

"In 2016-17, a total of 21.12 lakh passengers travelled through air transport in the State, while in 2017-18 the number of passengers went up to 31 lakh, recording a 15% growth. Similarly, 7.64 lakh vehicles were sold in the State in 2016-17, but the number went up to 11.18 lakh in 2017-2018," said Deputy Chief Minister Sushil Kumar Modi, who also holds the Finance portfolio.

Stating that these were "development index of the State", Mr. Modi also cited the examples of teledensity and the energy sector to explain the growth story of the State. "In teledensity, Bihar

has achieved second position after Kerala, and in the energy sector it has registered a growth of 165% in per capita consumption of power since 2011-12," he added.

Power consumption
The per capita consumption of power in the State in 2011-12 was 134 MW per hour, but it went up to 280 MW per hour in 2017-18, said the survey report.

The growth rate of Bihar's economy in 2017-18 was 11.3%, which was 9.9% in 2016-17... during both these years the growth rate of the national economy was about 7%," the report said.

Bike-borne youth abduct, gang rape 21-year-old

Accused bash up male friend

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHANDIGARH

A 21-year-old woman was allegedly gang-raped by 9 to 10 men near Issewal village in Ludhiana district after she and her male friend were kidnapped from their car on Saturday night, the police said. A manhunt has been launched to nab the accused.

Superintendent of Police (investigations) Tarun Ratnani said the victim and her male friend were going from Ludhiana towards Issewal village when their car was chased and intercepted by three motorbike-borne

youth. "They followed the car and hurled stones at it. As the car slowed down, they overpowered the occupants and took control of the vehicle. The attackers beat up the male friend and took him and the woman to a vacant plot where she was sexually assaulted," said Mr. Tarun.

More join the crime
He said the bikers who had abducted the woman and her friend called six to seven more men at the crime spot and they too took turns to rape the victim.

Government of India
Ministry of Human Resource Development
Department of Higher Education
Technical Section-II, Shastri Bhawan,
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Extension of date: Application for
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Ref. Advt. No. MHRD/01(04)/2019

Attention of the candidates/applicants is invited towards our earlier Advertisement No. MHRD/01(04)/2019. The last date of receipt of applications for the post of Member Secretary in AICTE has been extended up to 04th March 2019.

Advt. No. MHRD/02(01)/2019

Uproar in U.P. Assembly over hooch deaths

Opposition members demand CM Adityanath's resignation

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
LUCKNOW

Alleging that laxity on the part of the Uttar Pradesh government led to a large number of deaths after consumption of spurious liquor, Opposition members on Monday created chaos in the Assembly which led to adjournment of the entire Question Hour.

Opposition members demanded resignation of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath in the wake of the hooch tragedies that struck Saharanpur and Kushinagar districts.

As soon as the House met, SP, BSP and Congress members tried to raise the matter terming it one of utmost importance.

Anti-govt. slogans
SP and BSP members trooped into the Well of the House, raising anti-government slogans.

Parliamentary Affairs Minister Suresh Kumar Khanna said the State government has taken stern action in the matter and those involved



CM Yogi Adityanath. ■

Cong. blasts Uttarakhand government

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
DEHRADUN

The Opposition Congress in Uttarakhand on Monday demanded the dismissal of the Trivendra Singh Rawat government, accusing it of being insensitive to the plight of families which had lost their kin in the hooch tragedy.

Claiming that number of deaths due to the hooch tragedy in the State and neighbouring Uttar Pradesh had already climbed to 130, State Congress chief Pritam Singh said those who were behind the tragedy were yet to be brought to book.

"Despite such a large number of deaths, not a single Minister has gone to see the victims or commiserate with their families," Mr. Singh said.

He then adjourned the House for 30 minutes and later extended the adjournment till 12.20 p.m. as a result of which the entire Question Hour was wiped out. The State government on Sunday night announced a probe by a Special Investigation Team into the twin tragedies.

will not be spared.

The Opposition members also raised slogans, "CM istifa do" (CM should resign).

Speaker Hriday Narain Dixit repeatedly pleaded with the angry Opposition members to resume their seats, but they did not relent.

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Speaker Hriday Nar

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IN BRIEF

**2 killed, 15 injured as bus rams truck in Telangana**

KATTANGUR
Two persons on a State-run bus were killed and 15 passengers injured when the vehicle rammed a cement mixer truck in Kattangur in Telangana's Nalgonda district early on Monday, the police said. One of the deceased was a passenger, Appayamma, 47, while the other was conductor K. Ramakrishna, 37. Police said the accident occurred when the bus driver tried to overtake the truck. The Hyderabad-bound bus was carrying 40 passengers.

CPI(M) leaders charged with criminal conspiracy

KANNUR
CPI(M) district secretary P. Jayarajan and party MLA T.V. Rajesh have been charged with criminal conspiracy in the case of murder of Abdul Shukoor of Ariyil, near Taliparamba, probed by the CBI. Shukoor, 21, an activist of the Muslim Students Federation, the students' wing of the Indian Union Muslim League, was hacked to death on February 20, 2012 here.

Women's panel opens probe against Kerala MLA

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM
Kerala Women's Commission (KWC) on Monday began an investigation on its own against S. Rajendran, MLA, on the charge of having publicly insulted Devikulam Subcollector, Renu Raj, for her attempt to stop an allegedly illegal construction by the panchayat in Munnar in Idukki district. KWC chairperson M.C. Josephine told *The Hindu* that the registration of the case was the Commission's standard response to issues involving alleged denigration of women.

Clip row: Karnataka CM for SIT probe

Kumaraswamy agrees to a suggestion by Speaker; BJP demands judicial inquiry or House panel probe

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**BENGALURU**

Karnataka Chief Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy on Monday agreed to a suggestion by Speaker K.R. Ramesh Kumar to constitute a Special Investigation Team (SIT) to probe the controversial audio clip purportedly of a BJP leader saying that the Speaker had been "booked" for ₹50 crore for accepting the resignations of dissident legislators. This came amidst the demand by the BJP for a judicial inquiry or a House panel probe.

While all members of the Assembly demanded a probe, the suggestion by the Speaker for a SIT probe did not go down well with the BJP, which expressed apprehension over an impartial probe by the SIT since Mr. Kumaraswamy was also a



Attack mode: Women MLAs shouting slogans against the BJP in the Assembly on Monday. ■ V. SREENIVASA MURTHY

party in the issue.

Meanwhile, the functioning of the House was affected as the day was marked by exchange of words between the ruling and Opposition benches.

On Friday last, Mr. Kumaraswamy released the audio recording purportedly showing Leader of the Opposition B.S. Yeddyurappa's attempt

to woo the son of a JD(S) MLA promising him money and Ministry for allegedly toppling the government.

An emotional Speaker

"This is not a direction. I am suggesting the Chief Minister to form an SIT and ascertain the truth in the content of the tape. The truth would give me relief," an emotional

Speaker said in the House. "I have spent the last two nights in distress and I am in pain... My apprehension is that someone who is a member of this House is in the audio clip casting aspersions on me."

Breach of privilege

While the Chief Minister agreed to the suggestion made by the Speaker, BJP members continued to oppose it, saying they were not confident that the SIT probe would be impartial. At the end of the day, when the BJP members did not relent, he said: "I cannot reverse or modify the decision."

Minister Krishna Byre Gowda initiated the debate. He said the statement on bribing the Speaker amounted to breach of privilege of all members of the House

and it was contempt of the House.

"We have elected you unanimously. We are pained by the comments made against you [Speaker].... Caesar's wife should be above suspicion," Mr. Byre Gowda told the Speaker.

Appealing to the Speaker not to take the matter seriously, J.C. Madhuswamy (BJP) said since the allegations were made against him outside the House it would not amount to breach of privilege of members or contempt of the House. Intervening in the debate, the Speaker said: "You are defending a weak case."

S. Suresh Kumar, Jagadish Shettar, K.G. Bopaiyah, K.S. Eshwarappa, (all BJP) wanted the Speaker to conduct the probe to end "loose talk."

Sabarimala temple to open today

Police step up security arrangements

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**PATHANAMTHITTA**

The Kerala police have made elaborate security arrangements at Sabarimala and along the Elavumkhal-Nilakkal-Pampa route in view of the opening of the Ayyappa temple on Tuesday afternoon for the five-day monthly rituals in the Malayalam month of Kumbham. District police chief T. Narayanan said 700 officers would be deployed at Sabarimala, Pampa, Nilakkal, and Elavumkal.



A file photo of pilgrims at the Sabarimala temple.

■ H. VIBHU

be permitted to proceed to Pampa from Nilakkal from February 12 to 17.

Pilgrims have to park their vehicles at the Nilakkal base camp and proceed to Pampa and return from there to Nilakkal in the chain services operated by the KSRTC.

No private vehicles would be being planned in Kanjur, with land being acquired at market rates. While the government was procuring land through its own agencies, it was also incentivising private parties to consolidate land for industrial purposes.

Mr. Vijayan said the government's attempts to woo investors factor in the scarcity of land. "We cannot be extravagant in offering land to entrepreneurs," he said.

Mr. Jose said the government was encouraging vertical expansion, and less land-demanding industries, mostly knowledge and tourism-based. Parallel to that, a slew of heavy infrastructure projects such as the Vizhinjam Port and the GAIL pipeline were also taking shape. A greenfield industrial cluster of 5,000 acres

"That is our own PPP model," the CPI(M) Chief Minister said, referring to the project pioneered by former Congress Chief Minister K. Karunakaran.

In his third year as CM, Pinarayi in a twin-mission mode

Kerala initiates measures to woo investors

Pinarayi Vijayan

VARGHESE K. GEORGE**KOCHI**

Into his third year as Chief Minister of Kerala, Pinarayi Vijayan is in a twin-mission mode, to preserve one reputation of the State and alter another.

Mr. Vijayan has turned the question of women's entry at the Sabarimala shrine to a campaign to uphold Kerala's heritage of social reforms; and he is simultaneously campaigning to amend the perception that the State has an unfriendly investment climate.

"That is an unfounded perception," he said during an interaction with journalists ahead of a conference to

encourage entrepreneurship in Kerala, Mr. Vijayan said his government was taking proactive measures to optimise the favourable factors in the State that must be enticing for investors anywhere in the world.

"I have personally sought to understand from those who have invested in Kerala and run enterprises here. While they are happy and have not reported any problem, we have identified two specific issues that crop up during the setting up of a new unit – one is the 'nokku koolie', (literally looking wages, or the money levied by organised workers who are not employed by the project) and the other is an organised attempt to force companies to employ people. We have spoken to trade

unions regarding this, and they all agree that both these practices need to end. And hence we have ended them," he said.

All-party meet on hartal

On a third issue of hartals, the Chief Minister said in response to a question: "We do not want to curb people's right to protest, but hartal is an extreme form of protest and should be used only very sparingly. We are talking to all parties to evolve an agreement on this. We will call a meeting of all parties soon."

More than 100 reforms had been done by Kerala with the unanimous support of all political parties, said K. Ellangovan, Principal Secretary, Department of Industries. The official pointed out that in an omnibus piece of legislation last year, Kerala

made 27 changes across seven Acts. Other changes were made in rules, and regulations at the local bodies' level. Starting Monday, all licence applications in the State can be tracked real time, will be deemed to be granted if the officials do not process them in 30 days. Most supporting documents will be self-certified, which will make the whole climate trust-based, said Tom Jose, Chief Secretary.

"When someone comes to set up a unit in your area, treat them as someone who is trying to help you. If some of you don't have that mindset, change now. We are starting with 30 days' deadline for licences, but soon it will be reduced to 15 days," the Chief Minister told the delegates that included a large number of government

officials. E.P. Jayarajan, the Chief Minister's confidant and Minister for Industries, said the new online portal, KSWIFT, would process 20 services across 14 departments with one application and within the stipulated 30-day window.

Mr. Vijayan said the government's attempts to woo investors factor in the scarcity of land. "We cannot be extravagant in offering land to entrepreneurs," he said.

Mr. Jose said the government was encouraging vertical expansion, and less land-demanding industries, mostly knowledge and tourism-based. Parallel to that, a slew of heavy infrastructure projects such as the Vizhinjam Port and the GAIL pipeline were also taking shape. A greenfield industrial cluster of 5,000 acres

Top Maoist leader surrendered?

MARRI RAMU

HYDERABAD
Top leader of the Communist Party of India (Maoist) Sudhakar alias Kiran has reportedly surrendered to the police.

He, along with his wife Madhavi alias Neelima, is being questioned at an undisclosed location, senior Telangana police officials, unwilling to be named, confirmed. The arrest of Sudhakar, perceived as a big blow to the Maoist movement in Jharkhand where he had been operating for the past several years, is likely to be formally announced in a couple of days in Hyderabad.

Carrying a reward of over ₹25 lakh on his head, Sudhakar is a CPI (Maoist) Central Committee member. He played a crucial role in the Eastern Regional Board of the party and was instrumental in creation of the Bihar Jharkhand Special Area Committee. Hailing from Sarangpur of Nirmal district (erstwhile Adilabad district), he had initially worked with People's War Group (PWG) of Naxalites in Adilabad. He quickly rose to the position of PWG's Adilabad District Committee Secretary.

Later, he got elevated in the party and eventually became one of the key persons in taking forward the CPI (Maoist) in other parts of the country, especially Jharkhand. Sudhakar is known for his strong military tactics.

Even Maoist leaders like Takkalapally Vasudeva Rao alias Ashana who were behind Maoists' sensational attacks, including the one at Alipiri in Tirupati and Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu, were said to have learnt the tactics and strategy from him," said a police official.

He was wanted in several cases by the police of different States.

Telangana villagers ostracised for ignoring caste while voting

Elders penalise those who did not vote for their community

K.M. DAYASHANKAR**KARIMNAGAR**

Some villagers have been ostracised by their community leaders for not casting votes in favour of contestants hailing from their own community in the recently-held gram panchayat elections in various parts of integrated Karimnagar district of Telangana.

The first such incident took place in Narayananpur village of Sultanabad mandal in Peddapalli district. It came to light only on Friday when one Chandraiah and others approached the Sultanabad police lodging a complaint that leaders of his community (Boya) had expelled him from the village

and were not talking to them for not supporting their community leader in the elections.

In another incident, Donakonda Tirupati, a resident of Lothupur village of Gollapalli mandal in Jagtial district, on Sunday complained that he was expelled from the village by his community leaders for not voting in favour of a community leader.

When contacted, a senior police official confirmed that some villagers had lodged complaints about their expulsion from villages. "We had decided to take deterrent action and register a case.

When contacted, a senior police official confirmed that some villagers had lodged complaints about their expulsion from villages. "We had decided to take deterrent action and register a case.

Expressing concern over the incidents, Lok Satta Udyama Samsha Karimnagar district president N. Srinivas said that ostracisation of the people for not casting

vote for community candidates was against the democratic rights of the people.

Action sought
He urged the authorities concerned to take stern action against the people involved in such regressive acts.

When contacted, a senior police official confirmed that some villagers had lodged complaints about their expulsion from villages. "We had decided to take deterrent action and register a case.

Expressing concern over the incidents, Lok Satta Udyama Samsha Karimnagar district president N. Srinivas said that ostracisation of the people for not casting

All lit-up

The Attukal Bhagavathy temple illuminated ahead of the annual festival beginning on Tuesday. During the festival, women will prepare 'Pongala', a mix of rice, jaggery and scraped coconut, on either side of the roads around the shrine ■ S. MAHINSHA

A proud memory of World War II yet to see the light of the day

On this day 75 years ago, Japanese submarine RO-110 was sunk off the coast of Visakhapatnam



HMAS Launceston of Royal Australian Navy that sank Japanese submarine RO-110 about 25 miles off the coast of Vizag.
Imperial Navy RO-110, a RO-100 class submarine, was sunk about 40 km south of the Visakhapatnam Harbour (Coordinates: 17°25'N 83°21'E), by ships of the Eastern Fleet of the Allied forces. It was during the peak of the World War II, and all ships carrying supplies to the Allied forces. They were given escort by HMAS Launceston from the Australian Navy and the

HMS Junna of the British Indian Navy. About 25 km off the coast of Visakhapatnam, Japanese submarine RO-110, which was lying in wait in submerged position, released a torpedo that hit merchant ship Asphalion crippling it, said Edward Paul, who had done considerable research on the history of Visakhapatnam.

Realising the presence of an enemy submarine, both HMS Junna and HMAS Launceston launched a Depth Charge operation and one of the charges from the Australian Naval ship hit RO-110 and it sank to the depths in a few minutes with its crew and remaining armament of seven torpedoes and two anti-aircraft guns.

The incident is documented in the

Gazetteer in The British Library in London, said Mr. Paul.

Immediately on receiving a signal from the naval ships, a couple of Motor Torpedo Boats (MTBs) and a tug were despatched from the HMIS Circars, now INS Circars, the headquarters of the Eastern Naval Command. The crew of the damaged ship, including a critically injured fourth engineer, were transferred to the MTBs and the injured shifted to the HMIS Indus for medical care.

SS Asphalion was towed back to the Visakhapatnam harbour, where it underwent minor repairs for three months, before being towed to Calcutta for major refit. HMS Junna was renamed INS Jamuna and inducted into the Indian Navy in 1950, post Independence.

LDF may contest the same number of seats

Final picture likely after March 2

N.J. NAIR**THIRUVANANTHAPURAM**

The Left Democratic Front is likely to maintain status quo in terms of the number of seats the Communist Party of India (Marxist) and its allies are set to contest in the Lok Sabha election.

As in the previous elections, the CPI(M) may contest 15 seats, leaving four to the Communist Party of India (CPI). One seat for which the front will have to take a final call is Kottayam, where it had fielded Janata Dal (S) leader and former Water Resources Minister Mathew T. Thomas in 2014.

But the CPI(M) leadership had clarified in due course that it was a unique situation that prompted such an adjustment following the Revolutionary Socialist Party's decision to shift to the United Democratic Front in the face of differences over

sharing Kollam. Front sources told *The Hindu* that the current situation did not warrant gruelling seat-sharing discussions and the process would be much easier than the last election.

Winnability being the sole criterion, the front has to weigh all options for wresting Kottayam from the UDF. Since the UDF had reiterated that it would only have a Kerala Congress (M) nominee for the seat, the LDF too may explore the possibility of fielding a leader such as K. Francis George.

The front has commenced talks and a final picture will emerge after March 2 when it officially kicks off the campaign, when the rallies led by CPI(M) State secretary Kodiyeri Balakrishnan and CPI State secretary Kanam Rajendran converge in Thrissur.

IN BRIEF



'Previous govt. used Jind as platform to hold rallies'

JIND (HARYANA)

Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar on Monday alleged that previous governments in the State had neglected Jind and used it just as a platform to hold political rallies as he asserted that his government will leave "no stone unturned" to develop the district.

4 dead, 16 hurt as vehicle overturns in Odisha

MALKANGIRI (ODISHA)

At least four persons, including 2 women, were killed and 16 others injured, when a passenger vehicle carrying them overturned in Malkangiri district on Monday, a senior police officer said.

Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik announced an ex-gratia of ₹2 lakh each to the next of kin of the deceased. PTI

800 kg of cannabis seized in Odisha

BERHAMPUR
The police on Monday seized 800 kg of cannabis from a truck in Odisha's Ganjam district and arrested three persons, a senior police officer said. Three cell phones and ₹3.24 lakh in cash were seized from the accused. PTI

Satellite phones for authorities in H.P.

SIMHLA
Satellite phones have been provided to Himachal Pradesh's district disaster management authorities for better coordination, officials said on Monday. PTI

Three of family killed in road accident in Banda

BANDA (U.P.)
Three members of a family died in a car crash after their vehicle rammed into a stationary tractor-trolley in Uttar Pradesh's Banda district, police said on Monday. PTI

NSCN(I-M) appoints chairman after 3 years

Founder-chairman Isak Chishi Swu had passed away in 2016

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

GUWAHATI

The Isak-Muiyah faction of National Socialist Council of Nagaland or NSCNI(M), once the fountainhead of extremism in the Northeast, has appointed a chief almost three years after the death of its founder-chairman Isak Chishi Swu.

The fact is named after Swu, who died at 86 in June 2016 after a prolonged illness, and its general secretary Thuengaleng Muivah.

An NSCNI(M) spokesperson said the collective leadership appointed Qhehezu Tuccu as the chairman and Tongmeth Konyak as vice-chairman during an assembly at Camp Hebron, the faction's headquarters near Nagaland's Dimapur town.

Like his predecessor, he belongs to the Sumi community that dominates Di-



Qhehezu Tuccu

vacated by Khole Konyak, who died in December last year.

A close associate

The two were handed over charge in the presence of Mr. Muivah. Mr. Tuccu has been a close associate of Swu and Mr. Muivah for years.

Like his predecessor, he belongs to the Sumi community that dominates Di-

mapur district. Most of the members of NSCNI(M) are Manipur-based Tangkhuls, the community Mr. Muivah is from.

The NSCN was formed in January 1980 by extremists who did not accept the Shillong Accord of 1975 between New Delhi and the Naga National Council that had been fighting a separatist war since the 1950s. But the NSCN split in 1988, one led by the Myanmar-based S.S. Khaplang and the other by Isak-Muivah.

The NSCNI(M) has been pursuing a peace process with the Indian government but a final settlement has been elusive. The Khaplang faction of the NSCN too joined the peace process in 2001 but walked out of it in March 2015.



Residents of Kargil district protest in Jammu on Monday against Leh being made the permanent headquarters of the newly created Ladakh division. ■PTI

Kargil shuts down over new division HQ in Leh

Panel formed to look into issue: Governor

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

JAMMU/SRINAGAR

The town of Kargil and adjoining areas observed a shutdown on Monday in protest against the decision of the Jammu and Kashmir government to set up the permanent headquarters of the newly-created Ladakh division in Leh.

Amid ongoing protests demanding rotational divisional headquarters, State Governor Satya Pal Malik said a committee of secretaries has been formed to ensure justice for the district.

Rally in Jammu

Hundreds of Kargil residents, including women and children, took out a rally in the winter capital, Jammu, and chanted slogans in support of their demand for equal share in the recently created separate division for Ladakh and rotational divisional headquarters.

On Sunday, thousands of people also staged a rally in Kargil and submitted a memorandum to the Deputy Commissioner to press for their demand.

The people of Kargil are demanding that Divisional Commissioner and Inspector General of Police (IGP) offices function on rotational basis – in Kargil during summers and in Leh during winters.

"The divisional status for Ladakh was a long-standing

demand [of the people of the region]. We have formed a panel, which will look into the issue so that Kargil gets justice," the Governor said on the sidelines of a function in Katra, Reasi district.

On February 8, the J&K administration had sanctioned creation of a separate administrative and revenue division for Ladakh, with its headquarters at Leh.

Cutting across party lines, politicians from Kargil, affiliated with the National Conference, the Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP) and the Congress, came together and threatened mass agitation if the administration did not review its decision to permanently post the divisional commissioner and IGP HQs in Leh.

On Sunday, thousands of people also staged a rally in Kargil and submitted a memorandum to the Deputy Commissioner to press for their demand.

Mr. Malik denied that his administration was planning to give divisional status to any other region of the State. The PDP and the National Conference are advocating similar status to Pir Panjal and Chenab valley region.

WEATHER WATCH

RAINFALL, TEMPERATURE & AIR QUALITY IN SELECT METROS YESTERDAY



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

Forecast for Tuesday: No weather warning

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	... 28.0 ...	10.2	...	Kozhikode	... 35.8 ...	26.0	...
Ahmedabad	... 29.2 ...	11.5	...	Kurnool	... 33.6 ...	23.9	...
Aizawl	... 30.5 ...	14.5	...	Lucknow	... 23.3 ...	9.2	...
Allahabad	... 25.9 ...	8.5	...	Madurai	... 34.6 ...	23.9	...
Bengaluru	... 28.1 ...	19.8	...	Mangaluru	... 34.6 ...	22.4	...
Bhopal	... 26.3 ...	9.0	...	Mumbai	... 35.1 ...	15.4	...
Bhubaneswar	... 30.0 ...	13.4	...	Mysuru	... 30.2 ...	20.6	...
Chandigarh	... 22.0 ...	9.8	...	New Delhi	... 22.3 ...	7.0	...
Chennai	... 30.1 ...	25.3	...	Patna	... 24.5 ...	10.8	...
Coimbatore	... 32.6 ...	22.7	...	Port Blair	... 31.2 ...	23.9	...
Dehradun	... 23.5 ...	9.6	...	Puducherry	... 31.8 ...	24.1	...
Gangtok	... 15.0 ...	5.7	...	Pune	... 33.4 ...	10.6	...
Goa	... 32.9 ...	19.5	...	Rajpur	... 28.4 ...	12.9	...
Guwahati	... 30.0 ...	10.6	...	Ranchi	... 24.2 ...	8.2	...
Hubballi	... 31.0 ...	19.0	...	Shillong	... 17.9 ...	4.1	...
Hyderabad	... 30.7 ...	20.3	...	Shimla	... 15.7 ...	4.1	...
Imphal	... 25.5 ...	5.2	...	Srinagar	... 11.8 ...	0.4	...
Jaipur	... 22.0 ...	9.2	...	Trivandrum	... 35.0 ...	24.2	...
Kochi	... 32.6 ...	24.4	...	Tiruchi	... 34.2 ...	24.4	...
Kohima	... 21.4 ...	6.0	...	Vijayawada	... 30.7 ...	23.0	...
Kolkata	... 26.6 ...	13.8	...	Visakhapatnam	... 28.8 ...	22.0	...

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

Yesterday

CITIES	SO ₂	NO _x	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	61	100	29	75	—	—
Bengaluru	.4	.41	.77	.65	.87	—
Chennai	.9	.14	.45	.69	—	—
Delhi	37	.71	.30	.36	.401	■■■
Hyderabad	20	.46	.31	.102	.116	■■■
Kolkata	12	.84	.23	.226	.239	■■■
Lucknow	12	.57	.23	.239	—	—
Mumbai	33	.39	.98	.233	.228	■■■
Pune	59	.34	.157	.188	.156	■■■
Visakhapatnam	.5	.35	.32	.113	—	—

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Ludhiana, Punjab recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 395 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Tirupati recorded a healthy AQI score of 61

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

SO₂: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.NO_x: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

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

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

Former YSR secy joins Cong. in Assam

Retired IAS officer likely to contest LS polls from Tezpur

RAHUL KARMAKAR

GUWAHATI

M.G.V.K. Bhanu, a retired IAS officer who was the secretary of former Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y.S. Rajasekhar Reddy, joined the Congress in Assam on Monday.

He is likely to contest the upcoming Lok Sabha elections from Tezpur, the area he had served in his initial days as a Deputy Commissioner.

A 1985-batch IAS officer of the Assam-Meghalaya cadre, Mr. Bhanu retired on July 31 as an Additional Chief Secretary. He had earlier served as Director in the Union Tourism Ministry, and Chairman



M.G.V.K. Bhanu

of Tea Board of India.

"I had made up my mind to join politics after my retirement. Congress president Rahul Gandhi's honesty, sincerity and straightforward nature attracted me to the party," Mr. Bhanu told *The Hindu* after joining the Congress along with 10 others at

the party's State unit HQ in Guwahati.

Mr. Bhanu assumed his home, though he hails from Navabpalem in West Godavari district of Andhra Pradesh. He has applied for a ticket from the Tezpur seat, currently represented by BJP's Ram Prasad Sharma.

Mr. Bhanu was considered one of the most influential, and controversial bureaucrats, in Assam. He was close to former CM Tarun Gogoi, and decided on key appointments in Assam.

He went on a five-year deputation to become the secretary to the newly-appointed CM Y.S.R. Reddy in 2004.

He went on a five-year deputation to become the secretary to the newly-appointed CM Y.S.R. Reddy in 2004.

"The divisional status for Ladakh was a long-standing

JHARKHAND URBAN INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT COMPANY LIMITED

(Govt. of Jharkhand Undertaking)

3RD FLOOR, PRAGATI SADAN, KUTCHERY ROAD,

RANCHI - 834001, JHARKHAND. Ph No.: +91-651-2225878

CIN: U45200JH2013SGC001752, e-mail Id:juidcolimited@gmail.com

NIT No.: JUIDCO/NIT/Ranchi Flyover/DPR & PMC/20

IN BRIEF



Facebook expands fact-checking network

NEW DELHI Facebook on Monday said it has expanded its fact-checking programme in India, adding names like India Today Group, Factly and Fact Crescendo to the roster, as the social networking giant looks to combat the spread of fake news ahead of the general elections. It added that this will be done for content in languages, including English, Hindi, Bengali, Telugu, Malayalam and Marathi. PTI

Kiran Bedi counsels two-wheeler riders

PUDUCHERRY Lieutenant Governor Kiran Bedi, who was the main drive behind the latest initiative to make wearing helmets mandatory, took to the streets once again to educate people on the need to wear the head-gear. After uploading videos of two-wheeler riders commuting in the town without any safety, Ms. Bedi, while on her way to a function on Sunday evening, stopped at Thattanchavady and personally advised riders to wear helmets for their welfare.

HC asks Jaya panel to file counter affidavit

CHENNAI The Madras High Court on Monday insisted on filing of counter affidavits by the State government as well as the Justice A. Arumugam Commission of Inquiry (CoI) to two writ petitions filed by Apollo Hospitals Enterprises with a plea restrain the commission from probing the correctness, adequacy or inadequacy of medical treatment provided to former Chief Minister Jayalalithaa before her death.

60% children adopted in India between 2015 and 2018 are girls

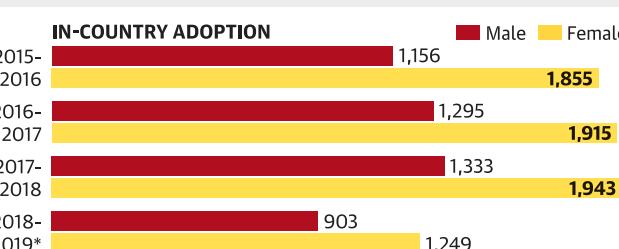
Data from the Ministry of Women and Child Development show that of the 11,649 children adopted, 6,962 were girls and 4,687 boys

Daughters in demand

Between 2015 and 2018, about 60% of children adopted in the country were girls. The figure jumps to 69% when it comes to inter-country adoptions

*Figures till December 2018

Source: CARINGS Child Adoption Resource Information and Guidance System, Ministry of Women and Child Development



INTER-COUNTRY ADOPTION

Year	Male	Female
2015	226	440
2016	148	430
2017	198	453
2018	144	271
2019*		

SHIV SAHAY SINGH
KOLKATA

India may have a skewed gender ratio, but the female child happens to be the first choice when it comes to adoption. The number of female children placed for in-country adoptions and inter-country adoptions between 2015 and 2018 are relatively higher than male children.

During this period, about 11,649 children were put up for in-country adoptions; of them 6,962 were girls and 4,687 were boys. Of the 3,011 children that were placed for in-country adoption in 2015-16, as many as 1,855 were female children. In the

year 2016-17, as many as 3,210 children were placed under in-country adoptions and of them 1,915 were females. The figures for 2017-18 and 2018-19 (till December 2018) were 3,276 and 2,152, of which the numbers of girl children were 1,943 and 1,249 respectively.

All the figures put together, female children comprise almost 60% of all in-country adoptions. When it came to inter-country adoptions, the number of female children was even higher: 69%. Of the 2,310 children placed under adoption between the same period, 1,594 were females. The data was tabled by

the Ministry of Women and Child Development in the Lok Sabha on February 8, in response to a question by members Tej Pratap Singh Yadav, L.R. Shivarame Gowda and Anju Bala.

Prajakta Kulkarni, a member of the Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA), said there was little doubt that more girls were being adopted and it reflected that gender bias and the attitude of people against the girl child are changing across the country. Ms. Kulkarni, who represents the NGO-run Specialised Adoption Agency in the CARA steering committee, said the whole

issue of more girls getting adopted needs to be looked into with research.

More girls for adoption?

Sindhu Naik, member, Adoption Scrutiny Committee, State Council of Child Welfare (Karnataka), said that one has to also look whether more girls were coming for adoption. Ms. Naik said that the urban middle class people were preferring female children because they are concerned and aware of the situation of the girl child. The situation may not be the same for villages and small towns, she said.

Plea for SIT probe into Hapur lynching case

SC seeks response from U.P. police

SOIBAM ROCKY SINGH
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday sought response from the Uttar Pradesh police on a petition filed by the son of the victim in the 2018 Hapur lynching incident, seeking the probe to be transferred to a Special Investigation Team (SIT) with officers from outside the State.

A Bench of Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi and Justice Sanjiv Khanna gave the direction on the plea of Mehatab, eldest son of the deceased, Qasim Qureishi, invoking his right under the Constitution to a fair and impartial investigation into the "barbaric lynching" case.

Mehatab, a resident of Hapur district in Uttar Pradesh, has also sought compensation from the govern-

ment. His plea said his father was "brutally thrashed to death in a dastardly case of mob lynching on June 18, 2018."

The plea said his father was the primary bread-winner of the family, who earned a living by buying and selling goats.

"The police officers investigating the case from the outset tried to create a false version of the incident in order to shield the accused persons from Bajheda village," the petition alleged.

Mr. Mehtab claimed that the police constructed a false chain of events to turn the lynching by cow vigilantes into an act of road rage. Thereafter, the police did not record the statement of the surviving, injured witness, Samayudeen.

Gujjar stir hits life for fourth day

Jaipur-Agra NH blocked; several trains cancelled, diverted over track obstruction

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
JAIPUR

As the Gujjar agitation for 5% reservation in government jobs and education entered its fourth day on Monday, protesters blocked the Jaipur-Agra National Highway at Sikandra in Rajasthan's Dausa district.

Dausa Superintendent of Police Prahlad Singh said the blockade was peaceful and vehicles were being diverted. The Rajasthan Roadways suspended operations on the Jaipur-Agra route.

Prohibitory orders

The protest had turned violent on Sunday. Three vehicles were torched and shots were fired at the police in Dholpur. Prohibitory orders under Section 144 imposed in Dholpur and the neighbouring Karauli district re-



Flery protest: Gujjar community members blocking the National Highway-58 in Ajmer, Rajasthan on Sunday. •PTI

mained in force on Monday.

The blockade of the Delhi-Mumbai railway line at Sawai Madhopur district's Malarna village and the Karauli-Hindon and Bundi-Bhilwara roads also continued with largescale cancellation and diversion of trains.

While several trains running between Delhi and Mumbai were diverted, 10 trains plying in the Kota divi-

2008-13], we took positive steps and gave them 1% reservation, from which they are still benefiting and joining services," he said.

Assembly ruckus

The State Assembly, meanwhile, witnessed uproarious scenes and was adjourned for an hour on the first day of the Budget session, when the Bahujan Samaj Party members raised the issue of the Gujjars' agitation and demanded an early resolution of the matter. BSP MLAs Joginder Singh Awana and Wajid Ali briefly staged a dharna in the Well of the House.

Rashtriya Loktantrik Parthy MLA Hanuman Beniwal also raised the matter during zero hour and demanded that the State government should take action to fulfil the demand of Gujjars.

SC turns down plea to monitor Saradha probe

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday declined to entertain a plea filed by some investors requesting the court to monitor the probe into the Saradha chit-fund scam by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).

A Bench of Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi and Justice Sanjiv Khanna said, "We are not inclined to set up a monitoring committee for the chit fund scam probe."

The investors contend that though the case was transferred by the top court to the CBI in 2013, the investigation had not attained finality. On February 5, the apex court had directed Kolkata Police Commissioner Rajeev Kumar to appear before the court for questioning.

How Hobbs found a way to fight bad cholesterol

Geneticist and her team discovered a rare mutation that protects against heart disease

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD

The discovery of cholesterol-lowering mutations in a human gene called PCSK9 led to the development of the most promising new drugs against heart disease since statins.

At the Hyderabad edition of the TNQ's Distinguished Lectures in Life Sciences, geneticist Helen Hobbs told an audience of scientists and lay persons the story of this discovery. Ms. Hobbs and her colleague at Dallas' UT Southwestern Medical Center, geneticist Jonathan Cohen, found that when people had a mutation in PCSK9, they ended up with lower levels of low-density lipoprotein (LDL) or bad cholesterol. Through this mechanism, the mutation protected people against heart disease, seemingly without side effects. In 2016, Ms. Hobbs was awarded the Breakthrough Prize in Life Sciences for her work.

Ms. Hobbs' research journey was unusual in many ways. When she began working on cholesterol in the early 2000s, the prevailing stra-



Geneticist Helen Hobbs speaking at the TNQ's Distinguished Lectures in Life Sciences in Hyderabad on Monday. •K.V.S. GIRI

tegy among researchers looking for the genetic basis of disease was to search for common gene variants (present in around 5% of the population). However, this strategy hasn't gone very far in understanding complex illnesses like heart disease; most common variants only have small effects on traits like cholesterol. Ms. Hobbs reasoned that it would be more fruitful to look for rare gene variants with large impacts. Large impacts would also mean such findings would translate more quickly into treatments, she said.

The question Ms. Hobbs and Mr. Cohen wanted to answer was how necessary high LDL was to causing coronary artery disease (CAD).

From Mendelian, or single-gene disorders, the researchers already knew that elevated LDL made people sick.

People with Mendelian heart disease often have no other risk factor, such as obesity or smoking. LDL seems sufficient to make them ill.

Ms. Hobbs wanted to test if the opposite was true. In other words, she was looking

for a gene that protected against LDL and promoted health. To do this, the team set up the Dallas Heart Study, a cohort of around 3,500 people, comprising blacks, Hispanics and whites. The idea was that more racial diversity would make it more likely to find rare variants.

PCSK-9 gene mutation

The cue for which gene to focus on in the Dallas Heart Study came from a French study which found that people with familial hypercholesterolemia - a genetic disorder leading to high LDL - tended to have a mutation in the PCSK-9 gene. Could a mutation with the opposite effect protect people against CAD then? To answer this, Ms. Hobbs et al. sequenced the genes of people at both extremes of the Dallas Heart Study - those with the highest LDL levels and lowest. Sure enough, they found a mutation that protected against LDL, the opposite of the French study. The findings led to the development of the PCSK9 inhibitors Alirocumab and Evolocumab within 10 years, an unusually

rapid example of drug development. The average time between the discovery of a drug target to commercialisation is typically 15 years.

Today, Ms. Hobbs has turned her attention to fatty liver disease.

Here, too, her efforts led to the identification of two gene mutations which promote the disease through different pathways. Both mutations increase triglycerides in blood through different mechanisms, while also making people susceptible to liver cirrhosis and cancer.

This finding shows that a condition called hepatic steatosis, in which fat builds up in the liver is not as benign as clinicians currently think, according to Ms. Hobbs. When hepatic steatosis is not accompanied by inflammation, clinicians call it "bland" and believe it has a good prognosis. Ms. Hobbs' research shows that such fat build-up, which results from high triglycerides, can lead to cirrhosis and cancer without help from any other factors. "I question whether [steatosis] really is bland," she said.

The incident happened near the Bherugarh railway station in Jhabua in Madhya Pradesh. "Pankaj, 16, climbed on top of the wagon in the afternoon to click a selfie from the top of a rail oil tanker, officials said on Monday

selfie as reported by witnesses. He came in contact with a high-tension overhead wire and was electrocuted," said Bamanji Railway Protection Force officer Uday Pratap Singh.

Meanwhile, in Jamshedpur, a 14-year-old boy was killed and another sustained severe burns when they came in contact with a high tension wire while trying to click a selfie from the top of a rail oil tanker, officials said on Monday

Md. Faisal, 14, and his friend Naved Akhtar, 12, climbed atop the stationary oil tanker on Sunday evening, while it was waiting at a signal near Salgajhuri on the outskirts of the steel city here. The two accidentally came in contact with the live wire, Railway Protection Force Inspector M.K. Singh said.

While Faisal was killed instantly, his friend was rushed to Tata Main Hospital with severe burns.

Mr. Faisal's friend Naved Akhtar, 12, was electrocuted while climbing on top of a stationary oil tanker on Sunday evening. He was rushed to Tata Main Hospital with severe burns. The accident occurred near Salgajhuri on the outskirts of Jamshedpur. The 14-year-old boy, Md. Faisal, died on the spot. His friend Naved Akhtar was admitted to hospital with severe burns. The accident occurred near Salgajhuri on the outskirts of Jamshedpur. The 14-year-old boy, Md. Faisal, died on the spot. His friend Naved Akhtar was admitted to hospital with severe burns.

House panel summons Twitter head on Feb. 25



should make himself available to show the "company's seriousness in safeguarding rights of Indian citizens online", sources said.

As per the resolution, the panel would hear only the CEO or a senior member of the firm's global team "who has decision-making authority regarding Twitter's operations in India," they added.

College event with Mevani as guest called off

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
AHMEDABAD

A college in Ahmedabad has cancelled its Annual Day event in which independent legislator and prominent Dalit activist Jignesh Mevani was invited as the chief guest after the management received numerous protest calls.

On Monday, Prof. Hemant Shah, principal of the H.K. Arts College in Ahmedabad where Mr. Mevani is an alumnus, resigned in protest, claiming that the Brahmchari Vadi Trust, which runs the college, "compromised on freedom of expression" by calling off the event.

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Welcome shift

The transfer of the Muzaffarpur shelter home trial to Delhi is a major step towards justice

The Supreme Court's order transferring the trial in the Muzaffarpur shelter home case from Bihar to a court in Delhi is a welcome intervention to ensure justice for the children who were sexually exploited. The Central Bureau of Investigation had argued that the trial would not be fair if it was held in Muzaffarpur. In shifting it to a court notified under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act at Saket in Delhi, the apex court has once again demonstrated its lack of confidence in the Bihar government. It had transferred the investigation from the State police to the CBI. Later, it asked the agency to take over the probe in respect of 16 other shelter homes for children, destitute women and senior citizens. These interventions had become necessary, given the apparent apathy of the authorities in Bihar even after horrific instances of physical and sexual exploitation came to light last year. The Bihar government asked the Tata Institute of Social Sciences to audit the short-stay and shelter homes, run by non-governmental organisations but funded by the government. Last year, TISS came up with a damning report on the unsafe conditions in which children were staying in many shelter homes. The Muzaffarpur home was among the worst: many girls reported physical and sexual violence. More than 30 girls below 17 have been sexually assaulted.

However, the subsequent response of the State government has not inspired much confidence. Apart from some officials being suspended, and some of those involved arrested, the State government did not have much to show as stringent action. Its response came under adverse scrutiny. A Bench of the Supreme Court found that 11 FIRs mentioned only minor offences, that is, "the least serious" of the offences involved. In the Muzaffarpur case, the court took note of the clout of Brajesh Thakur, whose NGO ran the shelter home concerned. The girls in the shelter identified Chandrasekhar Verma, the husband of former Social Welfare Minister Manju Verma, as a frequent visitor. The Verma couple later surrendered to the authorities. It is disquieting and significant that the court had to order Thakur's transfer to a prison in Patiala to prevent him from exerting his influence on the authorities in Bihar. The court is also separately monitoring the functioning of child care homes in Bihar. Meanwhile, it is high time that States bestowed sufficient attention to such institutions. A recent Central government committee report highlighted the shocking inadequacies in the facilities available at most child care institutions and homes. There is a strong case for a systematic scrutiny to be taken up on an urgent basis to address the problem.

A curious bid

The Thai general election will determine the military's power in the new set-up

The rather unusual move by a member of Thailand's royal family to announce a bid for the office of Prime Minister has ignited greater interest in the country's general election. Ubolratana Rajakanya, King Maha Vajiralongkorn's sister, subsequently had her nomination withdrawn – but the fact that the prospect drew a public disapproval from the King is an indication of how closely the palace is tracking the contest. The larger question concerning the March 24 poll is the prospect of Thailand's credible return to civilian rule, after the 2014 military coup that deposed the government of Yingluck Shinawatra. The military general-turned-Prime Minister, Prayuth Chan-ocha, is contesting as the candidate of the Palang Pracharat party, known for its pro-military and pro-palace leanings. The constitution drafted by his ruling National Council for Peace and Order, and ratified in a 2016 popular referendum, introduced a voting system that provides for a wholly nominated Upper House of Parliament and allotment of seats to army officers. King Vajiralongkorn had granted approval for its promulgation only after withholding some other controversial provisions. The March general election has been long overdue, as General Prayuth repeatedly deferred the dates since seizing power in 2014. Moreover, investigations into social media content from the new Future Forward party have added to worries about the junta silencing Opposition voices. While the bid to hand over power to an elected government may seem well-intended, the power given to the military in the legislature remains a concern.

Ms. Ubolratana had entered the fray with the Thai Raksa Chart party, which is linked to exiled former Prime Ministers, the telecommunications tycoon Thaksin Shinawatra and his sister Yingluck. The Shinawatras are perceived to be a challenge to the Bangkok elite, including the palace and the military. But despite being evicted from power in coups, they still hold sway among the predominantly rural electorate. Till now, the military had struggled to dent their chances sufficiently, and Mr. Shinawatra or his proxies won every election since the early 2000s. The new constitution ensures that the military will be a crucial determinant in a democratic transition. King Vajiralongkorn's public response to his sister's decision to contest the election may also affect the chances of Mr. Shinawatra's party. Ms. Ubolratana had relinquished her royal title in the 1970s, but her candidature sparked speculation about an understanding between the palace and Mr. Shinawatra. The March election is being watched keenly across the region. The second largest economy in Southeast Asia, Thailand this year assumes the presidency of ASEAN, that sets a broad economic and political agenda for member-states. A number of them are so-called guided democracies, with a pre-eminent role for the military.

Everyone is afraid of data

There needs to be robust infrastructure for official statistics so that governments do not suppress inconvenient truths



SONALDE DESAI

Over the past two weeks, headlines have focused on declining employment between 2011-12 and 2016-17; loss of jobs under the National Democratic Alliance government, particularly post-democratisation; and the government's refusal to release a report using the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) documenting this decline, leading to resignations of two members of the National Statistical Commission. In a pre-election, politically charged environment, it makes for eye-catching headlines.

Five trends

Let us step back from this episode and recall similar controversies over official data in the past. Past experiences tell us five things.

First, suppression of results seems to be a problem common to all political parties. Census 2011 data on religious distribution of the population was not released until 2015. It is widely believed that these data were ready before the 2014 election, but the United Progressive Alliance government was worried about inciting passions around differential population growth between Hindus and Muslims and chose not to release the tables. Similarly, the UNICEF conducted the Rapid Survey on Children (RSOC) 2013-14 on behalf of the Ministry of Women and Child Development but the report was held up by the new government, allegedly due to the fear that it showed Gujarat in poor light. Sometimes these concerns lead to lack of investment in data collection itself, as is the case with the National Sample Survey, or the

NSS's Employment-Unemployment surveys (not conducted since 2011-12), forcing public policy to rely on non-comparable statistics from other sources such as the data from the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO). These episodes are likely to recur, and hence, we need a more comprehensive strategy for dealing with them.

Second, the fear of having statistical reports misquoted is legitimate. We live in a world where appetite for news is incessant and the news cycle is very short. Statistics that don't always lend themselves to rapid unpacking into sound bites and headlines are easily misinterpreted. When Census 2001 results on religion were released, in September 2004, a newspaper led with a story that although the Hindu growth rate between 1981-1991 and 1991-2001 had declined from 25.1% to 20.3%, that for Muslims had gone up from 34.5% to 36%. Media reports paid little attention to the actual report that highlighted that the 1991 Census was not conducted in Jammu and Kashmir and that after adjusting for it, growth rates for both Hindus and Muslims had declined. When the mistake was discovered, it was blamed on the then Registrar General and Census Commissioner, J.K. Banthia, a highly competent demographer. He was sent into bureaucratic exile while the news media moved on to a new story.

Third, it is impossible to bottle up the genie once data are collected and reports prepared. In a world dominated by WikiLeaks, suppressing reports seem to create an even bigger problem, since it allows individuals with exclusive access to act as the interpreters for others. In the instance of the RSOC mentioned above, suppression of the report, coupled with leaked data encouraged speculation by *The Economist* (July 2015) that the data were being suppressed because Gujarat



must have fared poorly on reducing malnutrition. It stated that Bihar had made much greater progress since the proportion of children who go hungry had been cut from 56% to 37% between 2005-6 and 2012-13, while the decline was much smaller in Gujarat, from 44.6% to 33.5%.

Fourth, sometimes leaked results create speculation that is far worse than full disclosure would warrant. *The Economist* cherry-picked its comparisons. Nutritional status is measured by weight-for-age (underweight) and height-for-age (stunting). The final report showed that about 41.6% of children in Gujarat were stunted (had low height for their age). This is higher than the nationwide average of 38.7%. However, improvement in stunting in Gujarat between 2005-6 and 2013-14 was of similar and slightly higher magnitude as that for the nation as a whole: 10.1 versus 9.7 percentage points. Moreover, stunting decline in Gujarat was greater than that in Bihar, 10.1 percentage points as opposed to 6 percentage points. Usually statistics on underweight and stunting should provide a similar picture; when they do not, greater care is required in interpretation. This was not possible because only *The Economist* seemed to have access to the report and led the headlines.

The employment picture

Fifth, statistics often deal with complicated reality and require thoughtful analysis instead of the

bare bones reporting contained in typical government reports. The headline in *Business Standard* on February 3 based on the leaked PLFS report claims that more than half the population is out of labour force; however, the statistics they present show that the trend is dominated by women and the rural population. If the full report were available, I think it would be rural women who would drive the employment story. This is very much a continuation of the trend between 2004-5 and 2011-12 documented by the NSS, under a different government.

Between 2004-5 and 2011-12, work participation rates for rural women of working ages (25-64) fell from 57% to 43%. However, much of this decline was in women working on family farms and in family businesses, from 42% to 27%; decline in wage work was much smaller, from 24% to 21%. If lower engagement of women with family-based activities such as farming, rearing livestock or engaging in petty businesses drives the decline in employment, we may need to look at declining farm sizes and increasing mechanisation as the drivers of this decline. One can blame the government for not creating more salaried jobs for women pushed out of farming and related activities, but it would be hard to blame it for eliminating jobs.

If the full report and unit level data for the PLFS were available, it is possible that we will find a continuation of the trend that started in 2004-5. This is not to say that demonetisation may not have had a negative impact, particularly in urban India, where *Business Standard* reports that employment fell from 49.3% to 47.6%, but this is a much smaller decline. It is also important to note that the urban comparison between the NSS and the PLFS requires caution, particularly for unemployment figures. Whereas the NSS contains inde-

pendent cross-sectional samples for each sub-round, the PLFS includes a panel component in urban areas where the same households are re-interviewed every quarter. Since it would be easier to find unemployed individuals than employed individuals for interview, attrition adjustment is necessary before drawing any conclusions. Without access to the full report, it is difficult to tell whether attrition adjustment was undertaken.

So how do we get out of this vicious cycle where fear of misinterpretation leads to suppression of data, which in turn fuels speculation and suspicion and ultimately results in our inability to design and evaluate good policies? The only solution is to recognise that we need more openness about data coupled with deeper analysis, allowing us to draw informed and balanced conclusions. The onus for this squarely lies with the government. Simply placing basic reports in the public domain is not sufficient, particularly in a news cycle where many journalists are in a hurry to file their stories and cherry-pick results to create headlines.

Spread the net wider

Understaffed and underfunded statistical services cannot possibly have sufficient domain expertise to undertake substantively informed analyses in all the areas for which statistical data are required.

A better way of building a robust data infrastructure may be to ensure that each major data collection activity is augmented by an analytical component led by domain experts, recruited from diverse sources, including academia.

Sonalde Desai is Professor of Sociology at University of Maryland, and Professor and Centre Director, NCAER-National Data Innovation Centre. The views expressed are personal

Time to raise the bar

The judiciary needs a mechanism to regulate post-retirement government appointments



N.L. RAJAH

Justice A.K. Sikri, a well-regarded judge of the Supreme Court of India, found himself in the eye of a storm arising from accepting a post offered by the government, last year, while being a judge of the court. By later turning down the offer after the controversy erupted, he substantially redeemed the judiciary's and his own honour. However, this is an issue that recurs frequently. Even titans in the legal field have had to face stinging rebuke from respected members of the fraternity for similar lapses.

The case of M.C. Chagla

For example, take the case of the late Justice M.C. Chagla. Both he and the former Attorney General of India, M.C. Setalvad, were members of the First Law Commission. Speaking as members of the Law Commission they had categorically denounced the proclivity of judges accepting post-retirement jobs sponsored by governments and called for an end to it. Unfortunately, in his post-retirement as-

signments, Justice Chagla violated the very same principle he had supported.

After retirement, he accepted a government appointment to serve as Indian Ambassador to the U.S. (1958-61) and later as Indian High Commissioner to the U.K. (1962-1963). Soon after this he was asked to be minister for education in Nehru's cabinet, which he again accepted. He served as Education Minister (1963-66) and then as Minister for External Affairs (1966-67).

All this incensed his good friend M.C. Setalvad no end. In his book, *My Life: Law and Other Things*, he did not mince words in commenting on this serious lapse. He observed: "The Law Commission had, after careful consideration, expressed the unanimous view that the practice of a judge looking forward to accepting employment under the government after retirement was undesirable as it could affect the independence of the judiciary... He was so keen to get into politics that soon after the report was signed by him he resigned his office to become India's Ambassador to the United States. His action was characteristic of the self-seeking attitude of many of our leading men."

These harsh words are possibly unfair to a person of the calibre of Chagla. In none of the posts he



held could he be accused of having acted as a sidekick to the government. On the other hand, by declaring in 1965 that the Aligarh Muslim University could not claim minority status conferred under Article 30(1) of the Constitution, he even earned the collective ire of his cabinet members. However, the shrill denunciations of the Law Commission on judges accepting post-retirement posts and Setalvad's repeated calls to honour the principle merit acceptance even today.

In a study, the Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy pointed out that as many as 70 out of 100 Supreme Court retired judges have taken up assignments in the National Human Rights Commission of India, National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission, Armed Forces Tribunal, and the Law Commission of India, etc. In Rojer Mathew

v. South Indian Bank Ltd. – which is currently going into the issue of tribunalisation of the judiciary and its challenges to the independence of the judiciary – senior counsel Arvind P. Datar, amicus, has observed: "The Tribunals should not be havens for retired persons and appointment process should not result in decisions being influenced if the Government itself is a litigant and appointment authority at the same time." Mr. Datar has expressed the sentiments of many of us at the Bar.

Striking a balance

At the same time, it is also true that the valuable experience and insights that competent and honest judges acquire during their period of service cannot be wasted after retirement. Unlike abroad, a judge of the higher judiciary in India retires at a comparatively young age and is capable of many more years of productive work. However, government-sponsored post-retirement appointments will continue to raise a cloud of suspicion over the judgments the best judges delivered while in service. Though clichéd, it is true that in law justice must not only be done but also be seen to be done. Therefore, the viable option is to expeditiously establish, through a properly enacted statute, a commission made up of a majori-

ty, if not exclusively, of retired judges to make appointments of competent retired judges to tribunals and judicial bodies.

It is true that judges cannot legislate. However, where a void is found in the legal framework that requires immediate attention, and legislative intervention is not likely to emerge immediately, the Supreme Court is empowered to provide an interim solution till legislation is passed to address the hiatus. This process the top court has followed, to cite an instance (there are others), in the Vishaka case, where it laid down guidelines to deal with sexual harassment in workplaces till a law was passed by Parliament. It is desirable the Supreme Court invokes that methodology now and puts in place a process to regulate post-retirement appointments for judges. Such a process must sufficiently insulate the judiciary from the charge of being a recipient of government largesse.

In these times, the attacks on the fabric of independence of the judiciary will not be through engulfing flames but through small corrosive doses. Therefore, it is in the judiciary's own interests to resolve this issue as expeditiously as it can.

N.L. Rajah is Senior Advocate, Madras High Court

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.

Rafale, Part 3

The Hindu has once again lived up to its reputation of being the daily that is committed to social causes and public values in keeping with the highest norms of journalistic ethics (Page 1, 'Exclusive', "Government waived anti-corruption clauses in Rafale deal", February 11). The criticism by a section of readers – who are questioning the credibility of the daily in exposing irregularities in the Rafale deal – has been harsh and in bad taste. That said, it needs to be understood that the signatories to the inter-governmental agreement are the sovereign governments of France and India. The non-inclusion of the standard DPP clauses has to be viewed in this light. Although anti-corruption

clauses were waived, there is no clinching evidence of the involvement of middlemen or illegal gratification. The supposed irregularities appear to be procedural rather than financial.

B. SURESH KUMAR,
Coimbatore

■ There is a popular saying, "Three things cannot be hidden for long: the sun, the moon, and the truth." The new disclosures (February 11) make it crystal clear that there is some hidden agenda behind the government's negotiation of the Rafale deal. The government has to give credible answers to many unanswered questions.

BIDHU BARAL,
Cuttack, Odisha

■ I often used to wonder why the paper never pursued investigative journalism in

the recent past but have been pleasantly surprised with the 'Rafale revelation series'. The deal is dodgy: from escalating prices, anti-corruption clauses being waived, sovereign guarantee being bypassed, parallel negotiations taking place, Parliament and the Supreme Court being misled, a private firm being favoured over a public sector giant, to, finally, demands for a JPC being evaded. It's a pity that there are some who are either ignorant or keen on showing implicit partisanship to the ruling party and unable to make sensible arguments when there is damning evidence.

J.M. SALMAN JAVID,
Chennai

■ It may not be an exaggeration to say that *The Hindu* has been anti-BJP for quite some time now

while choosing to not even whisper about Congress governments that have been corruption-tainted and ruining India. The daily does not seem to have the magnanimity to appreciate the well-meaning programmes of the present government. In contrast, the Indian National Congress party has done precious little despite decades of rule. The fact is that the Rafale deal is certainly not Bofors. The paper is only playing into the hands of the Opposition, which is bent on maligning the otherwise unblemished and eventful tenure of the NDA.

R. SAMPATH,
Chennai

■ I attended 'The Huddle' at Bengaluru (an event 'by

as we move towards a new India. The initiative to organise an event such as this is welcome especially as it has become essential to be able to air one's suggestions and sort out one's differences on various subjects and issues. It is interesting ideas that contribute to making our country more vibrant, and *The Hindu*'s 'The Huddle' event should continue to be one such space for this.

PUSHPENDRA SINGH,
Sonipat, Haryana

■ I attended 'The Huddle' at Bengaluru (an event 'by

invitation') and found the sessions to be cerebral. But in line with the newspaper's stated position and in the shadow of the Rafale exposé, there was an anti-BJP thread in most sessions. The session, "Reviving the Congress", was not even a debate but an occasion to be an election platform for a specific political party. It would have been less blatant had it been on "How to build a credible Opposition" to achieve a similar objective.

SUNIL KOLANGARA,
Bengaluru

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The state of the States

The SDG India Index overlooks the aspect of inter-dependence of Sustainable Development Goals



U.S. MISHRA & S. IRUDAYA RAJAN



"India has been making sincere efforts to achieve the SDGs." Children eat at a temporary shelter in Hyderabad. ■ AFP

India was one among the 193 United Nations member states to adopt the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in September 2015. It has been making sincere efforts to achieve these goals. The SDG India Index: Baseline Report 2018, released to the public in December 2018 by NITI Aayog, is a useful comparative account of how well different States and Union Territories have performed so far in their efforts to achieve these goals.

In this effort, it has not been possible to establish suitable indicators for three of the 17 goals, including climate action (SDG-13). This is on account of either lack of identification of appropriate indicators or of the inability to compare different States. On the whole, 62 indicators representing 14 goals have been identified based on their measurability across States over time. A progress performance assessment has been made towards targets set by the Government of India, or the UN SDGs target for 2030, or the average of the three best-performing States. For reasons of comparability, all these indicators are normalised.

Four categories

Based on a scale of 0 to 100, the States are categorised into four groups: achievers, front runners, performers, and aspirants. Achievers are those States which have already accomplished the set target. Front runners are those States that are very close to realising them. A majority of the States are categorised as performers and some lag behind as aspirants. Although classification sounds like an appropriate thing to do, there is arbitrariness in the exercise in the sense that in a unitary range, those States with scores till the midpoint are categorised as aspirants and a cluster of States in a close range of progress are termed as performers. A few States are designated as front runners. The three front runner States – Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and Himachal Pradesh – assume values of

66, 69 and 69, respectively, as against a range of States with values between 50 and 64. With the national score being 57, almost 17 States qualify as above or equal to the national score. Plotted on a graph, there is a negatively skewed distribution of scores with a reasonable tail to the left, a flat presence in the middle, and a tapering to the right. This needs to be recognised in classification; otherwise the arbitrariness with which the classification is made somewhat hints at a purposive designation of a few States in two extremes and a major share of them in between.

The problem of averaging

Further, when one reads into the performance on various SDGs, it is found that many States fall into the aspirant category, especially for SDG-5 (gender equality), SDG-9 (industry innovation and infrastructure) and SDG-11 (sustainable cities and communities). These kinds of differences could well be emerging owing to a different number of indicators considered under different SDGs as well as their corresponding

variability across the States. This is evident in the variation of scores across different goals. For instance, in case of goals 1 and 2, the range for the majority of the States is between 35 and 80. For goals 3 and 6, the range is between 25 and 100. Again, for goal 5, it ranges between 24 and 50. Given these variations across different goals, merely averaging them not only compromises on robustness but also masks the disaggregated story to a large extent. Not only does the feature of the progress performance pattern need to be recognised in such classification but also the pathway of progress in development indicators, which has a character removed from linearity. Given that this is a measure of progress towards a target, the States near the target get a value closer to one compared to those which are away from the target assuming a lower value. These values are determined in relative terms in the sense that they represent the unitary position of the States within the available scale of gap between the minimum achieved and the target. Such positioning conveys a linear distance, which does not differ-

U.S. Mishra and S. Irudaya Rajan are Professors, Centre for Development Studies, Kerala

SINGLE FILE

Getting India's history right

It is time to stop raising generations on a diet of victimhood

UDAY BALAKRISHNAN



T.E. Lawrence's *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* is a great read but is it a credible record of the Arab uprising against the Ottomans? The Arab historian Aziz al-Azmeh was scathing in his denunciation of Lawrence, holding that his was a work of fiction. But

that is not the way many others recalled it over the years.

Except for those nursing an acute sense of victimhood, Shashi Tharoor's engaging polemic, *An Era of Darkness*, is not a serious, objective work of historical scholarship. While the British rule of India had its rotten side, it had a redeeming one as well. As Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh had the courage to acknowledge this in his widely publicised July 2005 speech at Oxford University – all without one whit downplaying the harmful aspects of British rule. That is a balanced perspective.

The best of our historians tie themselves in knots toeing a nationalistic line, however unintentional that might be. A widely acclaimed book, *India's Struggle for Independence*, by Bipan Chandra and some of India's best regarded historians, is a case in point. Partition is seen as the outcome of Muhammad Ali Jinnah's intransigence and the Congress's inability to carry the subcontinent's Muslims along. The latter point is Bipan Chandra's view too. But any historian claiming to be objective would also have highlighted Abul Kalam Azad's objection to Partition on the grounds that it would reduce, intentionally perhaps, the Muslims from a politically powerful quarter of the population to a less significant and vulnerable minority in free India. Developments since then have proved him right.

The mass killings and forced migration of millions caused by Partition was entirely foreseeable, especially in the light of the extreme violence that accompanied Jinnah's 'Direct Action Day,' a year before. Then why couldn't independence have been delayed to ensure a less cataclysmic separation? This is rarely discussed anywhere, and never in our schools, where most Indians have their last brush with history, reinforcing life-long prejudices.

It is time we stopped raising generations on a diet of victimhood while at the same time hoping to make peace with those of our neighbours we feel most threatened by. With the evidence now available, we should accept that, far from being victims, we share historical responsibility for our difficult relations with Pakistan and our border dispute with China. As the largest country in the subcontinent, and its principal economic driver, India has a great stake in getting its history right, for lasting peace to follow.

In his perceptive essay, 'The Decline of Historical Thinking' in a recent issue of the *New Yorker*, Eric Alterman observed, "A nation whose citizens have no knowledge of history is asking to be led by quacks, charlatans and jingos." How true of today's India!

The writer has taught public policy and contemporary history at the Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru



NOTEBOOK

The unsung heroes of every scoop

It is the duty of journalists to protect the identity of their sources

S. VIJAY KUMAR

A week after I exposed the sensational gutkha scam in Tamil Nadu in June 2017, a retired police officer called to say that he knew who "planted" the story.

His theory was that one of his juniors had used me to settle scores with some colleagues. Even before I could dispel his suspicion, he confirmed what I feared the most by saying, "I know you spoke to him a day before writing the story."

He was right. I did call and meet the person concerned, and wanted his reaction since he held a key post when the scam took shape. But the officer in question politely declined to comment and was just one among the dozens I had called or met for the story.

Though a copy of the document was made available to *The Hindu*, the State government maintained that no such papers existed on record. I had to keep writing stories to expose the multi-crore scam despite constant monitoring by vested interests.

scandal also showed a keen interest in knowing my source and the contents of the classified Income Tax documents, which had details of the beneficiaries.

The gutkha scam story is perhaps the most challenging one I have done in my career. It had its origins in a secret note of the Income Tax department to the Tamil Nadu Chief Secretary. The note contained details of officials or politicians who allegedly took huge bribes from the manufacturer of the MDM brand of gutkha to facilitate the storage, transportation and sale of the banned substance in Chennai.

Though a copy of the document was made available to *The Hindu*, the State government maintained that no such papers existed on record. I had to keep writing stories to expose the multi-crore scam despite constant monitoring by vested interests.

on the beneficiaries, and the Opposition parties demanding a probe by the Central Bureau of Investigation, I had strong reason to believe that my phone was being tapped. Senior police officers cautioned me that even calls over WhatsApp were not foolproof.

It appeared to be me that the investigators were focusing more on the informer than the inputs. It had perhaps become a standard operating procedure to stalk the writer and his/her sources. I had a tough time writing the follow-up stories – while a couple of sources refused to meet me fearing surveillance and would occasionally pick up only Internet-enabled voice calls, a few others blocked my number.

Some friends, including a few in the police, kept a safe distance. I quit Facebook, limited conversations to personal meetings, and used mobile phones as

RESPONSE

There is nothing to unfetter

There is no stay today against the government handing over 67.703 acres of land to the Ramjanmabhoomi Nyas Samiti



SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY

habuddin also told me that if it was proved that there was a pre-existing Hindu temple, he himself would lead the demolition squad to the Babri Masjid. Had Chandra Shekhar's government lasted longer, this is what would have happened since Rajiv Gandhi was also in favour of building a Ram temple.

In 1994, the Supreme Court directed the Allahabad High Court to verify using scientific methods whether the Babri Masjid was constructed after a pre-existing temple. The High Court asked the Archaeological Survey of India to do this. Two archaeologists, B.B. Lal and K.K. Mohammed, in 2002 deployed scientific tools and concluded that there was indeed an extensive temple complex in ruins under the site where the Babri Masjid had stood. The court accepted this finding and relied on the same in its 2010 judgment. It is this judgment that the Sunni Waqf Board has appealed against in the Supreme Court.

There is nothing to "unfetter" – there is no stay today against the government handing over 67.703 acres of land to the Ramjanmabhoomi Nyas Samiti. The 1994 judgment did not place any fetter. The fetter was "engineered" by the Atal Bihari Vajpayee government in 2002. The interim order of the Supreme Court of 2002 stayed the giving away of 67.703 acres. As Justice Ashok Bhushan noted in 2018, the interim order was superseded by a final order of the apex court stating that the stay was "operative until the disposal of the suits" in the Allahabad High Court. Hence it is no longer operative today.

Two questions

Two questions remain. One, why give to the Ram Janmabhoomi Nyas Samiti the 67.703 acres and why not to the other owners who were there prior to government nationalisation? This is because, except for the Samiti, all the others accepted compensation from the government after nationalisation. Two, why did the BJP go back to the Supreme Court for getting land which is now unfettered? It did so after receiving bad bureaucratic advice to play safe. We have lost an opportunity again.

Mr. Muralidharan has not only exhibited ignorance of these facts but has confused the issue with the irrelevant consideration of secularism. Only fundamental rights in the Constitution matter, not Western-borrowed concepts. The word secularism does not figure in any of the Articles of the Constitution. It was grafted during the Emergency in the Preamble, along with socialism. The two words are comatose today since nobody in the mainstream knows what they mean.

Subramanian Swamy is Member of Parliament and a former Union Law Minister

FROM The Hindu ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO FEBRUARY 12, 1969

Bombay almost normal

The Maharashtra Chief Minister, Mr. V. P. Naik, to-day [February 11] told Pressmen that the situation in Bombay city was returning to normal. Except for a few sporadic incidents in the afternoon the city [Bombay] was free from any incident since this evening. Mr. Naik said he was advising BEST to run normal services from Wednesday [February 12] in order to end the inconvenience caused to the people. He had full confidence that the people would see that the normal services were allowed to run without any trouble. Political and social workers were trying to approach people to create a peaceful atmosphere, Mr. Naik said. Mr. Naik appealed to the people to maintain the fair name of the city and help in bringing about normalcy. He said he had a brief talk with the Prime Minister on the telephone about the situation.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO FEBRUARY 12, 1919

Moplah Outbreak.

The following are fuller details [available in Calicut] of the Moplah trouble in Pandalore: Nine Moplahs led Checku by Haji, an ex-Head Constable of Police with several previous convictions, went on the warpath in Mankada Pallipuram Amsom at dawn on Friday [February 7]. The rest were mostly youths of eighteen and thereabouts. They were armed with a few guns, knives and spears. They murdered five Namboodiri landlords who had gone to bathe in the river near the residence of another Namboodiri where a marriage feast was being celebrated by some hundreds of Namboodiris and others. Some of the murdered men wore valuable ornaments but the fanatics did not touch these. Afterwards the gang proceeded to Pandalore where it is believed they had designs on the life of the Nair Adhikari. They killed two male relatives of his, burnt two temples and about a dozen houses and a haystack and marched to Nemmini Amsom and entered the house of Kayalot Wariar and obtained rice and other provisions from the Wariar's agent.

CONCEPTUAL

Assassination market

ECONOMICS

This refers to a prediction market where participants with money can place bets on the likely date of death of a given individual. Assassination markets thus reflect the probability, as predicted by the people betting their money in the marketplace, of the death of a certain person at various points in the future. While bettors usually try only to predict the likely date of death of important personalities, some critics of assassination markets have feared that these markets could actually induce large bettors to plot the killing of the people they bet on in order to win huge sums of money. Assassination markets are thus deemed to be illegal in many countries.

MORE ON THE WEB

ICC adds cricketing spin to Lennon's "Imagine"

<http://bit.ly/ICCPoem>

FROM PAGE ONE

Opposition hits out at govt. over Rafale

He later referred twice to the media report – first in his speech at the day-long fast by Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu which he attended as a gesture of solidarity with the TDP, and later during the Congress' road show with Priyanka Gandhi Vadra in Lucknow.

"The Prime Minister became Prime Minister by saying he is going to fight corruption. Have you read *The Hindu* newspaper today, did you read *The Hindu* newspaper yesterday?... The Prime Minister has stolen from the people of Andhra Pradesh and he has given that money to Mr. Anil Ambani," the Congress chief said.

Former Finance Minister P. Chidambaram in a series of tweets said the Rafale deal was "unravelling faster than the government thought".

Pointing to the series reports in *The Hindu*, he said, "Now it is revealed that crucial changes were made to the clauses in the standard Defence Procurement Pro-

cedure. No sovereign guarantee, no bank guarantee, no escrow account, yet a huge amount was paid as advance." No penalty clause for undue influence, no clause against agency commission, no clause for access to suppliers accounts and Dassault goes laughing all the way to the bank."

The Communist Party of India reiterated its demand for a probe by Joint Parliamentary panel in the light of the latest revelations.

"*The Hindu* story has brought the Rafale deal in perspective of how PMO took upon itself not only to negotiate the deal but also to facilitate it by removing critical clauses. The government stands thoroughly exposed. The entire truth of this deal can be brought out only if it is probed by a joint Parliamentary Committee," CPI leader D. Raja said.

Trinamool Congress's Saugata Roy said the new revelations on Rafale has exposed chinks in the government's armour and it can no longer claim to be incorruptible.

Pak. cleric's remarks on Kashmir red-flagged

Mr. Qadri said in a video message posted on January 2 that he was coming to India at the request of Home Minister Rajnath Singh, and the invitation was extended to him through the Lucknow-based Shia cleric Kalbe Jawad.

Mr. Jawad could not be reached for comments.

Mr. Qadri says he has received Mr. Singh's *paigam* (message) and *dawatnama* (dinner request) through Mr. Jawad and he has given his consent for the same.

Minhaj-ul-Quran International, the organisation run by Mr. Qadri also posted a video message on January 3 where he said that he will begin his India visit from Lucknow on February 8 and will be here for another 12 days.

He said he also wished to visit the Ajmer Sharif Dargah and would hold congregations at Kanpur, Ahmedabad, Kolkata and Delhi.

A senior government official said the security agencies red-flagged Mr. Qadri's

message on Kashmir. "We had no problem with his visit, but on February 6 his statement on Kashmir surfaced where he said that 70,000 Kashmiris have lost their lives yet they are unable to get independence. In the wake of this, the visa clearance didn't come through," said the official.

The Indian High Commission in Islamabad could process the visa only after the Intelligence Bureau (IB) and the Research and Analysis Wing (R&AW) have given a security clearance from their end in Delhi, an internal procedure for visas to Pakistani and Pakistani-origin people.

'Visa under process' Syed Nadeeli, the chairperson of Minhaj in India said the visa was still under process. "We are told that some documents are missing and he will get a visa soon. The news of him being denied a visa is fake," Mr. Nadeeli said on phone from Ahmedabad.

Naidu's fast turns show of strength

Referring to Mr. Modi's charge in Guntur on Sunday that he was promoting his son at the cost of the State, he warned that he would be "taught a lesson" if he made personal attacks against the people of his State.

The Andhra CM alleged that Mr. Modi was "unfit" to rule the country and that he went to Guntur in Andhra Pradesh "only to rub salt into our wounds."

"On behalf of five crore people of Andhra, I am warning this government... I came here to remind you of the promises made in the AP Reorganisation Act," he said.

Congress president Rahul Gandhi, who was one of the first Opposition leaders to visit the fast venue, said the Prime Minister had made a habit of lying on the special status.

"He goes to Andhra Pradesh, he lies about the special status. He goes to the North-East, he tells another lie over there. He has absolutely got no credibility left," Mr. Gandhi said.

Trinamool Congress leader Derek O'Brien said the No-Confidence Motion moved by the TDP had brought the Opposition together.

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said: "One may have voted for any party but after elections, who ever wins and becomes the CM, is the CM of the en-

tire State and not of a particular party. Similarly, when one becomes the PM, then he is the PM of the entire country, not just one party. The way PM Modi treats governments of Opposition parties in States, he behaves like he is not the PM of India but the PM of Pakistan."

National Conference leader Farooq Abdullah said the Prime Minister had stooped so low as to make personal remarks against Mr. Naidu.

Just cause, says DMK Stating that Mr. Naidu was fighting for a just cause, DMK leader Siva said the Modi government would be ousted in three months. "The powers of the State are being encroached upon," he said.

Loktantrik Janata Dal chief Sharad Yadav said the Modi-Shah claim that the Opposition has no prime ministerial face is grounded in ignorance.

In 1996 or 1989 we did not have any prime ministerial face and yet we managed to win the election and find a credible candidate," he added.

Among others who met Mr. Naidu were former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, NCP's Majeed Memon, JD (S) chief Devi Gowda, Samajwadi Party founder Mulayam Singh Yadav and BJP rebel Shatrughan Sinha.

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said: "One may have voted for any party but after elections, who ever wins and becomes the CM, is the CM of the en-

CAG report on Rafale deal to be tabled in Lok Sabha today

Officials say it will not go into pricing details that have been withheld by govt.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Amid new revelations that anti-corruption clauses in the Rafale deal with France were waived by the government, official sources have said the audit report of the Comptroller and Auditor-General (CAG) is likely to be tabled in the Lok Sabha on Tuesday.

Tuesday will be the penultimate day of the current Budget session, which is the last before the Lok Sabha election due in April.

However, officials said the CAG which went into the €7.87-billion Inter-Governmental Agreement (IGA) with France would not get into the pricing details, which had been withheld by the government citing an information security agreement between the two countries.

Opposition parties have also questioned the impartiality of the current CAG, Rajiv Mehrishi, in the audit, as he was an official in the Finance Ministry during the Rafale negotiations.

The Finance Ministry on Monday issued a statement that such an accusation was



More steam: Youth Congress activists protesting with cutouts of Rafale jets in New Delhi recently. • PTI

"totally a figment of imagination and stretch of facts".

"It is pertinent to point out here that it is the Department of Expenditure of the Finance Ministry which deals with financial sanctions relating to all the Ministries of the Government of India and, in that capacity, any files relating to defence procurement would be dealt with by the Secretary, De-

partment of Expenditure, and not by Shri Rajiv Mehrishi as Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs," the Finance Ministry statement said. "To claim that Secretary (Economic Affairs)... would have dealt with the expenditure proposals from the Ministry of Defence is totally a figment of imagination and stretch of facts," the statement added.

France to display Rafale at Aero India

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

As the controversy rages over the Rafale deal with France, the French defence industry is gearing up for a major presence at the premier air show Aero India 2019 to be held later this month in Bengaluru.

"France will have the strongest foreign showing with 49 companies. All sectors will be represented – civil and military aerospace, defence and space," the French Embassy said in a statement. The 12th edition of the biennial Aero India is scheduled between February 20 and 24.

The Rafale aircraft manufactured by Dassault Aviation and deployed by the French Air Force, a Dassault Falcon 2000S, an Airbus A330-900, an Airbus C295 and Airbus H135 and H145 helicopters will be presented, the statement said.



S.B.P. Sinha

Procurement Procedure (DPP) in which eventually AgustaWestland was shortlisted. But the deal was later cancelled due to allegations of corruption.

Govt. silent

In major revelations on Monday, *The Hindu* had put out details of how the anti-corruption clauses for the Rafale deal were waived.

The government maintained total silence on the latest revelations by *The Hindu*.

Air Marshal Sinha stated that Para 71 of the DPP states that classic pacts do not apply to IGAs and contract clauses will also be not valid and there will be mutually agreed terms between the two governments.

Nageswara Rao apologises to SC

Admits shifting Sharma was a mistake

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI



M. Nageswara Rao

wrote in the apology.

The Supreme Court on February 7 came down heavily on the CBI for transferring Mr. Sharma, who was probing Bihar's shelter home cases, to the CRPF, in violation of the court's order and had directed Mr. Rao to personally appear before it on February 12.

Karnataka row finds an echo in LS

Congress members led by Sonia Gandhi walk out alleging horse-trading by BJP

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI



Another controversy: Congress member Mallikarjun Kharge speaking in the Lok Sabha on Monday. • PTI

The raging controversy in Karnataka, over 'horse trading' allegations levelled by Chief Minister H. D. Kumaraswamy against the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) echoed in the Lok Sabha, forcing an adjournment and a denial by Union Minister Sadananda Gowda.

Congress members, including United Progressive Alliance (UPA) chairperson Sonia Gandhi, staged a walkout from the House over the issue, after an adjournment right at the beginning of the question hour, but returned a few minutes later.

Mallikarjun Kharge, leader of the Congress Legislative Party in the Lok Sabha, levelled allegations of horse-trading against the BJP leadership during zero hour, mentioning BJP leader B. S. Yeddyurappa's name in connection with an audio clip,

revealed by Mr. Kumaraswamy, in which he is allegedly seeking to win over an MLA of the ruling Congress-Jana-Dal-Secular (JD-S) coalition.

Objectionable remark Mr. Kharge said that there were objectionable references in the tape, including a claim that the Assembly Speaker, and even a judge, "could be managed".

Former Prime Minister and JD(S) leader H.D. Deve Gowda said "things like 'Operation Kamala' should not happen in the country." 'Operation Kamala', with a reference to the BJP's party symbol, is a name given to any move to lure members of a rival party to its side by the BJP.

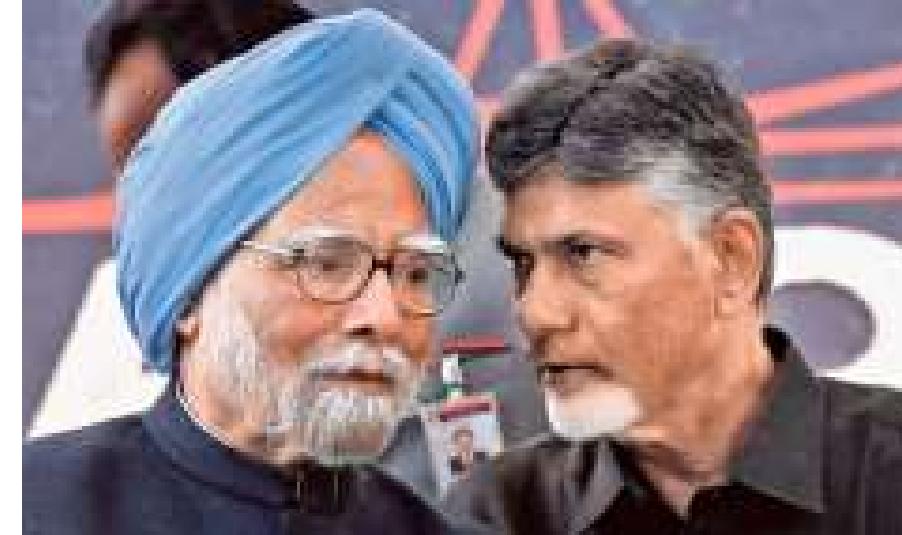
Refuting the allegations, Minister for Statistics and Programme Implementation

Sadananda Gowda said there was already infighting between the Congress and the JD(S) in Karnataka, and that both parties were involved in "fake activities".

Mr. Gowda claimed that the two parties were making the allegations just to save the Chief Minister's chair. "All things uttered [here]... are false and far from truth," Mr. Sadananda Gowda said.

Congress members had also trooped into the Well, displaying placards with the message 'Operation Kamala. Death of Democracy' written on some of them.

Telegu Desam Party (TDP) members joined them in the Well as they sought to raise issues related to Andhra Pradesh. Despite repeated requests from Speaker Sumitra Mahajan, they remained in the Well. Earlier, the Question Hour was adjourned for nearly 50 minutes due to these protests.



Show of support: Former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh with Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu during his protest at Andhra Bhavan on Monday. • SANDEEP SAXENA

Naidu's political fortunes declining, says Amit Shah

Sensing poll defeat, Andhra CM is attacking BJP leadership

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

BJP president Amit Shah reacted to Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu's fast demanding special category status for the State, by writing an open letter to the people of the State, accusing him of "theatrics and histrionics" to cover up the decline in his political fortunes.

"In 1996 or 1989 we did not have any prime ministerial face and yet we managed to win the election and find a credible candidate," he added.

Among others who met Mr. Naidu were former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, NCP's Majeed Memon, JD (S) chief Devi Gowda, Samajwadi Party founder Mulayam Singh Yadav and BJP rebel Shatrughan Sinha.

babu Naidu is back to theatrics and histrionics. His desperation for headlines is understandable as he is aware that his political fortunes are declining rapidly," he wrote. "His delusional politics is about to end, and we have faith and belief in 'Satyamev Jayate' [truth will prevail]."

He said: "Shri Naidu knows that he has lost credibility among the people... and, as a result, is announcing a series of sops to woo

different sections." "Sensing defeat in the coming elections, Mr. Naidu has made multiple U-turns and is carrying on a malicious propaganda against the Centre and the BJP leadership to divert the people's attention from his failures," he said. "He is going too far by personally attacking Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, and he did not have the courtesy to receive the honourable Prime Minister when he came to the State."

Goyal defends big-ticket proposals

Lok Sabha clears Budget amid protest

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Lok Sabha passed the Appropriation Bill and the Finance Bill on Monday amid protests by the Opposition over the Rafale deal, with Finance Minister Piyush Goyal defending the budgetary announcements.

The Interim Budget for 2019-20 was passed through a voice vote.

Criticism that the Budget presented on February 1 was a full Budget and not an Interim Budget was unfounded as no schemes were announced for the next year, Mr. Goyal said in his reply following a day-long discussion.

Two major schemes

The Finance Minister, in his Interim Budget speech, had announced two major schemes aimed at farmers and informal sector workers. The Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) scheme, aimed at providing an income transfer to farmers, is designed to have begun from December 1, 2018. The pension scheme for informal sector workers – Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Mandhan – is to begin from February 15.

As both are starting in the current year, they cannot



Piyush Goyal outside Parliament on Monday. • PTI

technically be classified as schemes launched for the next financial year.

"Some people are trying to belittle the scheme," he added. "But maybe the 'namdaars' in their big houses do not understand how significant the ₹2,000 the farmers will get every four months is to them."

Mr. Goyal said compared to the various pro-farmer decisions taken by the government, the Congress had over its 10 years in power announced only one pro-farmer decision and didn't even allocate funds for it.

"This was still only an interim Budget," Mr. Goyal said. "A full Budget would have much more announcements, and they would be for the next year. There were no schemes that were announced for next year."

Rajya Sabha proceedings washed out

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Rajya Sabha proceedings were adjourned on Monday owing to protests by Opposition members.

Soon after the House assembled, Congress and TDP members gathered in the well and sought to raise the issue of alleged horse-trading in Karnataka, and the demand for the special category status for Andhra Pradesh.

SP and BSP members wanted to take up the issue of hooch deaths in Uttar Pradesh and

IN BRIEF



Zakia Jafri's plea to be heard in July

NEW DELHI
Zakia Jafri, wife of slain MP Ehsan Jafri, told the Supreme Court on Monday that her plea challenging the SIT's clean chit to Narendra Modi, the then Chief Minister of Gujarat, in the post-Godhra riots be heard after the election. There is "no urgency in the matter" and it can be heard in July, she told the top court. A Bench of Justices A.M. Khanwilkar and Ajay Rastogi considered the submission and listed the matter for hearing in July. PTI

PDP seeks return of Afzal Guru's remains

SRINAGAR
The PDP on Monday joined the separatists' demand for the return of the mortal remains of Parliament attack convict Afzal Guru as Kashmir witnessed a shutdown on the 35th death anniversary of JKLF founder Maqbool Bhat. PDP MP Mohammad Fayaz Mir wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi: "Today, on February 11, I request you to consider returning his mortal remains."

Eight suspected Rohingya arrested

GUWAHATI
The police in southern Assam's Cachar district have arrested eight suspected Rohingya, including six women, some of whom allegedly possess Aadhaar issued in adjoining Tripura. Police officials said the eight people were arrested on Sunday from the house of one Shergul Barbhuiya, an oil tanker driver from Krishnapur in Cachar district. "They claimed they were living in Tripura for 15 years, but were unable to speak Bengali," a police officer said.

Ex-IPS officer moves SC for protection from cops
NEW DELHI
Former IPS officer Bharati Ghosh, who joined the BJP last week, has moved the Supreme Court seeking protection from any coercive action by the West Bengal police in new corruption cases registered against her. Ms. Ghosh, once considered close to Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, claimed the police have registered seven FIRs against her. PTI

Let us together start a new brand of politics: Priyanka

New Congress general secretary begins innings with a roadshow in Lucknow

OMAR RASHID
LUCKNOW

Launching herself into the campaign for the 2019 Lok Sabha election, Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, Congress general secretary in charge of east Uttar Pradesh, took the roads of Lucknow on Monday on her maiden visit to the State after being given the assignment.

However, it was her brother, Congress president Rahul Gandhi, accompanying her on the roadshow, along with colleague Jyotiraditya Scindia and other senior leaders, who launched a fresh verbal attack on the BJP government, while outlining the need to strengthen his party in U.P.

Rahul's plea

"Congress started in U.P., so it cannot stay weak here," Mr. Gandhi said at the UPCC headquarters at the end of a day-long roadshow that



Crowd favourites: Rahul Gandhi, Priyanka Gandhi Vadra and Jyotiraditya Scindia in Lucknow on Monday. ■ RAJEEV BHATT

started from the airport and passed through major landmarks of the State's capital.

Mr. Gandhi said he had assigned Ms. Vadra and Mr. Scindia the task of securing a better performance in the

2019 election, but more importantly to form the government in the State in the 2022 Assembly polls.

On the SP-BSP alliance, Mr. Gandhi said he respected their leaders Akhilesh Yadav

and Mayawati, but reiterated that the Congress would fight with all its strength to change U.P., and would not be on the back foot in any State.

Ms. Vadra did not speak to

the public on Monday, but she had released an audio message on the eve of her visit, in which she hoped they could all together start a new brand of politics.

"Politics in which you will

NRC verification to begin on Thursday

36 lakh people's papers to be checked

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI

The process of verifying the documents of some 36 lakh applicants who were excluded from the published list of the National Register of Citizens (NRC) would begin on Thursday.

Nearly 40.07 lakh of the 3.29 crore applicants were left out of the complete draft of NRC published on July 30 last year.

An official at the NRC Coordinator's office in Guwahati, declining to be quoted, said a 15-day deadline had been set for some 3,500 examiners engaged to complete the verification of the fresh documents submitted by the 36 lakh people who had reapplied for inclusion in the list. An applicant,



A man with documents to check NRC draft.

whose papers are found valid, would be called to his or her nearest NRC Seva Kendra for hearing and further verification. The NRC authorities want the entire process to be completed by June 15 as the Supreme Court, which had been monitoring the exercise, had directed them to publish the NRC by July 31.

Bhupen's Bharat Ratna tied to Bill

Son says accepting or rejecting it depends on Citizenship Act amendment

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI

Tez Hazarika, the U.S.-based son of music maestro Bhupen Hazarika, has said that accepting or rejecting the Bharat Ratna, India's highest civilian award bestowed posthumously on his father, depends on "how the Centre moves" on the issue of the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2016.

Assam and the other northeastern States are opposed to the Bill that seeks to fast-track the process of granting citizenship to non-Muslims who took refuge in India after fleeing religious persecution in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, and Pakistan up to December 31, 2014.

The Bill was passed in the Lok Sabha in January and awaits its fate in the Rajya Sabha.

"I believe that my father's

I believe that my father's name and words are being invoked and celebrated publicly while plans are afoot to pass a painfully unpopular Bill regarding citizenship that is actually undermining his documented position

TEZ HAZARIKA, Son of Bhupen Hazarika



name and words are being invoked and celebrated publicly while plans are afoot to pass a painfully unpopular Bill regarding citizenship that is actually undermining his documented position

indigenous populations of India, he would never have endorsed what appears, quite transparently, to be an underhanded way of pushing a law against the will and benefit of the majority in a manner that also seems to be grossly unconstitutional, undemocratic and un-Indian," he said.

Big question

He said many have been asking whether or not he would accept the Bharat Ratna for his father.

"I have not received any invitation so far (so) there is nothing to reject, and how the Centre moves on this matter (Bill) far outweighs in importance the awarding and receiving of such national recognition – a display of short-lived cheap thrills," he said.

Padma Shri returned

A few days ago, Manipur-based film-maker and music composer Aribam Sham Sharma decided to return his 2006 Padma Shri award in protest against the Bharatiya Janata Party-led NDA's bid to have the Bill passed in Parliament.

Before him, a majority of survivors of the martyrs of the Assam Agitation (1979-85) had returned the mementos awarded by the BJP-led coalition government in the State in 2016.

EPFO likely to retain interest rate at 8.55%

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Retirement fund body the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) is likely to retain the interest rate on the employees' provident fund at the 8.55% rate for the 2018-19 fiscal for its over 6 crore subscribers, a highly-placed source said.

"The proposal for providing interest rate for the current fiscal would come up in the meeting of the trustees of Employees' Provident Fund Organisation on February 21," the source said. "The interest rate would be retained at 8.55% for the current fiscal as provided in 2017-18 in view of forthcoming Lok Sabha election. The EPFO's income projections for the current fiscal would be tabulated in the meeting."

New immigration checkpoint for Kartarpur Sahib corridor

Centre designates Dera Baba Nanak check post in Gurdaspur

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Home Ministry has designated the Dera Baba Nanak land check post in Gurdaspur district, the exit and entry point in Punjab for visiting the Kartarpur Sahib Gurdwara in Pakistan, as an authorised immigration checkpoint. In a notification, the Ministry said on Monday that anyone with valid travel documents could exit or enter through the check post.

"In pursuance of sub-rule (b) of rule 3 of the Passport (Entry into India) Rules, 1950, the central government hereby designates Dera Baba Nanak Land Check Post of District Gurdaspur, Punjab State as an author-



The Kartarpur Gurdwara Sahib.

gements to build a pilgrim corridor over the border from Dera Baba Nanak in Gurdaspur to Kartarpur in the Narowal province of Pakistani Punjab. The plan is to complete the project by November 23, the 550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak.

On November 26 last year, Vice-President M. Venkaiah Naidu laid the foundation stone of the Dera Baba Nanak-Kartarpur Sahib Corridor (up to the International Border) at an event at Mann village in Gurdaspur district. On November 28, Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan laid the foundation stone of the 4-km corridor on the Pakistan side, which is expected to be completed by 2019.

ised Immigration Check Post for entry into/exit from India with valid travel documents for all classes of passengers," the notification said. Sikh bodies have been petitioning both the go-

was necessitated by the Ministry of External Affairs due to numerous complaints received from Indian nationals, mostly women deserted or harassed by their Non-Resident Indian spouses," declared a press release from the MEA.

The Bill, which has been championed by the MEA, the Ministry of Women and Child Development (MoWCD), Ministry of Home Affairs (MoEA) and Ministry of Law and Justice (MoLJ) is aimed at preventing victimisation of Indian nationals in fraudulent marriages.

It is expected that the Bill will serve as a deterrent for NRI spouses, who use marriages as a tool of exploitation.

"The introduction of the Bill

Tourism Corporation of Gujarat Limited
Block No. 16/17, 4th Floor, Udyog Bhavan, Sector-11, Gandhinagar.

Tender Notice

TCLG invites offers for Empanelment of Agencies / Firms / Group of Individuals for promotional activities and Interactive Digital Solutions for various requirements and for other similar Tourism related works. The tender document may be downloaded from www.gujarattourism.com/tenders.

Last date of submission of tender is 15/03/2019

Managing Director,
Tourism Corporation of Gujarat Limited

SL. No.	Brief Description of Procurement	Tender No.	Closing Date and Time for Receipt of Tenders
1	Procurement of Security Design Software and Compatible Computer to Offset Plate/Off Set Plate/Computer Systems for Dry and Wet Offset.	SPPHA-II/EI/2018/6401	At 10:45 AM (IST) Dated : 02-02-2019

प्रतिभाव सुरक्षा तंत्र / सुरक्षा तंत्र नियन्त्रण की प्रक्रिया
(A Unit of Security Printing & Minting Corp. of India Ltd.)
प्रतिभाव सुरक्षा तंत्र / सुरक्षा तंत्र के लिए आवश्यक विभिन्न विकल्पों से आमतौर पर चयन किये जाते हैं।
टक्साल कंपनीज़ / सेक्युरिटीज़ / मिनिट्रिल्स / मिनिट्रिल्स / हाइड्रोज़ेल्ड - 500063
CIN - U22213 DL 2006 GH014476 GSTIN : 36AAJC56111J1Z9
राजधानी/Ph: +91-40-23253607 फैक्स/Fax : +91-40-23456687 ई-मेल/email : spp.hyd@spmcil.com
No. SPPHA-II/Adv/EI/2018/19/6402 Date: 12-02-2019

सुरक्षा तंत्र अभियान / Global Expression of Interest (EOI)

Sealed tenders are invited from eligible and qualified tenderers for the following Procurement/Services :

SL. No. Brief Description of Procurement Tender No. Closing Date and Time for Receipt of Tenders

1 Procurement of Security Design Software and Compatible Computer to Offset Plate/Off Set Plate/Computer Systems for Dry and Wet Offset. SPPHA-II/EI/2018/6401 At 10:45 AM (IST)
Dated : 02-02-2019

जारी किया गया दस्तावेज़ : <http://spmcil.com> और विवरण प्राप्त करने के लिए यहाँ पर्याप्त है :
एसडी (SD) - Manager (TO) & CPO (कुर्ता पार्सार्क) for General Manager

For further details, please visit our website at <http://spmcil.com> or any amendment / corrigendum will be published on website only.

सुरक्षा तंत्र अभियान / Global Expression of Interest (EOI) का विवरण देखने के लिए विवरण प्राप्त करने के लिए यहाँ पर्याप्त है :
एसडी (SD) - Manager (TO) & CPO (कुर्ता पार्सार्क) for General Manager

SD/ Administrative Officer, NAAC

Invitation for Expression of Interest (EoI) for Empanelment of Suppliers of Services related to Data Validation and Verification for Assessment and Accreditation purposes through Letter of Intent.

NAAC intends to empanel technologically competent, cost effective and resourceful suppliers for Data Validation and Verification initially for one year.

Interested service providers are requested to remit application fee of Rs.1000/- (Rupees one Thousand Only) to administrative Officer, NAAC, Bengaluru by way of a crossed demand draft and obtain the form for Expression of Interest.

This amount is non-refundable. The details also can be accessed on NAAC website.

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ELSEWHERE



Pakistan is very close to securing IMF bailout

ISLAMABAD
Pakistan is likely to secure an International Monetary Fund (IMF) bailout soon to stave off a balance of payment crisis and help shore up its economy, Finance Minister Asad Umar said on Monday. The country's foreign reserves have dwindled to around \$8 billion, just enough for about two months of imports. REUTERS

Sri Lanka seeks to recruit hangmen

COLONBO
The Department of Prisons in Sri Lanka, where the last hanging took place in 1976, on Monday said that applications have been sought to recruit two hangmen, days after President Maithripala Sirisena vowed to end a the moratorium on death penalty within two months. PTI

U.S. moves in South China Sea irk China

BEIJING
China accused the United States of trying to "stir up trouble" on Monday by sending two U.S.-guided missile destroyers near disputed South China Sea islands. REUTERS

Pentagon chief visits troops, meets Ghani

'No instructions to begin withdrawal'



Still on alert: Acting U.S. Defense Secretary Pat Shanahan, centre, in Kabul, Afghanistan on Monday. ■AP

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
KABUL
Acting Pentagon chief Patrick Shanahan made an unannounced visit to Afghanistan on Monday, where he met with President Ashraf Ghani as the U.S. leads a push for peace talks with the Taliban.

The visit comes after Washington held major talks with Taliban officials in Qatar last month that negotiators hope could herald a breakthrough in the grinding 17-year conflict.

Mr. Shanahan told reporters earlier that he had no instructions from Washington to begin a withdrawal. "I have not been directed to step down our forces in Afghanistan," Mr. Shanahan said. "I think the presence we want in Afghanistan is what assures our homeland defence and supports re-

H-1B holders from India rally for reform

200-300 people protest outside the White House, seeking changes to green card-linked rules

SRI RAM LAKSHMAN
WASHINGTON

A group of mostly Indians on H-1B visas held a rally outside the White House on Sunday afternoon, demanding immigration law reforms to benefit those in the country legally. The rally, organised by the Republican Hindu Coalition (RHC), involved the period between February 1, 1979 and February 11



Call to Trump: Indian-origin H-1B visa holders protesting outside the White House on Sunday. ■SRI RAM LAKSHMAN

'Dreamer' benefits

The group is also pushing for legal childhood arrivals ('LCAs') to receive any benefits that individuals brought illegally to the U.S. as minors (a group often referred to as 'Dreamers') might receive. Nearly 7,000,000 such individuals have been protected by a Barack Obama-era programme called for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA).

"Age 21 is a fear factor for H-1B parents whose kids are on an H4," said Jyotsna Sharma, a tech worker and TV host and one of those leading the rally on Sunday. H-1B visa holders, whose

children and spouses get H4-dependent visas, are asking that H4 children be given green cards straight away, so that they can remain in the U.S. after they turn 21 without having to switch to another visa category or having to self-deport.

Placards at Sunday's rally included ones that read, "DALCA [DACA for LCAs] kids deserve better," "Stop Abusing Legal Immigrants" and "We are Not Displacing American Jobs". One placard even said "\$25 billion could be raised from green card fees to build U.S. President Donald Trump's controversial

border wall. "What we are suggesting to them [lawmakers and the Trump administration] is to include DALCA in DACA. We have nothing against DACA, that's fine, but just because you came here legally you should not be prohibited from DACA benefits," Shalabh Kumar, founder of RHC and donor to Mr. Trump's 2016 presidential campaign, said.

"Being on an H4 means, if I cannot obtain a green card by the time I turn 21, I will be kicked out of the country... In addition to being separated from my family, I will be made to feel like an outcast

and children whose green cards, when granted, also count against the overall cap.

AKSHITA
High school student

or a misfit, in a country that I grew up in for my whole life [sic]," Akshita, a high-school student, told the assembled crowd over a megaphone.

The third demand of those rallying was to remove the country caps for green card allotments. Currently, no country may be allocated more than 7% (around 9,800) of the total number of green cards granted each year. India, which sends a relatively large number of skilled workers to the U.S. each year – over 70% of all H-1B visas in fiscal year 2018 went to Indians – inevitably uses up all the green cards allocated to it. China, Vietnam and the Philippines are other examples, though the excess demand for immigrant visas is far less in these countries.

Green card cap

Just under 3,07,000 Indians were waiting for green cards in May 2018, according to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) data. These numbers do not include dependent spouses

and children whose green cards, when granted, also count against the overall cap.

In 2017, H.R. 392, a Bill introduced in the 115th Congress sought to end the per-country cap. Several groups, including the American Hospital Association, National Iranian American Council and Canadian Bar Association, had raised objections to this, concerned that it would crowd out applications from other countries.

Nevertheless, similar Bills have been introduced in the 116th Congress this year. Democratic Senator Kamala Harris and Republican Senator Mike Lee introduced the Fairness for High Skilled Immigrants Act of 2019 which will eliminate country caps for employment-based green cards and increase the caps from 7% to 15% for family-based green cards. A similar Bill has been introduced by Zoe Lofgren, a Representative from California in the House of Representatives.

The struggle for H-1B workers and families may go on for a while yet. Hours before Sunday's rally, news had broken that the discussions between lawmakers and the President to avert another shutdown had broken down over disagreements over border security funding.

Bahraini player released, heads for Australia

Manama drops extradition request

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

BANGKOK

Refugee footballer Hakeem al-Araibi left Thailand on Tuesday after Bangkok dropped extradition proceedings against him at Bahrain's request, ending a two-month detention ordeal that stirred global outcry.



Bahraini footballer Hakeem al-Araibi. ■AFP

informed that Bahrain wants to withdraw the (extradition) request... if they don't want him, we have no reason to keep him here," said Mr. Akapin.

Just after midnight local time on Tuesday (1700 GMT Monday), the footballer boarded a Thai Airways flight bound for Melbourne.

The Australian government had repeatedly called for Mr. Araibi's release.

Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison, who had also repeatedly pushed his Thai counterpart Prayut Chan-O-Cha for Mr. Araibi's release, on Monday thanked the Thai government for "listening to the issues" raised by Australia.

Pentagon chief visits troops, meets Ghani

'No instructions to begin withdrawal'



Still on alert: Acting U.S. Defense Secretary Pat Shanahan, centre, in Kabul, Afghanistan on Monday. ■AP

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No-deal Brexit could cost 6,00,000 jobs'

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
FRANKFURT AM MAIN

A British departure from the European Union (EU) without a deal could put 6,00,000 jobs around the world at risk, with Germany the hardest hit, a study published on Monday found.

Researchers at the IWH institute in Halle, eastern Germany, examined what would happen if U.K. imports from the remaining EU fell 25% after Brexit. They reckoned that some 1,03,000 jobs would be under threat in Europe's largest economy Germany and 50,000 in France.

A "hard" departure without a deal would see tariffs imposed at the border, "tangling up global supply chains", study co-author Oliver Holtmoeller said in a statement.

The economists focused only on trade in goods and services, leaving out other possible economic impacts of Brexit like changes to investment flows. Within the 27 remaining EU countries, a total of almost 1,80,000 posts at firms directly exporting to the U.K. would be at risk. But 4,33,000 more workers in the EU and around the world would be affected, as their employers sell to companies who, in turn, export to Britain.

Later he sat down with Mr. Ghani, who has vented frustration at peace talks occurring without him about the future of Afghanistan and warned against rushing into a deal.

Thai Princess disqualified from running for PM

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
BANGKOK

Thai Princess Ubolratana was on Monday formally disqualified from running for Prime Minister, ending her brief and ill-fated political union with a party allied to the powerful Shinawatra clan, just days after a stern royal command rebuking

her candidacy was issued by her brother, the King.

Uncertainty and conjecture have coursed through Thailand since Friday when the Thai Raksa Chart party made the explosive announcement of Princess Ubolratana, King Maha Vajiralongkorn's elder sister, as their candidate for Premier after

the March 24 election. Her tilt appeared to some to be a masterstroke of back-room dealings by Thaksin Shinawatra, the billionaire self-exiled ex-Premier, just weeks before the poll.

But just hours later it fell apart. A royal command from the King put a pin in her un-

precedented political aspirations, insisting that the monarch was above politics and describing his sister's candidacy as "highly inappropriate". Thailand's incredibly wealthy and powerful monarchy is revered by Thais and protected by a draconian *lese majeste* law. The King's word is seen as final.

On Monday, the Election Commission formally scratched her candidacy.

"The EC today has announced the name of candidates excluding Princess Ubolratana proposed by the Thai Raksa Chart party," it said in a statement, explaining "all royal family members are above politics".

'We don't know where Khashoggi's body is'

Saudi official says probe is still going on

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
WASHINGTON

Riyadh does not know the location of dissident Jamal Khashoggi's body, despite having detained the Saudi team that murdered him, a high-ranking foreign affairs official said in an interview broadcast on Sunday. Khashoggi was dismembered after his murder on October 2 in the Saudi consulate in Istanbul but his remains have yet to be found.

Adel al-Jubeir, Saudi Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, said the murder was carried out by Saudi officials "acting outside their scope of authority". But asked where Khashoggi's body is, he told CBS's 'Face the Nation,' "We don't know."

Mr. Jubeir said the public prosecutor responsible for the case had sought evidence from Turkey but had

received no response. Questioned why those in custody couldn't tell them where the body was, Mr. Jubeir responded: "We are still investigating."

On Friday, *The New York Times* said the CIA had intercepted communications of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman telling a top aide in 2017 that he would go after Khashoggi "with a bullet" if the journalist did not return to Saudi Arabia.

Prospective bidders may visit our websites: www.nmdc.co.in; CPP Portal https://eprocure.gov.in; https://mstccommerce.com and may download the tender documents. Any corrigendum to the above tender notice will be uploaded on our website and MSTC e-portal only.

Executive Director (Materials)

A poster of Jamal Khashoggi in Istanbul. ■REUTERS

DEPARTMENT OF POSTS

The Executive Engineer (E), Postal Electrical Division, Bangalore invites on behalf of the President of India on line percentage rate E-tenders from eligible contractors for the works of

Sl.No.	Name of work	Estimated cost	EMD
1	SITC of 62.5 KVA E/A set with acoustic enclosure at Kasargod HO building (NR-Kerala)	6,17,661	12,353
2	SITC of 62.5 KVA E/A set with acoustic enclosure at Kannur HO building (NR-Kerala)	6,21,598	12,432

Time of completion: 30 days for each work vide NIT Nos. 196,197/EEE/PED/BGL/18-19 respectively. The last date of submission of online Tenders - 20.02.2019 at 11.00AM and Date of opening of tender - 20.02.2019 at 11.30AM. The detailed tender notice, tender documents, corrigendum if any, and other instructions can be downloaded or viewed online from the E-wizard portal http://dopcivil.euniwizard.com. For further clarifications if any, please contact 080-26676804

Sd/- Executive Engineer (E)

NMDC Limited

(A Government of India Enterprise)
10-3/2006-18/11X084/318 dt. 11/02/19 for Supply of design, manufacture, assembly and testing before despatch, packing, delivery, & supervision of Commissioning at site for One no. 11KV, 3 MVA Power Transformer, complete with all fittings, accessories, associated equipment, Spares, 10% extra Transformer Oil, required for its satisfactory operation at DIOM Donimalla

Final Tender: 11/02/2019 to 07/03/2019

2 HQMM/2006-18/11X084/318 dt. 11/02/19 for Supply of design, manufacture, assembly and testing before despatch, packing, delivery, & supervision of Commissioning at site for One No. 800 KVA 3.3 KV/0.433 KV Dry Type Cast Resin Outdoor Distribution Transformer, complete with all fittings, accessories, associated equipment, Spares required for its satisfactory operation at Screening Plant of BIOM Bacheli Complex

Final Tender: 11/02/2019 to 09/03/2019

3 HQMM/5007-18/EPAC001/19 dated 11-02-2019 for procurement of 2350 Nos. of Mould for PPCM required for NMDC Iron & Steel Plant, Nagarnar (Post) Bastar District, Chhattisgarh State (only from manufacturers)

12/02/2019 to 06/03/2019

₹ 5900/- and ₹ 50000/-

Prospective bidders may visit our websites: www.nmdc.co.in; CPP Portal https://eprocure.gov.in; https://mstccommerce.com and may download the tender documents. Any corrigendum to the above tender notice will be uploaded on our website and MSTC e-portal only.

Dated : 11.02.2019

e-TENDER NOTICE (Running Contract)

Online bids are invited for the supply and installation of the following equipment for various Government healthcare institutions across Kerala

Sl. No	Tender No.	Description	Pre-Bid Meeting at NMDC Head Office	Last date of online submission
1.	T 312/2019	Modular OT, Slit Lamp with Applanation Tonometer Model B, CVTS Instruments – Pediatric	18.02.19 11.00 a.m. 05.00 p.m.	25.02.19 05.00 p.m.

MARKET WATCH

	11-02-2019	% CHANGE
Sensex	36,395	-0.41
US Dollar	71.18	0.18
Gold	34,225	-0.16
Brent oil	61.06	-1.22

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	328.80	-2.70
Asian Paints	1437.10	-11.70
Axis Bank	710.85	-8.55
Bajaj Auto	2853.60	-2.20
Bajaj Finance	6096.25	-86.45
Bharti Airtel	312.20	-1.05
BPCL	333.60	-3.80
Cipla	543.30	9.05
Coal India	218.80	0.15
Dr Reddy's Lab	2615.35	-154.35
Eicher Motors	2073.15	-94.25
GAIL (India)	328.40	-7.95
Grafix Ind	716.65	-1.30
HCL Tech	1079.35	10.90
HDFC	1948.20	3.55
HDFC Bank	2139.65	17.00
Hero MotoCorp	2889.05	-49.80
Hindalco	199.45	-6.45
HPLC	231.60	-1.25
Hind Unilever	1804.80	-12.50
Indiabulls HFL	598.05	-15.85
ICICI Bank	350.05	-5.05
IndusInd Bank	1511.00	11.95
Bharti Infratel	323.50	-2.55
Infosys	762.80	1.90
Indian Oil Corp	135.85	2.05
ITC	277.10	-1.60
JSW Steel	261.60	-1.25
Kotak Bank	1301.55	2.15
L&T	1246.50	-15.25
M&M	647.55	-34.55
Maurit Suzuki	7177.90	43.65
NTPC	130.35	-1.70
ONGC	138.20	-5.95
PowerGrid Corp	182.35	1.35
Reliance Ind	1253.25	-24.45
State Bank	280.50	-5.50
Sun Pharma	428.55	-2.50
Tata Motors	152.65	1.95
Tata Steel	480.70	11.95
TCI	2065.90	4.50
Tech Mahindra	809.40	3.85
Titan	1056.40	3.15
UltraTech Cement	3449.40	-108.40
UPL	805.85	-6.35
Vedanta	152.15	-2.00
Wipro	373.05	0.35
YES Bank	173.25	-1.85
Zee Entertainment	401.70	2.90

EXCHANGE RATES		
Indicative direct rates in rupees a unit except yen at 4 p.m. on February 11		
CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	70.97	71.29
Euro	80.31	80.70
British Pound	91.73	92.15
Japanese Yen (100)	64.43	64.73
Chinese Yuan	10.45	10.50
Swiss Franc	70.75	71.10
Singapore Dollar	52.26	52.50
Canadian Dollar	53.48	53.72
Malaysian Ringgit	17.42	17.51

Source: Indian Bank

BULLION RATES CHENNAI		
February 11 rates in rupees with previous rates in parentheses		
Retail Silver (1g)	43.2	(43.1)
22 ct gold (1g)	3150	(3150)

Source: Indian Bank

Buy-backs gain speed amid volatile market

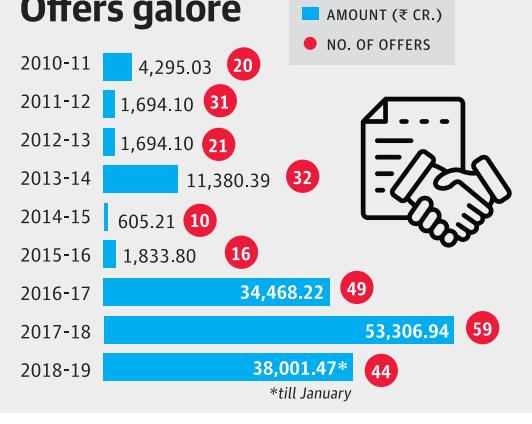
Current financial year has already seen a cumulative offer size of over ₹38,000 crore

ASHISH RUKHAIYAR
MUMBAI

Companies are using the current market volatility and the recent price correction as an opportunity to buy back their shares with as many as a dozen such buy-back offers currently underway.

While the current financial year had already seen 44 buy-back offers with a cumulative offer size of more than ₹38,000 crore, there are almost 20 more companies in the pipeline that have already taken board approval for buy-back and will be launching the offers in the near future.

Data from Prime Database shows, the year 2017-18 saw a cumulative offer size of ₹53,307 crore, the highest so far. For the current financial year, data shows that companies such as Ajanta Pharma,



panies, especially mid-caps, trading well below their highs, entities are looking at buying back the shares at an attractive premium to the market price.

Market participants are of the view that with most com-

panies, especially mid-caps, trading well below their highs, entities are looking at buying back the shares at an attractive premium to the market price.

Market participants are of the view that with most com-

petitive. They are emerging as sustainable substitutes for traditional energy forms. Natural Gas is fast becoming one of the largest fuels in the global energy mix."

Mr. Modi also highlighted India's role in the global economy and the energy market, saying that even international agencies such as the World Bank and the IMF had recognised its position.

"Currently, India is the fastest growing large economy in the world," he said. "The United States has become the world's largest oil and gas producer after the shale revolution. Solar energy and other renewable sources of energy have become more

"There is a shift in energy consumption from West to East," Mr. Modi said. "The United States has become the world's largest oil and gas producer after the shale revolution. Solar energy and other renewable sources of energy have become more

ders," he added.

Meanwhile, January alone saw eight buy-back offers totalling almost ₹9,700 crore. Currently, buy-back offers are underway for companies such as Bosch, Natco Pharma, NMDC, Tata Investment Corporation, Baba Arts, Oil India and Persistent Systems.

L&T offer

Interestingly, the cumulative amount of buy-back offers in the current fiscal would have been still higher if the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) had not rejected the ₹9,000 crore buy-back of engineering major Larsen & Toubro (L&T).

The regulator found the offer size non-compliant with the Companies Act as well as with the SEBI regulations.

Andhra Bank's loss widens to ₹578.59 cr.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD

Andhra Bank's net loss widened to ₹578.59 crore during the quarter ended December.

The loss in the year-earlier period was ₹532.02 crore.

In a regulatory filing, the bank said the provisions for non-performing assets (NPAs) stood at ₹1,790.17 crore. This is an increase of 2.58% from the ₹1,744.99 crore made in the corresponding quarter of the previous fiscal.

Total income increased 4.49% to ₹5,322.33 crore (₹5,093.43 crore).

The gross NPAs of the State-owned bank increased to 16.68% (14.26%).



Sultan Al Jaber

deepen the bilateral relationship even further, particularly in the oil, gas and petrochemical sectors

"India is a very important market for us from a political, strategic, and of course from an economic and commercial point of view," Mr. Al Jaber said on the sidelines of Petrotech 2019, India's flagship oil and gas conference. "India continues to be a very important destination for our business."

"But now, we are of the belief that we have to transform our relationship with India from only being an energy supplier to being a strategic long-term partner when it comes to the energy sector," Mr. Al Jaber added. "We are very much keen and interested in expanding our portfolio of investments in India in the downstream sector."

He said that Abu Dhabi is going to work hard with India to attract Indian companies to invest in Abu Dhabi in the upstream as well as the downstream space.

"Beyond oil, India is one of the UAE's top trading partners, with \$53 billion in bilateral trade between our countries in 2017, and the UAE's leadership wishes to expand and

PM pitches for responsible oil pricing

We need to move towards transparent and flexible markets for both oil and gas'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

The world must move to a more responsible pricing mechanism for oil that balances the needs of the producers as well as the consumers, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Monday while inaugurating Petrotech 2019, the government's flagship oil and gas conference.

"For too long, the world has seen crude prices on a roller-coaster," Mr. Modi said. "We need to move to responsible pricing, which balances the interests of both the producer and consumer. We also need to move towards transparent and flexible markets for both oil and gas. Only then, can we serve the energy needs of



Clarion call: For too long, the world has seen crude prices on a roller-coaster, says Narendra Modi. ■ ABHISEK SAHA

humanity in an optimal manner," he added.

Shift in energy sector

The Prime Minister also highlighted an ongoing shift in the energy sector, both geographically and also in the mix of fuels used by nations.

"There is a shift in energy consumption from West to East," Mr. Modi said. "The United States has become the world's largest oil and gas producer after the shale revolution. Solar energy and other renewable sources of energy have become more

competitive. They are emerging as sustainable substitutes for traditional energy forms. Natural Gas is fast becoming one of the largest fuels in the global energy mix."

Mr. Modi also highlighted India's role in the global economy and the energy market, saying that even international agencies such as the World Bank and the IMF had recognised its position.

"Currently, India is the fastest growing large economy in the world," he said. "The United States has become the world's largest oil and gas producer after the shale revolution. Solar energy and other renewable sources of energy have become more

competitive. They are emerging as sustainable substitutes for traditional energy forms. Natural Gas is fast becoming one of the largest fuels in the global energy mix."

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IN BRIEF



S&P affirms IOB's rating, keeps outlook stable

MUMBAI International rating agency S&P Global on Monday affirmed the credit rating of state-run Indian Overseas Bank (IOB) at 'BB' and 'B' on expectation of government's capital infusion. The lender's outlook has also been kept stable. The bank's capital position improved in Q4 of FY19 through an employee stock purchase scheme (ESPS) and sale of non-core assets for which it has received initial payment.

Exatron Servers plans to invest ₹360 cr. in unit

NEW DELHI Exatron Servers said it was setting up a manufacturing and assembly plant at Tirupati in Andhra Pradesh, and planning to invest ₹360 crore over the next five years to scale up its operations. The facility, located at the Industrial Park Electronic MFG Cluster – II in Tirupati, is spread over 2 lakh sq. feet and will be the assembling and manufacturing centre for high-end servers and storage products, the company said in a statement.

KKR buys 60% stake in Ramky for \$510 million

MUMBAI Global investment firm KKR has completed the acquisition of 60% stake in Ramky Enviro Engineers Ltd. (REEL), a provider of environmental services and solutions, for \$510 million via a combination of primary and secondary investments. M. Goutham Reddy, MD and CEO, REEL said "KKR's expertise in environmental issue management makes it an ideal partner to help us keep pace with the environmental challenges."

India Cements' Q3 profit slides

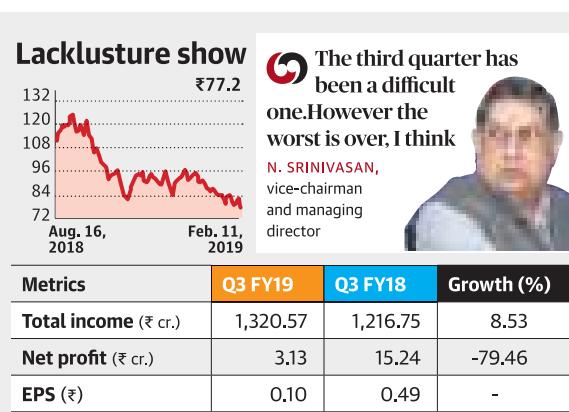
Rise in input cost, lower realisation impact the company's performance

K.T. JAGANNATHAN
CHENNAI

The India Cements Ltd. (ICL) has reported a net profit of ₹3.13 crore for the quarter ended December 2018, down about 80% from ₹15.24 crore in the year-earlier period.

Total income increased to ₹1,320.57 crore from ₹1,216.75 crore. Volume-wise, sales had risen 8% to 29.38 lakh tonnes from 27.26 lakh tonnes. With a clinker sale of 0.2 lakh tonnes, the overall sales volume is up at 29.58 lakh tonnes. The lower profit is primarily attributed to a combination of drop in net plant realisation and rise in input costs.

Better times ahead
Addressing the media here on Monday, N. Srinivasan,



The third quarter has been a difficult one. However the worst is over, I think

N. SRINIVASAN,
vice-chairman and managing director

in the past week or so on the eve of busy season (January-September), he said that the trend would sustain in the coming days with a pick-up in demand.

"This will boost capacity utilisation," he added. Currently, the capacity utilisa-

tion of ICL stood at about 76%.

Mr. Srinivasan said that poor pricing forced ICL to pull out of certain markets and focus on its primary markets i.e. south and Maharashtra.

To a question, he said that rise in variable cost had shaved off nearly ₹200 a tonne (close to ₹57 crore) for ICL. The variable cost had gone up by nearly 9% on a year-on-year basis. Following an increase in volume during the quarter under review, ICL managed to cut this loss (due to rise in variable cost) to ₹27 crore.

Pointing to a number of visible demand-inducing factors Mr. Srinivasan said, "the fourth quarter will be substantially better than the third quarter."

SpiceJet profit plunges 77% on oil hike, rupee depreciation

The low-cost carrier's yields, however, increased by 8%

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Low-cost carrier SpiceJet reported a 77% plunge in net profit to ₹55.1 crore in the third quarter ended December 31, 2018 against ₹240 crore in the year-earlier period.

An increase of 34% in crude oil prices and 11% depreciation of the rupee against the dollar led to a rise in cost by ₹329 crore but the airline said it was able to offset some of this by an 8% increase in yield or revenue per passenger per mile.

The carrier had reported two straight quarterly losses.

Total income stood at ₹2,530.8 crore against ₹2,096.1 crore in the year-



Future perfect: The airline will continue to invest in creating capacity, says Ajay Singh. ■M.SAMRAJ

earlier period. For the comparative periods, expenditure stood at ₹2,475.8 crore against ₹1,856.1 crore.

The airline had incurred a loss of ₹38 crore and ₹389 crore in the first and second quarters, respectively.

"With sector headwinds having subsided, we are bullish on our future prospects and will continue to invest aggressively in creating capacity in line with our forecasts," said Ajay Singh, chairman and managing director, Spicejet.

The airline added nine Boeing 737 Max 8 aircraft and three Q400s between October and December and would add seven more Max aircraft and one Boeing 737 freighter this fiscal.

Exim Bank on track to hit ₹140-cr. profit target

It has ₹480 cr. exposure to IL&FS units

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI

Export Import Bank of India (Exim Bank) is hopeful of recovering over ₹640 crore from two big accounts that have gone to National Company Law Tribunal during the current quarter, said a top official.

"We are hopeful of recovering ₹240 crore from Bhushan Power and Steel and ₹400 crore from Essar Steel this quarter," said David Rasquinha, managing director, Exim Bank. "Apart from these two accounts, there are several firms owing us money. But they are small."

Recently, Exim Bank was successful in recovering its dues from Binani Cement.

Thyssenkrupp, Tata Steel to get EU warning on JV

Companies may have to offer concessions: sources

REUTERS
BRUSSELS

Germany's Thyssenkrupp and Tata Steel will be warned this week that European Union (EU) antitrust regulators could veto their planned European steel joint venture (JV) unless they offer concessions, people familiar with the matter said.

The European Commission is expected to send a charge sheet, known as a statement of objections, to the companies, the people said. Such documents set out serious competition concerns which companies have to address with specific concessions or see their deal



blocked.

Thyssenkrupp said it was

the group's understanding

that such a statement would

be sent by the European

Commission in the course of

the week, adding this was

previously expected and

would serve as the basis for

further talks.

"As soon as the statement

of objections has arrived, we will thoroughly examine the Commission's arguments," a spokesman for Thyssenkrupp said, adding the group continued to be confident that the transaction could be closed in early 2019.

The JV, announced in June last year, is the biggest shake-up in Europe's steel industry in more than a decade. To be named Thyssenkrupp Tata Steel, the entity will have around 48,000 workers and about €17 billion (\$19.2 billion) in sales.

The Commission did not immediately respond to a request for comment. Tata Steel was not immediately available for comment.

SEBI to look into sale of pledged shares

Issue related to three Reliance firms

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Markets regulator Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) is looking into allegations and counter-allegations related to the sale of pledged shares of the Anil Ambani-led Reliance Group's three listed firms by two lenders, senior officials said on Monday.

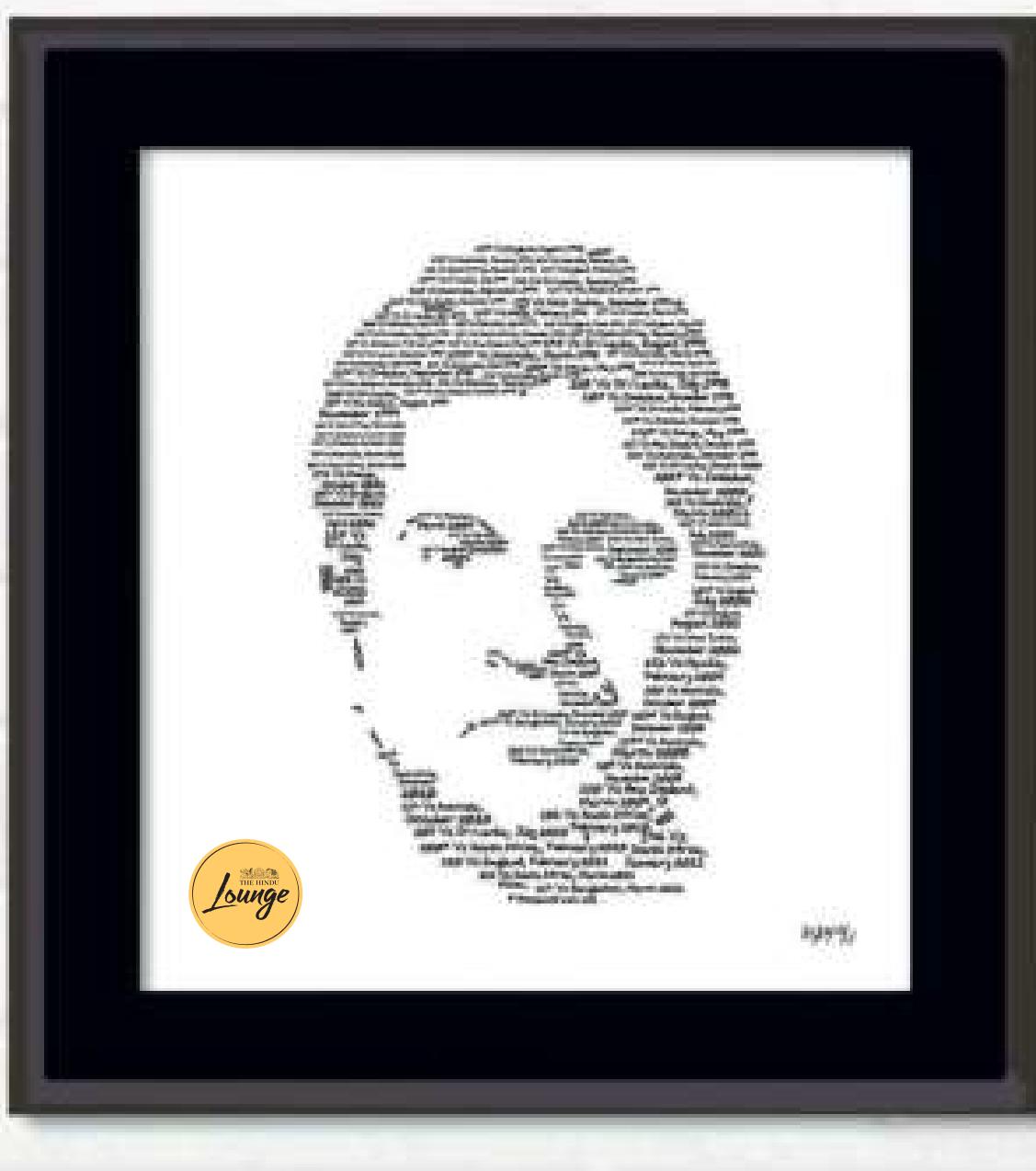
Reliance Group has accused L&T Finance and Edelweiss Group entities of "illegal" and "motivated" actions in invoking the pledged shares of Anil Ambani group firms and selling them in open market causing a steep fall in share values.

L&T Finance and Edelweiss Group have refuted the allegations and have counter-alleged that Reliance Group failed to make timely payments, which, they said, necessitated the sale of pledged shares.

Officials said the regulator had asked the exchanges to look into the trade details and seek clarifications from the entities concerned regarding open market sale of shares to ascertain whether any norms were breached in the process.

The regulator would subsequently examine whether there was any violation of regulations relating to insider trading and disclosure norms, the officials said.

Reliance Power has already written to SEBI to investigate the matter.



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THE HINDU GROUP

India set to rotate World Cup certainties during Australia ODIs

Selectors cannot ignore the fact that the IPL is to be played just before the marquee event



Downtime: India's pacemen are also likely to be given breaks to avoid fitness issues. ■ FILE PHOTO

AMOL KARHADKAR
MUMBAI

Next month's ODI series at home against Australia may well be billed as a dress rehearsal for the World Cup, since it will be India's last 50-over test before the mega event that starts on May 30 in England. However, that doesn't mean India will field its first-choice World Cup squad against a struggling Australian outfit.

In fact, the India team management and the national selectors are understood to be mulling over how to

rest or rotate some of the key members of the squad during the five ODIs to be played from March 2 to 13, and the preceding two T20Is.

The *Hindu* understands that the selectors will try and strike a balance of resting senior batsmen, rotating pacers and trying out the back-up options for the World Cup. Rohit Sharma, who lead the team in Virat Kohli's absence, is likely to be rested – at least partially – from the Australia series to spend some time with his newborn daughter.

It will be interesting to see if Kohli, who was rested for the last two ODIs and the three T20Is in New Zealand, plays all five ODIs since the selectors may be tempted to try out a few back-up options.

The selection panel headed by M.S.K. Prasad, in consultation with Kohli and head coach Ravi Shastri, is likely to test fringe batsmen like opener K.L. Rahul and Test vice-captain Ajinkya Rahane.

The other back-up options, Dinesh Karthik and Rishabh Pant, are also set to

be presented with as much game-time as possible so they are ready for the challenge should the need arise.

IPL challenge

The pace triumvirate of Jaspit Bumrah, Bhuvneshwar Kumar and Mohammed Shami is also likely to be rotated in order to help them recover. It will be interesting to see if wrist-spin duo of Yuzvendra Chahal and Kuldeep Yadav are also given a break at some point during the series, to help them rejuvenate for the challenging four

months ahead.

While the selectors' discussion with Shastri after the team's return is going to be pivotal, the selectors just cannot ignore the fact that the rigorous Indian Premier League is to be played just before the World Cup. The IPL franchises have made it clear that they cannot rest key India players at least in the first half of the tournament.

As a result, the selectors will have to give key players a break to avoid fitness issues during the marquee event.

Ranji champion Vidarbha chasing history

Rest of India's strong batting will be a tough test for Umesh & Co.

IRANI CUP

M.R. PRAVEEN CHANDRAN
NAGPUR

After scaling another peak, by retaining the Ranji Trophy a few days ago, Vidarbha will have to hit prime form against a strong Rest of India (ROI) side as it chases history in the Z.R. Irani Cup which begins at the VCA stadium on Tuesday.

Unlike the previous season, this year's Ranji triumph for Vidarbha came after a battle of attrition with Saurashtra. The Vidarbha players will have to be back at their best against ROI for doing an encore in the Irani Cup and become only the third team to do so.

They don't have to look far ahead for motivation as the 41-year-old Wasim Jaffer is all keyed up to do well and is chasing some personal records as well.

Though Vidarbha has the obvious advantage of playing the final at the VCA stadium – which has of late become a fortress for the home side – the depth and quality of ROI's batting will be a tough test for its bowling spearheaded by Umesh Yadav.

Rajneesh Gurbani, whose swing bowling was instrumental in Vidarbha's twin triumph last year, has not been the same force this season. But his ineffectiveness was camouflaged by Umesh



Talking heads: Vidarbha skipper Faiz Fazal, left, and Rest of India captain Ajinkya Rahane exchange notes on the eve of the Irani Cup match on Monday. ■ S. SUDARSHAN

and Aditya Sarwate's magical spells. The duo will again hold the key.

The ROI team, led by India's Test vice-captain Ajinkya Rahane, has a formidable batting line-up with a mix of Indian players and consistent performers in the Ranji Trophy this season.

Internationals Mayank Agarwal, Hanuma Vihari, Shreyas Iyer alongwith wicketkeeper-batsman Ishan Kishan, who looked in fine touch in the A series against England Lions, and promising Punjab opener Anmolpreet Singh will be more than a handful for the Vidarbha bowlers.

Leg-spinner Rahul Chahar, coming into the match

the backbone of Saurashtra's campaign in Ranji Trophy, and Kerala medium-pacer Sandeep Warrier have earned their places in the squad.

Fast bowlers Ankit Rajpoot, Ronit More and Tanveer Ul Haq, who all had a good Ranji season, are sure to give selection headaches to Rahane.

Leg-spinner Rahul Chahar, coming into the match

after a fine show against England Lions, and off-spinner K. Gowtham will also have strong cases for their inclusion in playing XI.

The teams:

Rest of India: Ajinkya Rahane (capt.), Mayank Agarwal, Anmolpreet Singh, Hanuma Vihari, Shreyas Iyer, Ishan Kishan, K. Gowtham, Dharmendrasinh Jadeja, Rahul Chahar, Ankit Rajpoot, Tanveer Ul Haq, Ronit More, Sandeep Warrier, Rinku Singh and Snell Patel.

Vidarbha: Faiz Fazal (capt.), R. Sanjay, Atharva Taide, Wasim Jaffer, Ganesh Satish, Mohit Kale, Akshay Wadkar, Siddhesh Wath, Aditya Sarwate, Akshay Karneware, Akshay Wakhare, Umesh Yadav, Rajneesh Gurbani, Yash Thakur and Sunil Patel.

Wood's five-for stifles West Indies

REUTERS
GROS ISLET

Mark Wood picked up his first five-wicket haul to bowl England into a commanding position on the second day of the third Test against West Indies on Sunday. Wood scooped five for 41 as the visitors bowled out West Indies for 154, giving them a 123-run first-innings lead.

Moeen took four for 36, while Broad chipped in with a wicket, as well as a magnificent one-handed catch at long-off.

England was 108 for two at lunch on the third day with Joe Denly (45) and Joe Root (18) at the crease.

SCOREBOARD

England – 1st innings: 277.
West Indies – 1st innings: K.

Brathwaite c Anderson b

Moeen 12, J. Campbell lbw b

Moeen 41, S. Hope c Burns b

Wood 1, D. Bravo c Root b

Wood 6, R. Chase c Burns b

Wood 0, S. Hetmyer c Root b

Wood 8, S. Dowrich lbw b

Broad 38, K. Paul st Bairスト

Broad 9, K. Roach (not out)

16, A. Joseph c Broad b

Moeen 2, S. Gabriel b Wood 4;

Extras (lb-4, nb-3, w-10): 17.

Total (in 47.2 overs): 154.

Fall of wickets: 1-57, 2-57, 3-

59, 4-59, 5-74, 6-79, 7-104,

8-145, 9-148.

England bowling: Anderson

9-3-31-0, Broad 15-4-42-1,

Moeen 15-4-36-4, Wood 8.2-

2-41-5.

Kuldeep vaults to career-best No. 2

Krunal's efforts see him climb 39 spots

IANS
DUBAI

India's premier wrist-spinner Kuldeep Yadav rose one place to take a career-best second spot in the ICC men's Twenty20 International player rankings after returning two for 26 in the final match against New Zealand on Sunday.

The 24-year-old Indian is now only behind Afghanistan leg-spinner Rashid Khan, according to an International Cricket Council (ICC) release.

Spinners Imad Wasim of Pakistan (up five places to fourth position) and Mitchell Santner of New Zealand (up four places to 10th) have also moved up in the latest rankings update that includes two other series which saw South Africa beat Pakistan and Nepal beat the United

Arab Emirates by 2-1 margins.

Among other Indians, left-arm spinner Krunal Pandya rose 39 places to a career-best 58th while openers Rohit Sharma (up three places to seventh) and Skhar Dhawan (up one place to 11th) have made progress with some useful knocks.

For New Zealand, Kane Williamson (up one place to 12th), Ross Taylor (up seven places to 51st) and Tim Seifert (up 87 places to a career-best 83rd) among batsmen and Tim Southee (up seven places to 30th) among bowlers are some notable gainers.

In the team rankings, South Africa has overtaken Australia and England to third place, while Nepal has overtaken the UAE to be 14th.



Kuldeep Yadav. ■ AFP

New Zealand-India T20I series in numbers

Top run-getters	M	Inns	Runs	HS	Ave	SR	50s
Tim Seifert (NZ)	3	3	139	84	46.33	173.75	1
Colin Munro (NZ)	3	3	118	72	39.33	163.88	1
Rohit Sharma (IND)	3	3	89	50	29.66	134.84	1
Vijay Shankar (IND)	3	3	84	43	28	155.55	0
Colin de Grandhomme (NZ)	3	3	83	50	27.66	172.91	1

Top wicket-takers	M	Inns	Wkts	BBI	Ave	Econ	SR
Daryl Mitchell (NZ)	3	3	4	2/27	13.75	8.68	9.5
Mitchell Santner (NZ)	3	3	4	2/24	18	8	13.5
Krunal Pandya (IND)	3	3	4	3/28	29.75	9.91	18
Khaleel Ahmed (IND)	3	3	4	2/27	30.5	10.16	18
Lockie Ferguson (NZ)	2	2	3	2/22	17.66	6.62	16

Juventus consolidates top spot

EURO LEAGUES

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
MILAN

Cristiano Ronaldo headed in his 18th league goal this season as Juventus soared to an 11-point lead in Serie A on Sunday with a 3-0 win at Sassuolo.

Juventus had started slowly with goalkeeper Wojciech Szczesny saving twice in the opening minutes as the champion was without in-

jured defenders Leonardo Bonucci and Giorgio Chiellini. Juventus broke through after Sassuolo goalkeeper Andrea Consigli rushed out to parry a Ronaldo shot leaving the way clear for Khedira to turn in the rebound after 23 minutes.

It was the German international's second league goal of his injury-hit campaign, after scoring the opening goal of the Serie A season against Chievo on August 18. Consigli denied Federico Bernardeschi just before the break with a Khedira header flying wide.

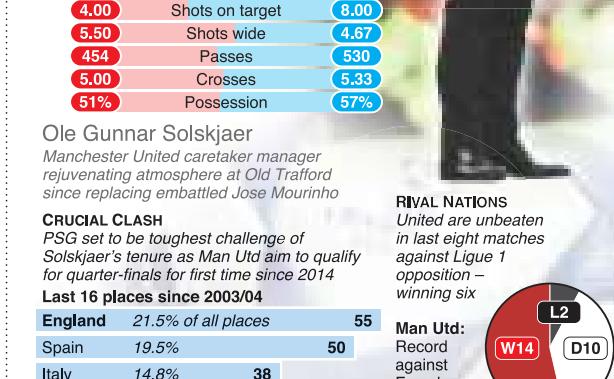
But Ronaldo jumped highest after 70 minutes to meet Pjanic's corner for his fourth goal in his last three league games to bring his tally to 20 goals for Juventus in all competitions.

Lionel Messi was short of fitness and Barcelona lacked spark as a goalless draw away to Athletic Bilbao offered fresh hope to rivals.

A thigh injury had limited Messi against Real Madrid on Wednesday. Messi was not at his best and neither was Barcelona, which would even have lost had it not been for Marc Andre ter Stegen's stunning late save to deny Inaki Williams.

The results: Serie A: Sassuolo 0 lost to Juventus 3 (Khedira 23, Ronaldo 70, Can 86); AC Milan 3 (Ceppitelli 12-0g, Piatek 22, Piatek 62) bt Cagliari 0.

La Liga: Athletic Bilbao 0 drew with Barcelona 0.



TV PICKS

NBA: Sony ESPN (SD & HD), 7.30 a.m.
Irani Cup: Vidarbha vs Rest of India: Star Sports 2 (SD & HD), 9.30 a.m.
Pro Volleyball League: Sony Six (SD & HD), 7 p.m.
West Indies vs England: 3rd Test, Sony ESPN (SD & HD), 7.30 p.m.
Champions League: Sony Ten 1 & 2 (SD & HD), 1.30 a.m. (Wednesday)

IN BRIEF



Joel Embiid propels 76ers past Lakers

LOS ANGELES Joel Embiid scored 37 points and grabbed 14 rebounds to power Philadelphia 76ers over visiting Los Angeles Lakers 143-120 on Sunday in a match-up of high-profile NBA clubs.
Other results: Dallas Mavericks 102 bt Portland Trailblazers 101; Sacramento Kings 117 bt Phoenix Suns 104; Orlando Magic 124 bt Atlanta Hawks 108; Golden State Warriors 120 bt Miami Heat 118. AFP

Ravi on the prowl for 61st Cavalry

NEW DELHI Ravi Rathore struck six goals to guide 61st Cavalry to a 6-5 victory over LA Pegasus Polo in the opening league match of the 22nd Jiwaji Rao Scindia Gold Cup 10-goal polo tournament on Monday. Eight teams will figure in the tournament to be held on a league-cum-knockout basis. **The results (league):** 61st Cavalry 6 (Ravi Rathore 6) bt LA Pegasus Polo 5 (Dhrupad Godara 3, Samir Suhag 2).

Mumbai February 27th races cancelled

MUMBAI The Stewards of RWITC have decided to cancel the races scheduled to be held on February 27 (Wednesday) due to administrative reasons.

Spectacular rally by Neroca to hold Chennai City FC

Hits back after trailing 3-0; Pedro Manzi's first-half hat-trick for the visitor goes in vain

I-LEAGUE

AMITABHA DAS SHARMA
IMPHAL

Manipur giant Neroca FC made a spectacular comeback overcoming a three-goal deficit to hold title-aspirant Chennai City FC 3-3 in a riveting contest of the Hero I-League at the Khuman Lam-pak Stadium here on Monday.

The few hundred fans who braved a general strike to support the home side were treated to some fantastic action.

Plan backfires

Pedro Manzi's hat-trick, his fourth in the tournament, went in vain as Chennai City's defensive plan backfired in the second half.

Neroca reduced the margin through substitute Felix Chidi soon after resumption before Chencho Gytshen struck the second midway



Upstaged: Pedro Manzi, second right, came up with a fine hat-trick but found himself pushed to the background by Neroca's spectacular comeback. ■ COURTESY AIFF MEDIA

through and Aryn Glen Williams fetched the equaliser three minutes from time.

The result opened up the title race, putting Chennai City under the threat of losing its two-point advantage if Kolkata giant East Bengal

wins its next two matches.

Chennai City stayed on top of the standings with 34 points from 16 matches, but its position is fragile as East Bengal, currently at the fourth spot with 28 points from 14 matches, has the

chance to draw level.

Riding a fine show in the last 10 minutes of the opening half, Chennai City opened the account in the 35th minute, Manzi finishing a fine lay-in from Nestor Jesus.

Seven minutes later Neroca's Liberian defender Varney Kallon gifted Manzi an opportunity with a miss pass and the Spaniard did not make any mistake.

Manzi completed his hat-trick in injury-time, working on an assist from Edwin Vanspaull to secure a big cushion for Chennai City.

All out attack

Just before finding the three-goal lead, Chennai City lost its experienced goalkeeper Nauzet Garcia to injury. This seemed to go the host's way as Neroca doubled its offense with a couple of changes after the break. This overtly aggressive approach seemed to unnerve Chennai City, which lost its composure in the face of the blitzkrieg and surrendered.

The result: Neroca FC 3 (Felix Chidi 52, Chencho Gytshen 68, Aryn Glen Williams 87) drew with Chennai City FC 3 (Pedro Manzi 35, 42, 45+1).

A painful reversal

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
IMPHAL

The Chennai City FC camp looked a broken side.

Hat-trick man Pedro Manzi was inconsolable and it required a lot of persuasion from team officials and tournament organisers to get him to receive the Man-of-the-Match award.

"I am terribly upset. We should have taken three points from this match," Manzi, said.

"Our philosophy has been quite simple. We always go for a win and there are no draws or losses in mind. A draw means we have lost, so there are huge disappointment," head coach Akbar Nawas said.

"We have to go back to

the drawing board and analyse what went wrong and prepare for the next match (against Shillong Lajong FC at Shillong)," Nawas added.

With the fans back home feeling the pain, Nawas sought to protect his boys.

"Most of my squad, I mean the local players, are young and inexperienced and developed nerves in the process of development. Please don't ask us anything about the title or how the loss of two points will affect our chances."

"We are playing to a style and trying to take the standard of football to a different level," he said.

Lakshya and Shlok-Shriyanshi power AAI past Railways in thrilling finale

NATL. BADMINTON

SPORTS BUREAU
GUWAHATI

rising women's stars, Aakarshi Kashyap notched up a 21-12, 21-14 win over Anura Prabhudesai to make it 2-0 for AAI.

Though Railways stormed back to make it 2-2, AAI had the last laugh.

Railways' men's doubles pair of Kabir Kanzarkar and Hemanagendra Babu held its nerve to eke out a 21-18, 17-21, 21-18 win over Shlok Ramchandran and Chirag Sen while in women's doubles, Riya Mookerjee and Anura Prabhudesai hammered

AAI's Shriyanshi and Sneha Santhilal 21-8, 18.

Shriyanshi and Shlok, however, overcame Kanika Kanwal and Akhay Raut 21-9, 17-21, 21-8 in the decider.

This is AAI's seventh title.

The 17-year-old Lakshya battled for 55 minutes before subduing Subhankar Dey 21-17, 21-17 in men's singles to help AAI begin in style.

In a face-off between two

The winner was awarded prize money of ₹3.5 lakh and the runner-up ₹2.5 lakh.

Seeds announced

With the inter-zonal competition having reached its conclusion, the 83rd senior Nationals will get underway on Tuesday.

The opening ceremony was held on Monday and was attended by the top shuttlers representing every State.

The BWF world rankings as on January 18 was the major criterion for the seedings. All the top 50 shuttlers have got direct entries and the BAI rankings have been considered for players who have filled up the empty slots. P.V. Sindhu, champion in

2011 and 2013 as well as the runner-up in the previous edition, is the top seed in women's singles.

Defending champion Saina Nehwal will be the only seed representing PSPB as she eyes a fourth National title.

The results:

AAI bt Railways 3-2 (Lakshya Sen bt Subhankar Dey 21-17, 21-17; Aakarshi Kashyap bt Anura Prabhudesai 21-12, 21-14; Shlok Ramchandran & Chirag Sen lost to Kabir Kanzarkar & Hemanagendra Babu 18-21, 21-17, 18-21; Shriyanshi Pardeshi & Sneha Santhilal lost to Riya Mookerjee & Anura Prabhudesai 8-21, 8-21; Shriyanshi Pardeshi & Shlok Ramchandran bt Kanika Kanwal & Akhay Raut 21-9, 17-21, 21-8).



Flying high: The AAI players on cloud nine after clinching the title. ■ RITU RAJ KONWAR

Tetra Rama wins main event

HYDERABAD: Tetra Rama (Akshay Kumar astride) claimed the Godolphin Barb Million, the feature race, in a thrilling finish from Agni here on Monday (Feb. 11). The winner is owned by Dr. Peddi Reddy Prabhakar Reddy & Mr. Rama Sheshu Eyunni and trained by Laxman Singh. Jockey Akshay Kumar rode four more winners on the day.

1 BAILE LALITH PERSHAD MEMORIAL PLATE (1,100m), (Cat. II), 3-y-o (only) (Terms): CELEBRITAS (Akshay Kumar) 1, Southern Lady (Tanwar) 2, Her Legacy (Kunal Bunde) 3 and Konia (Kuldeep Singh) 4, 4-3/4, 1-1/2 and 3/4. Im, 5.0ls. #14 (w), 6, 7 and 21 (p), SHP: 22, FP: 86, Q: 39, Tla: 1,662. Favourite: Konia. Owners: Mr. Donald Anthony Netto, Mr. Peter C. D'Souza. Trainer: D. Netto.

2 ETURNAGARAM PLATE (DIV. II), (1,100m), 4-y-o & over, rated 26 to 46 (Cat. III): BRUSH THE SKY (Md. Ismail) 1, Baywatch Babe (Kunal Bunde) 2, Farmville (Tanwar) 3 and Stormy (Afroz Khan) 4. Shd, 1-1/4 and 1-1/2, Im, 6.33s. #25 (w), 7, 8 and II (p), SHP: 21, FP: 145, Q: 72, Tla: 1,522. Favourite: Promiseofappiness. Owner: Mr. Aditya P. Thackersey. Trainer: Srinivas Reddy.

3 SIR BRUCE PLATE (DIV. II), (1,100m), 4-y-o & over, rated upto 30 (Cat. III): LOCHA STELLA

(C.P. Bopanna) 1, Bombastic (Akshay Kumar) 2, Smarty (Ashhad Asbar) 3 and Top Singer (Md. Ismail) 4. 2-1/2, 3, and 3/4. Im, 6.50s. #19 (w), 8, 5 and 19 (p), SHP: 17, FP: 79, Q: 36, Tla: 581. Favourite: Bombastic. Owner: Mr. A.C. Muthiah. Trainer: Satheesh.

4 ETURNAGARAM PLATE (DIV. IV), (1,100m), 4-y-o & over, rated 26 to 46 (Cat. III): MARVEL PRINCESS (Akshay Kumar) 1, Man Apart (P.S. Chouhan) 2, Cymbal (Anelia) 3 and Shimmer (Dhebe) 4. Hd, 4-1/2 and 1-1/4, Im, 5.89s. #8 (w), 5, 9 and 11 (p), SHP: 18, FP: 26, Q: 24, Tla: 148. Favourite: Lakshya Sen and the mixed doubles pair of Shlok Ramchandran and Shriyanshi Pardeshi guided Airports Authority of India (AAI) to an exciting 3-2 victory over Railways in the final of the Yonex-Sunrise 74th inter-State inter-zonal badminton championships on Monday.

This is AAI's seventh title.

The 17-year-old Lakshya battled for 55 minutes before subduing Subhankar Dey 21-17, 21-17 in men's singles to help AAI begin in style.

In a face-off between two

Pat Cummins wins Allan Border Medal

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
MELBOURNE

Australian fast bowler Pat Cummins won the Allan Border Medal on Monday, the country's highest cricketing honour.

The award, presented here, has been won by Steve Smith and David Warner two times each over the previous four years.

Cummins, 25, narrowly won the medal with 156 votes, beating Nathan Lyon with 150 and Aaron Finch with 146.

Fellow players, the media and umpires vote for player of the year.

Born in Sydney, Cummins is the third bowler, after Glenn McGrath and Mitchell Johnson, to win the award in the past two decades.



Pat Cummins. ■ AFP

Award for Alyssa Healy
Alyssa Healy claimed the Belinda Clark Award ahead of Megan Schutt and Ashleigh Gardner, after an outstanding year for the wicket-keeper-batter.

Frost is consultant coach for PPBA

SPORTS REPORTER
BENGALURU

Badminton legend Morten Frost was on Monday announced as a consultant coach for junior players at the Prakash Padukone Badminton Academy (PPBA), Bengaluru. The stint is a private arrangement between Olympic Gold Quest (OGQ), PPBA and Frost.

The Dane, a former World No. 1 and four-time All England champion, will have his first brush with the country's players at the Senior National badminton championships, currently underway in Guwahati, from Wednesday.

Over the course of the next year, the 60-year-old will visit the Padukone-David Centre for Sports Excellence, which houses PPBA, for a total of 90 days spread over four trips.

"I am very excited to



Morten Frost. ■ FILE PHOTO

come to the PPBA, a very successful academy started by my friend Prakash," a press release quoted Frost as saying.

"India is doing so well in badminton in the last decade with players like Saina, Sindhu and Srikanth excelling. I am delighted to get an opportunity to contribute to the next generation of young badminton talent," he said.

"Besides coaching the

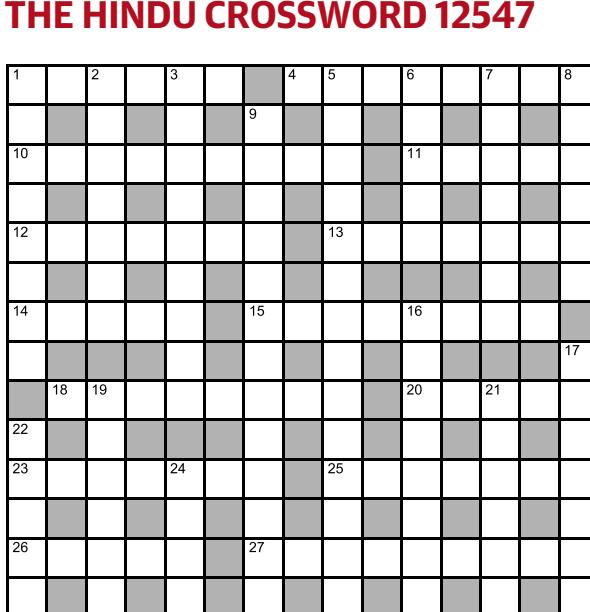
players, Morten will also help implement a robust coaches development plan," said Padukone, who founded the PPBA almost 25 years ago.

"Morten has tremendous experience as a player, coach and technical director. He has seen badminton over the years when we were playing and he is also very much in touch with the latest developments in world badminton. His experience, insight and technical know-how will be invaluable for us."

As the chief coach of the Denmark team, Frost helped his country win more than 20 major international titles including the men's singles Olympic Gold medal in 1996 (Poul-Erik Hoyer Larsen).

He was the technical director of the Badminton Association of Malaysia from 2015 to 2017.

THE HINDU CROSSWORD 12547



ACROSS

- 1 "Nothing much mate, go later" (6)
- 4 Let popes change a rule for giving evidence (8)
- 10 Grand line crossing city (9)
- 11 Group shot in two parts (5)
- 12 General assumption about girl – one of the best (7)

(set by Arden)

- 3 New entrances, creating new life (9)
- 5 Main extract from the pinnacle, in short (6,8)
- 6 It's beginning to rise a bit in United States now (5)
- 7 Set volume, not even having soothing effect (7)
- 8 Letter takes a dance form (6)
- 9 Vital to include a part of speech, it's set for you, the solver (14)
- 16 Rolls it at random and eats it (9)
- 17 It's conventional, not for doctor to misuse (8)
- 19 Moan and cry about GST, perhaps (7)
- 21 Pilot assumes the navy is more rigid (7)
- 22 Snatch and rest can be subtracted (6)
- 24 A meaty role, in 'The Alps' (5)

Dinda hit on head, advised rest

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
KOLKATA

Bengal pacer Ashoke Dinda was hit on his head by a ball during a practice match at the Eden Gardens here on Monday.

Arun Lal, the Bengal coach for the upcoming Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy T20 tournament, said there was no major issue with Dinda.

"A scan was done. Thankfully, the results were okay."

"He has been advised rest."

"He shall be back in time, we are sure," said Arun Lal.

Dinda, who donned India colours in 13 one-dayers and nine T20 matches, received a minor head injury while trying to field off his own bowling.

Deflection
A straight drive by Vivek Singh was deflected from his hand to his temple, forcing the bowler to leave the field.

Arun Lal and batting consultant V.V.S. Laxman oversaw the first day's practice.

"We practised from morning till evening, but the intensity did not drop during the whole day."

"They also played in simulated match situations where targets were constantly changed."

"This kept both the batting and bowling units on their toes," said Arun Lal.

Bengal to meet Mizoram

Bengal will meet Mizoram in its opening Group D match at the Barabati Stadium in Cuttack on February 21.

Ramkumar gets past Smith

SPORTS BUREAU
UNIONDALE

Ramkumar Ramanathan overcame Roy Smith of the United States 4-6, 6-2, 6-4 to reach the second and final qualifying round of the \$773,985 New York Open ATP tournament on Sunday.

In the Bangkok Challenger, Li Zhe of China beat Saketh Myneni 6-4, 7-6(7) in the first round.

The results:
\$773,985 ATP, Uniondale, USA: Qualifying singles (first round): Ramkumar Ramanathan bt Roy Smith (US) 4-6, 6-2, 6-4.

\$54,160 Challenger, Bangkok, Thailand: Singles (first round): Li Zhe (Chn) bt Saketh Myneni 6-4, 7-6(7).

RSPB's fine run continuesPRESS TRUST OF INDIA
HISAR

Holder Railway Sports Promotion Board (RSPB) continued its fine form and defeated Karnataka 4-0 for its third consecutive win in the ninth Hockey India senior women's National championship (Division A) here on Monday.

Odisha also registered its first win by beating Rajasthan 5-2 in Pool A.

In Pool B, Hockey Madhya Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh Hockey Academy played out a 1-1 draw while Hockey Gangpur-Odisha also drew 2-2 with Chhattisgarh.

First win for UP
Uttar Pradesh posted its first win, defeating Hockey HIM 4-2 in Pool C while Jharkhand registered its third consecutive win, beating Punjab 2-1.



Happy days ahead: Ankita hopes India will be in the World Group in near future. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Ankita Raina confident

Of India's journey to the World Group

KAMESH SRINIVASAN
NEW DELHI

We were more positive, had more belief and fought well as a team

Ankita Raina asserted her new found confidence, but the Indian women's team came short of its target after strongly believing that it was well prepared to qualify from the Asia-Oceania group-I Fed Cup tennis competition in Astana, Kazakhstan.

The key to those aspirations lay squarely on the strong shoulders of Ankita, especially in the key contest against world No. 47 Yulia Putintseva of Kazakhstan.

Ankita had defeated Yulia, a two-time French Open quarterfinalist in the Fed Cup last year, and was confident of a repeat. But the Kazakhs were better prepared this time.

"Lately, Yulia has been playing well, with good results on the WTA Tour. But, I went into the match thinking I would win. Somehow, I was not able to maintain the length in my strokes in the first set. I got better in the second, but few points in the tie-break cost the match."

"Karman also played a

good match against Zarina Diyas. We were more positive, had more belief and fought well as a team," said Ankita.

India had fought hard in both the singles and doubles the earlier day to clinch a nerve-wracking victory against an unfancied Thailand, while Kazakhstan had a rest day.

"We are used to playing three sets in singles and doubles in one day, and play again the next day. So, I don't think that can be an excuse," Ankita conceded.

Karman was injured and could not play the tie against Korea for the third place. Ankita won her singles but after Mahak Jain's three-set loss in the first singles, India went down in the decisive doubles.

"All of us are working hard to perform at the WTA level. Once we start doing it, mark my words, India will be in the World Group in the near future," said Ankita.

AFC CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Minerva Punjab takes on Saipa FC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
TEHRAN

proved show from the team if it wants to advance further in the continental tournament.

Minerva is playing the continent's premier club competition for only the second time.

Its previous appearance came in 2008 when it made the quarterfinals where it lost over two legs to FC Bonyodkor of Uzbekistan.

If Minerva wins on Tuesday, it will face Qatar's Al Rayyan SC in the play-off match in Doha on February 19.

If it goes down, it still has an automatic berth in the AFC Cup, the second tier continental club competition.

PSPB retains chess titles

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
KOLKATA

Petroleum Sports Promotion Board (PSPB) retained the National Team Chess Championship crown by emerging victorious in both men's and women's categories on Monday.

S.S. Ganguly and Aravindh Chithambaram spearheaded the challenge and won four out of eight games as PSPB finished with 17/18 to reign supreme in the 39th National Team Chess Championship.

Airport Authority of India (14/18) and RSPB-B (13/18) were second and third.

Padmima Rout won seven out of seven to lead PSPB's charge in the women's section en route to retaining the 17th National Women Team Championship title.

Real Kashmir-EB match on Feb. 28

Gokulam, Aizawl match too scheduled for same day

I-LEAGUE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

the AIFF, the match was postponed and that game will now be played at the TRC ground on February 28.

The I-League on Monday announced new dates of the postponed matches on its official Twitter handle.

Real Kashmir is currently second with 32 points from 16 matches, two adrift of leader Chennai City FC, while East Bengal is fourth with 28 from 14.

The match between Gokulam Kerala and Aizawl, which was to be played in Aizawl on Sunday but was postponed, will also be played on February 28.

Aizawl's home match against Shillong Lajong, scheduled for March 2, will now be played on March 4.



Driving snow! The Gokulam and Real Kashmir players in action during a match. ■ NISSAR AHMAD

Bhandari attack: a shock for the fraternity

DDCA calls for swift action against assailants

VIJAY LOKAPALLY
NEW DELHI

The assault on Amit Bhandari has left the Delhi cricket fraternity in a state of shock.

The former India seamer was thrashed by goons who wanted a particular player to be included in the team for the Mushtaq Ali tournament.

According to Delhi and District Cricket Association (DDCA) president Rajat Sharma, "Amit told me they were pressurising him to select a player who had failed on merit. They had threatened to kill Amit and had a revolver with them.

Former India opener Virinder Sehwag reacted strongly. "The attack on Bhandari for not picking a player is a new low and I am hopeful that stringent action will be taken against the culprit and adequate measures be taken to avoid such incidents. DDCA should look to providing protection to its selectors."

Sharma said the DDCA would support Bhandari.

Missing Rutuja, Pranjala India did miss Rutuja Bhosale and Pranjala Yadlapalli owing to injury.

"We not only missed Rutuja and Pranjala, but also Sania (Mirza). I have played with her and we all know what her presence can do. Mahak and Riya were ready for the task. Now, you can see we have six-seven players including Zeel Desai, who can play any role in the team. I am sure all of us will perform well internationally."

After Ankita's bronze in the Asian Games and the doubles WTA title with Karman Kaur Thandi, Indian women's tennis does look quite robust.

"All of us are working hard to perform at the WTA level. Once we start doing it, mark my words, India will be in the World Group in the near future," said Ankita.

Since this year selections are being done strictly on merit with transparency, and selectors have resisted all pressures and monetary offers, the miscreants and manipulators are feeling frustrated.

"The assault on the chief selector is the result of such frustration. I assure you that no one will be allowed to disrupt this process of bringing professionalism and transparency into DDCA functioning."

A livid Madan Lal blamed the system of selection in Delhi for the incident. "Compromises and adjustments are made at every stage. It's not good for Delhi cricket. I can't recall anything close to this. In the past two selectors were approached for some selections. It is a wake up call to set the system right so that no one can just come and beat up selectors."

"Such people should be debarred and I would like strong action in this case. Cricketers are not respected in Delhi. You can't provide protection always, but a

clean system can send a strong message."

Kirti Azad, who has long advocated transparency at the DDCA, said, "It is really sad to learn that Amit has been seriously injured in the attack. As a former Delhi and India player, I denounce such a cowardly attack, and would expect DDCA to take a very tough stand against this well planned attack and pressure Delhi Police to book the attackers including this boy, under serious sections of the IPC."

"No compromise should be made with or on behalf of this boy or his fellow attackers."

In the past, Vinay Lamba was assaulted by a player at the DDCA. On another occasion, Arun Jaitley, then president of the DDCA, had sacked the entire selection committee for selecting a non-deserving player.

Kohli is hungry for runs, like Lara: Such

P.K. AJITH KUMAR
KRISHNAGIRI (WAYANAD)

It was not just the ball that Peter Such turned on his Test debut.

The England off-spinner turned heads as well, claiming six for 67 against a classy Australian batting line up at Old Trafford in 1993. But, that match is more remembered for the most famous turn of a cricket ball in history – Shane Warne's ball of the century, the leg-break that clean-bowled Mike Gatting.

"Yes, my debut was overshadowed by Warne's ball, but I couldn't have done anything about it," Such told *The Hindu*. "I was sitting at the pavilion when it happened, but those days you would only get a square-on view from where the players were, so I had to pop into the

dressing room to see what happened. That truly was an unbelievable ball."

Spin bowling has changed a lot since those days, when Warne, Muttiah Muralitharan and Anil Kumble reigned supreme.

"But, there are fine spinners today, too," said Such, England's lead national spin bowling coach who has come with the Lions team. "R. Ashwin and Nathan Lyon are top class bowlers; they are easily the world's best off-spinners. Ashwin has amazing variety."

Such's compatriot Moeen Ali may not be in the same class, but he feels he is a much better bowler than he is given credit for.

"He is vastly underrated as a bowler, and he is a very good batsman in the world," he says. "What separates him from others is



Peter Such. ■ P.K. AJITH KUMAR

success against India, whose batsmen are good players of spin."

Among those batsmen he has the highest regard for Virat Kohli. "He is without doubt the best batsman in the world," he says. "What separates him from others is

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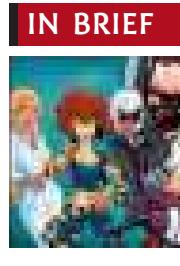
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Marvel's superheroes for Hulu streaming service

LOS ANGELES

Marvel Studios will produce four new adult-oriented animated series for the Hulu streaming service, Hulu said in a statement. The four series will centre around the characters M.O.D.O.K., Hit-Monkey, Tigra & Dazzler and Howard The Duck, it said. The series will culminate with *The Offenders*, in which the characters team up to save the world. **REUTERS**



Exercise may protect against Alzheimer's

NEW YORK

Exercise produces a hormone that may improve memory and protect against Alzheimer's disease, according to a study. The study, published in the journal *Nature Medicine*, found that the hormone, irisin, may promote neuronal growth in the brain's hippocampus, a region critical for learning and memory. **PTI**



German prize for peace goes to 'Napalm Girl'

BERLIN

Kim Phuc, known as the 'Napalm Girl' in an iconic 1972 Vietnam War photo, is receiving a €10,000 award in Germany for her work for peace. Organisers of the Dresden Prize say she is being honoured for her support of children wounded in war. **AP**

+ AI to the aid of child trafficking victims

It sifts through a database of hotel room pictures to match with online ads

REUTERS

WASHINGTON

Scientists are hoping artificial intelligence can help identify and rescue child victims of sex trafficking via an app and more than a million crowdsourced pictures of hotel rooms.

Researchers launched an app in 2016 to collect photographs of 50,000 hotels around the world that could be matched up with online advertisements placed by traffickers, who often use selfies taken by their victims in hotel rooms.

Hotels-50K can be used to identify where trafficking victims are being held – and ultimately to rescue them, according to a paper written by a group of scientists and presented at a conference on

Women, rap artists take centre stage at Grammys

Childish Gambino and Kacey Musgraves notched four wins each

ASSOCIATED PRESS

LOS ANGELES

Rap artists and women have felt shunned by the Grammy Awards in recent years. But this year, they both took centre stage. Childish Gambino's *This is America*, a disturbing look at race relations, won Record and Song of the Year, becoming the first rap-based track to win both the awards. He also took home the Best Music Video and Best Rap/Sung Performance awards.

The Album of the Year went to Kacey Musgraves for *Golden Hour*. Ms. Musgraves matched Childish Gambino with four wins.

British pop singer Dua Lipa was named Best New Artist.

Surprise of the show
Lady Gaga and Brandi Carlile won three Grammys apiece, and former first lady Michelle Obama was a surprise guest at the top of the show on CBS.

Childish Gambino, the stage name of actor Donald Glover, and another prominent rap nominee, Kendrick Lamar, both declined invitations to perform or attend the show. Some rap artists feel the Grammys have been slow to recognise how the genre now dominates popular music.

Ludwig Goransson, a songwriter and producer on *This is America*, said backstage that he was surprised the victories were so historic. Just listening to the radio, watching the culture and seeing how many rap songs are downloaded is evidence of rap's impact.

"It's about time something like this happened with the Grammys as well," Mr. Glover said.

When she was onstage,

Goransson said.

Popular rapper Cardi B won her first Grammy, taking home the Best Rap Album for *Invasion of Privacy*.

The 26-year-old rap queen's rendition of *Money* was among the night's performance highlights.

Stepping up
When she accepted her best new artist award, Ms. Lipa pointedly said, "I guess this year we really stepped up."

That was a reference to outgoing Recording Academy CEO Neil Portnow, who said women needed to "step up" when he was asked about the lack of women in top categories in 2018. He later acknowledged it was a poor choice of words.

When she was onstage,

Ms. Lipa was one of a handful of winners who paid special tribute to fellow artists. Another was Drake, whose appearance to accept the Grammy for *God's Plan*, which won Best Rap Song, was a surprise because he's not usually seen on award shows.

"You've already won if you have people who are singing your songs word for word, if you're a hero in your hometown. Look, if there are people who have regular jobs who are coming out in the rain and the snow, spending their hard-earned money to buy tickets to come to your shows, you don't need this right here. I promise you. You already won," he said at the Staples Center in Los Angeles.

When she was onstage,

Kim Phuc, known as the 'Napalm Girl' in an iconic 1972 Vietnam War photo, is receiving a €10,000 award in Germany for her work for peace. Organisers of the Dresden Prize say she is being honoured for her support of children wounded in war. **AP**

There are 4.5 million people in sexual slavery worldwide.



AI in Hawaii.

A huge number of pictures are put through an artificial intelligence engine called a deep convolutional neural network.

The engine "learns a set of filters," said Abby Stylianou, co-author of the paper.

By getting 150,000 people all over the world to down-

load their app, TraffickCam, and take hundreds of thousands of pictures, it is easier to get the same view that a trafficking victim's selfie taken for an ad is likely to have.

Once Hotels-50K was ready for testing about eight months ago, the scientists shared it with the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC), a U.S. non-profit involved in the fight against child sex trafficking.

It is unclear whether anyone has been saved directly because of Hotels-50K. "We've had a couple of (ads) that have given us leads and information," Stacia Sheahan, executive director of the case analysis division at NCMEC, said.

Hotels-50K can be used to identify where trafficking victims are being held – and ultimately to rescue them, according to a paper written by a group of scientists and presented at a conference on

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**'Stop blaming Centre'**

BJP accuses Kejriwal of delay in projects worth ₹6,000 crore, missing deadlines [Page 2](#)

**5 in cop net for murder**

Cops nab five members of Neeraj Bawania gang, for alleged involvement in two recent murders [Page 3](#)

**The Caravan case**

Duo says allegations levelled in the magazine article against Vivek Doyal are false [Page 3](#)

**Earth-lover's guide**

In its seventh edition, the annual India Design ID is a gathering of innovators and thinkers in Delhi [Page 4](#)

IN BRIEF**Pregnant swine flu patient successfully treated**

NEW DELHI
The doctors at Fortis Escorts Heart Institute, Okhla, treated a 30-year-old pregnant woman, Swapnil Mishra, who had tested positive for swine flu (H1N1 virus). The case was extremely critical and complex as the foetus could not be delivered prematurely but had to be protected from the virus while in the womb.

CITY ▶ PAGE 2

Eatery pays compensation for levying service charge

NEW DELHI
Following a complaint against an eatery – All American Diner – for charging “service charge” of ₹168, despite relevant rules stating that it is not mandatory, it compensated the complainant by paying ₹10,000.

CITY ▶ PAGE 3

Air quality of Delhi-NCR				
Delhi	309	Gurugram	288	
Ghaziabad	333	Faridabad	182	
Noida	304	Greater Noida	302	
Good 0-50	51-100	Moderate 101-200		
Poor 201-300	301-400	Very poor >401		
AIR QUALITY INDEX AT 4 P.M. YESTERDAY (AVERAGE OF PAST 24 HOURS) [SOURCE: CPCB]				

Man found dead outside Andhra Bhavan**STAFF REPORTER**

NEW DELHI
A 40-year-old differently-abled man was found dead outside Andhra Bhavan, the police said on Monday.

They have recovered a two-page note left behind by the deceased.

The man had come to the Capital to participate in the day-long hunger strike by Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu, said an officer.

A PCR call was received at 7 a.m. regarding the incident. He was taken to a hospital where doctors declared him brought dead.

“The man was found dead outside Andhra Bhavan. He had mentioned a financial crisis in the note,” said Madhur Verma, DCP (New Delhi).

The incident took place on the intervening night of Sunday and Monday, the police said.

Proceedings have been initiated and further inquiry is in progress, the DCP said.

The body will be sent soon for post-mortem.

Suicide prevention helpline: Sanjivini, Society for Mental Health, Telephone: 011-4076 9002, Monday-Saturday, 10 a.m.-7.30 p.m.

Heinous crimes down in Capital but non-heinous cases on the rise, says Minister

Measures such as e-FIR registration of theft of vehicles may have led to increase in the number of cases, Hansraj Ahir tells Rajya Sabha

SAURABH TRIVEDI
NEW DELHI

The Capital has shown a declining trend in heinous crimes but e-FIR registration of theft and other non-heinous crimes has increased significantly, Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Hansraj Gangaram Ahir informed the Rajya Sabha.

Mr. Ahir, in a written reply in the Upper House on February 6, said that a number of measures have been taken for reporting and registering criminal cases, including e-FIR registration for theft of vehicles and other things, which may have contributed to the rise in number of cases registered

Crime scene

YEAR	TOTAL HEINOUS CRIMES REGISTERED	TOTAL NON-HEINOUS CRIMES REGISTERED
2016	8,238	2,01,281
2017	6,527	2,27,053
2018	5,688	2,45,031
2019*	205	12,318

SNATCHING CASES (WOMEN VICTIMS)

YEAR	2016	2017	2018*	2019
TOTAL NUMBER OF INCIDENTS REPORTED	3,749	3,306	2,868	87

SOURCE: DELHI POLICE; * UPTO JANUARY 15, 2019

in the NCT of Delhi.

However, according to statistics, crime in Delhi under some heads has shown a declining trend, Mr. Ahir added.

On being asked about

snatching cases where victims are women and steps being taken by the government to make the police administration more active, Mr. Ahir said crime statistics of the last three years show

Case history

YEAR	2016	2017	2018 (TILL NOV)
CASES REPORTED	1,30,928	1,65,765	1,65,296
CASES CANCELLED	8,999	19,796	18,194
CASES ADMITTED	1,21,929	1,45,969	1,47,102
CASES WORKED OUT	14,521	22,438	20,141
CASES CHALLANED	8,003	7,411	3,167
CASES IN WHICH RECOVERIES MADE	8,958	10,406	7,852
PERSONS ARRESTED	17,685	26,337	23,776

SOURCE: DELHI POLICE

that incidents of snatching from women in broad daylight (6 a.m. to 6 p.m.) reported to the police have been on the decline.

He added that various measures are being taken by

the police to control crimes. These include dynamic identification of crime-prone areas and deployment of police resources such as pickets, foot patrolling, PCR vans and Emergency Response Vehicles, he said.

Drives to curb crime
Delhi Police Commissioner of Police (Delhi) Madhur Verma said the police have

worked to make registration of crimes hassle-free. “We always follow basic policing and focus on curbing street crimes and those where weapons have been used. We recently conducted a massive drive to identify bad characters in each police station area and keep a tab on them,” said Mr. Verma.

Speaking on reasons for poor percentage of recovery in theft cases, he said, as per Delhi Police data, in 2018, motor vehicle thefts accounted for around 19% of the total Indian Penal Code cases and in around 12% cases, stolen motor vehicles were found registered in other States.

AAP reaches out to Rahul Gandhi for Opposition rally

‘Party would formally invite the Congress president today’

DAMINI NATH
NEW DELHI

Meanwhile, BJP MP Ramesh Bidhuri accused Mr. Kejriwal of being a “habitual liar” and demanded that issue list of 30 lakh names which have allegedly been deleted.

MP Parvesh Verma argued that the people of Delhi had “stopped trusting” Mr. Kejriwal’s statements in this regard.

He has not done anything

then there was no need to indulge in false propaganda. We appeal to the people to remain cautious about the phone calls; whenever they get such calls, they should record them and send them to us. We will keep it confidential

and complain to the concerned authority,” Mr. Tiwari said.

Meanwhile, BJP MP Ramesh Bidhuri accused Mr. Kejriwal of being a “habitual liar” and demanded that issue list of 30 lakh names which have allegedly been deleted.

Since Mr. Gandhi was in

Uttar Pradesh for an event on Monday, AAP would formally invite the Congress president on Tuesday, a senior party leader said.

On Sunday, AAP Delhi convener Gopal Rai had announced that the party would host the “remove dictatorship, save democracy” rally at Jantar Mantar on Wednesday.

Ms. Banerjee was coordi-

nating with the other Opposition parties, he had said.

While confirming that Mr. Gandhi was one of the invitees for the rally – a first for an event being hosted by the AAP – AAP Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh said: “This is not a party-specific rally. We all want to send a message that to save democracy and the Constitution, we have to defeat the BJP.”

He said West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu would address the rally, apart from AAP national convener and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal.

Mr. Singh added that apart from Ms. Banerjee and Mr. Naidu, leaders Sharad Yadav, Sharad Pawar, Farooq Abdullah and H.D. Deve Gowda were expected to attend, as on Monday evening.

+



DPCC president Sheila Dikshit and former Delhi Minister Haroon Yusuf at a press conference in the Capital on Monday. ■ SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

Congress slams govt for ‘cheaper electricity’ claims

Power costlier than ever before: Dikshit

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

As part of its campaign for the upcoming Lok Sabha elections, the Aam Aadmi Party will launch a drive to send its MLAs and municipal councillors to Delhiites’ doorstep from Friday.

AAP Delhi convener Gopal Rai said on Monday that the party’s MLAs and councillors will go door-to-door in their respective areas to tell people about the “dictatorship” of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and BJP president Amit Shah and the need to defeat the BJP in the elections.

Other CMs to join

On Wednesday, AAP will host a joint Opposition rally at Jantar Mantar here, for which Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal would be joined by his counterparts from West Bengal and Andhra Pradesh, Mamata Banerjee and Chandrababu Naidu respectively, Mr. Rai said.

He added that the Modi government had in the past five years attacked Opposition parties and diluted democracy.

The Opposition parties in the country were getting together to counter the BJP and in Delhi, the responsibility was “on the shoulders of the AAP”, said Mr. Rai.

The AAP made false promises that electricity will be provided at half the rate before the 2014 Assembly election and is using the same strategy before the Lok Sabha election.

But in reality, the AAP reneged on its promise after coming to power in Delhi as power rates have become more costly than ever before,” said Ms. Dikshit.

She added that fixed charges, new meter security charges, upload charges, service line charges and pension fund collected from the power consumers, account for more money than what the Delhi government claims to give to the consumers in subsidy.

“Despite collecting so

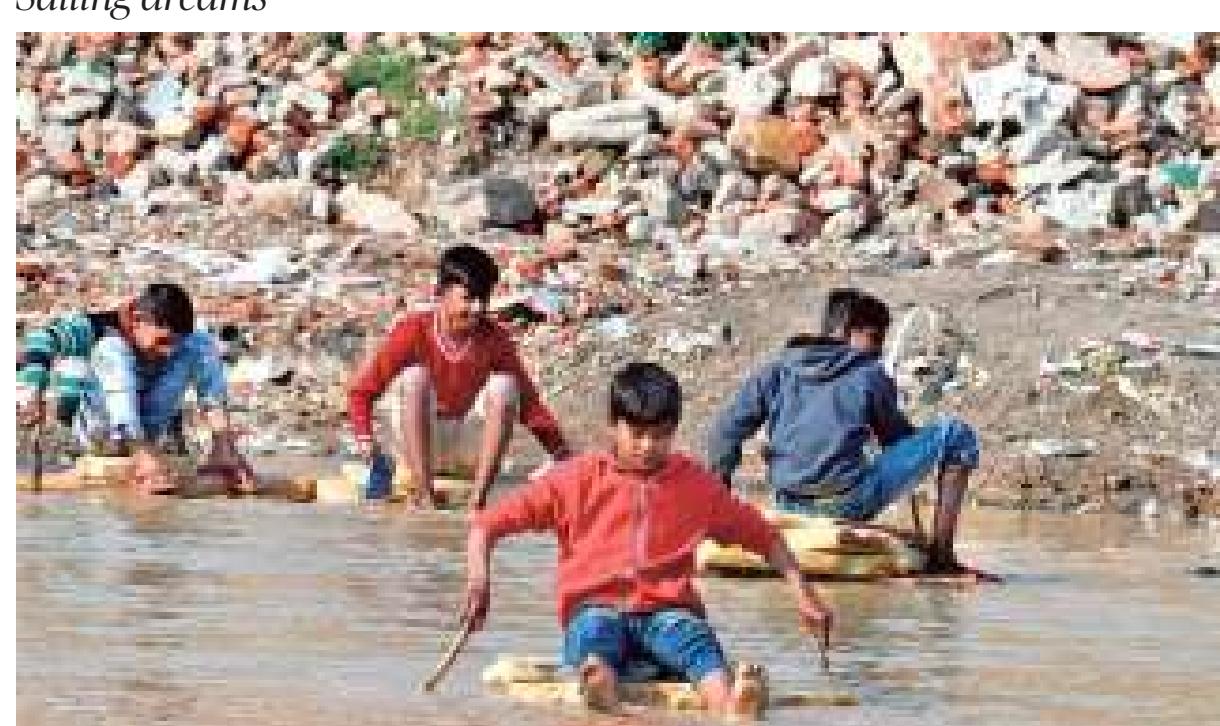
much money from the power users on various heads, the government has not bothered to ensure upgradation of the transmission lines and distribution network,” she added.

During the Congress rule, the billing cycle for the power consumers used to be once in two months but under the Kejriwal government, it has been changed to a monthly cycle thereby collecting more money from the consumers via fixed costs, she said.

Ms. Dikshit demanded that AAP government fulfil its promise of giving power to the consumers at half the rate without any dilution and withdraw the hike in the fixed charges and security amount, which she claimed was done intentionally by the government to squeeze money.

She also hit out at the seven BJP MPs saying that despite their party being in power at the Centre, they had done nothing for Delhi during their tenure. “It is time for the people of Delhi to wake up and elect the Congress candidates in the coming Lok Sabha elections for the larger good,” she said.

Sailing dreams



Smart crew: Children ride on rafts in a waterbody near Burari in the Capital on Monday afternoon. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

Minor raped by public convenience staffer; accused nabbed

Incident took place on February 6 evening when the 5-year-old girl had gone to relieve herself

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

A 5-year-old girl was allegedly raped by a public convenience staffer in west Delhi’s Naraina on February 6 when she went to relieve herself, the police said on Monday.

The accused has been arrested, they

IN BRIEF



R.V. MORTHY

BJP pays homage to Deen Dayal Upadhyaya

NEW DELHI

'Sampran Divas' was observed by the BJP at the Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Park here on Monday to commemorate the death anniversary of Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyaya. BJP national president Amit Shah, Delhi BJP president Manoj Tiwari, Union Minister Vijay Goel, MPs Meenakshi Lekhi, Maheish Girri and Parvesh Verma were among the senior party leaders in attendance at the event.

Stop blaming Centre, introspect own misgovernance: BJP to AAP

Accuses Kejriwal of delay in projects worth ₹6,000 crore, missing deadlines

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Monday accused the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government of "inordinate delay" in more than 30 significant projects worth ₹6,000 crore which had missed their respective implementation deadlines.

Advising it to "stop blaming the Centre" and look into its "own incompetence and misgovernance", Leader of the Opposition in the Delhi Assembly Vijender Gupta further alleged that most of the held-up projects pertained to the Delhi government's "much boasted-about" forays in the education and health sectors.

"Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal should stop blaming the Centre and do some introspection about how the Delhi government's own incompetence and misgovernance are putting roadblocks in Delhi's development," Mr. Gupta



The AAP government has to blame itself for its lethargy leading to inordinate delay in its implementation of more than 30 projects

VIJENDER GUPTA
Leader of the Opposition in the Delhi Assembly

said.

"The AAP government, which is never tired of blaming the Centre for putting obstacles in development, has to blame itself for its lethargy leading to inordinate delay in its implementation of more than 30 projects costing over ₹6,000 crore," the BJP leader alleged further.

Failed to monitor

According to Mr. Gupta, these projects included the expansion and remodelling of hospitals, upgradation of dispensaries to polyclinics, construction of classrooms,

tors. The execution of these projects entirely lies within the jurisdiction of the government. It highlights poor governance. The cost of these projects has considerably increased due to delay in implementation," Mr. Gupta alleged.

Behind schedule

Most of these projects, the Rohini MLA alleged, had missed their deadline; the CCTV project, which he argued was to be completed about six months ago was now running seven months behind schedule.

"It is apprehended that the project will not be completed in the AAP government's tenure," he said.

"The project pertaining to the upgradation of 94 Delhi government dispensaries into polyclinic by January 2019, has not even taken off. The construction of 12,748 classrooms is running nine months behind schedule," he added.

DJB approves proposal to appoint a consultant

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

A study of the possibility of giving 24-hour water supply in the city would be conducted, with the Delhi Jal Board on Monday approving the appointment of a consultant for the same.

In a statement, the DJB said the Board, chaired by Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, approved the proposal to hire a consultant to carry out a feasibility study to see if 24/7 water supply can be provided. Currently, the DJB's network provides about 900 million gallons per day (MGD) of treated wa-

ter statement said.

The plan would include creation of district-metered areas to monitor the distribution in the particular area, getting better water pressure and reducing contamination and leakage.

Water connections

At Monday's meeting, the Board also extended the deadline for legalising illegal water connections at a reduced rate. The scheme, which gives applicants the chance to get an authorised

water connection for ₹500 for domestic and ₹1,500 for commercial or industrial connections, was extended till June 30.

In addition, the Board approved the extension of the scheme giving reduced development charges for unauthorised colonies till June 30.

The Board also approved several water and sewerage network augmentation projects, including the setting up of 70 new borewells to increase water supply.

Feasibility study for 24/7 water supply to be conducted

DJB approves proposal to appoint a consultant

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

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IN BRIEF



Foreign national held with gold bars at airport

NEW DELHI

A foreign national was apprehended at the Delhi airport on Monday for allegedly carrying gold bars worth ₹12 lakh in his baggage in violation of rules, officials said. They identified the man as Jian Zhang, a Chinese national.

Liquor store employee robbed of ₹8 lakh

GAZIABAD

Three bike-borne men looted an employee of a liquor store here of ₹8 lakh at gunpoint at Chiranjiv Vihar colony here on Monday, police said. The accused fired shots into the air when Rupendra Chaudhary, the employee, opposed the robbery bid. They robbers snatched the bag from him and escaped from the spot, they said.

2 held for stealing cash from banks

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Two men have been arrested from West Bengal and Jharkhand for allegedly taking out money from bank accounts of several persons in the National Capital after obtaining the one time passwords or OTPs, officials said on Monday.

The accused used to initiate transactions, then call the victims and seek the OTPs sent to them by the banks and transfer the money to different e-wallets, they said. The accused have been identified as Binod Kumar Modi (26), a resident of Durgapur in West Bengal and Rikki Kumar (23), a resident of Dumka district in Jharkhand.

According to the police, on June 8, 2017, one Jagdish Chander filed a complaint at Kirti Nagar police station in which he stated that ₹2.42 lakh had been withdrawn from his bank account although no transaction was done by him.

After investigation, it was revealed that the money was transferred to different e-wallets. When the verification of the addresses of the beneficiaries, who hailed from Jharkhand, Odisha and West Bengal were conducted, they were found to be fake, a senior police officer said.

During investigation, it was also revealed that a part of the cheated amount was transferred through PayTM, which was linked with an account belonging to Binod, who is based at Durgapur, Deputy Commissioner of Police (West), Monika Bhardwaj, said.

DELI TODAY

Talk: 13th Giri Deshingkar Memorial Lecture: "Silk Road and the Belt and Road Initiative" by Mark C. Elliott, Mark Schwartz Professor of Chinese and Inner Asian History, Department of East Asian Languages and Civilizations, Harvard University at Multipurpose Hall, India International Centre (IIC), 6:30 p.m.

Talk: Maya Kadosh, Deputy Chief of Mission of Israel will speak about the author Amos Oz, an Israeli writer and novelist. Readings from Oz's writings by Sudeep Sen, author and translator at Seminar Rooms, IIT & III, Kamaladevi Complex, India International Centre (IIC), 6:30 p.m.

Talk: Kabir Taneja, Associate Fellow, ORF will be in conversation with Christine Fair on her book "In their own words: Understanding Lashker-e-Tayyaba" at Seminar Room, Library, Nehru Memorial Museum & Library, Teen Murti House, 4 p.m.

Talk: Lecture on "Bharatiya Sahitya aur Sanskriti" by Dr. K. Sreenivasarao, Secretary, Sahitya Akademi at Gulmohar Hall, India Habitat Centre (IHC), 7 p.m.

Music: Hindustani vocal recital by Indira Nalk from Mumbai, disciple of Pandit Dayal Thakur and Pandit Vithal Rao at C.D. Deshmukh Auditorium, India International Centre (IIC), 6:30 p.m.

Dance: Kuchipudi recital and lecture on "Cultural Value Education" by Sree Veena Mani at D.I.E.T., Daryaganj, Ansari Road, 11 a.m.

Exhibition: "Art for Concern", an annual show of Indian Art at Galerie Romain Rolland, Alliance Francaise De Delhi, 72, Lodhi Estate, 11 a.m. - 7 p.m.

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

Caravan case: witnesses say article caused unrest among investors

Claim allegations levelled in the magazine article against Vivek Doval are false

NIRNIMESH KUMAR

NEW DELHI

National Security Adviser Ajit Doval's son Vivek Doval's friend Nikhil Kapur and his business partner Amit Sharma on Monday submitted before a Delhi court that *The Caravan's* article and later its use by Congress leader Jairam Ramesh to level misdeeds against Mr. Vivek caused huge unrest among investors of his angel fund.

The witnesses were recording their evidence in the court of Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Samar Vishal in a defamation case filed by Mr. Vivek against the magazine and the Congress leader for linking his Cayman Islands-based hedge fund GNY Asia to demonetisation and money laundering.

"There was a huge unrest among the investors and I was getting repeated calls with investors showing their anguish. Investors till today are of the view that irrespective of allegations being true or false, Vivek should not continue as fund manager. He should step down and so nobody else should take



Vivek Doval filed a defamation case against *The Caravan* for linking his hedge fund to demonetisation and money laundering. ■ FILE PHOTO: SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

charge as they apprehend that he would be a continued target due to his family background in India," Mr. Sharma said.

'Incorrect and mala fide'
Mr. Sharma also said that there was no financial interest between Vivek's and his brother Shaurya's compa-

nies and that the magazine's allegations of Vivek's overseas ventures being linked to that of his elder brother was absolutely incorrect and mala fide.

"Even Vivek's brother Shaurya runs his business of investment but there is no financial interest between our companies. The statement

Investors till today are of the view that irrespective of allegations being true or false, Vivek should not continue as fund manager

AMIT SHARMA

Business partner

by *The Caravan* that Vivek's overseas ventures are inexplicably linked to businesses run by his elder brother Shaurya in Asia is absolutely incorrect and mala fide," Mr. Sharma said.

The magazine had in its January 16 article alleged that the documents accessed by *The Caravan* also showed that Vivek's overseas ventures were inextricably linked to businesses run by his elder brother Shaurya in Asia.

'Copy paste' job

Mr. Kapur in his statement said that the article was a "copy paste" job and there was no merit in what was published. "Without doubt, Vivek is not involved in any of the things that has been published," Mr. Kapur said.

Lured girl with toffee

DCP (New Delhi), Seju P Kuruvilla said that the accused Rajender lives in the same area and was identified after scanning CCTVs in the locality and with the help of local intelligence. He was in the market where he spotted the girl. He lured her by offering her toffee and took her to his home when his parents were away.

"Rajender is a school dro-

An eight-month-old child who was raped last year has failed to get justice till date. When will this seven-year-old girl get justice?

SWATI MALIWAL

Chairperson of DCW

to be an adult. But he managed to get the bail. "We will seek police custody of the accused to find out if he was involved in more such cases," said a police officer.

DCW issues notice

Taking suo-motu cognisance of the incident, the Delhi Commission for Women (DCW) issued notice to the Delhi Police seeking reasons for "police inaction on the missing child's complaint filed by her father." Further, the women's commission has sought details of the investigation undertaken by the Delhi Police, including copies of the CCTV footage.

Implement ordinance

Swati Maliwal, chairperson of the DCW appealed to Prime Minister Narendra Modi to implement the ordinance on awarding death penalty to persons accused of raping minors. "The PM should ensure that the law for awarding death penalty to rapists of minor be implemented. Police accountability in such cases be fixed, the required police resources be mobilised and fast track courts be set up," said Ms. Maliwal.

"An eight-month-old child who was raped last year has failed to get justice till date. When will this seven-year-old girl get justice?" asked Ms. Maliwal.

The DCW has also sought information on the number of children missing from Nihal Vihar since January 2018, including the number of kids who have been rescued.

Five, including juvenile, nabbed after chase, shoot-out

Accused are members of a gang and involved in 2 murder cases

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI



(Clockwise from top left) Ravinder, Arpit Chellar, Sukhwinder alias Sanju and Sunil alias Bhura.

■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Five members of Neeraj Bawaria gang, including a juvenile were arrested after a film chase by the police in Rohini. In the episode which resembled that of a movie, the accused fired six rounds at the police team which hit the bullet proof jackets of two officers. In retaliatory firing, three of the gang members were injured, the police said on Monday.

The five were arrested for their alleged involvement in two recent murders in Outer Delhi. Sophisticated and a country made pistol was recovered from their possession, said the police.

DCP (Special Cell) Sanjeev Kumar Yadav said that the accused have been identified as Sunil alias Bhura (24), Sukhwinder alias Sanju (23), Ravinder (34), Arpit Chellar (20).

The two murders
The Police said one Vikas Chauhan was shot dead in his vehicle outside a private school in Narela on February 1. "The five of them conducted a recess of the place and then Sunil and Sukhwinder shot Vikas," Mr. Yadav said. On January 20, a victim identified as Mohit

was killed in North West Delhi's Shalimar Bagh allegedly by absconding accused Sonu Chidi and Nishant along with Sukhwinder. "The reason behind the murders were ongoing rivalry between Neeraj Bawaria and Rajesh Bawaria gang," Mr. Yadav said.

While investigating the cases, the police received a tip-off that the accused would come to Swarn Jayanti Park in Rohini to meet a few associates. "Around 5 a.m. the police team spotted a black colour car and when they signalled to stop, they

tried to drive away. The police team chased them and the vehicle ran into a divider," the officer said.

The Police claimed that the accused fired six rounds at the team which hit the bullet proof jackets of two officers. "The team also retaliated and in the crossfire, Sunil, Sukhwinder and Arpit received bullet injuries on their legs," Mr. Yadav said.

During questioning, accused allegedly told the police that they had come to meet Monu Bajitpur and Sonu Chidi, members of Neeraj Bawaria gang.

Bus driver thrashed for not stopping on flyover

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

A cluster bus driver was thrashed for allegedly following rules and not stopping the bus on Gokulpuri flyover in north east Delhi on Monday afternoon. Police have registered a case and started probe.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (North East) Atul Kumar Thakur said the victim has been identified as Sudhanshu, a resident of Harsh Vihar. He was plying the bus on the route from Shahbad Dairy to Anand Vihar.

"When the bus reached Gokulpuri flyover, a 55-year-old woman asked him to stop the bus right there, but he refused and said that he would stop at the bus stand. Following this, a man also got up and asked the driver to stop," Mr. Thakur said.

When the driver refused again, an altercation took place between the two parties and the driver was kicked on the knee. Sudhanshu was taken for medical examination.

A case under Sections 323 and 341 of the Indian Penal Code has been registered. But no arrests have been made so far, said the police.

2 arrested for attacking cop, trying to rob him
Accused were out on bail then

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

Two robbers were arrested from near Geeta Colony on Monday for allegedly firing at a police officer last week in a bid to rob him, the police said.

"When the bus reached Gokulpuri flyover, a 55-year-old woman asked him to stop the bus right there, but he refused and said that he would stop at the bus stand. Following this, a man also got up and asked the driver to stop," Mr. Thakur said.

The accused were identified as Arman Farhaz (30) and Mohammad Riaz (34). They are involved in several heinous crimes, including murder and robberies.

On February 7, Assistant Sub-Inspector (ASI) Vedi Ram, posted at the Nizamuddin police station, lodged a complaint that on his way to Seelampur after completion of his duty, he was intercepted by two persons near the Golden Jubilee Park at 11.45 p.m. He alleged that the accused, who were on a motorcycle, asked him to hand over his belongings. When he resisted, they shot him in the stomach and

fled with his wallet and mobile phone. A case was registered at Kotwali police station.

DCP (North) Nupur Prasad said that during investigation, CCTV footage of the area was scanned and a list of criminals who have come out on bail recently was prepared.

"We tracked each and every criminal who is out on bail and simultaneously analysed CCTV footage of the all possible routes that could have been taken by the robbers.

"We finally succeeded in identifying the two suspected criminals – Arman Farhaz and Mohd Riaz. A trap was laid on Geeta Colony flyover and they were arrested. The motorcycle used in committing the offence, three robbed mobile phones and other articles were also recovered" said Ms. Prasad.

Sexual harassment: scribe alleges political pressure

Says accused trying to reach compromise

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

GURUGRAM

Three days after registering a case against her former colleague and three journalists for allegedly making sexual advances to her and defaming her, the woman journalist with an English daily here on Monday recorded her statement before the Magistrate alleging political pressure to withdraw the complaint.

In her statement to the Judicial Magistrate (First Class) Harjot Kaur under Section 164 of the CrPC, the complainant, seeking immediate arrest of the accused, maintained that they were using their contacts to put pressure on her to reach a compromise.

The woman journalist in her statement said that her former colleague Rashpal Singh Bhardwaj started hitting on her soon after he joined the company in mid-2016 and would often

tell her that he was not happy with his marriage since his wife was overweight.

The accused would often ask the victim as well to lose some weight and advised her to walk with him, said the statement.

Reiterated allegations
She reiterated her allegations before the Magistrate as to how Rashpal made her attend office parties against her will and tried to defame her on social network platforms.

The complainant recalled as to how on one occasion Rashpal even gave her a veiled threat referring to instances of spurned lovers throwing acids on women. The complainant also reiterated her allegations against three other journalists for defaming her on social network platforms with Rashpal.

The police said efforts were on to nab the accused.

Eatery compensates complainant with ₹10,000 for service charge

For ₹2,100 bill, restaurant charged ₹168 as service charge

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

Following a complaint against an eatery for charging "service charge" of ₹168, despite relevant rules stating that it is not mandatory, it compensated the complainant by paying ₹10,000.

Complainant Aashish George had moved a District Consumer Disputes Redressal Forum alleging that All American Diner had charged ₹168, despite rules that exempted customers from paying the tax.

Citing relevant guidelines issued by the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, the plea alleged: "It has been stated that it is not mandatory for consumers to pay service charge charged by restaurants and it is solely on the discretion of consumers whether they want to pay or not."

Following the settlement

In spite of the complainant's repeated requests, the restaurant did not remove the illegal service charge from the bill, which was charged illegally by them and refused the complainant's request upfront, which was legally binding on the restaurant as per guidelines," the plea alleged.

Further, it was alleged that the eatery, while refusing to deduct the service charge, had contended that entry of customers into the restaurant "implied consent" towards payment of the service charge.

"The restaurant stated that charging of service tax is mandatory in the establishment, restaurant or cafe and the complainant's entry or any customer's entry amounts to his implied consent to pay the service charge," read the plea.

While the complainant sought compensation of over ₹50,000 for unfair trade practices, both parties agreed for a settlement of ₹10,000.

driver of the car went away in another car after parking. A trap was laid near the car and in the early hours of Sunday, a car came after which a man got down and shifted

4 SHOWCASE

THE HINDU
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2019

VANGMAYI PARAKALA

In its seventh edition, the annual India Design ID is a gathering of innovators and thinkers in Delhi. As spring sets in, urban planners, designers, decorators and conservationists, all come together to show and tell us about how utility and aesthetics come together. This year's edition will have over 130 Indian and international exhibitors. Over 20 speakers, including art stalwart Bose Krishnamachari, conservationist Brinda Somaya, London-based lighting artist and designer Flynn Talbot, and Japan-based founder of innovation studio Lab +e Yoko Shizumu, will speak on the various panels that run parallel to the show. While the discussions range from sustainable urban planning to bio-design and emotions in architecture, among some of those exhibiting, there is a thought towards tactility, sustainability, and green-ness.

Claymen



The little clay figurines are making a reappearance. Aman Khanna, a sculptor trained in informational design says his men of clay are informed by the simple functionality of iconography. The Claymen come in a range called Functional and Dysfunctional.

The Dysfunctionals consist of a range of 30-odd human-like figurines that Khanna intellectualizes, if only just a little. "These help you deal with the dysfunctionality of life," he says, adding that the figures come in peace, and are non-judgmental.



The EARTH-LOVER'S GUIDE to India Design ID 2019

Tactility and green-ness are two things we're looking forward to this year

Among the Characters is a long-nosed, somber figure, hugging his knees to his chest, called Misplaced Hope - he looks sturdy, and steady, but there's a certain fragility about him (other than the fact he's made of clay). There are also Dysfunctional Clayheads and Forms, some of which can be used as vases or tealight holders.

The Functionals, on the other hand, are more straightforward about their utility: there's the de shaped round cup and squashed jug in the 'Deformed' subset; the angular decanter and pourers in the 'Geometric' line; and espresso cups with an unfinished look in 'Hand moulded'. In intentionally retaining these Khanna's connect with clay, the most ancient material of all time, comes through - the small "flaws" let you really feel the product you're holding in your hand, as well as bits of its process.

Elan
Spearheaded by décor designer Vidushi Gupta, Elan focuses on keeping alive the textures and colours of the materials that go into making her work. "About a decade ago, I went to the Amber Palace in Jaipur. I felt so bad when I saw how the place was painted and white-washed," she says. She recalls how the patterns she drew in her sketchbook there, and



made decals, now make it to the items in this collection.

Usually, the feel of the material gets covered in coating and colour. Elan has intentionally avoided that this time around. The material remains king: For instance, the serve-ware keeps a bend

and grain in the metal; the tiffin-dabbas take on the hand-drawn floral patterns from the palace's walls, while the platters keep a textured face.

Gupta uses stainless steel, mild steel, brass and aluminum. Her copper bottles dip into the ancient Indian wisdom of



drinking water from copper containers, while molding them resemble the very popular S'well vacuum bottles that Instagram influencers promote in lieu of single-use plastic bottles.

Earth Garden

This project, headed by director Kamal Badia wants to bridge the gap between the indoors and outdoors. With trellises, arches, urns, cauldrons, meant for "live plantations," the products are made mostly of brass, copper, and mild steel, which is known for its relatively lower carbon content. "These materials age well," Badia says.

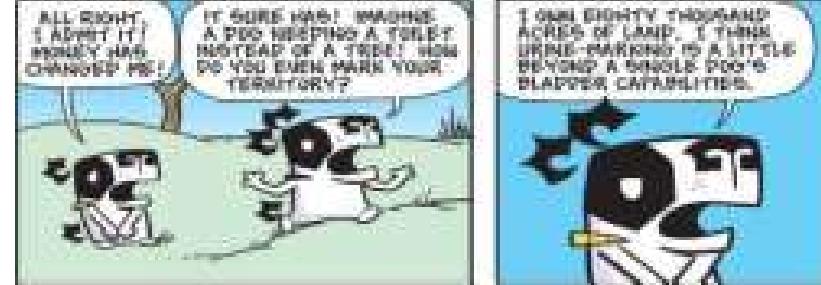
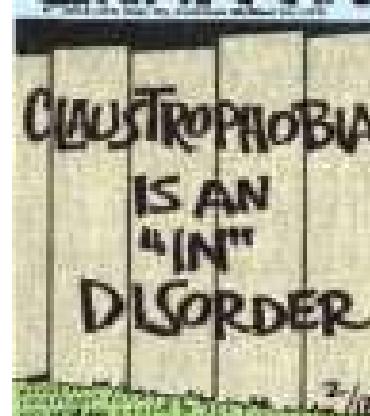
Some of Earth Garden's products also include coco-liners - thin coir-based planter pots known for their eco-friendly and breathable nature.

Aranya Earthcraft

The brand that had gained popularity over the past couple years for their nature-inspired papier-mâché jewellery has now expanded into interior décor. The idea, says co-founder Preeti Gupta, is to make the statement that their eco-friendly products are durable, despite being made from scrap newspaper-pulp

and natural edible glue from the *baobab* (acacia) tree.

While Gupta does the jewellery, her partner Vivek Prasad is the sculpture artist. For their India Design exhibit, the duo has collaborated with textile artist Manas Ghorai. They've also used bronze and a little wood - they avoid teak wood at all costs, using only the faster-growing pine wood when necessary. The line now includes smaller products like coasters, and bigger, more durable ones like clocks, lamps, and sculptures.

POOCH CAFE**PEANUTS****HAGAR THE HORRIBLE****CALVIN AND HOBBES****TIGER****GRAFFITI****THE GUARDIAN QUICK CROSSWORD-12991**

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- Across**
- 1 Medical practitioner (9)
 - 2 Inclined walkway (4)
 - 3 Exaggerated (9)
 - 4 US coin (4)
 - 5 19th-century prime minister (9)
 - 6 Accommodation for prisoners (5)
 - 7 Stringed instrument (4)
 - 8 Set aside (4)
 - 9 Favoured not available to all (9)
 - 10 Oral exam (4)
 - 11 Accommodation for prisoners (5)
 - 12 Countless (6)
 - 13 Pleasure trip (6)
 - 14 Pacified (6)
 - 15 Wall paintings (6)
 - 16 Old four-pence (5)
 - 17 Try garlic powder, white pepper, ground ginger and curcumin. These pungent herbs are known to reduce inflammation, lower cholesterol and protect arteries. Also try: rosemary, cilantro, basil, oregano and finely chopped onion
 - 18 Health Capsules is not intended to be a diagnostic or

- 12 Adhere (5)
- 13 Talent seeker (5)
- 14 Abase oneself (6)
- 15 Spoiled (6)
- 16 Not hilly (4)
- 17 The ugly Duckling's outcome (4)

Solution will appear in Delhi Metro dated February 13, 2019.

Solution No. 12990

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WUMO**PEARLS BEFORE SWINE**