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**NEARBY**

Extortion rackets run by Mamata, says Modi

 THAKURNAGAR / KOLKATA  
 Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday launched his election campaign in east India and West Bengal with an attack on the newly formed Opposition alliance, the ruling Trinamool Congress and the Congress.

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 CLASSIFIEDS ▶ PAGE 4 & 6

## Rishi Shukla named to head CBI

Former Madhya Pradesh top officer chosen by high-power panel led by PM; Kharge pens dissent note

MAHESH LANGA  
AHMEDABAD

Former Director-General of Police of Madhya Pradesh Rishi Kumar Shukla, a 1983 batch Indian Police Service (IPS) officer of the M.P. cadre, was on Saturday appointed the Director of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), the country's premier investigation agency, for two years.

Mr. Shukla was picked from a panel of several names cleared by the high-power committee, led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and comprising the Chief Justice of India and the Leader of the Opposition in



New innings: Rishi Kumar Shukla being greeted after his appointment as CBI Director in Bhopal. ▶ PTI

the Lok Sabha.

"The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has, based on the panel recommended by the Committee constituted as per Section 4A

ification issued by the Department of Personnel and Training in the evening.

However, the Leader of the Opposition Mallikarjun Kharge submitted a dissent note on Mr. Shukla's appointment, saying he did not meet the required criteria as he had not worked in any anti-corruption agency.

In his dissent letter, Mr. Kharge contended that three aspects – seniority, integrity and experience in investigation of anti-corruption cases – should be given equal weightage to get officers best suited in the short-list.

He also stressed that the criteria decided at the meet-

ing were diluted by adding general investigation experience as experience of investigation of anti-corruption cases.

**Amid controversies**

Mr. Shukla's appointment comes at a time when the agency is mired in a series of controversies related to a bitter fight between two top officials, former Director Alok Verma and Special Director Rakesh Asthana, both of whom were shunted out following serious corruption allegations against them.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 10

DISSENT NOTE ▶ PAGE 10

## Pune police arrest Teltumbde, court orders his release later


 Anand Teltumbde leaving a Pune court after he was released on bail on Saturday.  
 ▶ MANDAR TANNU

Judge cites apex court order, terms custody of writer and Dalit scholar illegal

GAUTAM S MENGLE  
MUMBAI

Writer and academic Anand Teltumbde, who was arrested by the Pune police at the domestic terminal of the Chhatrapati Shivaji International Airport at 3.30 a.m. on Saturday, was released in the afternoon by a Pune court that termed his arrest illegal.

gaon case.

According to police sources, Mr. Teltumbde was picked up from the domestic terminal soon after his arrival from Kochi.

A special Pune court on Friday rejected his anticipatory bail application, observing that his custodial interrogation was necessary in the Elgar Parishad-Bhima Kore-

Special judge Kishore Va-

dade referred to the Supreme Court's earlier order, which granted Mr. Teltumbde protection from arrest till February 11, during which time he could seek regular or pre-arrest bail.

'IN CONTEMPT OF SC' ▶ PAGE 11

'TEMPORARY RELIEF' ▶ PAGE 11

## + U.S. visa fraud: India demands release of students

SUHASINI HAIDAR  
NEW DELHI

Worried about the condition of 129 Indian students arrested in the United States for visa fraud, the government issued a demarche to the U.S. Embassy in Delhi on Saturday, demanding that the stu-

dents be released from de-
 tention and not summarily deported.

"Our concern over the dignity and well-being of the detained students and the need for immediate consular access for Indian officials to the detainees was reiterated."

The MEA has set up hel-

plines for all those arrested, currently in detention centres across states. Indian consulate officials in Texas met with detainees in San Antonio, Conroe and Alvarado, the consulate said.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 10

Congress to contest all 7 LS seats in Delhi, says Sheila

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

Ruling out an alliance with the Aam Aadmi Party yet again, Delhi Congress chief Sheila Dikshit on Saturday said her party would contest all seven parliamentary seats in the Capital and the process of selecting "winnable" candidates has already begun.

The Congress's chosen candidates, Ms. Dikshit said, would be a mix of old and new faces as well former legislators. The former Chief Minister reiterated her party's stance amid recurring speculation over the possibility of an alliance with AAP for the upcoming Lok Sabha polls.

"There will be no alliance [with AAP]," said Ms. Dikshit. The ruling AAP, too, has asserted on its part that it will independently contest the elections in Delhi, Punjab and Haryana.

The party may have some loss or benefit in the absence of an alliance and it would "pay attention" to the issue, said Ms. Dikshit. The names of probable candidates will be sent to the central party leadership for screening after a cut-off date which is yet to be decided, she added.

Ms. Dikshit accused the AAP government of "misleading" people on its performance and claimed that the voters of Delhi will give their reply in the elections.

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## Kerala sets up drug price monitor

It will look at overcharging for medicines and sale of stents

A.S. JAYANTH



The new watchdog will offer technical help to the State Drug Controllers.

■ GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

The State Health Secretary would be the Chairman of the society and the Drugs Controller would be its member secretary. Its members include a State government representative, representatives of private pharmaceutical companies, and those from consumer rights protection fora.

The society would also have an executive committee headed by the Drugs Controller.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 10

## IN BRIEF



FIR against AAP MLA for 'obstructing' drive

NEW DELHI  
Delhi Police has registered a case against AAP MLA Madan Lal for allegedly obstructing anti-encroachment drive carried out by the Railways on Tuesday, the police said on Saturday. STAFF REPORTER

## Hospital conducts cancer awareness drive in city

NEW DELHI  
To raise awareness about cancer, a hospital here conducted a drive to reach out to village school teachers and sarpanch. In the run-up to World Cancer Day on February 4, the BLK Super Specialty Hospital organised a ceremony on Saturday to felicitate sarpanch, each of whom contributed to this campaign. PTI

Air quality of Delhi-NCR			
Delhi	332	Gurugram	275
Ghaziabad	370	Faridabad	-
Noida	346	Greater Noida	374
Good	■	Satisfactory	■ Moderate
0-50	51-100	101-200	201-300
Poor	■	Very poor	■ Severe
201-300	301-400	>401	

AIR QUALITY INDEX AT 4 P.M. YESTERDAY (AVERAGE OF PAST 24 HOURS) | SOURCE: CPCB

# No provision in Budget for Delhi Metro Phase-IV: Sisodia

Centre has meted out stepmotherly treatment to the Capital, says Deputy CM

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

The Aam Aadmi Party government on Saturday claimed that "no provision" had been made for the Phase-IV of the Delhi Metro project in the Interim Budget.

The party accused the BJP-led Centre of meting out "stepmotherly treatment" to the Capital in the tabling of Budget.

"They have meted out stepmotherly treatment to Delhi in giving financial assistance and in relation to Phase IV," alleged Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia.

The Minister, who also holds the Finance portfolio,

**C** A lot of noise was earlier made by the Ministry about the Delhi Metro Phase-IV project... Work related to Phase-IV, which needs funds, has been neglected

MANISH SISODIA  
Deputy Chief Minister



Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia at a press conference in New Delhi on Saturday. ■ SANDEEP SAXENA

said AAP MPs would raise the issue in both Houses of Parliament.

"A lot of noise was earlier made by the Ministry [Housing and Urban Affairs] about the Delhi Metro Phase-IV project but when we saw the Budget, it was a surprise for us. Work related to Phase-IV, which needs funds, has been neglected," Mr. Sisodia alleged. The Delhi Metro has been given a grant of ₹414.70 crore in the Budget.

The Delhi Metro Rail Cor-

claimed that AAP government had "stonewalled" the progress of the project leading to "substantial delay" and inconvenience to commuters in relation to lack of agreement over the 50-50% sharing of operational loss on the proposed network.

**Financial feasibilities'**

"Phase-IV is important and while going through its files, we had found shortcomings in technical and financial feasibilities. An extra ₹10,000 crore was being projected as in its estimated cost," Mr. Sisodia argued, claiming that "₹10,000 crore was reduced" in the overall estimated cost of the project after a Delhi government study.

The lines under Phase-IV of the Delhi Metro project are Rithala-Narela (21.73 km), Janakpuri West-R K Ashram (28.92 km), Mukundpur-Maujpur (12.54 km), Inderlok-Indraprastha (12.58 km), Tughlakabad-Aero City (20.20 km) and Lajpat Nagar-Saket G-Block (7.96 km).

# Son of police officer, two others held for stabbing man to death

Victim was trying to help a shop owner being targeted by trio

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

A 25-year-old man was stabbed to death when he tried to intervene in a fight between a paan shop owner and three men on Saturday in Rohini, the police said.

The three accused, including a son of a police officer, have been arrested, they said.

Victim Rajat Chaudhary used to run a mobile repairing shop, the police said, adding that the accused have been identified as Gaurav, Sachin and Prince.

A senior officer said the incident was reported around 1 a.m. by the hospital, where the victim was admitted.

back off.

"An argument ensued between Rajat and Gaurav during which the latter pulled out a knife and stabbed him," the officer added.

The accused allegedly boasted of their "contacts" and fled the spot.

Rajat's friends rushed him to a nearby private hospital where he was declared brought dead.

**Kin protest**

His family members and relatives also staged a protest on Saturday, the police said.

"Gaurav is the son of a police officer posted in north-west district," they added.

# CM inaugurates development works in 38 unauthorised colonies

In Badarpur, drains, lanes and streets would be constructed at a cost of ₹101.19 cr., promises Kejriwal

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Saturday inaugurated development works in 38 unauthorised colonies in the vicinity of Badarpur here, read a statement issued by the Delhi government.

**To benefit 4 lakh people**  
The government said drains, lanes and streets would be constructed in these 38 colonies at a cost of ₹101.19 crore and would benefit around 4 lakh residents.

The inauguration was also



CM Arvind Kejriwal said the inauguration is a historic occasion. ■ FILE PHOTO

2019, then go ahead and do not vote for me. I will come back to inaugurate these projects, which have been pro-

mised to you today [Saturday] in December...governments of different parties have come and gone but they could not accomplish in 70 years what we have done in just four years," he added.

The Delhi government has

been striving for a better life for the residents of the unauthorised colonies of Delhi since it came to power, the statement said. Work of roads, lanes, drains, sewer lines, water pipelines and street lights have been carried out in a huge number of

colonies in the last four years by the Delhi government, the statement said. It added that the total length of lanes and street to be constructed under the project was 101.88 km while the total length of drains to be constructed was 237.81 km.

"The completion of work will be done in a phase-wise manner with the first phase completing in September 2019 and the last in December 2019. The project will be executed by the Irrigation and Flood Control Department," the statement added.

# BJP accuses Cong. of playing with sentiments of '84 riots victims

Tiwari hits out at party for appointing Kailash Jain, an accused in a riots case, as a district president

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

The BJP on Saturday accused the Congress of playing with the sentiments of families affected by the 1984 anti-Sikh riots.

The accusation comes after the Congress appointed an individual who is out on bail in a criminal case relat-

ed the riots as one of its district presidents.

Delhi BJP chief Manoj Tiwari questioned the appointment of Kailash Jain from Shahdara's Babarpur district stating that he "is out on bail granted in a 1984 anti-Sikh riot case".

"What can one expect

cases of murder of Sikhs...When Congress can appoint Kamal Nath, also one of the murderers of Sikhs, then there is no surprise in the appointment of Kailash Jain as a district president," he said.

"On the one hand, under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, BJP

is respecting the sentiments of Sikhs...and is making arrangements to open the Kartarpur Sahib corridor...while, on the other hand, Congress is promoting persons like Sajjan Kumar, Jagdish Tytler, Kamal Nath, Kailash Jain and insulting the sentiments of the Sikhs," the north-east Delhi

MP alleged.

**Befitting reply'**

Accusing it of protecting "criminals", Mr. Tiwari said Congress was "forgetting that the people are watching everything" and will give a "befitting reply" to Congress for "protecting the murderers of Sikhs."

# Plea seeking ₹3 lakh from apparel store dismissed

'Store charged exorbitant amount for bag'

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

A district consumer disputes redressal forum here has dismissed a complaint seeking over ₹3 lakh compensation from an apparel store for charging an exorbitant amount of ₹10 for a carry bag.

Alleging unfair trade practice, the complainant claimed that due to lack of options, he had to purchase a paper bag for ₹10 from the store that was "priced much higher compared to other carry bags available in the market".

The complainant further alleged that the State government had failed to monitor "legally assigned duties, including monitoring of day-to-day affairs of both the Department of Food Supplies and Consumer Affairs as well as local self-government."

However, the consumer panel observed, "The charge of ₹10 per carry bag was introduced as part of Nagpur Municipal Corporation Policy to protect the environment. Environment-friendly citizens do carry their own shopping bags, preferably cloth bags while going shopping. The complainant did not carry any such bag with him." While dismissing the com-

**C** Charge of ₹10 per carry bag was introduced as part of Nagpur Municipal Corporation Policy to protect the environment

DISTRICT CONSUMER DISPUTES REDRESSAL FORUM

## Centre for enlightenment



Against all odds: Children study near a bonfire in Old Delhi on Saturday. The government's weather forecasting agency issued a warning of cold wave conditions over the next few days in the city. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

# Airlines, travel agent directed to pay over ₹60,000

Did not inform passengers about changed flight timing, notes consumer forum

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

A district consumer disputes redressal forum here has directed Indian Airlines and a travel agency to compensate a group of passengers by paying over ₹60,000 after the airlines rescheduled a flight to Dibrugarh without prior in-

timation. The directions came after nine complainants alleged that despite paying a booking amount of ₹25,000 to the travel agent, on the date of travel, they were told that the flight had been postponed by over a day. While directing the airlines and the travel agency to

jointly compensate the complainants, the consumer panel said: "There is a deficiency on the part of the opposite parties for not informing the amendment causing rescheduling of the flights. Further, there was enough time of more than 15 days available during which the complai-

rant could have been informed."

**Unable to contact'**

The airlines had contended that they were unable to reach the complainants to inform them about the rescheduled flight and the agent was informed of the same.

# Consumer forum rejects plea claiming medical negligence

'Death no ground for compensation'

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

The State Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission has dismissed a compensation plea alleging that medical negligence by a hospital in Nangloi led to the death of a teenager.

While dismissing the plea, the forum stated that death under the treating doctor or a hospital cannot be held as ground for medical negligence.

A family alleged that a 19-year-old youth died owing to medical negligence on behalf of Nangloi's Khera Hospital. The panel said: "Death is a very unfortunate incident but whether the act of a doctor treating the patient has resulted in the end of the life has to be assessed or evaluated in the right and objective perspective before reaching a conclusion."

It added: "The mere fact that a patient dies in a hospital does not lead to a presumption that the death occurred due to the negligence of the doctor. In order to make a doctor responsible for a patient's death, it must be established that there was negligence or incompetence on his part and that he did

...whether the act of a doctor treating the patient has resulted in the end of the life has to be evaluated in the right and objective perspective before reaching a conclusion

STATE CONSUMER DISPUTES REDRESSAL COMMISSION

something in disregard for the life and safety."

"The complainant's son, having consumed poisonous substance, allegedly due to mental depression, was brought in for the treatment...the allegation of the complainant is that no treatment was done [for over 45 minutes], despite there being emergency," the forum observed.

However, the hospital contended that treatment was started within 15 minutes of the patient being brought in for treatment.

While observing that treatment was started in the shortest possible time, the panel said: "It is trite law that if the doctor has taken proper precaution and despite that, if the patient does not survive, then the court should be slow in attributing negligence on the part of the doctor."

# Man loses two cars in one year from same spot

Thefts took place amid high-security arrangements: victim

HEMAMI BHANDARI  
NEW DELHI

In a crime involving too many coincidences, a businessman's new SUV got stolen on Thursday from the same parking lot where his old SUV was lifted from around a year ago.

Pawan Gupta (40), who runs an event management business and lives with his family in Mandawali, said his old SUV was stolen amid high-security around Republic Day last year.

In April 2018, he bought the same model of the car again, which he had parked at the same spot on Wednesday morning and saw it for the last time at night.

"I had to go to my mother's house nearby. I was about to leave around 7 a.m., when I realised my car was gone," he said.

#### FIR difficulties

The victim called the police and informed them about the incident on Thursday.

They asked him to visit Mandawali police station. The officer at the station, however, told him to report it



The second car which was stolen on Thursday.

■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

I don't know whether I should buy another car or not. I have also started to wonder if I should change my house

PAWAN GUPTA  
Car owner

The theft was committed despite regular police patrol in the area. "Every night, the police patrol our area and still thieves are managing to flee with cars. Recently, another car was stolen in the area," he claimed.

The victim said that his colony has a security guard, but he does not show up regularly.

"I don't know whether I should buy another car or not. I have also started to wonder if I should change my house," Mr. Gupta said.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (East) Jasmeet Singh said, "We are scanning CCTV footage of the area to ascertain the identity of the accused. We will also see what went into the investigation last year."

The victim alleged that

## Man accused of tearing up Constitution gets bail

NIRNIMESH KUMAR  
NEW DELHI

A Delhi court has granted bail to a man charged with tearing pages of the Constitution and setting it on fire and passing remarks against the dalit and tribal communities during a demonstration against the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act last August.

"The plea of bail of accused/applicant Krishan Mohan Rai is allowed and he is admitted to bail on his furnishing bail bond in the sum of ₹20,000 with one surety in the like amount...," the court said.

#### Dancer arrested for stealing bikes

NEW DELHI

Two men, identified as Ravi Singh Bhadaria (27) and Satya Veer (23), were arrested from Dwarka on Friday for allegedly stealing bikes. The police said that Ravi is a dancer. He is also a drug addict and started committing thefts so he could support his habit, said the police. STAFF REPORTER

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## Six arrested for killing passer-by during a scuffle in south Delhi

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

Six persons have been arrested for allegedly killing a 31-year-old passer-by while fighting among each other

in south Delhi's Sangam Vihar on Friday, the police said on Saturday.

DCP (South) Vijay Kumar said that the accused have been identified as Imran

(25), Ashu Gupta (21), Mohd Arshad (20), Rakesh alias Raka (23), Inder Kumar (19), and Manoj Kumar (20). All except Imran and Arshad have criminal records, Mr.

Kumar said.

"A scuffle had broken out between two groups, with Arshad, Nitin and Sanu on one side and Ashu, Manoj, Rakesh, Imran and few oth-

ers on the other. Manoj and Sanu pulled out pistols and started firing at each other. One of the bullets hit Kanhaiya, who was passing from the area," he also said.

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#### OTHER NEAREST SELECTION CENTRES & DATES :

Chandigarh(22nd Feb), Dehradun(14th Feb), Lucknow(16th Feb),

Jaipur(19th Feb), Gwalior(26th Feb) and Jammu(16th Feb)



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### BRIDEGROOMS WANTED

#### INDEX OF MATRIMONIAL

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#### BRIDES WANTED

#### BRIDES & GROOMS WANTED

#### Classification common for Brides, Bridegrooms, Brides & Grooms

#### Assamese

#### Awadhi

#### Bengali

#### Bhojpuri

#### Bihari

#### Chhattisgarhi

#### English

#### Gujarati

#### Haryanvi

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#### Manipuri

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#### Sindhi

#### Tamil

#### Telugu

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#### Urdu

#### Advocate

#### Business

#### Defence

#### Doctor

#### Engineer

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#### IAS/ Allied Services

#### Information Technology

#### MBA/ CA/ ICWA

#### NRI

#### Cosmopolitan

#### Divorcee

#### Physically Challenged

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THE HINDU DELHI  
SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 2019

EAST 5

## Odisha villagers demand halt in mining

STAFF REPORTER

BHUBANESWAR

Villagers living near Kodingamali hill in Laxmidipur block of Odisha's Koraput district have sought Governor Ganesh Lal's intervention in halting bauxite extraction by the Odisha Mining Corporation.

A delegation of villagers under the banner 'Kodingamali

Sukshya Samiti' on Saturday protested against the mining operation and alleged that their opinion was not sought before extraction started.

Officials said that the firm had obtained mining lease on around 428 hectares of Kodingamali hill and had started preliminary work. Vedanta Group, which was facing short-

age of raw material for its refinery unit in Kalahandi district, is likely to be supplied bauxite from the mine.

"The area where mining is being done is a Fifth Schedule area. Before taking up any work, approval of villagers is required. But the government sidestepped us," said Jitendra Khora, a protesting villager.

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e-Procurement Cell JHARKHAND STATE BUILDING CONSTRUCTION CORPORATION LTD., RANCHI				
Very Short Term e-Procurement Notice				
Sr. No	Tender Reference No.	Work Name	Amount in (Rs)	Completion Time
1	JSBCCL/87/2018-19	Construction of New Pharmacy Institute at Palamu	112963100	18 Months
2	JSBCCL/88/2018-19	Construction of New Pharmacy Institute at Chaibasa	112963100	18 Months
3	JSBCCL/89/2018-19	Construction of New Pharmacy Institute at Hazaribagh	112963100	18 Months
4	JSBCCL/90/2018-19	Construction of New Pharmacy Institute at Dumka	112963100	18 Months
5	Date of Publication of Tender on Website	08.02.2019 at 11:00 AM		
6	Date of Submission of Bids	09.02.2019 at 11:00 AM		
7	Last Date/Time of Submission of Bids	22.02.2019 at 11:00 AM		
8	Last Date/Time of Submission of Bid Security Money and Tender Fee	26.02.2019 upto 11:30 AM		
9	Date/Time of opening of Bid	26.02.2019 at 12:00 PM		
10	Name & Address of office Inviting tender	e-Procurement Cell, Jharkhand State Building Construction Corporation Ltd., Ranchi.		
11	Helpline Number of e-procurement Cell	0651-2446259		
12	e-mail ID	jsbccjharkhand@gmail.com		

Any change can be seen on Website <http://Jharkhandtenders.gov.in>.  
Any other information can be seen on <http://Jharkhandtenders.gov.in>.

PR 200995 (Jharkhand State Building Construction Corp. Itd.) 18-19 (D) Jharkhand State Building Construction Corp. Itd.) 18-19 (D)

JHARKHAND COMMUNICATION NETWORK LIMITED  
(A SPV under DoIT & e-Gov., Govt. of Jharkhand)  
Registered Office: H/NO-347, Project Building 3rd Floor, HEC Dhrura, Ranchi-834004  
CIN: U74999JH2017SCG009474 Contact: 0651-2446147

#### (Tender Ref.: JCNL-04/2019)

Jharkhand Communication Network Ltd. invites online bid through e-Procurement process from eligible firms/agencies for "Hiring Of Human Resource Agency For Recruitment Of Various Posts for JCNL" on the basis of scope of work as mentioned in tender document. The bid shall be downloaded / submitted online from the Website <http://Jharkhandtenders.gov.in>. The bidder(s) should have necessary portal enrolment with their own Digital Signature Certificate:

(a)

S.N.	Name of Work	EMD	Cost of tender Document	Period of validity
1.	Hiring Of Human Resource Agency For Recruitment Of Various Posts for JCNL	Rs. 20,000/- (Twenty Thousands only) in the form of Demand Draft or Bank Guarantee in favour of CEO, Jharkhand Communication Network Ltd payable at Ranchi	Rs. 1,000/- (One thousand only) in the form of demand draft in favour of CEO, Jharkhand Communication Network Ltd payable at Ranchi	180 days

(b) Period of availability of tenders online date & time bidding on-line/last date of seeking clarification/date of opening of tender papers are as given below-

S. N	e-Procurement officer	Place of Opening and Pre Bid	Availability tender on-line for bidding	Date & Time of opening of Technical Bid
1.	Sri Anurag Lakra Call No. +91-9430732109 Or email id: lakra54321@gmail.com	Jharkhand Communication Network Ltd. 3rd Floor, Project Bhawan, Dhrura, Ranchi-834004	Bid Downloading date from  From 02/02/2019 at 02:00 PM to 20/02/2019 at 11:00 AM	Pre-Bid Date and time of Online Bid Submission  From 05/02/2019 at 03:00 PM to 20/02/2019 at 03:00 PM

SD/-  
CEO  
Jharkhand Communication Network Ltd.  
Ranchi, Jharkhand

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- NOIDA, Nirula's Sec-2, Near Metro Station, Sec-15, Noida, UP
- LAJPAT NAGAR, 49, Main Ring Road, Adj. Haldi Ram, Near Moolchand Crossing

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ENGINEER UPPER NARMADA ZONE BARGI HILLS, JABALPUR (M.P.) T. NO. 0761-2673450 (O) Fax No. 0761-2672373 E-mail : ceunz.2010@rediffmail.com
BRIEF NOTICE INVITING TENDER (Fourth Call) NIT. No. 246/G/2019/Jabalpur, Dated: 28.01.2019
Online tender for the following work has been invited on the e-procurement system Portal website <a href="http://mp.tenders.gov.in">http://mp.tenders.gov.in</a> Tender details are as below:- Name of the work: Execution of Rani Durgawati Micro Lift Irrigation Scheme on "Turnkey" basis for irrigation in 1,200 ha up to 2.5 ha, each as per detail scope of work. Probable Amount of Contract (Rs. in Crore): 20.54 Crore EMD (in Rs.): Rs. 10.27 Lakhs Cost of Tender Documents: Rs. 50.000 (Fifty Thousand Only) (Nonrefundable) Date of Purchase of tender documents: Up to 13.02.2019, 17.30 On line Submission of Bid: Up to 14.02.2019, 17.30 Manual submission: 15.02.2019 Up to 4.00 PM Date of opening of EMD and Pre-qualification: 15.02.2019 from 4.30 PM ONWARD Date of Opening of Financial Bid of Qualified Bidders: 21.02.2019 from 10.30 AM. The tender documents can be purchased only online from the above website after making online payment using credit card or Internet Banking Account. Detailed NIT and other details can be viewed on the above mentioned portal. G-22803/2019
(Kalash Choubey) Chief Engineer Upper Narmada Zone Bargi Hills, Jabalpur (M.P.)

JHARKHAND URBAN INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT COMPANY LIMITED		Date: 31.01.2019
3 <sup>RD</sup> FLOOR, PRAGATI SADAN, KUTCHERY	ROAD, RANCHI 834 001, Jharkhand	PH: +91 651 2252878, E-MAIL: juidco@gmail.com CIN: U45200JH2013SCG001752
E-Procurement Notice	Tender Notice	
NIT No.: JUIDCO/NIT/M&MPM/2019/207	Construction of Museum and Multimedia Projection Mapping in Birsa Munda Jail, Ranchi	
1. Name of the work	e-tendering ( <a href="http://Jharkhandtenders.gov.in">http://Jharkhandtenders.gov.in</a> )	
2. Mode of Bid Submission	Rs. 21,66,01,981/- (Rupees Twenty Five Thousand) only Non-Refundable Bid Security: Rs. 21,67,000/- (Rupees Twenty One Lakh, Sixty Seven Thousand) only	
3. Estimated Cost	Tender document fee: - Rs. 25,000/- (Rupees Twenty Five Thousand) only Non-Refundable Bid Security: Rs. 21,67,000/- (Rupees Twenty One Lakh, Sixty Seven Thousand) only	
4. Tender Fee and Bid Security	Tender document fee: - Rs. 25,000/- (Rupees Twenty Five Thousand) only Non-Refundable Bid Security: Rs. 21,67,000/- (Rupees Twenty One Lakh, Sixty Seven Thousand) only	
5. Date & Time of Publication of Tender on Website	01.02.2019 & 17:00 Hrs	
6. Last Date & Time of submission of pre-bid queries	08.02.2019 & 15:00 Hrs	
7. Date & Time of Pre-bid meeting	08.02.2019 & 17:00 Hrs	
8. Last Date & Time of Bid Submission	22.02.2019 & 17:00 Hrs	
9. Last Date & Time of Submission of Tender Fee & EMD	23.02.2019 & 17:00 Hrs	
10. Date & Time of Bid Opening	23.02.2019 & 17:30 Hrs	
11. Bid Submission Address	Jharkhand Urban Infrastructure Development Company Limited, 3 <sup>rd</sup> Floor, Pragati Sadan, Kutchery Road, Ranchi - 834001	
12. Helpline No. of e-Procurement Cell	+ 91 651 2225878	

Note: Only e-Tenders will be accepted.  
Further details can be seen on website <http://Jharkhandtenders.gov.in>

Sd/-  
Project Director (Tech.)  
JUIDCO Ltd., Ranchi

JHARKHAND URBAN INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT COMPANY LIMITED		Date: 23.02.2019
3 <sup>RD</sup> FLOOR, RRDA BUILDING, PRAGATI SADAN, KUTCHERY	RANCHI 834 001, JHARKHAND	Ph: +91 651 2242302
E-mail: juidcolmited@gmail.com CIN: U45200JH2013SCG001752		

TENDER CANCELLATION AND REPUBLICATION NOTICE

Ref. PR No.: 200961  
NIT No.: JUIDCO/PMAY/Vertical III/2019/205  
Tender ID: - 2019\_UDD\_35886\_1

Project Title: - "Construction of 2480 Dwelling units in 124 number of G + 3 blocks including structural design under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana Package A at Bagunhatu Jamshedpur" The tender of JUIDCO/PMAY/Vertical III/2019/205/Tender ID: - 2019\_UDD\_35886\_1 for "Construction of 2480 dwelling units in 124 number of G + 3 blocks including structural design under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana Package A at Bagunhatu Jamshedpur" is cancelled due to unavoidable reasons, however, the same is republished with modified tender identification number. Bidders are requested to take note of this while bidding.

Sd/-  
Project Director (Technical)  
JUIDCO Ltd.

PR201048 (Urban Development and Housing)18-19'D

WESTERN RAILWAY- RATLAM DIVISION CORRIGENDUM		
No. Srt-RTM-18-Tele-09, Date: 31.01.2019, Subject: Corrigendum of Tender Notice No. Srt-RTM-18-Tele-09. The following changes have been made in TENDER NOTICE.		
Item	Existing	Revised
Earnest Money Deposit	₹ 78,700/-	₹ 78,690/-
The name of the work on the IREPS portal was incorrect, it has been corrected.		
Rest all Terms & Conditions of the TENDER NOTICE & TENDER DOCUMENT will remain same		
Divisional Railway Manager (S&T) Western Railway, Ratlam		
ID-6/1465		
Like us on: <a href="#">facebook.com/WesternRly</a> • Follow us on: <a href="#">twitter.com/WesternRly</a>		

Ref. PR No.: 200961  
NIT No.: JUIDCO/PMAY/Vertical III/2019/205  
Tender ID: - 2019\_UDD\_35886\_1

Project Title: - "Construction of 2480 Dwelling units in 124 number of G + 3 blocks including structural design under Pradhan

Mantri Awas Yojana Package A at Bagunhatu Jamshedpur" The tender of JUIDCO/PMAY/Vertical III/2019/205/Tender ID: - 2019\_UDD\_35886\_1 for "Construction of 2480 dwelling units in 124 number of G + 3 blocks including structural design under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana Package A at Bagunhatu Jamshedpur" is cancelled due to unavoidable reasons, however, the same is republished with modified tender identification number. Bidders are requested to take note of this while bidding.

Sd/-  
Project Director (Technical)  
JUIDCO Ltd.

PR201048 (Urban Development and Housing)18-19'D

## MATRIMONIAL

## BRIDES WANTED

TAMIL	TAMIL	TAMIL
HINDU NADAR /32/B.Tech /IBM /1L /P.M SG Duraindar Chromepet Ch-44 044-48573284,6381576005 10-6pm	HINDU NADAR /28/B.E /LN/T /3.5lak P/A SG Duraindar Chromepet ch-44 044-48573284,6381576005 10am-6pm	HINDU NADAR /28/B.E /LN/T /3.5lak P/A SG Duraindar Chromepet Ch-44 044-48573284,6381576005 10am-6pm
HINDU NADAR /32/B.Tech /IBM /1L /P.M SG Duraindar Chromepet Ch-44 044-48573284,6381576005 10-6pm	AGE:39 DEEE, VALLUVAN (SC) Castle Bar, Own House, Working Private Company R/s. 40k seeks Bride, Unmarried & Divorced / Widow (Without Child) 449301863/9943626921.	AGE:39 DEEE, VALLUVAN (SC) Castle Bar, Own House, Working Private Company R/s. 40k seeks Bride, Unmarried & Divorced / Widow (Without Child) 449301863/9943626921.
HINDU NADAR /32/1M/NAIKER/UNMARRIED GROOM/THIRUVATHIRAI/MITHUNAM/BE/34/		

THE HINDU DELHI  
SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 2019

## Bail pleas of 3 cops rejected

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

FARIDKOT

A court here on Saturday rejected the anticipatory bail applications filed by three officers booked in connection with the 2015 police firing at people protesting over the desecration of religious scriptures.

District and Sessions Judge Harpal Singh rejected the bail pleas of the then Fazila Superintendent of Police Bikramjit Singh, Inspector Pardip Singh and the then SHO Amarjeet Singh.

"The anticipatory bail pleas have been rejected by the court," Faridkot District Attorney Rajnish Kumar said.

The court had heard the arguments of both the sides on Friday and reserved the order for Saturday.

The three officers had filed anticipatory bail applications after an SIT arrested the then Moga SSP Charanjit Singh Sharma on January 27. Sharma was arrested in connection with the police firing at Bebhal Kalan in Fardikot district that killed two people. He was leading a police team that allegedly opened fire at the protesters.

Sharma was arrested after the Punjab and Haryana High Court dismissed a petition challenging the findings of the Ranjit Singh Commission.

## Booth-level workers BJP's strength, says Amit Shah

Virtually launches party campaign in Uttarakhand for LS polls

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

DEHRADUN

BJP president Amit Shah addressed a booth-level workers' rally at the Parade Ground here on Saturday. Praising the party workers, he said that they are the BJP's real strength and can steer it to a thumping victory.

Mr. Shah added that a Ram temple should be built in Ayodhya at the earliest and dared the Congress to spell out its stand on the issue.

The Kumbh Mela is on and it is only natural that the demand for a Ram temple is being raised, he said, virtually launching the BJP's campaign in Uttarakhand for the Lok Sabha polls.

The BJP national president also hit out at the Opposition for the attempts to forge a 'Mahagathbandhan' for the parliamentary elections just months away.

**'Desperate attempt'**

He called the 'Mahagathbandhan' a desperate coming together of political forces opposed to each other as they cannot think of taking on Prime Minister Narendra Modi alone.

"Who is going to listen to a Chandrababu Naidu at a public meeting in Haldwani or a



BJP national president Amit Shah at the Haridwar-Tehri Lok Sabha Trishakti Sammelan in Dehradun on Saturday. ■PTI

Deve Gowda in Dehradun? They are leaders of regional parties with a limited appeal," Mr. Shah said. "Their only aim is 'Modi Hatao' (Remove Modi) whereas Modi wants to remove poverty, corruption and disease," he added.

**'PM's priority'**

The BJP national president urged the people to ensure that the party wins all the five Lok Sabha seats in Uttarakhand, as it did in 2014. "Uttarakhand is Prime Minister Narendra Modi's priority," he said and referred to the makeover of Kedarnath after the 2013 floods.

Mr. Shah also praised the interim Budget presented on Friday, saying that it took

care of all sections of society, particularly farmers, women, the poor and the marginalised.

He also credited the Modi government with implementing the 'One Rank, One Pension' scheme for military veterans, saying successive Congress governments had failed to achieve this.

Mr. Shah said coming to address the meeting reminded him of his initial days in the party. "This is possible only in a party like the BJP, which is governed by democratic principles. A small party worker like me who pasted party posters on poles rose to become its president and a tea seller's son the country's Prime Minister," he said.

## 6 killed in U.P. mishap

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

KAUSHambi

At least six persons were killed when the car they were travelling in had a head-on collision with a container truck coming from the opposite direction here, police said on Saturday.

Circle Officer Sirathu Rajveer Singh said the accident took place on the National Highway 2 on Friday night. The driver lost control over the car as its tyre exploded. The car jumped the divider and crashed into the vehicle coming from the opposite side, he added.

**SEARCH FOR MISSING**

General Public is hereby informed that a boy namely Pawan S/o Unknown R/o Bal Sahyog, Connaught Circus, Opposite L-Block, Connaught Place, New Delhi. Age- 7 years, Height-3'8", Face-Round, Built-Medium, Complexion-Sallow, Identification-Speak Bhamla, Wearing-Half Pant and T-Shirt. Shoes in his feet has been missing from above Said Bal Sahyog since Dated 08.10.2015 Time 01.00 PM. In this regard az case vides FIR No. 125/15 u/s 363 IPC Dated 10.10.2015

has been registered at P.S. Barakhamba Road, New Delhi. Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the boy but no clue has come to light so far. If any one having any information about this boy please inform undersigned.

E-mail : cic@cbi.gov.in  
Ph.: 011-24368638, 24368641

SHO  
Fax : 011-24368639 P.S. Barakhamba Road, New Delhi.  
Ph.: 011-23413800, 23413713  
DP/1912/NDD/19 23413999, 8750870527

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

The Executive Engineer, Palampur Division, HPWD, Palampur - 176061 on behalf of Governor of Himachal Pradesh, invites the item rate bids, in electronic tendering system from the eligible class of contractors registered with HPWD for the works as detailed in the table:-

Sr. No.	Name of work	Estimated Cost.	Starting date for downloading Bid	Earnest Money	Deadline for submission of bid
1	C/O link road from Chachian to Darati via Mathehra Km, 0/0 to 3/000 ( under Nabard RIDF-XXVI ) (SW- C/O passing places, R/walls, C.D. wroks, G.S.B., Mettaling and tarring, sid drain and parapets)	Rs. 1,34,74,261/-	7.2.2019	Rs. 1,67,300/-	21.2.2019

The bidders are advised to note other details of tenders from the department website [WWW.hptenders.gov.in](http://www.hptenders.gov.in)  
Executive Engineer, HPWD, Division, Palampur PIN-176061, Tel. 01894-230561, e-mail-ee-pal-hp@nic.in  
On behalf of Governor of H.P.

HP/4447/18-19 HIM SUCHNA AVAM JAN SAMPAK

Pawan

125/15 u/s 363 IPC Dated 10.10.2015

SHO

Fax : 011-24368639

P.S. Barakhamba Road, New Delhi.

Ph.: 011-23413800, 23413713

DP/1912/NDD/19 23413999, 8750870527

Part I

Insured Party	Government of Jharkhand, Department of Home, Government of Jharkhand.
<b>Aircraft Details</b>	
Make, Type & Serial Number	ALH-DHHRUV, DS-51
Year of Manufacturing/Purchase	2005/2007
Seating Capacity	Nine passengers (09)
Engine Number and Type	MSN 1115 and 1239+TURBO SHAFT ENGINE TM 333-2B2
Registration/Identification Marks	VT-HAP Jharkhand Government symbol & Jharkhand Police symbol
Value of aircraft	30 crores approx
Extra equipments and Accessories fitted with value	AC System.
Coverage	All Risks of Physical Loss or damage including Legal liability to Third Party. (Comprehensive)
Geographical Area	India
Period	12 Months STARTING 28.02.2019 00:00 HRS
<b>VALUES TO BE INSURED</b>	
(a) Hull Values	INR 297,700,000
(b) Legal Liabilities to Third Parties	INR 10,00,000 any one occurrence and in aggregate.
(c) Passenger Admitted Liability	INR 4,00,000 per person (Total INR. 3,60,00,000) INR 75,000 per person (Total INR 675,000)
Pilots Experience	Duly licensed and certified for the flights on ALH-DHHRUV
Hangar Facility	Full equipped hangar base available for aircraft
Use of Aircraft	All weather days and night operations, Troop Transport, Evacuation, VIP Communication, Normal Passenger Carriage, Carriage of arms and ammunition.

Part II

Format of offer TO BE FILLED IN BY BIDDERS ON COMPANY LETTER HEAD

DUE DATE OF OPENING OF OFFERS BEFORE AUTHORISED COMMITTEE: 18.02.2019

ISSUE OF ACCEPTANCE LETTER TO SELECTED COMPANY: 21.02.2019

SELECTED COMPANY TO ISSUE INSURANCE POLICY: 25.02.2019 -00.00 Hrs.

(Aviation Insurance (Specifically Helicopter Insurance) Experience- THIS IS MANDATORY

PREFERENTIAL PREQUALIFICATION

CLAUSE IN VIEW OF THE SENSITIVE/STRATEGIC NATURE OF THE USE OF THE AIRCRAFT

Client List with relevant details and dates

Conditions

All conditionalities of offer must be clearly spelt out as part of offer and will have a bearing on the selection of insuring party.

(a) Hull Values

(b) Legal Liabilities to Third Parties

(c) Passenger Admitted Liability

Baggage (without S.T.) Service Tax (Without S.T.) Total Premium (Without S.T.)

Discounts/Deductibles offered

Must be clearly mentioned in total terms without any hidden costs

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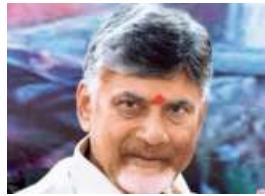
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## IN BRIEF



## TDP will come back to power, says Naidu

GANNAVARAM  
Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu on Saturday exuded confidence that his party would retain power in the general election due to the hard work done by his government and exhorted those who benefited from the slew of welfare schemes to stand by it.

## Minister slams 'display' of sick children

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM  
Kerala Health Minister K.K. Shylaja on Saturday took exception to the fact that sick children were being 'used' and 'exhibited as showpieces' by those leading a hunger strike in front of the Secretariat demanding justice for endosulfan victims. Ms. Shylaja said the government had given an assurance that the victims would get help.

## 'Directions issued to arrest Congress MLA'

MYSURU  
Karnataka Chief Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy on Saturday said directions had been issued to arrest Kampli MLA J.N. Ganesh of the Congress, who was involved in a brawl with former Minister Anand Singh at a resort recently. Home Minister M.B. Patil said there was no question of protecting the absconding MLA.

## Ganja seized from Assam man in Kerala

KOCHI  
Excise officials seized over 1 kg of ganja from Alimudheen Sheikh, 23, of Assam, near the Angamaly KSRTC stand here in Herala. The accused allegedly smuggled in the drug by train while returning from his home-State and sold it mostly to migrants, sources said. He was produced before a court and remanded.

## HAL draws flak on social media following Mirage crash

For decades, military used poor quality machines and often paid with lives... no Defence Minister stressed on quality at the PSU: ex-Navy chief

K.V. ADITYA BHARADWAJ  
DINAKAR PERI  
BENGALURU/NEW DELHI

At a quiet ceremony, Squadron Leader Siddhartha Negi, 31, and Samir Abrol, 33, were killed in the Mirage 2000 crash, in picture below, at the HAL Airport on Friday. He was one of the two pilots killed in the Mirage 2000 aircraft that have been in service in India for over three decades

## Fatal flight

Squadron leaders Siddhartha Negi, 31, and Samir Abrol, 33, were killed in the Mirage 2000 crash, in picture below, at the HAL Airport on Friday. He was one of the two pilots killed in the Mirage 2000 aircraft that have been in service in India for over three decades



The pilots had ejected but one of them fell on the debris

The Mirage was not being flown by ordinary pilots; these were superbly trained Aircraft and Systems Testing Establishment (ASTE) test pilots  
ADMIRAL ARUN PRAKASH, FORMER NAVAL CHIEF

- The IAF procured 51 Mirage 2000 fighters from France
- The fighters started entering service in 1985
- They are currently undergoing a comprehensive upgrade
- Two aircraft were lost in crashes earlier
- The first two Mirages were upgraded in France by Dassault Aviation. The rest are being upgraded by HAL in India
- The aircraft that crashed was a trainer and was undergoing customer acceptance tests after an upgrade

The mortal remains of Sqn. Ldr. Samir Abrol, 33, the other test pilot killed in the crash, were flown to Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh, where his family is based.

## Several theories

The last rites of Sqn. Ldr. Negi were performed in a private ceremony attended by his immediate family and senior officials of the Indian Air Force and the armed forces. Several retired defence personnel in the city also attended. Sqn. Ldr. Negi was given a gun salute.

Social media was abuzz all day over the incident, with several theories put out on the possible reasons for the crash and some sharp observations against HAL, a defence public sector undertaking (DPSU).

The French-origin Mirage 2000 jet had undergone a comprehensive upgrade at HAL and the customer acceptance test was under way when the accident occurred, killing the two young IAF pilots.

Officials remained tight-lipped about the cause. One defence official said it was likely a technical issue but stated that the exact sequence of events could only be determined by the Court of Inquiry (CoI).

"The black box that has been recovered is being examined by the CoI," an official source said. The CoI is head-

ed by the HAL, which is working in coordination with the IAF.

## MP's query

However, on social media, HAL was criticised over the incident. Karnataka MP Rajevee Chandrasekhar put out a strong message on Twitter, "My sources say aircraft was on 2nd acceptance air test af-

ter upgrade. One oleo (wheel) came off during take-off and it veered off runway. Pilots ejected both parachutes caught fire in the debris of aircraft..." he said.

He also offered to "ensure legal support" for the families if they wanted accountability from HAL.

Underscoring the gravity of the incident, former Naval

chief Admiral Arun Prakash said on Twitter, "The Mirage was not being flown by ordinary pilots; these were superbly trained Aircraft and Systems Testing Establishment (ASTE) test pilots."

He said the military has, for decades, flown "poor quality HAL machines and often paid with young lives but no reckoning for HAL management."

"Time to focus on the leadership and directors of this giant PSU," he noted, and added that HAL-bashing may be justified up to a point, but it was time to question our elected representatives too.

"Thirty-five Defence Ministers have overseen this giant DPSU (HAL) since 1947. While pampering its unions, none demanded quality, productivity and aeronautical innovation of HAL or hand-picked a dynamic CEO," he said.

It goes to the credit of the Aeronautical Development Agency, which designed and conceptualised the Light Combat Aircraft and the National Flight Test Centre, which flight-tested and further refined the aircraft without any major mishaps, he stated.

indigenisation is important, it comes with a price.

Speaking at a seminar, Air Chief Marshal B.S. Dhanoa noted that a crucial contribution to all the successes of indigenisation was also the "supreme sacrifice of IAF's pilots in testing these aircraft to battleworthy standards."

He said the IAF had lost 17 pilots and engineers in air accidents during the testing and evaluation of indigenous prototypes.

Air Chief Marshal Dhanoa further said that of the 19 category-I accidents on HF-24 Marut, 12 were due to technical defects, of which five were fatal accidents. "But that did not stop us from encouraging indigenisation," he said.

It goes to the credit of the Aeronautical Development Agency, which designed and conceptualised the Light Combat Aircraft and the National Flight Test Centre, which flight-tested and further refined the aircraft without any major mishaps, he stated.

## 2,119 children rescued in Telangana

Unique face recognition tool developed by police helps trace missing minors

ABHINAY DESHPANDE  
HYDERABAD

A visually-impaired boy who went missing from Mahaganj in Uttar Pradesh was rescued at the Mancherial railway station in North Telangana. The 17-year-old was later reunited with his parents after the police alerted their counterparts in U.P. about his current location.

Under phase V of 'Operation Smile', the boy was rescued and his details were entered in DARPAR app, a unique facial recognition tool developed by the Telan-

1,303 of them were reunited with their families while 816 were sent to rescue homes

SWATI LAKRA  
IGP (Law & Order)

gana police. "His details were matched with lakhs of images from various databases across the country and his details tallied with that of a boy who went missing in November last year," said Swati Lakra, IGP (Law & Order) and in-charge of Women's Safety.

Extensive use of technology by the rescue teams is a unique feature of this operation, she said.

The Telangana police, along with other government departments, have rescued 2,119 children, including 1,653 boys and 466 girls, during the month-long drive to trace missing children. "Of the 2,119 rescued children, 1,303 were reunited with their families while 816 were sent to rescue homes," she said.

Ms. Lakra said 763 of them belonged to other States.

These children were engaged in jobs, micro industries and begging while many others were trafficked. "The teams rescued vulnerable children from railway stations, bus stations, religious places, traffic signals and footpaths," she said.

The Nagarkurnool team raided cotton mills and rescued seven child labourers hailing from Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh, and produced them before the Child Welfare Committee for handing them over to their parents.

## Pillars vandalised in Hampi

STAFF REPORTER  
BALLARI

A video clip showing some pillars at the Hampi World Heritage Site being vandalised by a group of persons surfaced on Saturday, sparking protests by locals.

The clip shows some miscreants pushing a big stone pillar. The Archaeological Survey of India has filed a complaint with the police.

Enquiries revealed that the incident occurred at the Vishnu temple in ruins.

As the news spread, people in Hampi and Kamalapur, including members of the Save Hampi Samiti, held a protest and sought action.



Police officials inspecting the Hampi heritage site, where miscreants damaged a few pillars. ■ B.M. SIDDALINGASWAMY

## Forest or farmland: Nagarhole's dilemma

Man-animal conflict sharpens debate

R. KRISHNA KUMAR  
MYSURU  
Man-animal conflicts which have claimed two lives within a week around the Nagarhole National Park and Tiger Reserve has brought to the fore the prevailing divide among the local people over relocation and rehabilitation schemes of the government.

While some are prepared to relocate, others who are not so eager. The government has a land-based rehabilitation programme for the original forest-dwelling communities like Jenu Kurubas and Kadu Karubas in and around Nagarhole.

But apart from them, there are Schedule Tribe communities many of whose forefathers came from Central Karnataka and were resettled here during colonial times more than 100 years ago.

**Lease system**  
"The forest land was leased out for an annual sum and this was called Ek Saali Lease system and the tenants are even today known as Ek Saali Lease holders," said the former Nagarhole Park Director Kantharaj.

Originally, 405 acres of forest land was distributed to 56 families under the Ek Saali Lease contract system. But over decades forest land has been encroached and

converted to agricultural land and there are nearly 2,500 families subsisting on it now which is the root of the current problem, he added.

**Land compensation**  
From the Forest Department's perspective only around 1,800 families were eligible for the rehabilitation programme in Nagarhole as per their "cut-off date."

The project initially entailed allotment of three acres of land in addition to a house and a cash component. Anyone over 18 years of age in the relocated family would qualify for the cash component as well. But many of the "Ek Saali" tenants are unwilling to accept the package as the land component has been reduced to half an acre.

Devise Gowda of Hullumutlu village in the DB Kuppe range is keen on relocation provided there was land package.

"I have sought the consent and signature of more than 240 families who are willing to relocate but there are others who are opposed to it," he said.

Swami and Govinda brothers of Chinnappa, who was killed in a tiger attack in Hullumutlu on Monday also stressed on a land package and rejected the cash-only component.

## Summer's coming



Fruits of happiness: Watermelons have started arriving at Hyderabad's Gaddiannaram wholesale market on Saturday. Here the fruit is priced at ₹2 to ₹5 per kg. ■ G. RAMAKRISHNA

## A.P. can produce more salt: study

'Govt. must help youth set up units'

K. SRINIVASA RAO  
VIZIANAGARAM

Andhra Pradesh with the second longest coastline of 974 km after Gujarat, has the potential to produce 50 lakh tonnes of salt a year as against the present 50,000 tonnes if the government formulates an exclusive salt industry policy, according to a detailed study conducted by Uttarandhra Adhyana Vedika and PULSUS Group.

Both organisations feel that if the resources are fully exploited to produce salt to the maximum level, the industry would turn into a goldmine for the State and create job opportunities for lakhs of people. Immediately, 50,000 persons can be provided livelihood besides spurring economic activity along the coastal areas, particularly in the North Andhra Pradesh which comprises Srikakulam, Vizianagaram and Visakhapatnam.

**Provide subsidy'**  
Currently, the value of salt per kilo is 50 paise at farmer's site but it is sold at ₹25 in the market after processing and branding. The rate will come down drastically if more salt processing units are established.

"Each processing unit needs an initial investment of only ₹25 lakh. The government can help the unemployed youth establish the units by providing subsidy and other incentives. The units will generate jobs and prevent migration of youngsters to cities," says Srinubabu Gedela, chief executive officer of the PULSUS Group and convener of the Uttaraadhyana Vedika.

## Battle against the bottle won't stop, say women

They are undeterred by their recent padyatra to Bengaluru not yielding concrete results

KUMAR BURADIKATTI  
KALABURAGI

It was a year ago that Ranganamma, in her late 60s, lost her son to alcohol. The woman from Molkera village in Huminaballu taluk recently lost her daughter-in-law as well to health complications. Now, she and her aged husband are left to look after their six-year-old grandson. She works as a daily wager while her husband grazes cattle.

Nearly every household in the village in Kalaburagi district has a tale to tell on how alcoholism has ruined their families. Shridevi, a labourer who lost her alcoholic husband, is left with three children – the eldest one being 10-year-old – to look after by working in a poultry farm for ₹3,000 a month. Sunita, 40,

an ASHA worker, is inconsolable as she talks of how her husband sells anything he lays his hands on to buy liquor and beats her up if he doesn't find anything of value. "For many men, their only job is consuming liquor and arranging money for it by any means," said Swapna, an activist of Gramenee Kooli Karmikara Sanghatane, a rural labourers' organisation.

This organisation was at the helm of the recent padyatra of about 3,000 women from across Karnataka to Bengaluru to demand complete prohibition. Fifteen women from this village were part of the march. They marched about 210 km from Chitradurga for 12 days to reach the State capital.

"I decided to walk because no woman in the



Women taking out a rally in Bengaluru seeking liquor ban. ■ V. SREENIVASA MURTHY

of Ballari district. Her husband has sold almost everything, including 2.5 acres, to sustain his habit. A village of about 100 households, Togarkatti has five liquor shops.

"Even some school children are getting addicted," said Bhagya, an activist.

She mobilised hundreds of women affected by alcoholism in about 10 villages.

Lakshmapura, 60, from Angondahalli in Mulbagal taluk of Kolar district, walked with the women because his 30-year-old alcoholic son has subjected him to physical and mental abuse. Chinnappa, also from Angondahalli, said the village of about 150 households has four liquor shops. "It is bad for men too because people know about the addiction issue in this vil-

lage and do not want to give their daughters in marriage to anyone here," she said.

**'Don't issue licences'**

Swarna Bhatt, a leader of the Sanghatane, said alcoholism was the root cause of several other problems. "If the government is really concerned about the welfare of the people, it can start with smaller steps, such as curbing illegal sale of liquor and not issuing new licences," said Ms. Bhatt.

The march to Bengaluru did not yield any result, with the Chief Minister only saying he will "look into the matter". "I am disappointed. But we are determined to go on. We will gherao the politicians when they come to us for votes," said Virupamma of Udbal village in Raichur.

STAFF REPORTER  
KOCHE

The Kole Fish Count, conducted on February 2 in connection with World Wetland Day across the Kole wetlands of central Kerala, recorded a total of 82 aquatic species.

These include 71 fish species, five shrimp species, four crab and two mollusc species.

The assessment, in which scientists, students and nature enthusiasts from the Kerala University of Fisheries and Ocean Studies, the Kerala Agricultural University's College of Forestry and the Kole Birders Collective participated, covered the entire expanse of Kole habitats distributed across Thrissur and Malappuram districts.



On the fringes: Forest officials say only around 1,800 families in Nagarhole are eligible for rehabilitation. ■ M.A. SRIRAM

## IN BRIEF



## Gautam Gambhir seeks help for Army veteran

**NEW DELHI**  
Cricketer Gautam Gambhir urged the Defence Ministry on Saturday to help a man claiming to be war veteran, after he spotted him begging in Connaught Place here. Responding to the cricketer's tweet, the Ministry assured a "quick and complete" response. PTI

## Shahabuddin's close aide shot dead in Bihar

**SIWAN**  
A close aide of mafia don-turned-politician Mohammad Shahabuddin was shot dead late on Friday night, triggering tension in the town, a police officer said. Mohd. Yusuf, 40, received bullet injuries in his chest and died while being taken to hospital by local policemen, who rushed to the spot upon hearing the gunshots. PTI

## In full bloom

Searching for a calming ambience amidst the hustle and bustle of Delhi? The Mughal Gardens at the Rashtrapati Bhavan will be open to the public from February 6 to March 10

**70**  
flower varieties on display

**137**  
varieties of roses

**10,000**  
tulips\*

## The flowers

Matthiola incana from Japan

Pasadena, Pansy, China Man, Marigold, Antiqua, Pink Parfait, Dahlia, Zinnia, Lantana, and creepers

Herbal garden

It has patches of Brahmi, Giloy and Ashwagandha plants, among others

Bonsai garden

Floral carpets designed by over 40 gardeners

Musical garden

Cactus corner

Air purifying plants

## What else is there this time

It has plants significant to all religions

Spiritual garden



Organic vegetables and fruits grown in-house

Colour palette: Tulips, below, and other flowers at the Mughal Gardens.

SANDEEP SAXENA & PTI

Total area **15 acre**

visitors in 2018

Colour scheme: White, yellow, red and orange

How to visit? Free online booking facility available at [www.presidentofindia.gov.in](http://www.presidentofindia.gov.in)



SOURCE: IANS

## ₹1,585 cr. fine slapped on Devas Multimedia

Firm and its directors found guilty of illegal foreign investment of ₹579 crore

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA) Adjudication Authority has held Devas Multimedia, its directors, and overseas investors guilty of an illegal foreign investment of ₹579 crore, and imposed a penalty of ₹1,585.08 crore, based on the Enforcement Directorate's probe in the Antrix-Devas case.

The ED investigation was initiated based on inputs that Devas Multimedia had received the funds in violation of FEMA rules.

The company was incorporated in 2004 by some former employees of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO). It entered into

## Officials summoned

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

BENGALURU

A special court in Bengaluru has taken cognisance of the charge of money laundering against the former MD of Antrix Corporation Ltd. and the executives of Devas Multimedia Ltd. in the Antrix-Devas case.

The court has issued summons to U.S.-based Ramachandran Viswanathan

an agreement with ISRO's commercial arm Antrix Corporation to get bandwidth facilities in two proposed satellites for a range of services in the digital media and broadcasting business.

posed on them," said an official.

In a separate case, which is based on an FIR earlier registered by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), the ED had conducted money laundering investigations against Devas Multimedia and others. A special court in Bengaluru took cognisance of its chargesheet on February 1.

The agency, in the money laundering case, has alleged that the company and others illegally entered into the agreement with Antrix Corporation by making false claims that it had the ownership and intellectual property rights to use the technology for delivering multimedia services in India.

## DST to incentivise quality research

## R. PRASAD

CHENNAI

More than four years since the last hike in research fellowship, on January 30 the Ministry of Science and Technology announced a 24-25% hike for Junior Research Fellows (JRFs) and Senior Research Fellows (SRFs) respectively. However, research scholars, who have been demanding an 80% hike, are unhappy with the hiked fellowship and plan to continue the protest.

Reacting to this, Professor K. VijayRaghavan, Principal Scientific Adviser to the Go-

vernment of India, in an email to *The Hindu* said: "Previous hikes were steps taken at about four-year intervals. The Department of Science and Technology (DST) has put in place a mechanism for regular review."

Dispelling the wrong notion that the hike is restricted only to research scholars who have cleared the Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (CSIR)/UGC NET (University Grants Commission National Eligibility Test) exams, Prof. VijayRaghavan noted. "The goal is to gently nudge a turn towards quality (not quantity), driven by the student also taking the initiative. This will have the collateral consequence of an enhanced award, which can be significant. But the purpose is not to chase the latter metric, but to focus on quality science."

"There will be incentives for publications and patents.

those qualifying through a set of national level exams. Thus, institutions can set up ways by which 'non-NET' students, now paid very low levels [of salaries], can take these [other] exams, set by the host institutions, and benefit."

"An empowered committee has been formed to bring all Ministries together to periodically visit the quantum of fellowship and incentivise research," DST Secretary Professor Ashutosh Sharma said at a press conference.

"There will be incentives for publications and patents.

Aristotle and Plato. In the 20th century, it became part of hospital routine when musicians – both amateur and professional – began playing for the war wounded after the two World Wars, seeking to relieve emotional trauma of the conflicts.

Abhay Rustum Sopori, internationally known santon maestro and music composer, says that while offering music therapy, it's important to remember that sound is the active ingredient, while music is the capsule to deliver this therapy. "This form of healing is a science in itself but there is no denying that classical music has a very deep and positive impact on wellness," he said.

"Music has always been an integral part of our lives. It refreshes and soothes the soul and also reduces stress. We are delighted to collaborate with the hospital," said a statement issued by Amaan Ali Bangash and Ayaan Ali Bangash.

Women, said, "This series will help us establish the connection between the power of music, rhythm and beats and healing."

"According to various studies, music evokes emotional responses that help people/patients relax and heal faster. This programme is aimed at our cancer patients as it is known that music therapy can reduce pain, anxiety and even help invasive procedures during cancer treatment. It can improve medical outcomes as well," Ms. Birla said.

The idea of music as a healing influence finds mention in the writings of



## Delhi hospital offers a soothing therapy by tuning into music

A sarod concert will be held at the C.K. Birla Hospital for Women

## BINDU SHAJAN PERAPPADAN

NEW DELHI

For its adherents, music therapy is an effective part of treatment for a range of ailments from addiction to cancer. And the link between sound healing and music therapy will be tested live in a unique collaboration between internationally renowned sarod players Amaan Ali Bangash and Ayaan Ali Bangash and C.K. Birla Hospital for Women, where the musicians will be performing later this month.

At the concert, the siblings will also talk about the therapeutic powers of music to relieve not only stress and anxiety but also benefit patients in their quest to be healed.

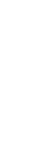
While this kind of a collaboration isn't new in the healthcare sector, with the Delhi government recently having launched dance therapy for patients at government hospitals, Avanti Birla, founder of the C.K. Birla Hospital for



Reconnaissance Engineering Survey for a new BG line between JOLARPETTAI/TIRUPPATUR - HOSUR (via) KRISHNAGIRI (101 Kms.)

Doubling of track between Omalur and Metturdam - Collection and supply of 50mm size machine crushed hard granite stone ballast and leading of ballast between Omalur (ind.) and Metturdam (ind.).

Doubling of track between Salem and Omalur - Earthwork excavation in cutting, forming bank, construction of minor bridges, ROBs, LUS, construction of side drains, retaining walls and other related works between Salem and Omalur Stations (TWO PACKET SYSTEM).



## GOVT. OF ODISHA

## OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER,

## NORTH EASTERN RURAL WORKS CIRCLE, KEONJHAR

## eProcurement Notice for Road Works

1558-0: Identification No.- Road Online NCB No. 255

No. 485 / Date : 01.02.2019

1. Name of the Work

: Construction of Road Works under OMBADC in the District of Keonjhar.

2. Total No. of Work

: 07 (Seven) Nos.

3. Estimated Cost

: As per Annexure (Approximately)

4. Eligible Class of Contractor

: As per Annexure

5. Period of Completion

: As per Annexure

6. Other details

:

Procurement Officer Bid Identification No.

Availability of tender On-line for bidding

From To

Last Date & Time of seeking Tender Clarification

Technical Bid

Financial Bid

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Superintending Engineer, North Eastern Rural Works Circle, Keonjhar.

Road Online NCB No.- 255

DL05.02.19 at 11.00 A.M.

DL22.02.19 up to 3.00 P.M.

Dt.21.02.19 up to 3.00 P.M.

Dt.23.02.19 at 11.00 A.M.

Dt.27.02.19 at 11.00 A.M.

Tel. No. 06766-258301(O); eMail: se\_nerwki@rediffmail.com

Further details can be seen from the website: [www.tendersorissa.gov.in](http://www.tendersorissa.gov.in)

25048/11/0049/1819 Sd/- Superintending Engineer, N.E.R.W.Circle, Keonjhar.

DIPR/779/Tender/2019

1558-0: Identification No.- Road Online NCB No. 255

No. 485 / Date : 01.02.2019

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Further details can be seen from the website: [www.tendersorissa.gov.in](http://www.tendersorissa.gov.in)

25048/11/0049/

## FROM PAGE ONE

**Kerala sets up drug price monitor**

The new watchdog will offer technical help to the State Drug Controllers and the NPPA to monitor notified prices of medicines, detect violation of the provisions of the DPCO, look at price compliance, collect test samples of medicines, and collect and compile market-based data of scheduled as well as non-scheduled formulations.

Pharma companies have been accused of overcharging prices of drugs in the scheduled category fixed by the DPCO and those outside its ambit too.

The suggestion to set up PMRUs was made against the backdrop of the lack of a field-level link between the NPPA and the State Drugs Controllers and State Drug Inspectors to monitor drug prices.

States and UTs have been classified into three categories for staff recruitment and infrastructure.

Kerala falls in the second category, having a population of less than 3%, but he said.

**Rishi Shukla named to head CBI**

In fact, the top post in the agency has been vacant since October 2018 when Mr. Verma and his deputy Mr. Asthana were removed based on Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) report after Mr. Verma lodged an FIR naming his deputy in a bribery case.

However, the Supreme Court, acting on a plea filed by Mr. Verma and a non-profit outfit, reinstated Mr. Verma as CBI chief, while asking the Centre to call a meeting of selection committee to decide on the matter.

The selection committee on January 10 removed Mr. Verma as Director, just two days after the Supreme

more than 1% of the total population of the country.

The State will have a project coordinator, two field investigators, and two data entry operators. The unit is expected to help the State Drugs Control wing, which is hit by severe staff shortage, and regulate drug prices more effectively.

Highly placed sources say that about ₹10,000 crore worth medicines are sold in Kerala in a year. Official data on drug purchases for public institutions were not disclosed.

Mr. Menon said that the NPPA had fixed the prices of around 1,000 drugs and the unit would track if buyers were being overcharged. It would also check if pharma companies were hiking the prices of non-scheduled drugs by more than 10% a year. "We need to also check if there is any shortage of essential medicines. There is also a plan to collect data on the prices of surgical devices and stents in the market," he said.



Packed spot: Narendra Modi at the rally in Thakurnagar and, right, a woman being carried to safety after a stampede-like situation on Saturday. ■ SUBHAM DUTTA

**Extortion rackets run by Mamata, says Modi**

PM flags off campaign with two rallies in West Bengal

**SHIV SAHAY SINGH  
SUVOJIT BAGCHI**  
THAKURNAGAR / KOLKATA

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday launched his election campaign in east India and West Bengal with an attack on the newly formed Opposition alliance, the ruling Trinamool Congress and the Congress.

Among the three, Mr. Modi reserved his choicest barbs for the Trinamool and its head, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee.

The Prime Minister raised several allegations against the Chief Minister including of large-scale corruption, running of "syndicates" that control the construction business and her alleged involvement in financial scams.

Mr. Modi alleged that the recently lodged illegal mining case involving former Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh Akhilesh Yadav, land acquisition case involving former CM of Haryana Bhupinder Hooda and Aircel Maxis case with former Finance Minister P. Chidambaram named as accused among others.

"The Central government

She is trying to stop investigating agencies in Bengal. Why are you worried, Didi?

is giving thousands of crores to the State but either the projects are slow or not taking off. The Trinamool government does not touch a project unless there is a syndicate involved in it or they have no option of receiving a kickback; this is an anti-development government," Mr. Modi said.

"Every child knows that there is a thing called triple T in Bengal – Trinamool *Tolabaji Tax* – which every job aspirant has to pay," Mr. Modi said at a rally in Durgapur in Bardhaman district. *Tolabaji* is colloquial Bengali for extortion.

Without naming Ms. Banerjee, the Prime Minister said all forms of extortion or

kickbacks "reach one door" indicating that the Trinamool chief is involved in running the networks. He further added that Ms. Banerjee was now "scared".

"She is trying to stop the investigating agencies from coming to Bengal. Why are you worried, Didi, if you have not committed any crime," Mr. Modi said recalling CBI action against him during the UPA regime.

He also criticised the united Opposition for its assembly in Kolkata on January 19, arguing that they came to Kolkata to "hide their crimes".

"But your teaseller will expose each and every one of them," he said.

Earlier, addressing a rally at Thakurnagar in North 24 Parganas district, Mr. Modi asked the Trinamool "to support the [Citizenship Amendment] Bill" in the Rajya Sabha.

"He was interrogated be-

**Modi organised riots and killing of people: Mamata**

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
KOLKATA**

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee hit back at Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday accusing him of "orchestrating riots and killing people" to come to power, minutes after Mr. Modi had at a public rally in Durgapur charged the Trinamool Congress chief with running extortion rackets in the State.

Describing Mr. Modi as the "grandfather of corruption," she told a Bengali television channel in an interview that the Prime Minister had triggered "a politics of vendetta".

He also criticised the united Opposition for its assembly in Kolkata on January 19, arguing that they came to Kolkata to "hide their crimes".

If the first day of Mr. Modi's campaign in the State is any indication, West Bengal is set to witness a bitter, no-holds-barred battle between the BJP leader and Ms. Banerjee in the run-up to the 2019 Lok Sabha election.

In his speech, Mr. Modi accused the Chief Minister of "trying to block CBI investigations in the State".

"He was interrogated be-



Mamata Banerjee

cause he orchestrated a riot and killed people, it is a fact," Ms. Banerjee said. "Godhra happened in Gujarat, everybody knows. He now says, he will interrogate people because he was interrogated... what kind of logic is that? He was guilty so he was interrogated... this is politics of vendetta."

After the Prime Minister left, the organisers gave medical help to the injured and tried to unite children with their parents. Later in the day, at a public rally at Durgapur, Mr. Modi expressed regret at the developments. "Some women and children faced problems. I want to apologise to them," he said, urging BJP supporters to be patient while displaying their affection towards him.

**VHP, RSS back Modi on temple**

Ask seers to be patient, request Supreme Court to hold day-to-day hearing

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
LUCKNOW**

The RSS and the Vishwa Hindu Parishad have thrown their weight behind the Narendra Modi government on the issue of Ram Mandir, it emerged after the two-day Dharma Sansad of the VHP at the Kumbh Mela in Allahabad that concluded on Friday.

The two outfits advocated a path of caution, given that the 2019 Lok Sabha election is round the corner, and appealed to Hindu seers to have patience for a few months.

They welcomed the Modi government's request to the Supreme Court to allow it to return the "superfluous land" the then government had acquired in 1993 around the disputed site in Ayodhya.

Saying that they did not want to "not give the pseudo-secular pack the opportunity



Seeking consensus: Nitya Gopal Das, president of the Ram Janmabhoomi Nyas, at the Dharma Sansad. ■ AFP

to drag" the Ram Mandir issue into a "political vortex and swamp", given the Lok Sabha polls, no new phase of the movement would be announced in the coming days, the VHP-backed Dharma Sansad said in its resolution.

While appealing to the Supreme Court to hold day-to-day hearing in the case and announce a verdict in two or

three months, the resolution said the seers had expectations from the current Central government, which had "made its commitment clear" by taking immediate action on their "request of land return".

In his address, RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat echoed the same line, saying the Modi government had "expressed its intention", which was

to proceed from the *maha dwar* to the *garbha griha*, Mr. Bhagwat said.

While appealing to the seers to continue building awareness on the issue, the RSS chief asked them to ensure that a government committed to a national viewpoint came to power in 2019.

Mr. Bhagwat's speech was marked by protests by a section of the attendees who were irked as no date of temple construction was announced at the sansad.

Nitya Gopal Das, the head of Ram Janmabhoomi Nyas, however, said the seers had not gathered to decide the date but for discussion on early construction of the Ram Mandir. "It's for the Centre to decide a date," he told presspersons.

In his note, Mr. Kharge contended that the three-member Selection Committee, which includes the Prime Minister and Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi, had diluted the principles laid down in the Delhi Special Police Establishment (DSPE) Act and the Vinay Kumar judgement.

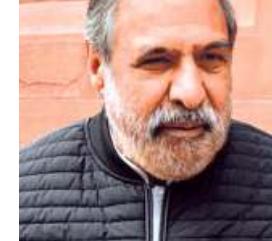
"By including officers who do not have experience in investigating anti-corruption cases, the Committee is in violation of the DSPE Act and the Supreme Court judgments that guide the appointment of the Director, CBI," Mr. Kharge asserted.

He said officers were shortlisted "on the basis of seniority, annual confidential reports (ACRs) and total experience in investigation and anti-corruption of 100 months or more."

But the newly named CBI chief didn't have any anti-corruption experience, Mr. Kharge wrote in his note, the contents of which have been accessed by the *Hindu*.

**Opposition confronts govt. on unkept promises**

Budget exercise aimed at confusing people: Anand Sharma



Anand Sharma

promise of creating two crore jobs every year.

"Modiji, Your Govt has mastered the art of *Jumle bazi*! Neither did your promise of 2Cr jobs/yr work, nor is the youth of our country getting work! No matter how much you hide the 45

year high unemployment data, the stark reality is visible to all!" said Mr. Surjewala.

M.B. Rajesh, CPI(M) MP from Kerala, echoed the sentiment in his tweet: "The goal post of *achche din* is shifted to 2022 in budget'19. PM must talk about promises of 2014 before making fresh ones. Where r the promised 2cr jobs? Stop deceiving ppl by making false promises & fudged data," he said.

With an eye on the middle class votes, former Finance Minister P. Chidambaram held out a promise on streamlining income taxes.

"Our outlook is a far more reformist," he said.

"Seniority cannot be the only criterion in an appointment to such a critical post and experience in anti-corruption cases and prior experience of having served the organization should also be considered seriously," he

**Kharge sends dissent note on Shukla to PM**

Says DSPE Act, SC norms were diluted

**SANDEEP PHUKAN  
NEW DELHI**

Congress leader Mallikarjun Kharge on Saturday sent a letter of dissent to Prime Minister Narendra Modi after the government named 1983 batch IPS officer Rishi Kumar Shukla as the new chief of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).

In his note, Mr. Kharge contended that the three-member Selection Committee, which includes the Prime Minister and Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi, had diluted the principles laid down in the Delhi Special Police Establishment (DSPE) Act and the Vinay Kumar judgement.

"By including officers who do not have experience in investigating anti-corruption cases, the Committee is in violation of the DSPE Act and the Supreme Court judgments that guide the appointment of the Director, CBI," Mr. Kharge asserted.

He said officers were shortlisted "on the basis of seniority, annual confidential reports (ACRs) and total experience in investigation and anti-corruption of 100 months or more."

According to Mr. Kharge, Mr. Ahmad, who had earlier served as a CBI joint director, had a total experience of 303 months including 160 months of investigating anti-corruption cases.

This was the highest for any of the five officers under consideration. Two other officers – Rajiv Rai Bhattacharya, a 1983 U.P. cadre officer and Sudeep Lakhtakia of Telangana – also had some experience in handling anti-corruption assignments.

"It is important to restore the image and integrity of the CBI as a premier institution that is fighting against corruption. Hence, prior experience of having served the institution should be given primacy

**Equal weightage**

"All three aspects – seniority, integrity and experience in investigation of anti-corruption cases should be given equal weightage to get the best suited officers in the shortlist," Mr. Kharge argued in his dissent note.

"Seniority cannot be the only criterion in an appointment to such a critical post and experience in anti-corruption cases and prior experience of having served the organization should also be considered seriously," he

**Many injured at rally in Thakurnagar**

**SHIV SAHAY SINGH  
THAKURNAGAR**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi was forced to cut short his speech at Thakurnagar in North 24 Parganas of West Bengal on Saturday after a stampede-like situation occurred at the public gathering.

Several persons, including women and children and a few journalists, were injured when the people breached the barricades and surged towards the stage where the Prime Minister was speaking. This is the second time a rally addressed by Mr. Modi in the State has run into problems in crowd management. In July last, a tent collapsed at his rally in Paschim Medinipur district, injuring several BJP supporters.

As the crowd swelled in the ground near the headquarters of Matua Mahasangha, the Prime Minister tried to pacify the people. But when the crowd kept moving towards the stage, he wrapped up his speech in 20 minutes and left the venue. The rally was held under the banner of International Mata Matua Sammelan and Dharmashabha. A large number of people carrying the flags of Matua Mahasangha gathered at the venue, along with BJP supporters.

After the Prime Minister left, the organisers gave medical help to the injured and tried to unite children with their parents. Later in the day, at a public rally at Durgapur, Mr. Modi expressed regret at the developments. "Some women and children faced problems. I want to apologise to them," he said, urging BJP supporters to be patient while displaying their affection towards him.



The U.S. Department of Homeland Security and Immigration and Customs Enforcement are investigating the case. ■ AP

The MEA also said officials had contacted about 30 Indian students, and efforts continued to contact the others. However, while consular access to all the students is expected to be completed in the next few days, the government's demands to release the students and not deport them will be a tall task, given the new, stricter regime for international students brought in by the Trump administration.

The arrested students, who have been charged with committing visa fraud by enrolling in the fictitious "University of Farmington" in Michigan state, along with eight recruiters in different U.S. states, were caught by the U.S. government's Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) in an elaborate sting operation earlier this week.

ICE officials had posed as employees of the fictitious University to expose unscrupulous recruiters who would enroll the students, and the students themselves who signed up for the University knowing that they would not need to attend classes, and could "pay to stay" in the U.S. and maintain their F-1 student visa status. "We underlined that students, who may have been duped into enrolling in the 'University' should be

treated differently from those recruiters who have duped them," the MEA said, adding that the welfare of the students was now its "highest priority".

**Domino effect**

Educational consultants, who spoke to *The Hindu*, said the Farmington University case was a "straight case" of alleged fraud committed by the students and recruiters accused, with some questions over whether the U.S. government's "sting" operation amounted to entrapment, or was valid process. However, all agreed that the case would have a chilling effect on the visa process for legitimate students applying for American universities and for work experience after finishing their degrees.

According to State Department figures, F-1 student visas to Indian nationals have already decreased by more than 40% in the two-year period between 2015 & 2017, from 74,831 to 44,741 issued.

"A case like this (Farmington University fraud) will only increase the scrutiny of student applicants for visas from India," an educational advisor, who preferred not to be identified, told *The Hindu*.

(With inputs from Sriram Lakshman in Washington)

CM YK

## IN BRIEF

**Lawyer Khaitan's custody extended by 6 more days**

The Enforcement Directorate on Saturday got extended the custody of lawyer Gautam Khaitan, an accused in the AgustaWestland VVIP chopper deal case, for six more days in connection with allegations of parking undisclosed income in overseas accounts. The agency said he allegedly diverted the funds in foreign companies controlled by him.

**Bihar Cabinet clears 10% quota for EWS**

PATNA  
The Bihar Cabinet has approved a draft Bill on providing 10% quota in government jobs and educational institutions to the economically weaker sections among the general category, a State government official said on Saturday. The Bill would be tabled before the bicameral State legislature during the budget session beginning February 11, he added. PTI

**'Efforts on to find Indian kidnapped in Ukraine'**

NEW DELHI  
India has taken up at the highest level with the Ukrainian government the kidnapping of an Indian national in that country, External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj said on Saturday. Ms. Swaraj's assurance came after a woman urged her and Prime Minister Narendra Modi to help find Indian national Anuj Goel. PTI

**Citizenship Bill won't harm us, says Tripura CM**

AGARTALA  
Tripura Chief Minister Biplab Kumar Deb saw "absolute politics" in the current turmoil in northeast India over the Citizenship Amendment Bill. Mr. Deb said parties and individuals wanting to gain political mileage were instigating the protests. "A notion has been created that the Bill will harm the interests of northeast India, which is an utter lie," he said here on Saturday.

# 'Teltumbde's release only interim relief'

Press meet in Delhi raises issue of suppression of dissent

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI**Loud and clear:** Activists taking part in a protest in Bengaluru on Saturday condemning the arrest of Dalit scholar Anand Teltumbde. ■ K. MURALI KUMAR

A press conference of academics, lawyers and activists held here on Saturday under the banner of the Campaign against State Repression to oppose the arrest of Dalit scholar Anand Teltumbde ended on a dramatic note, with the announcement that a special court in Pune had ordered his release. Mr. Teltumbde, a Professor at the Goa Institute of Management, was arrested earlier in the morning.

-

Among the participants at the meet, lawyer Vrinda Grover read out a text message from Mr. Teltumbde's lawyer Rohan Nahar, saying that based on the Supreme Court order providing him protection from arrest for four weeks – till February 11

the scholar had been released.

The activists present, however, added a caveat to the announcement saying it should only be considered an interim relief in a long battle ahead.

"This is nothing but an interim relief. Let us not be un-

der the impression that no one else in the world would be tortured in the Bhima Koregaon case," Gujarat MLA and Dalit leader Jignesh Mevani said.

He later announced that there would be a larger protest at the Maharashtra Bhavan on February 5 against

tions of the 'Urban Manu' sitting in Delhi," he said. This will be a matter of debate in the 2019 Lok Sabha election.

**No link to violence**

Speaking at the press meet, former Mumbai High Court Justice B.G. Kolse said he and former Supreme Court Judge Justice P.B. Sawant had organised the Elgar Parishad, and none of the organisers had any connection with Maoists or the violent incidents on January 2, 2018 at Bhima Koregaon.

"There have been consistent efforts to malign us because in the Elgar Parishad, we openly appealed that no one should vote for the BJP or any communal force," Justice Kolse said. On August 28 last year, Pune police had conducted raids at the homes of activists and scholars across the country in connection with the Bhima Koregaon case.

Mr. Mevani said the only reason for the arrest of Mr. Teltumbde and others like him was to discredit spontaneous dissent against the BJP government. "The Pune police is working on the direc-

the Maharashtra government for the Bhima Koregaon arrests.

Mr. Mevani said the only

reason for the arrest of Mr. Teltumbde and others like him was to discredit spontaneous dissent against the BJP government. "The Pune police is working on the direc-

Mr. Teltumbde, Special Judge Vadane while terming the arrest illegal, observed: "From the Honorable Apex Court's order, it is crystal clear that interim protection for a period of four weeks was given. Moreover, Competent Authority means the trial court, the Honorable High Court and the Honorable Supreme Court as well. Though anticipatory bail came to be rejected by this court, the accused has remedy to approach the Honorable High Court and the Honorable Supreme Court within the stipulated period of four weeks."

Senior counsel Amit Desai said, "A disciplinary action can be taken against the officer. It is a straight contempt of the court. An application can also be filed by the aggrieved party for damages."

## Police in contempt of Supreme Court: experts

Arrest of Dalit writer sparks debate

**SONAM SAIGAL**  
MUMBAI

The arrest of Dalit writer and academician Anand Teltumbde early on Saturday sparked a debate with legal experts terming the police action "high handed", and smacking of lack of respect for the Supreme Court's order. However, the Maharashtra government did not comment on the arrest.

Talking to *The Hindu*, the additional chief secretary of the Home Department Sanjay Kumar said, "I am yet to get proper details from the police and will be able to comment once I get the report." K. Venkatesham, Commissioner of Police, Pune said,

"I cannot comment on anything as I have not seen the order passed by the court."

Ordering the release of

## Freeze zone

**Keeping vigil:** Security personnel standing near the Sher-e-Kashmir International Conference Centre in Srinagar, where Prime Minister Narendra Modi is scheduled to attend a function on Sunday. Separatist leaders were put under house arrest ahead of the visit. ■ NISSAR AHMED

# Money laundering probe against Chanda Kochhar

Enforcement Directorate will investigate money trail

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate has initiated a money laundering probe on the basis of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) case against Chanda Kochhar, then managing director and chief executive officer of ICI-Cl Bank, her husband Deepak Kochhar, Videocon Group head Venugopal Dhoot and others for sanction of credit facilities allegedly in violation of rules.

The agency will investigate the money trail to determine whether there was any laundering of the funds involved.

The CBI registered the FIR



Chanda Kochhar

following a preliminary inquiry instituted on December 8, 2017, on charges that the bank sanctioned credit facilities of about ₹3,250 crore in violation of its credit policy and Reserve Bank of India (RBI) guidelines.

It was also alleged that as part of the *quid pro quo*, Mr. Dhoot made an investment of ₹64 crore in the NRL through the SEPL, and also transferred the latter to the Pinnacle Energy Trust, managed by Mr. Kochhar, through a circuitous route between 2010 and 2012. The agency found that the bank had sanctioned six high-value loans to various Videocon Group firms.

# Rahul to address rally in Patna

Congress chief to blow the bugle for election campaign in the northern States

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
PATNA

Congress president Rahul Gandhi will address his party's Jan Akansha (people's expectation) rally at the historic Gandhi Maidan here on Sunday.

"It is going to be a historic rally, the likes of which have not been seen in the recent past in Bihar...the rally will surpass all the rallies held in the past at Gandhi Maidan. It will be huge, with not less than five lakh people attending it," said Rajya Sabha member Akhilesh Singh, who is also chairing the Congress campaign committee in Bihar.

Shaktisinh Gohil, who is in charge of the party in Bi-



Rahul Gandhi

relieved of recurring floods with the Congress at the Centre. "We do what we promise," Mr. Gohil said. Sources said Mr. Gandhi would blow the bugle of the Lok Sabha election campaign in the northern States, at the rally.

**Big arrangements**  
All party leaders and lawmakers have reportedly been asked to invite at least 5,000 people to the venue. Independent MLA Anant Singh, who aspires to contest the Munger seat on Congress ticket, has held roadshows and public meetings.

"I'll bring so many people that the whole Gandhi Maidan will be filled...there will

be a sea of humans at the rally ground," he said.

Grand alliance leaders, including Tejashwi Yadav, Jitan Ram Manjhi, Sharad Yadav and Mukesh Sahni, are expected to attend.

Ahead of the rally, Rishi Kumar Mishra, MLC, left the ruling Janata Dal(U) and joined the Congress on Saturday, saying that it had become untenable for him to continue in a party in alliance with the BJP. "For the past 18 months, I have been living in suffocation," Mr. Rishi said, after joining the party in the presence of Mr. Jha.

The State administration has made elaborate arrangements for the rally.

# End our ordeal, say ex-militants' wives

Women from PoK and Pakistan feel stranded; want govt. to issue travel documents

**Emotional moment:** A woman crying during a protest in Srinagar on Saturday. ■ NISSAR AHMED

end our ordeal. For the past six years, we are applying for the travel documents. However, the question of our nationality is yet to be settled. Our children are also facing adaptability issues here. I lost my mother. I wish to pray for her at her grave in

Pakistan," said Ms. Mehtab, married to Imtiyaz Ahmad Wani from Kupwara.

On Saturday, Ms. Mehtab was accompanied by around two dozen women from PoK and Pakistan, who have turned "stateless" after returning to J&K. They held a

demonstration in Srinagar to press for their demand to be issued travel documents. The protest was held just a day ahead of Mr. Modi's visit to J&K.

"We are aged now. My elder daughter is pursuing a Master's in Arts. I got married in 1995 to Ghulam Hassan Lone from Kashmir and am yet to have basic right to travel and see my family across the LoC. We have applied for travel documents like passport. But no document is being issued to us," said Fozia Begum, a resident of PoK's capital Muzaffarabad.

*The Hindu* had reported the first such case, of a PoK bride Kubra Gillani, 27, who was divorced by her husband in Anantnag and was left stateless.

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**DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM**

Park View, Thiruvananthapuram

No. M2/1198/2019 Dated: 02-02-2019

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DMA/2018-19/WORK INDENT NO.80500 Date: 01-02-2019

**TENDER NOTICE**

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The Commissioner City Corporation, Mangaluru invites tenders from the eligible tenderers as per KTPP Act 1999 - 2000 in standard Tender document for the work detailed in the table below. The tenderer may submit tenders through E-procurement portal of the Govt. of Karnataka (viz <http://eproc.karnataka.gov.in>). Last date for Submission of the Tender is 18.04.2019, Time: 17:30:00. Pre Bid Meeting Date:11.04.2019, Time : 16:00:00

SI.No. Name of Work Amount put to Tender

1	Construction of EWS Houses under housing for all scheme of Pradhani Mantri Awaz Yojana (PMAY) at ward -6 Idya East, Idya Village, Ashraya Colony, Surathkal S.No. 16 in Mcc.Limits (Indent No.80500)	Rs.4000.00 Lakhs
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# 12 WHO•WHAT•WHY•WHEN•WHERE

## WHO

### Kamala Harris, Democratic hopeful

Kamala Devi Harris is a 54-year-old American senator from California, of Indian and African descent, and candidate for President of the United States in 2020. Ms. Harris announced her candidacy on Martin Luther King Jr. Day (January 21) and launched her campaign in Oakland, California, a week ago. She is the second African-American woman (and the first Indian-American) in the Senate and first Indian and African (Jamaican) woman to have been California's Attorney-General. Ms. Harris, when asked about her firsts, often quotes her mother as saying, "You may be the first to do many things, but make sure you're not the last."

#### Where did she grow up?

Ms. Harris was born in Oakland, California, to two Ph.D students at the University of California, Berkeley – Shyamala Gopalan from Chennai, who was studying nutrition and endocrinology and eventually became a breast cancer researcher, and Donald Harris from Jama

ica, who was studying economics and went on to become a professor at Stanford. The two met during the civil rights movement and would take Kamala and her sister Maya on marches. They divorced when Harris was seven. Harris's Indian grandfather, P.V. Gopalan, was a diplomat with the Government of India and a former freedom fighter and her grandmother was an activist for birth control in India. "She was the purest form of the Harris women...we're all diluted versions of my grandmother," Ms. Harris told *Vogue* last year. "My mother, grandparents, aunts and uncles instilled in us the pride in our South Asian roots," Ms. Harris



writes in her memoir *The Truths We Hold*, released this January, adding, "My mother understood very well that she was raising two black daughters... and she was determined to make sure we would grow into confident, proud, black women." Ms. Harris attended a prominent black college, Howard University, and is a member of the country's largest black sorority, Alpha Kappa Alpha.

#### Where does she stand?

In 2004, Ms. Harris became San Francisco's District Attorney, and in 2011, California's Attorney-General. Ms. Harris's contradictory stances as a public prosecutor have drawn criticism from many on the left. She has been praised for her efforts to reduce re-

cidivism through education and training, introducing racial bias training for police officers and for not backing California's Proposition 8 (a ban on same sex marriage). She has been criticised for her hardline positions on crime. Most notably, while Ms. Harris is personally against the death penalty – in 2004 she did not seek the death penalty for a man who had killed a police officer – she defended the death penalty's presence on the statute book in California in 2014, when she was Attorney-General.

#### What is her platform?

Ms. Harris's campaign slogan is 'Kamala Harris, for the people,' the words she first said as a public prosecutor, introducing herself in court. Ms. Harris has said she is an advocate of Medicaid for All (her proposal to get rid of private health insurance was controversial and her campaign staff later presented a softer position on this) and will provide the largest middle-class tax cut in history.

She also spoke out against big banks and corporations, alluded to the unfairness of tax giveaways for the rich, spoke of uniting Americans and making education a fundamental right at her campaign launch.

#### What is in store?

It is hard to tell at the moment how Kamala Ms. Harris will fare in the 2020 race. Harris has to first win the Democratic nomination – no mean feat as the field is diverse and crowded and new candidates continue to declare their interest (Cory Booker, an African-American Senator from New Jersey, declared on Friday that he would run). A Politico/Morning Consult poll conducted on January 25-27, before Mr. Booker announced his candidacy, ranked Ms. Harris as the third favourite candidate of Democratic voters, below former Vice-President Joe Biden and Independent Senator from Vermont Bernie Sanders.

SIRRAM LAKSHMAN

## WHAT

### The lowdown on MGNREGA funding



**WHAT IS IT?** The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) scheme has been allocated ₹60,000 crore in the Budget for 2019-20. It is less than what was spent on the scheme in the current year, that is, the revised estimate for 2018-19, which stands at ₹61,084 crore. In his Budget speech, Finance Minister Piyush Goyal noted: "Additional amount would be provided, if needed." The original 2018-19 Budget allocation for the scheme, a lifeline for landless la

bourers and rural workers, was ₹55,000 crore. However, by the end of 2018, 99% of the funds had been exhausted. A number of States already had a negative net balance. The activists protested that people were being denied work in several States. The Rural Development Ministry, which administers the scheme, asked for a supplementary allocation and was granted ₹6,084 crore in early January, taking the revised estimate for the year to ₹61,084 crore.

**HOW DID THIS COME ABOUT?** A look at the funding patterns over the last decade shows this is not the first time allocations for the scheme are lower than what was spent in the previous year. In most years, supplementary allocations later in the year have ensured that the final amount spent has risen at least incrementally each year. However, the revised estimates for 2012-13 were actually lower than the previous year, while the

amount spent in 2014-15 was exactly the same as in the previous year. When MGNREGA funding is adjusted for inflation, a bleaker picture appears, making it clear that both the UPA and NDA governments have short-changed the scheme for several years now. In 2011-12, the revised estimate was ₹31,000 crore. For the next four years, the inflation-adjusted amount spent on the scheme was lower than ₹30,000 crore in 2011 terms. The current allocation of ₹61,084 crore drops to just ₹41,013 crore in 2011 terms, when adjusted for inflation using the Consumer Price Index for rural labourers.

**WHY DOES IT MATTER?** Rural workers are being discouraged from registering with the scheme, being denied work even when they do register, and are facing long delays in payment of wages even when they do get work. Researchers, activists and elected representatives blame this

on the lack of sufficient funding. The promise of the MGNREGA is to enhance livelihood security by providing at least 100 days of wage employment a year to households that want it. If work is not provided within 15 days, applicants are entitled to an employment allowance. Thus, work is a legal entitlement under the scheme and funding should be demand-driven.

However, researchers have found a widening gap between demand and supply of work. A study of 3,500 panchayats in 2017-18 found that the employment provided was 32% lower than the work demand generated. Researchers calculated that in order to meet the registered work demand last year, the scheme should have had an allocation of ₹76,131 crore. Workers are also facing weeks and months-long delays in payment of wages, often without compensation. Finance Ministry documents admit that one of the causes is the non-availability of funds.

**WHAT LIES AHEAD?** The future funding situation is bleak, given that the government's "highest ever allocation" tag disguises the pending liabilities. If the total allocation of ₹61,084 crore had come through on the budget day, the scheme would still have a negative net balance of ₹3,270 crore, according to its financial statement on February 1. The next two months are the peak season, and workers have been promised an additional 50 days of work in drought-hit areas. Researchers predict that the deficit could grow as high as ₹12,000 crore by the end of this financial year. With Central money running out, States have also been asked to use their own funds to pay workers over the next two months, with the promise of an April refund. These deficits and liabilities will eat into the allocation for next year, slashing the amount available for new works in 2019-20.

PRISCILLA JEBARAJ

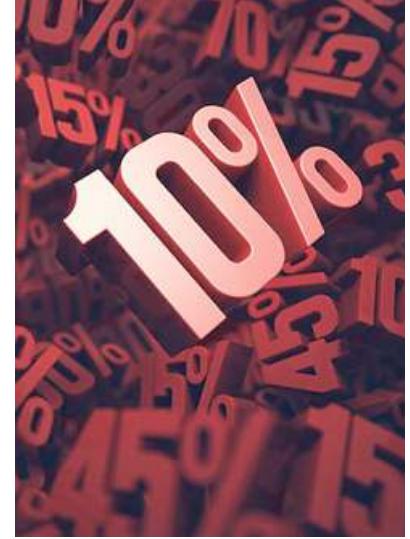
**Are there any other apprehensions?** Yes, there are fears that this will lead to shrinking of opportunities for those already enjoying reservation. A significant section of the population is already covered by the State's total reservation of 69% for the Scheduled Castes, the Scheduled Tribes, the backward classes, the most backward classes and de-notified communities.

The backward class quota has a sub-quota for backward class Muslims and the Scheduled Caste reservation has a sub-quota for Arundhatiyars, considered the worst-off among the Scheduled Caste. All of them are eligible to contest on merit under open competition too. The open quota may now come down by 10%. Further, there are fears the courts may insist on the 50% judicial cap on total reservation, and may order a cut in the caste-based quotas to accommodate the economic quota.

K. VENKATARAMAN

## WHY

### parties in Tamil Nadu are against 10% quota



#### What is their stand?

The 103rd Constitution Amendment, through which the Centre has introduced a 10% quota for the economically

weaker sections among communities that do not enjoy any other form of reservation, has drawn near universal opposition from almost all major parties in Tamil Nadu. When it was introduced as the 124th Constitution (Amendment) Bill in Parliament, the AIADMK, the ruling party in the State, and considered to be friendly towards the BJP, spoke out against it in both Houses of Parliament. Its MPs walked out during the vote. Karimozhi, DMK MP, moved a motion to refer the Bill to a select committee, but it was defeated. R.S. Bharathi, organising secretary of the DMK, has challenged the amendment in the Madras High Court. The Viduthulai Chiruthaigal Katchi (VCK), an ally of the DMK, has moved the Supreme Court against it. D. Veerasekaran, an advocate who belongs to the Dravidar Kazhagam, has also approached the High Court.

#### Why is there such opposition?

Tamil Nadu is a pioneer in providing reservation in employment and education

as a social justice measure. Its backward classes reservation history goes back to 1921. For historical and ideological reasons, therefore, the concept of social justice in the State is anchored firmly in the belief that reservation is a tool to ameliorate the conditions of sections of society that had been discriminated against in the past and that had suffered deprivation of employment and educational opportunities on account of their social backwardness. Here, reservation is seen not merely as an exception to the equality clause in the Constitution, but is considered an important and essential component of equality. In other words, equality acquires deeper meaning only if social injustices of the past are undone through preferential treatment for backward classes and other affirmative action programmes.

#### What are their principal objections?

The first and foremost objection to the 10% reservation for the economically poor in other classes is that it cannot be

used as a poverty alleviation measure. The amendment to the Constitution to add an enabling provision for extending quotas on economic grounds is seen as a perversion of the idea of social justice. So far, only social and backwardness and educational backwardness were valid grounds for reservation. Many in Tamil Nadu believe economic disadvantage among sections of the advanced castes can be addressed through other measures such as job creation, provision of scholarships and financial concessions. However, carving out a quota among government jobs and educational opportunities cannot be a just solution. One principal reason is that a family's economic condition is variable, whereas social status based on caste or community cannot change. Someone getting a new job, a promotion or an additional breadwinner in the family may result in a change in a person's economic status. On the other hand, the social disability caused by being born in a particular caste cannot be easily undone.

## WHEN

### 31 January 2019

**Deep freeze:** Tens of millions of Americans braved Arctic-like temperatures on Thursday as low as minus 49 degrees Celsius that paralysed the U.S. Midwest and were blamed for 21 deaths. News agencies said warmer-than-normal weather was on the way, but that offered little comfort to the homeless enduring a chill that caused frostbite in minutes. The cold has been blamed on a phenomenon called the 'polar vortex'. Meteorologist Mark Chenard said a polar vortex refers to the upper level jet stream that circulates around both the North and South Poles, keeping the coldest air there. When that jet stream occasionally weakens and buckles, he told Reuters, it disrupts weather patterns – bumping warmer air into Alaska and pushing cold winds down into the U.S. Midwest and East Coast. Pictures show ice flowing in the Merrimack River as it heads to the Atlantic Ocean in Newburyport, Massachusetts, and the impact of freezing temperatures on the Horseshoe Falls in Niagara in Canada. ■ AFP, AP



**WHEN**



nor the farmers will have to go to the APMC yards to buy and sell their produce. The buyers can directly buy from farmers based on the price quoted by them. Unable to get the Bill cleared in both Houses of the Legislature, the government in August 2016 de-listed fruits and vegetables from the purview of the APMC through a resolution. Further, it was expanded to all farm products. Apart from the government claim that farmers will get a better price after the amendment, it believes that the competitive environment will help the APMCs improve their infrastructure as well as their quality of service to attract farmers. According to Mr. Ghanavat, farmers will go to the market which gives them a better price, be it private buyers or the APMCs.

#### How many APMCs are there?

Maharashtra has 306 APMCs. The APMC Act had made it mandatory for farmers to sell all their crops in the mandi within a geographically delineated

market area under a particular committee's jurisdiction. A few lakh traders and head loaders survive on these committees. It is alleged that local political interests drive all the decisions taken by the APMCs. The supporters of the Bill claim that political compulsions have forced successive governments not to push for the amendments.

Shashikant Shinde, leader of the head loaders and one of the MLAs opposing the Bill, said it is being introduced to serve the interests of multinational companies. According to him, the APMCs provide a mechanism which ensures at least a minimum support price for the farmers' produce, and outside the APMCs, farmers will be forced to sell at a price quoted by companies.

The State government will continue to hold meetings with the stakeholders, and is likely to present the Bill, approved by all, in the budget session from February 24.

ALOK DESHPANDE

## WHERE

### Maharashtra struggles to amend APMC Act

The Maharashtra government's attempt to amend the Maharashtra Agriculture Produce Marketing (Development and Regulation) Act, 1963, has hit a road-block again. It had to withdraw the Bill from the Legislative Council even after it was passed by the Assembly. The amendment Bill has been in the works for over 14 years and owing to its politically and economically important stake-

holders, who are farmers, traders and 'mathadi' workers (head loaders), the government has struggled to push through the changes.

#### What is the problem?

After it was passed in the Assembly last November, the Mumbai and Pune APMCs called a strike, alleging that the proposed amendment severely limited their powers. One of the important amendments the Bill seeks to bring about is to free essential items from the purview of APMCs and allow them to be sold outside.

Farmer organisations such as the Shetkari Sanghatana, formerly led by Sharad Joshi, support this amendment. Sharad Joshi always said that the APMC Act is one of the main reasons why farmers are prey to the monopoly of traders," said Anil Ghanavat, president of Shetkari Sanghatana.

#### What are the changes?

The Bill also has a provision that the

APMCs can continue to levy cess/market fee on the produce brought and traded in their mandis, but cannot charge anything on goods traded outside. The traders' lobby had said no levy should be charged if the produce was sold outside. Following the meeting between the stakeholders and the government, sources said a compromise was reached to abolish this levy altogether. One of the amendments that was opposed by traders and farmer organisations was the direct payment to farmers from traders for purchase of more than ₹2 lakh, bypassing the *Adta* (the middleman). According to both, the *Adta* plays an important part as an assurer to both parties, and eliminating his role would be harmful to traders as well as to farmers.

Maharashtra is the second State after Bihar to attempt such amendments. While Bihar scrapped it altogether, Maharashtra is trying to do the same, by first allowing traders or processors to deal directly with farmers. Neither they

nor the farmers will have to go to the APMC yards to buy and sell their produce. The buyers can directly buy from farmers based on the price quoted by them. Unable to get the Bill cleared in both Houses of the Legislature, the government in August 2016 de-listed fruits and vegetables from the purview of the APMC through a resolution. Further, it was expanded to all farm products. Apart from the government claim that farmers will get a better price after the amendment, it believes that the competitive environment will help the APMCs improve their infrastructure as well as their quality of service to attract farmers. According to Mr. Ghanavat, farmers will go to the market which gives them a better price, be it private buyers or the APMCs.

The State government will continue to hold meetings with the stakeholders, and is likely to present the Bill, approved by all, in the budget session from February 24.

ALOK DESHPANDE

CM

NDE

THE HINDU  
SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 2019

# What about some human intelligence first?

To consider AI as a replacement for human intelligence is to repeat the age-old mistake of expecting god to solve problems without humans making any effort



## THE CONTROVERSIAL INDIAN

**TABISH KHAIR**  
is an Indian novelist and academic  
who works in Denmark

Artificial intelligence (AI) is all the rage these days. A recent article noted that 'robots' – shorthand for AI in the tabloids – will be able to write a fiction bestseller within 50 years. I suppose that would be shocking to me as a novelist if most fiction bestsellers were not already being written by 'robots'. Or so one feels, keeping publishing and other vogues in mind: a bit of this, a bit of that, a dash of something else, and voila, you have a bestseller!

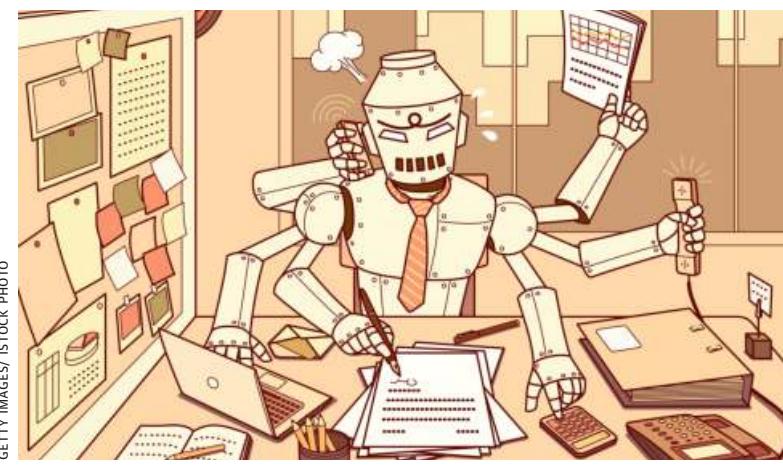
### Intelligence and skills

In that sense, perhaps the rise of AI will make us reconsider what we mean by human intelligence. This discussion has been neglected for far too long. Take my field: literature. The Chinese company,

Cheers Publishing, lately offered a collection of poems written by a computer program. So, are poets, generally considered to be suicidal in any case, jumping off cliffs in droves as a consequence? Well, this is a selection from one of the AI poems I found online: "The rain is blowing through the sea / A bird in the sky / A night of light and calm / Sunlight / Now in the sky / Cool heart / The savage north wind / When I found a new world."

Yes, there are aspiring poets – and sometimes established ones – who write like this, connecting words centrifugally or centrifugally to create an effect. I think they should have been pushed off literary cliffs a long time ago. Because this is not poetry; this is just the technique of assembling words like poetry. There is a difference between the intelligence required to write poetry and the skills required to write it. That poetic intelligence is lost without the required poetic skills, but the skills on their own do not suffice either.

The fact that lines like this, written by AI, can be considered poetry does not reflect on the intelligence of AI. It reflects on the intelligence of those read-



ers, writers, critics, editors, publishers and academics who have not yet distinguished between gimmickry and mimicry on the one side and the actual freshness of a chiselled line on the other.

But this is a small example. Surely, AI might also make us discover our basic lack of intelligence in other areas, including that of considering something like IQ to be a sufficient index of human mental capacity! Because if we think that AI can replace human intelligence,

then we are simply not thinking hard enough.

### Work and leisure

One of the major failures here is that of considering intelligence to be something different from and raised above the activity of living. This leads to the misconception that intelligence can be relegated to something else – say, a robot – without becoming something else. Human intelligence cannot be passed on to

something else: What is "passed on" is always a different kind of 'intelligence'. (I would call it cleverness, until further evidence to the contrary.)

Even the arguments that AI – or, as in the past, robots – can enable human beings to lead a gloriously workless existence is based on a similar misconception. Because human intelligence is embedded in human existence, 'work' as human activity in the world is not something human beings can do without. The fact that we resent 'work' at times – and in hard and boring jobs, often all the time – does not change this. What we resent is not acting in the world ('work') but being made to act in the world against our better and natural inclinations ('salaried work,' mostly). To think that AI and robots can just create a lifetime of 'leisure' for human beings is to not know what human beings are. It shows a lack of intelligence.

It is because human intelligence is

embedded in human living and acting that human beings have the ability to adopt contradictory positions, or no position at all. From the perspective of 'pure' intelligence, this seems to be a flaw. But it is only a flaw if one divorces

intelligence from living and acting in the world, for the latter often throws up situations of unresolvable ambiguity and ambivalence. In different ways, both religion and literature know this – and that is the reason why they retain a central role in human consciousness.

There is much that we can do with AI, just as there is much that we have done with the wheel. But to consider AI a replacement for human intelligence – or humanity – is to repeat an age-old mistake. This mistake relates to god. No matter whether god exists or not, it has always been a mistake to expect him to 'solve' problems without human effort. The Prophet of Islam is said to have once told a man who claimed that he believed in Allah so much that he never tied up his camel: "First tie up your camel and then believe in Allah." Buddha, pressed to answer if there was a god, supposedly replied: "It would make no difference to mankind in the world."

It is ironic that the often atheistic fans of AI who believe that it is 'The solution' are making the same mistake that some of the religious made in assuming that god can be 'The solution' – without ongoing and intelligent human effort.

# A Non-Defamation Agreement

How to protect oneself legally, logically and semantically against a defamation suit



## ALLEGEDLY

**G. SAMPATH**  
is Social Affairs Editor, The Hindu

For some time now I've been meaning to write a candid, courageous, no-holds-barred article naming every name and exposing every sordid detail about a defence deal involving flying objects that shall, for the moment, remain unnamed. Please don't think I'm spineless. In any case, when was the last time anyone saw a spine on Indian soil? In 1857? It's just that my lawyer keeps warning me that in India, speaking the truth can bankrupt you and land you in jail. Frankly, I don't get it.

### Firing defamation suits

Like you, I also keep reading in the papers about this crony capitalist whose full-time hobby is filing defamation suits. Again, I'm not naming him only because my lawyer insists that I don't. He says I may end up attracting a ₹56,000 crore defamation suit against me and the IT guy who helped me write this column by fixing my laptop when it crashed in terror after the opening sentence.

But tell me something. If your character is truly without blemish – it has to be, in order to be eligible for defamation, since you can't defame someone whose reputation is already faecal matter – how will binge-filing defamation suits help? In fact, if someone uses defamation suits like an AK-47 – going dhar-dhar-dhar-dhar against anyone and everyone – it would be counterproductive. This person would end up with the reputation of being a defamation maniac, which, if you ask me, is not something you'd expect from a paragon of virtue. As Shakespeare said, reliance on defamation suits provokes suspicion.

Personally, I am not a judgmental person. If you want to make money by



compromising India's defence interests, who am I to judge? As a patriotic taxpayer, I do not mind it in the least if my income tax helps a fellow Indian to pay off his debts.

But as my lawyer explained to me, with criminal defamation, the process IS the punishment. I finally understood why my favourite novel, Franz Kafka's *The Trial*, is called "Der Prozess" in German. Because it's the process, stupid!

So before I speak my mind on this defence deal, I wish to protect myself legally, logically and semantically against the faintest possibility of a defamation suit. Also, the way things are with the Mongolian judiciary (just to be clear, when I say Mongolian, I mean Mongolian), I don't want my fate sealed in an envelope.

### Terms and conditions

Therefore I'm not taking any chances. I want you to read carefully the terms and conditions under which you are consuming this column. I am grateful to my lawyer for drawing up this Agreement at such short notice and without even charging GST. Here goes:

1. This column that you are reading is a de facto Non-Defamation Agreement (NDA) between you (hereinafter referred to as 'you') and the column's author (hereinafter called 'me').

2. All the provisions of this Agreement are effective as of the date of publication of this column or your date of birth, whichever is earlier, and shall remain in force until you and/or your

reputation die(s), whichever is later.

3. Pursuant to (1) above, through the act of reading this column, you have entered into a legally binding Agreement with me, whereby you are deemed to have sworn on your mother and/or father/guardian, as applicable, that you will never, ever, either directly or through a proxy, file a defamation suit against me or any of my friends, family members, ex-girlfriend(s), or any other individual, organisation, mammal or reptile, pliable or otherwise, who claims to be, or has ever been, a journalist.

4. You acknowledge that Indian defamation laws are nonsense and that anyone who thinks of using them against anyone should pre-emptively drown himself or herself in a vat of double-toned cow urine.

5. If ever you feel an irrepressible urge to file a defamation suit, you will do so only after fulfilling two conditions: (a) Watch *The Accidental Prime Minister* and *Toilet: Ek Prem Katha* back-to-back five times without a single toilet break; (b) sing the first 18 lines of 'Vande Mataram' without any mistakes and without using words like 'Pulkistan' and 'Sumantra Bhusmani'.

6. You undertake to indemnify, in perpetuity, the author of this column and his progeny, both current and future ones, if any, from any damage (real or imagined) that may accrue to your reputation (real or imagined) from anything that this author may have ever written or may ever write in the future.

7. All disputes arising from this Agreement will be settled by a five-judge bench of a Kangaroo Court where the Chief Kangaroo will be myself, and the other four kangaroos will be picked by a one-member collegium headed by myself.

8. You biometrically signed this Agreement and accepted all its provisions the moment your eyes fell on the headline or any other line(s) of this column, including the defamatory lines in the visual misrepresentation of the author's winsome visage at the top of this column.

# Stupa-hopping in Sarnath

In the land where Buddha gave his first sermon and the Ashoka Pillar was found



## WHERE STONES SPEAK

**RANA SAFVI**  
is a historian, author and blogger documenting India's syncretic culture

In the 6th century BCE, a young man left the comforts of his royal home in search of truth. For six years, he followed extreme ascetic practices and became totally emaciated. It was then that he realised that this was not the way to nirvana. He eventually found enlightenment under a tree in Bodh Gaya. Prince Siddhartha became Buddha, or the Enlightened One.

### Teachings of Buddha

From Bodh Gaya, Buddha went to the Deer Park (Mrigadava) in Sarnath, where the five monks who had been with him during his ascetic phase were staying. It was there that he gave his first sermon, an event known as the Dharma Chakra Pravartana, or turning of the wheel of law. In ancient times, this place was known by many names – Rishipatana, Mrigadava and Mrigadaya. The word Sarnath comes from a corruption of the name Saranagatha (lord of deer).

In his first sermon to these five companions, Buddha spoke of the Four Noble Truths and the eightfold path that frees people from suffering. He said that there are two ways of life: one is to indulge in all the pleasures of the world and the other is to deny oneself these pleasures. The middle path is the way to achieve nirvana, he said.

It is in Sarnath that Buddha laid the foundation of his sangha, or organisation of monks. He had 60 disciples, who he sent to different parts of the country to spread his teachings. He also established an order of female monks, which was joined by his wife.

Two hundred years after Buddha, the Mauryan emperor, Ashoka, fought the Battle of Kalinga and, disgusted by



the bloodshed, became a Buddhist. It is to him that we owe many of the beautiful stupas and monasteries in Sarnath. We also owe a huge debt to Sir Alexander Cunningham, who excavated the Dhamekh, Dharmarajika, and Chaukhandi stupas along with a monastery and temple between 1834 and 1836. Many excavations followed these, the most famous among them being the 1904-05 excavation by Friedrich Oscar Oertel of the Ashoka Pillar, including the Lion Capital.

### Invasions and restorations

I have visited Sarnath many times, and each visit is as magical than the previous one. Entering the gate the first thing one sees are the remains of excavated monasteries. As I walked beyond that, I saw a huge group of devotees sitting around in prayer at the Dharmarajika stupa. It was an enchanting sight, for they were oblivious to the sun beating down on them and chanted their sacred texts.

This stupa is the one said to have been built by Ashoka to commemorate Buddha's first sermon. Today it is just a low and flat platform as it was pulled down in 1794 by one Jagat Singh of Banaras," says B.R. Mani in *Sarnath: Archaeology, Art and Architecture*. He says, "Jagat Singh, the Diwan of Raja Chet Singh of Banaras, dug the stupa mound in 1793-94 for the purpose of obtaining building material, both stones and bricks, for the erection of a market place in the city after his death."

Two hundred years after Buddha, the Mauryan emperor, Ashoka, fought the Battle of Kalinga and, disgusted by

the presence of the eternal knot associated with Buddhism in this complex.

Sarnath also suffered when it was attacked by Mahmud of Ghazni. Mahipala, the Pala king, restored the monuments. Architect James Ferguson, in *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture*, remarks on the similarity between the sculptured band on the central part of the Dhamekh stupa, which has "geometric patterns of great intricacy", and the carvings done on the two earliest mosques in Delhi and Ajmer. The calligraphy on the screen of Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque, built by Qutubuddin Aibak in the Qutub complex in Delhi, does bear resemblance to the stupa. I have often wondered at the presence of the eternal knot associated with Buddhism in this complex.

The last great monument of Sarnath, a monastery named Dharmachakra Jina Vihara, was built in the 11th century by Kumaradevi, wife of Govindachandra of the Gahadavala dynasty.

Sarnath's importance as a Buddhist centre diminished with time. But there are many other interconnections between historical characters which never cease to amaze me. According to an inscription at Chaukhandi stupa, Humayun sought refuge in Sarnath when he was escaping from the Battle of Chausa.

# What qualities should we expect from our leaders?

Our political leaders must owe supreme loyalty to nothing but the country's constitutional values.



## THE PUBLIC EYE

**RAJEEV BHARGAVA**  
is Professor, Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, Delhi

We expect individuals to be their own leaders, to take charge of their lives, to assume responsibility for their decisions. But when individuals group together, a problem arises. Groups can't take charge of themselves, nor can every member simultaneously take charge of the entire group. Someone from the group is invariably asked to show the way, to become the primary agent, to lead. This is simply a fact: groups can't do without leaders. Every sporting team has a captain, a school or college has a principal, a company has its CEO, institutions have their directors, and governments their presidents, chief or prime ministers.

Yet, not everyone who occupies high office is a leader. A person who merely coordinates the actions of others or has

management skills is not a leader. Moreover, not everyone who assumes the role of a leader is able to play it well. What qualities then make for a leader? Which virtues are required to provide ethical leadership? I suppose there is little new one can say on this matter. But let me still give it a shot in the hope that it serves as a good reminder. And in the election year, why not focus on qualities necessary for political leadership? Here I can identify four.

### Being inclusive

First, if a person is chosen to lead the group, it is her responsibility to take care of the interest of each person of the entire group. This often entails putting collective interest before her own interest or that of her preferred group. For this to happen, she must first be able to identify the common good, to have a grasp of what is acceptable to all, to have an inclusive vision. This requires an infinite capacity to listen to others, to learn from them, to have the intellectual ability to critically examine and evaluate what everyone wants and needs, and then put them all together.

Second, since this intellectual formulation can only be the first step, an esti-



mate of the real quality of a decision is not known until it is implemented; its deficiencies begin to show up only when put into practice. This requires him to keep his ear to the ground, listen patiently to criticism to judge if his policies are working. He must not be defensive when criticised, or evade uncomfortable questions, but face criticism head on and be able to sift the wheat from the chaff. It also necessitates that a leader show flexibility and an ability for course correction by admitting mistakes. He should know that one's stature is not diminished by accepting fallibility.

Third, a leader must be a good com-

municator, and that is greatly helped if he has a way with words. But all the rhetorical flourish is of no avail if the speech lacks sincerity and conviction. A conviction with no relation to truth or actual outcomes is dishonest. Eloquence, though a good quality, is hollow without truth. Isn't it better to quietly do the job at hand rather than make grandiose claims or promises that can't be kept?

Finally, a good leader knows that nothing can be achieved without the collective expertise and wisdom of a support team. And when it comes to the entire country, such a team consists of a battalion of groups and institutions.

How should members of such teams be picked? It is tempting to induct people who belong to a common caste, region or religion. But such people are prejudiced in their thinking, serve their own particular group or merely themselves. They can't be good for the country as a whole. A good leader must rise above narrow, irrelevant considerations to select his team.

### Unafraid of rivals

It is equally tempting to pick those one has taken a fancy to, who are personally loyal. But such people often lack spine. Fearful people with poor ability can never offer good advice to their leader and could allow bad decisions to prevail that push the country down a ruinous path. Besides, they are often among the first to backstab the leader once out of power. Thus, personal likes and dislikes too must be set aside. I doubt if younger readers know that Nehru inducted into his cabinet Dr. Ambedkar, his long-standing, pre-eminent critic, as also the founder of the Jan Sangh, Syama Prasad Mookerjee. Abraham Lincoln, the 19th century American President, was also exemplary in this matter. The man he appointed as his Secretary of War was

earlier his superior in legal practice and had on occasion even humiliated him. But over time Lincoln was convinced that the interest of the nation during war would be best served by bringing this rather arrogant man into the cabinet. This led him to set aside personal resentment, forgive him and appoint him to a very crucial job in his cabinet. Great leaders don't hold grudges, are not vindictive and do not care if they have been wronged in the past by anyone so long as they are convinced that he will do no wrong in the future. Magnanimity isn't just a personal moral quality but a necessary political virtue.

Clearly then, a leader must have a knack of appointing persons best suited to his team who have proven ability, understand the purpose of the job, can speak their mind, and are able, without fear, to disagree with the leader if need be. Above all, they must understand the inclusive public

# 14 SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

## CAPSULE



**Fruit fly sleep gene**  
New research screening 12,000 fruit fly lines finds that they have a sleep-promoting molecule expressed by a gene, named 'Nemuri'. Overexpression of Nemuri helps the flies fight bacteria and sleep more, which helps fight infection.



**Environment and brain**  
A study finds that mice behaved differently when serotonin neurons were stimulated in a medium threat situation and a high threat one. In the former case, the mice only paused, whereas in the latter, they tried to flee, showing flipped neural tuning.



**Evolution of traits**  
Predicting evolutionary paths of traits is very complex. New research shows how the survival of mice was linked to a gene that defines their coat colour. Their experiment verified the hypothesis that the coat colour should alter to match the colour of the soil.

## Nilavembu kudineer kills dengue virus, protects from chikungunya

The siddha drug showed significant antiviral activity, immuno-modulation

R. PRASAD

Under *in vitro* conditions, *nilavembu kudineer* (a Siddha medicine) was found to provide protection against chikungunya virus while it was effective as a treatment during acute phase of dengue infection. Dengue subtype-2, which is the most prevalent subtype in India, was used for testing the formulation. There was significant antiviral activity of the formulation at 3% of human dose onwards. Currently, there is no treatment for dengue and chikungunya.

The Tamil Nadu government had distributed *nilavembu kudineer* concoction to treat people infected with dengue during the outbreak in late 2017.

### Mode of action

A team of researchers led by Sujatha Sunil from the International Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology (ICGEB), Delhi found that the *nilavembu kudineer* formulation was modulating the host response in the case of both chikungunya and dengue virus but in a different manner. The mode of action of the concoction is antiviral in the case of dengue while immuno-modulatory in chikungunya infection. "The reason why we say the formulation is immuno-modulatory is because of the way *nilavembu kudineer* acts upon viral infections in



The *nilavembu kudineer* herbal concoction was found to be safe. ■ S.S. KUMAR

different types of cells," says Dr. Sunil. However, the mode of action of the formulation on immuno-modulation is yet to be understood.

To study the antiviral activity, the researchers tested the formulation on monocytes and macrophages in the case of dengue and epithelial kidney cells for chikungunya virus. "The monocytes and macrophages are the primary sites of infection in the case of dengue. And kidney is the secondary site of infection by chikungunya virus," says Jaspreet Jain from the vector Borne Diseases Group at ICGEB and first author of a paper published in the *Journal of Ayurveda and Integrative Medicine*.

*icide*. The primary site of infection of chikungunya virus is fibroblasts before the virus enters the blood stream and then to different organs.

"The joints are the worst affected due to chikungunya virus infection. But we don't have primary joint cell lines to test the formulation at this point," says Dr. Sunil.

### Safety studies

Safety studies showed that *nilavembu kudineer* concoction was non-toxic starting from 3% (about 1.8 milligram per millilitre) of human dose. However, the researchers found that andrographis, which is the active ingredient of *nilavembu kudineer*, when used alone was ex-

tremely toxic at 3% of human dose. Human dose is prepared by mixing 5 grams of *nilavembu kudineer* in 240 ml of water. It is then boiled and reduced to 30 ml and consumed.

"This shows that *nilavembu kudineer* as a formulation is safe for use in humans," Dr. Sunil says. "The cytotoxicity of andrographis reduces drastically when given as a concoction with other ingredients of *nilavembu kudineer*."

The *nilavembu kudineer* herbal concoction is made by mixing nine ingredients in equal measure.

"The importance of herbal medicines lies in the fact that they use plant as a whole. This is important because if the modern concepts are used in alternative medicine and only active component is separated, then it will cease to act as a herbal medicine and will plainly act as a chemical drug which can be highly toxic/hazardous to the human body," the paper notes.

"Based on the results of our study we see the formulation working well for dengue and chikungunya infections especially during outbreak conditions," she says.

Based on the positive results from *in vitro* studies, the researchers are in the process of studying the safety and mode of action of the formulation using mice models.

## Plants might be able to remove lead from soil: study

The plant accumulates lead in the root and shoot

ASWATHI PACHA

Researchers from Mahatma Gandhi University, Kerala have identified a native roadside plant that can take up lead from the soil and thus help in removing the metal from the environment. The plant was found to accumulate lead at about 12,000 microgram/g of dry weight in the root and 7,000 microgram/g of dry weight in its shoot.

"These plants grow in soils that are continuously exposed to lead from vehicle exhausts. Though lead additives in petrol and diesel are banned now, some low-quality fuels still have a huge percentage of lead," explains Dr. Joseph George Ray from the School of Biosciences at the University and corresponding author of the work published in *Ecotoxicology and Environmental Safety*.

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The present experiment was carried out using a soluble salt of lead, says Chandana Chandrasekhar (left).

from the pests, or other predators. Tribal people use it as an antidote for snake bites and treatment of scorpion stings," adds Dr. Ray.

Spectrophotometric studies showed increased levels of many enzymes that are known to induce tolerance in plants.

"Hi-tech microscopic analysis showed that the lead travelled to the leaves and was deposited as lead nanoparticles in its cell wall, cytoplasm, and chloroplast.

Though we noticed a little distortion in the structure of these organelles no toxicity was seen," explains Chandana Chandrasekhar, the first author of the paper.

Dr. Ray further explains that the plants can be burned up after they have taken up the lead. In this way, the metal can be effectively contained and later disposed off safely.

This study has provided evidence that the plant is a lead hyperaccumulator that has the suitable biochemical

machinery. But as the present experiment was carried out using a soluble salt of lead (lead nitrate), more studies are needed in contaminated environments where lead is usually found in insoluble forms.

### Bioavailability

To increase the solubility of lead so that it becomes bioavailable to the plant, some solubilising agents (metal chelators) need to be added to the soil; the plant must be tolerant to such chemicals as well. "Made into a solution, solubilising agents will be added to the contaminated soil. As chelators have long residence time and can percolate well, they will react with the lead in the soil and make it in a form available to the plant," adds Dr. Ray.

Such experiments using naturally contaminated soils are significant further steps in using the plant for bioremediation of lead-contaminated soil.

## Microbial fuel cell treats textile wastewater

The power generated in degradation can be used to sustain the process

SHUBASHREE DESIKAN



The technology can be used with any other industrial wastewater, say Priyadarshini Mani (right) and Fidal Kumar. ■ M. KARUNAKARAN

Microbial fuel cells (MFCs) are fast emerging as an option for several specific requirements. Now, a startup, JSP Enviro, aims to use this technology to process textile wastewater and additionally generate electricity that will render this exercise energy-efficient. Initiated by Suresh Paul Jones, the startup is in the process of joining the bioincubator at IIT Madras, where its other members V.T. Fidal Kumar and Priyadarshini Mani will expand the research they have done so far. Now working at the Biotechnology Department of IIT Madras with a prototype of about 200 litre capacity, the team plans to increase it to 1,000 litre capacity by 2020. "Though we have developed the technology for processing wastewater from the textile industry, it can be used with any other industrial wastewater," says Dr. Mani. The team is also working on the restoration of a lake attached to the Integral Coach factory at Villivakkam in Chennai.

The principle of using the MFC to degrade wastewater is

simple. A carefully selected cohort of bacteria is made to act on the textile wastewater placed in the fuel cell. These bacteria are isolated from the very wastewater they are meant to degrade. They feed on the organic material in the water and break it down under anaerobic (without oxygen) conditions, releasing electrons in the process. The electrons are collected at the anode which results in a current in the circuit. Because the bacteria form a biofilm on the anode, the electrons are collected easily by it. "After a period, when the thickness of the biofilm exceeds a limit, it will automatically detach and bring back the thickness to

optimal level," says Dr. Kumar. The team is working on a nanofilter to improve this process. "This is like a 'trickling filter' - where after thickness exceeds a limit, and it is difficult to sustain that thickness, the excess tears off. When it falls off, it shouldn't get mixed up with the water. That's where the nanotechnology filter will come in, to remove the bacteria and get clean water" he adds.

The bacteria take turns to act on the wastewater and purify it. There are many species of bacteria. If a dye is present in the water, it is broken to a simpler form by one species; this, in turn, is acted on by another species and so on.

While now, with the prototype, they can generate power of around 1 watt per square-metre, they aim to get to about 5 watts per square-metre. This power can be used to sustain the process. However, scaling up has challenges. The size of the chamber and its geometry and design remain to be worked out. All the power produced must be captured so that it is not wasted. "For that, we will work with some electrical engineers...," says Dr. Mani.

"It has a cascading effect," says Dr. Kumar.

Using MFC to process wastewater was an idea that the two used in the Carbon zero challenge, a competition hosted by IIT Madras when they were students there. They used the funding obtained through the event to develop the 200 litre prototype within the few months they were given. "We spoke to some people [in the textile industries] at Tirupur, and they said that if it is cheaper and more energy efficient than current technologies, we will use it," says Dr. Mani, describing how they started up.

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"Sample requirement is less – 10 microlitre of serum. This can be obtained

## CCMB uses paper-based device to determine lipid profile

R. PRASAD

A portable, cheap, point-of-care diagnostics for rapid determination of total cholesterol, HDL, LDL and triglycerides in a single run might become a possibility with researchers at Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CSIR-CCMB), Hyderabad successfully fabricating a paper-based microfluidic device. The device has high specificity while the sensitivity is comparable with conventional methods. The device has high specificity while the sensitivity is comparable with conventional methods. The device has high specificity while the sensitivity is comparable with conventional methods.

The flower-shaped device with five arms is printed on a filter paper to simultaneously detect total cholesterol, HDL, LDL and triglycerides; the fifth arm acts as a control. Cholesterol and triglycerides can be detected in less than eight minutes using the microfluidic device. Only 10 microlitre of serum sample is needed to determine the four parameters.

"Sample requirement is less – 10 microlitre of serum. This can be obtained



We have to use a readout device to quantify the amount of total cholesterol, HDL, LDL, and triglycerides, say Amit Asthana (left) and Shahila Parween.

from 25 microlitre of blood," says Dr. Shahila Parween from CCMB and first of a paper published in the journal Sensors and Actuators B: Chemical.

The filter paper is functionalised with aminosilane (3-aminopropyltriethoxysilane or APTES) and gold nanoparticles. The aminosilane acts as a binder to immobilise both gold nanoparticles and enzymes on the paper surface. While the enzymes react with the serum and help in detecting cholesterol and triglycerides, the gold nanoparticles enhance the intensity of the

tensity of colour change in the paper in the reaction zone.

"Till such time we have a readout device, we can use the three colour dots with different intensities present above the reaction zone (where cholesterol and triglycerides are detected) to know if cholesterol and triglycerides levels in the serum are low, medium or high," says Dr. Parween. "Matching the dye intensity with the colour dots by the naked eye can help in semiquantification."

The serum sample added to the sample zone flows into all the five arms and passes through a narrow channel and a precipitation zone before reaching the reaction zone. The precipitation zone has reagents that are coated on the paper. The reagents react with the sample and allow only HDL or LDL to enter the detection zone in the appropriate arms. The precipitation zone has no reagent in the arms meant for detecting total cholesterol, triglycerides and control.

## How rocking the bed promotes deep sleep and improves memory

Rocking allows the brain to slowly fall in synchrony with the rocking stimulation and speed, promoting deep NREM sleep



### SPEAKING OF SCIENCE

D. BALASUBRAMANIAN

*Soja Rajakumari*, *soja* was a beautiful lullaby sung by K. L. Saigal; M.L. Vasanthakumari has sung a series of lullabies in Tamil. Both are available on the Web. Lullabies are slow, gentle and accompany the rocking speed of the cradle in which the baby is placed. Most families invariably have a cradle, be it made of sandalwood and swung by silk ropes (*chandan ka palna, reshama ki dori*, sung by Hemant Kumar) or a poor mother's make-do one using a saree hung from a tree – it is the rocking that puts the baby to sleep. The lullaby is to soothe the baby's mood. That music soothes the brain is known and is being understood in neurobiological terms (e.g., Chanda and Levitin, 'The neuro-

chemistry of music', *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, April 2013). Thus, in the cradle the music is a bonus.

That rocking is sleep-inducing even in adults, particularly senior citizens who sit in a rocking chair trying to read a book after lunch. What is it about rocking that promotes sleep? This question is being answered recently by a Swiss neurobiology group. They have published two papers in the January 2019 issue of *Current Biology* (<http://doi.org/10.1016/j.cub.2018.12.007>, and also <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cub.2018.12.028>). The group decided to recruit 18 young adults as volunteers, put in small metal electrode discs on their scalps and recorded the activity of their brains using a computer device called an electroencephalogram or EEG. Each volunteer was put on a bed, and the bed was rocking rhythmically the whole night at a slow speed for 8 hours. For comparison, they were again asked to sleep later on the same beds, but this time with no rocking and their EEG recorded. All other conditions of the environment were the same, so that

they could study the effect of rocking on the sensory processing of the brain. Comparison of the brain waves revealed that rocking promoted the volunteers falling asleep sooner, sleep more deeply and wake up less frequently.

### Stages of sleep

Sleep in humans occurs in two different stages. During sleep, our eyes actually move even when closed. One phase is when the eyes move rapidly (referred to as rapid eye movement or REM sleep) and the other where REM does not occur or NREM. Most dreams occur during REM sleep and it is thought to play a role in memory, mood and learning. During rocking, the EEG pattern showed slow oscillations. Rocking allowed the brain to slowly fall in synchrony with the rocking stimulation and speed, thus entraining the brain and promoting deep NREM sleep.

How does this entrainment or synchrony occur? The brain has a central part called the thalamo-cortical network. This is a system of neural fibres that pass on electrical signals in the

brain connecting the thalamus and the cortex regions and integrates the sensory information into so that the brain "feels"; it also plays a role in memory.

Does rocking during sleep affect memory? It does seem to help. In order to test this, the group gave the volunteers a simple test of pairing two words appropriately. The test was given after they had a night's sleep in the rocking bed and again after they slept on the same bed which was not allowed to rock. The volunteers did better in the morning test when they were rocked! Thus the group concludes that rocking boosts deep sleep, sleep maintenance and memory in healthy sleepers. How does this translate to rocking babies in cradles? Or should one test a set of volunteer senior citizens napping on a rocking chair post-lunch, and again when they nap when the chair does not rock? Interesting!

### When you rock

The group wanted to know whether rocking promotes sleep in other mammals too. They decided to use mice as

experimental animals. They placed electrodes on their heads and monitored the EEG (also electromyograph patterns or EMG, which record how the skeletal muscles are affected) signals while the mice were sleeping in rocking cages and in stationary cages.

Mice needed a faster rocking rate than us humans, but otherwise behaved the same way as humans do.

It has been believed that the effects of rocking are mediated through the vestibular system in the head. The vestibular

## HEALTHLINE RITESH KUMAR



"Women find same-sex social interactions to be more rewarding than men." — *Neuropsychopharmacology*

## AROUND THE WORLD

## Leg up for bio-scaffolds

Biologic scaffolds — structures that are made up of tissues that promote wound repair — can enhance the effectiveness of cancer immunotherapy treatments in mice, according to a study in the U.S. The field of regenerative medicine is debating whether tissue repair scaffolds can help or hurt tumour growth and this finding indicates that these structures could augment the cancer-killing power of immunotherapies (such as immune checkpoint blockade), a mainstay of cancer treatment. A critical development in the field of regenerative medicine is the advent of biologic scaffolds. These structures, which are created from connective tissue that has been stripped of cells, promote wound healing. In the study, the scaffolds activated an array of anticancer immune responses. The findings appear in *Science Translational Medicine*.



GETTY IMAGES

**Counting makes exercise intensity simple**  
Walking cadence is a reliable measure of exercise intensity and can be used to set 'simple steps-per-minute' guidelines for moderate and vigorous intensity, according to a study in the U.S. The researchers also concluded that for adults, between the ages 21 and 40, walking about 100 steps per minute constitutes moderate intensity, while vigorous walking begins at about 130 steps per minute. The research offers walkers a concrete way to track their activity level without relying on exercise devices or complicated calculations about oxygen consumption or heart rate. The study also sought to establish the relationship between walking cadence (steps per minute) and intensity (metabolic rate) across the adult lifespan, from ages 21 to 85. Using the study's initial results for younger adults, walkers can simply count their steps to determine their approximate exercise intensity. Counting steps for 15 seconds and multiplying by four, for example, will determine steps per minute. The findings appear in the *International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity*.

## SSRIs work best for anxiety

Researchers from the University of Cincinnati, U.S. have examined common medications prescribed for children and adolescents with anxiety disorders to determine which are the most effective and best-tolerated. Their study showed that SSRIs, or selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors, performed best overall compared to other types of medications. The results include the largest amount of data to date for analyses of paediatric anxiety disorder treatments. The authors identified trials published between 1971 and 2018, comparing 13 commonly used medications with placebo or with other medications (including antidepressants) for the acute treatment of anxiety disorders in children and adolescents. The findings appear online in the *Journal of Clinical Psychiatry*.



GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

## E-cigarettes flavouring causes harm

Two chemicals widely used to flavour electronic cigarettes may be impairing the function of cilia in the human airway. Cilia are antennae-like protuberances that are present on 50-75% of the cells that line human airways. They play a key role in keeping the airway clear of mucus and dirt and allow people to breathe easily and without irritation. Impaired cilia function has been linked with lung diseases such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and asthma. The study is the first to look at the impact of flavouring chemicals in human epithelial cells, which are the type that line the lungs. In a previous study, the researchers found flavouring chemicals (primarily diacetyl and 2,3-pentanedione) in over 90% of e-cigarettes they tested. In addition to being used in e-cigarettes, diacetyl is used as a flavouring agent in foods such as butter-flavoured microwave popcorn, baked goods, and candy; it can create a variety of flavours. The findings appear in the journal *Scientific Reports*.

## A hidden switch for autism

Researchers in the U.S. have shown a possible mechanism of human cognition that underlies autism spectrum disorders, or ASD. Diagnosis for ASD is still behaviourally based, where psychologists and medical professionals with clinical expertise use the Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule and the Autism Diagnostic Interview to diagnose autism. These two tests are considered the gold standard. However, getting a diagnosis can be a longer process due to several factors which include a lack of resources and trained clinicians. This delays the diagnosis of autism, on average, until age 5 or 6. Utilising functional magnetic resonance imaging, or fMRI, the researchers looked at functional connectivity on two types of networks (unimodal and supramodal) in areas of the brain underneath the cerebral cortex. There was over-connectivity, it emerged, in the unimodal-subcortical connections and under-connectivity in the supramodal-subcortical connections for ASD individuals, as compared to the typically developing control group. This suggested a relationship between connectivity and the expression of ASD.



GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

## DEMYSTIFYING SCIENCE

## What are magnetic teeth?

Teeth made from the magnetic mineral, magnetite, are called 'magnetic teeth'. These teeth have the maximum hardness and stiffness of any known biomaterial and have been best studied in a type of mollusc. This organism has teeth that can grind down rock and, according to researchers, may hold the key to making next generation abrasion-resistant materials and nanoscale materials for energy. Although magnetite is a geologic mineral commonly found in earth's crust, only a few animals are known to produce it. Little is known about how they make it. A better understanding of the biomineralisation process could help scientists not only improve wear-resistant coatings and tooling but also grow nanoscale materials for energy and water-based applications. — Science Daily

CMYK

## Too old to wield the scalpel?

Health-care researchers in the U.S. are debating what, if anything, to do about the tide of ageing practitioners

PAULA SPAN

In the fall of 2015, Dr. Herbert Dardik, chief of vascular surgery at Englewood Hospital and Medical Center in New Jersey, U.S., nodded off in the operating room.

Note that Dr. Dardik, then 80, was not performing the operation. He'd undergone a minor medical procedure himself a few days earlier, so he'd told his patient that another surgeon would handle her carotid endarterectomy, in which plaque is removed from the carotid artery to improve blood flow.

But when she begged Dr. Dardik at least to be present during the operation, he agreed to sit in. "I was really an accessory," he recalled. "It was so boring, I kind of dozed off" — whereupon an alarmed nurse-anaesthetist reported the incident to administrators.

Within days, the hospital's chief of anaesthesiology and chief medical officer were in Dr. Dardik's office, praising his surgical skill while urging him to reduce his workload.

"I got so annoyed, I stood up and opened the door and said, 'Get out,'" Dr. Dardik said. "Who knows better what I can do but I myself?"

He also resisted the suggestion that he undergo testing at Sinai Hospital in Baltimore, U.S., which had established a two-day programme to evaluate whether older surgeons could safely continue



practising.

Not long afterward, Dr. Dardik was on a plane when its older-looking captain came aboard. (Federal regulations mandate a retirement age of 65 for commercial pilots.)

"I hope this guy's still OK," Dr. Dardik remembered thinking. At which point, "it hit me like a hammer — this is what other people think when they look at me."

A few weeks later, he became the first doctor evaluated by Sinai Hospital's ageing surgeon programme.

## The data

The physician work force, like the rest of the population, has grown substantially greyer in recent years.

Almost a quarter of practising physicians were 65 or older in 2015, according to the American Medical Association. In 2017, more than 122,000 physicians in that age group were engaged in patient care.

Health-care researchers and analysts are debating what, if

anything, to do about this tide of ageing practitioners. "We know that human faculties decrease with age," said Dr. Mark Katlic, the thoracic surgeon who founded Sinai Hospital's programme.

## Occupational necessities

Declining vision, hearing and cognition can affect any health professional (or any human). But Dr. Katlic has expressed particular concern about surgeons, who need to retain exceptional vision, manual dexterity, reaction speed and stamina.

Past age 70, "can you grab a tiny little blood vessel with a forceps and not grab something else?" he asked. "Or use very small instruments for sutures?" Some operations, he pointed out, go on for six or seven hours, even longer.

Studies haven't produced clear-cut answers to such questions. Cognition and other abilities decrease with age — but the variability between individuals increases.

At 75, "there are sharp, wonderful doctors, and those who need to stop," said Dr. E. Patchen Dellinger, lead author of a review on ageing physicians published in *JAMA Surgery*. Whether older surgeons have poorer outcomes than younger ones also remains debatable, because decades of experience and judgment can compensate for modest physical or cognitive

declines.

One large study of Medicare patients found surgeons over the age of 60 had higher mortality rates for several kinds of operations, including coronary bypasses, but not for other procedures. And the differences were small, occurring mostly among doctors who performed few operations.

Last year, conversely, researchers reviewing records for nearly 900,000 Medicare patients reported that operations by older surgeons resulted in lower mortality than those by younger physicians.

A 2016 statement from the American College of Surgeons recommended physical, visual and neurocognitive testing for older surgeons — but on an entirely voluntary basis, with no requirement that they disclose the results.

## The issues

Becoming a surgeon is difficult, a gruelling marathon. But remaining one isn't very demanding, experts say. Regular hospital re-certification tends to be perfunctory. Peers often fail to report troubling behaviour, especially since senior physicians can be powerful, respected figures.

Research also indicates that older surgeons do a poor job of judging their own competence. "We're sort of a fraternity of highly regarded professionals," Dr. Dellinger

said. "And we highly regard ourselves."

Doctors resist suggestions that they slow down or walk away, added Dr. Glen Gabbard, a psychiatrist at Baylor College of Medicine, U.S., who has specialised in psychological evaluations of doctors.

"Being a physician is at the core of their identity," he said. "It becomes something they can't let go of. They can't imagine retiring. Who's going to take care of my patients?"

A mandatory retirement age could solve such problems. But it also could violate discrimination laws, sideline perfectly competent doctors and leave rural communities even more underserved.

Advocates argue that mandatory screening at older ages represents a better approach, a way to distinguish able senior professionals from those who should retire, reduce their responsibilities, or transition to teaching and other roles.

A handful of hospitals have already adopted that tactic, including the University of Virginia Health System, Temple University Hospital and UPMC in Pittsburgh, U.S.

Back at Englewood, however, Dr. Dardik, now 83, still comes to the hospital every weekday, but has shifted to research, teaching and mentoring. NY TIMES

## Pop it in for an inside view



**Inflatable pill:** MIT engineers in the U.S. have designed an ingestible, Jell-O-like pill that, upon reaching the stomach, quickly swells to the size of a soft, squishy ping-pong ball big enough to stay in the stomach for an extended period of time. It is embedded with a sensor that continuously tracks the stomach's temperature for up to 30 days. If the pill needs to be removed from the stomach, a patient can drink a solution of calcium that triggers the pill to quickly shrink and pass safely out of the body. The new pill, tested in pigs, is made from two types of hydrogels — mixtures of polymers and water that resemble the consistency of Jell-O. The combination also enables it to remain impervious to the stomach's acidic environment. "The dream is to have a Jell-O-like smart pill, that once swallowed stays in the stomach and monitors the patient's health for a long time such as a month," says Xuanhe Zhao, associate professor of mechanical engineering at MIT. The researchers envision the pill may safely deliver different sensors to the stomach to monitor, for instance, pH levels, or signs of certain bacteria or viruses. Tiny cameras may also be embedded to image the progress of tumours or ulcers. The research was supported, in part, by the National Science Foundation, National Institutes of Health, and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. The results have been published in *Nature Communications*. — Science Daily • GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

## A call to exercise

It can make all the difference to patients with type 2 diabetes

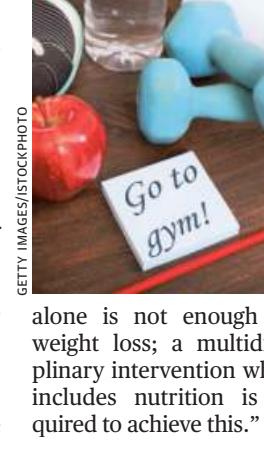
AFSHAN YASMEEN

Patients with type 2 diabetes should be prescribed physical activity to control their blood sugar and also to improve heart health, recommends a position paper from the European Association of Preventive Cardiology.

The paper provides practical recommendations for doctors on how to motivate patients to incorporate physical activity into their daily routine, set achievable and measurable goals, and design customised exercise-training programmes to meet these goals.

Increasing cardio-respiratory fitness (CRF) and glycemic control are key clinical targets of exercise training programmes in patients with type 2 diabetes with cardiac co-morbidities, the paper recommends. It adds that patients should be evaluated for CRF to classify them according to their risk and optimal exercise prescription.

Other clinical targets include controlling blood pressure, improving vascular function and dyslipidaemia and reduction in inflammation. The paper (authored by a team of doctors led by Harold Kemps, a cardiologist at the Máxima Medical Centre, Veldhoven, Netherlands) says, "Although a higher BMI is associated with worse prognosis, weight loss is not necessarily a relevant target of exercise training for these patients. Exercise



alone is not enough for weight loss; a multidisciplinary intervention which includes nutrition is required to achieve this."

## Adherence is vital

According to the paper, adherence to an exercise programme is very important to achieve its desired effects.

To improve adherence, the type, intensity and duration of activity need to be carefully adapted to the patient's preferences and co-morbidities and adjusted to training progress over time.

High-volume moderate intensity training is recommended for improving body composition and lowering cardiovascular risk factors, preferably by combining training with dietary interventions and counselling/education.

But it may not be safe for patients who develop arrhythmias during exercise or have ischaemia, it says. Corroborating the recommendations, C.N. Manjunath, Director of Sri Jayadeva Institute of Cardiovascular Sciences and Research, Bengaluru, says that while it is im-

portant to chalk out a customised exercise protocol for patients with diabetes, it is equally important that patients adhere to the protocol.

He says, "There are various studies that suggest regular exercise, even if it is walking, cycling, increases the life-expectancy of the person. More than the weight loss, a better motivational parameter is increasing exercise and physical fitness. Diabetes doubles the risk of mortality but the fitter patients become, the more that risk declines."

## Tailored approach

Says K.M. Prasanna Kumar, former President of the Endocrine Society of India and Research Society for the Study of Diabetes in India, "There is no one size fits all approach in exercise prescription too. All patients cannot be advised to exercise 30 minutes a day or the standard 150 minutes per week. We should chalk out a personalised exercise programme for each patient depending on his/her age, complications, usual habits, acceptable, affordable and available facilities."

Terminating the position paper as "accurate and scientific", he says, "A person with diabetes should undertake exercise which is permitted by his cardiologist. A person with diabetes who has knee, back or hip problems should consult an orthopaedic surgeon regarding the type and duration of exercise. A pregnant

woman should consult an obstetrician regarding the type, severity and duration of exercises, which she can undertake during pregnancy with diabetes."

He explains, "Exercise prescription should be gradually tailored to suit the individual patient's physical ability, co-morbidities, home and workplace environment with measurable targets. If patients have significant coronary artery disease, they are advised to walk and not do any strenuous exercise. If patients have diabetes with osteoarthritis, they are advised stationary bicycle."

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## Getting mental health into the curriculum



SAMIR PARIKH

When one hears the word 'curriculum' in the context of mental health, it might seem bewildering. What could the contents be and how would this be imparted to school students? First, why is it important?

Data show the growing prevalence of mental illnesses, especially among children and adolescents. Close to 15 million individuals are battling some form of mental health related illness or other in India; 10% of all children suffer from some form of mental health issue and more than 50% of these go untreated. Many more are undetected.

Depression is now the single largest illness in the world; suicide is the second leading cause of death among adolescents and young adults; and almost half of all mental illnesses begin by the age of 14. At the same time, the psychosocial stressors experienced by children cannot be ignored either. These include the growing pressure of academics and competitive entrance examinations, and even exposure to media, which seems to invade almost every aspect of our lives. Children and adolescents are particularly vulnerable given the impact on their self-esteem, and a positive body image contributing to overall psychological well-being.

Therefore, including such a mental health curriculum ought not to be viewed as increasing the academic burden of subjects being taught. Instead, its aim should be to highlight the need for incorporating life-skills training as an integral aspect of schooling. Some of these life skills could include encouraging them to acquire skills related to gender sensitivity, dealing with bullying and managing aggression, improving emotional intelligence while imbuing skills for emotional regulation, building empathy, training them to be assertive and, making them media literate.

Being mindful of such a curricular inclusion does not necessarily entail an additional number of academic classes or teaching hours. Instead it could involve more experiential and fun-learning techniques which are enjoyable for both teachers as well as students. This serves the dual purpose of equipping young minds with the necessary skills to improve their overall quality of life in the future, as well as building their resilience to deal with the world and its challenges in the years ahead. These practical experiences and learning are what help develop their personality. Therefore, such experiential learning cannot be restricted to textbooks.

Ideally, a mental health curriculum needs to be running in parallel with the existing educational paradigm within schools. Mental health often tends to get neglected when compared to the significance typically attached to general-health awareness (hygiene and sanitation, nutrition and balanced diets, education about infectious and communicable diseases). A point to be reiterated is that similar to physical ailments, mental illness is also rooted in a biological basis, as opposed to mythical beliefs which attribute mental illnesses to the presence of evil spirits, or the like.

## Overcoming stigmatisation

Given the extent of stigmatisation of mental illnesses, a catalyst for change would need to begin at the roots. This is by sensitising the young minds of children as well as adolescents. By incorporating mental health as an integral part of our health curriculum, such a pedagogy, which sensitises young minds about mental health and shapes their attitudes and beliefs, would help seize the future of mental health in the country.

Last, but not the least, the objective of introducing a mental health curriculum is to encourage help-seeking behaviour, especially in connection with mental health. It is through the training of young children and adolescents during their prime years that we can improve their own psychological well-being. The long-term implications of incorporating such a curriculum within schools will contribute to a society

# Making Ayodhya a place without wars

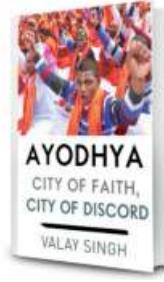
A writer points to the collective failure of the judiciary, Parliament and political parties in resolving the Ram Janmabhoomi issue

SUDHEENDRA KULKARNI

**W**hen religion is misused for political purposes, the results can never be happy for any nation. However, the same can also be said when the institutions and constituents of a nation fail to resolve contentious religious disputes in a just, amicable and expeditious manner. Both are true in the case of the Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid issue in Ayodhya, as is testified by India's painful experience.

The publication of Valay Singh's book *Ayodhya: City of Faith, City of Discord* could not have been better timed. On the one hand, Narendra Modi's government has made a desperate effort to get the Supreme Court to return 'superfluous' land around the disputed site, so that entities backed by the Sangh Parivar can start construction of the Ram Temple before the 2019 parliamentary elections. If the apex court accepts the government's contention, the BJP will surely go all out to solidify its Hindu votebank (especially in Uttar Pradesh, but in other States too) by claiming that it has fulfilled a key poll promise.

On the other hand, as the book shows with well-compiled information, the very fact that the issue has remained unresolved for so many decades after India gained independence (the dispute itself is much older) points to the collective failure of the judiciary, Parliament, political parties and also leaders of Hindu and Muslim communities. We thus see a vicious dialectic at work here. The failure to resolve the issue through trust-promoting negotiation between the communities has given the BJP an opportunity to communalise

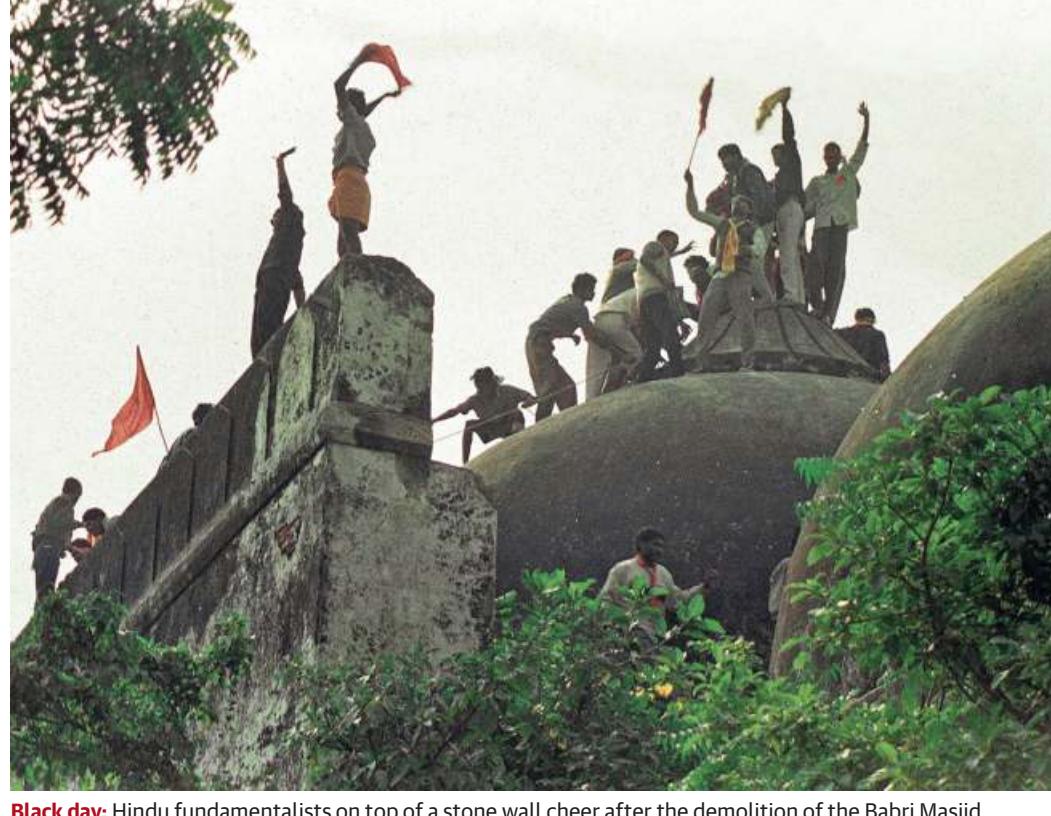


**Ayodhya: City of Faith, City of Discord**  
Valay Singh  
Aleph  
₹799

and politicise it for unconcealed electoral considerations. Its politicisation by one major national party has, in turn, made its cordial resolution difficult.

Many of the salient facts pertaining to the dispute are well-known since they are all in the public domain. Interpretation of these facts, of course, depends on one's ideological standpoint. As the author states (p. 260), there are essentially three sides: 'the pro-temple or the BJP side', 'the closeted pro-temple side' (mainly represented by the Congress, according to the author), and the third side, which is articulated by 'the secular public, communists, socialists' and others. Singh, an independent Delhi-based journalist, clearly belongs to the third side.

**Same story, different sides**  
The BJP's aggressive pro-temple politics has undoubtedly posed a threat to communal harmony in India. However, this does not automatically mean that the 'third side' is right either in dismissing the legitimacy of Hindu sentiments across India in favour of a Ram temple in Ayodhya or in not



**Black day:** Hindu fundamentalists on top of a stone wall cheer after the demolition of the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya. • AFP

questioning the stubborn refusal of Muslim leaders to agree to a compromise solution.

As many Marxist secularists have done in the past, the book at many places belittles or scorns Hindu sentiments, such as when Singh writes: "In a way Ayodhya had been brought to them (most Hindus) only through technology and media exposure." (p. 234) As if Hindus did not know about the Ramayana epic before Ramanand Sagar's popular TV serial in the 1980s. Nothing can be further from the truth. Despite all the pluralities associated with them,

Ram, Ramayana and Ayodhya have been deeply embedded in the consciousness of Hindus (and not of 'upper caste' Hindus only) all across India and for many centuries.

#### December 6, 1992

While it can never be established that Ram was born at the exact place where the Babri Masjid stood before its demolition by frenzied kar sevaks on December 6, 1992 – and the Supreme Court was right in refusing to go into this question – few can deny that Ayodhya means far more to Hin-

dus than it does to Muslims. Revealingly, the book quotes (p. 143) the muezzin of the Babri Masjid describing it, in a communication to the British authorities in 1858, as 'Janamstan Masjid situated in Oudh'.

The demolition of the Babri mosque was, indisputably, a reprehensible anti-secular and anti-Constitutional act. However, for a book on Ayodhya, it avoids going into similar acts of temple-breaking and idol-breaking that took place in many parts of India in the reign of bigoted Muslim rulers. (Even Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, who was

no sympathiser of Hindutva ideology, has described such deeds of fanaticism in his book *Pakistan or The Partition of India*.) Two wrongs don't make a right. But nor should historians and intellectuals ignore one wrong and only focus on the other.

#### The way forward

The moot question is: Where does India go from here? What can, even now, lead to a harmonious denouement to the dispute? The book skips this vital question. One thing is clear: No power can now stop construction of a Ram Temple in Ayodhya. The legal part of the dispute itself has now reached almost the last leg. But India would be a loser if the temple came up as a symbol of Hindu triumphalism. The Supreme Court's Constitution bench was right in stating in its 1994 judgment: "The Hindu community must bear the cross on its chest for the misdeeds of the miscreants (who demolished the mosque)." (p. 255)

This means that the Sangh Parivar should express sincere remorse for December 6 even if the apex court (or Parliament) finally decides the matter in favour of Hindus.

On their part, leaders of the Muslim community should give up their claim to the disputed site, it now having become only a property dispute, and support construction of the Ram temple. Finally, all parties should together rebuild the mosque at an agreed site in Ayodhya, and make both the temple and the mosque symbols of communal harmony and national integration.

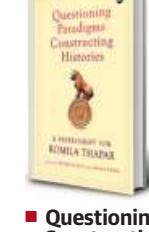
That would be a fitting tribute to Ayodhya, whose very name means 'a place without wars'.

## BOOKSHELF



**Rethinking Pluralism, Secularism and Tolerance: Anxieties of Coexistence**  
Neera Chandhoke  
Sage  
₹895

The world is marked by extreme intolerance towards racial, sexual, religious and ethnic minorities and refugees. It is stamped with disturbing consequences of religious strife. Chandhoke tries to find out if we can co-exist with some civility by reinterpreting the concepts of secularism, pluralism and tolerance in the context of contemporary India.



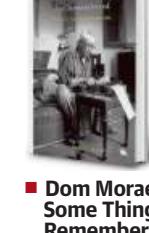
**Questioning Paradigms, Constructing Histories: A Festchrift for Romila Thapar**  
Kumkum Roy, Naina Dayal  
Aleph  
₹999

Historian and public intellectual Romila Thapar's path-breaking commentaries and essays on ancient Indian history, along with her writings on culture, society, archaeology, philosophy, classical literature and education have inspired many. In this Festchrift, Thapar's students and colleagues aim to bring her pioneering work to the attention of a wider audience.



**Jallianwala Bagh**  
Kim A. Wagner  
Penguin/Viking  
₹599

The Amritsar massacre of 1919 was a seminal moment in the history of the Indo-British encounter, and it had a profound impact on the colonial relationship between the two countries. In this telling, Wagner argues that General Dyer's order to open fire at Jallianwala Bagh was an act of fear.



**Dom Moraes: Where Some Things Are Remembered**  
Edited by Sarayu Srivatsa  
Speaking Tiger Books  
₹499

Poet, journalist and essayist, Moraes captured the essence of the people he met. In this collection of profiles and conversations, he shows how it is done. The Dalai Lama laughs with him and Mother Teresa teaches him a lesson in empathy. He was Indira Gandhi's biographer – painting her in defeat post-Emergency, and in triumph when she returned to power.

# From the fields

Through anecdotes, research and ground work, a BJP MP suggests ways to tackle agricultural distress and the way forward

SANTOSH MEHROTRA

**E**very aspect of rural life is captured in *A Rural Manifesto*'s 11 chapters. The 10 substantive chapters are on agricultural inputs, water availability, energy access, agricultural marketing, non-farm income, handicrafts, labour, education, healthcare, rural credit, and finally, a chapter that spells out the way forward. Since each chapter is huge, the bibliography at the end of the chapters itself has to be section, rather than one bibliography for the whole chapter. There are tables (118) and figures (221) a-plenty, on the one hand, but also plenty of anecdotes from Varun Gandhi's years of travel.

**Informed treatise**  
Gandhi has been a BJP MP from 2009, and had become the youngest general secretary of the BJP in 2013. Gandhi wrote his first volume of poems, *The Otherness of Self*, at the age of 20, in 2000. His second volume of poems, *Stillness* was published in April 2015.

As a 39-year-old, with a B.Sc. in Economics from London University, he has clearly acquired much field experience in rural India, which he shares with the reader through anecdotes and individual stories, much as a journalist does.

What the reader would find remarkable in a country where it is taken for granted that 30% of MPs and MLAs have criminal cases against them, and half of that share (i.e. 15%) have 'serious crimes' like rape and murder against their name, it is a good thing if an MP, especially from the current ruling party, also writes books dealing with the national crisis in agriculture.

Writing about such a national crisis needs to be applauded – it indicates a certain seriousness of public purpose. Such scholarship can only help Gandhi's contributions to parliamentary debates and in parliamentary committees. In August 2013, newspapers reported that Gandhi was the only MP in the country who had spent all his MP Local Area Development Fund (MPLAD) before stipulated time.

Gandhi certainly has his heart in the right place. He has repeatedly committed his MP salary to helping the families of farmer suicides, especially in his constituency. While this is very laudable, the young MP may consider devoting more time to convincing his party's government to resume publishing NCRB data on farmer suicides, which have not been made public since 2016.

He suggests that village-wise lists



**Farmers' friend:** 'Varun Gandhi may consider convincing the BJP government to resume publishing NCRB data on farmer suicides, not made public since 2016.' • K.V.S. GIRI



**A Rural Manifesto: Realizing India's Future through Her Villages**  
Feroze Varun Gandhi  
Rupa  
₹995

can be prepared of farmers who have availed of unsustainable amounts of credit, and are thus 'potential suicide candidates' and he suggests that the Reserve Bank of India and NABARD can analyse such lists for policy interventions, and local administrations utilise them to ensure timely loan restructuring and counselling – a useful suggestion.

#### Myriad issues

He rightly makes a pitch for drip irrigation, but notes its 'high initial cost (\$500-1500 per acre)'. Most drip irrigation systems that were available in India were for a land-holding of one acre. The small size of the farms immediately translated into a design constraint. Small farmers could not afford the expensive drip irrigation systems.

Second, electricity was not always available to many farms. To irrigate a farm using drip irrigation systems normally requires continuous power supply for three to four hours. Most Indian villages did not have this luxury. However, there are firms that have reduced the cost sharply, e.g. Netafim (an Israeli firm). As against other systems that would cost at least double, this system cost ₹30,000

of which 50% came in by way of a grant from the State government. The farmer had to finance just around ₹15,000. It is such drip irrigation that MPs should be making a pitch for.

Gandhi recognises the impact of climate change. He suggests that agro-met advisories at a district level need to be converted into block and village level advisories. Good advice indeed, but the reason this has not happened is that the Met department does not have enough radars to provide such granular information. Could his party focus on this specific intervention?

Gandhi shows a remarkable breadth of reading and understanding derived from the field. He is probably exceptional as a BJP MP (or any MP) for the level of knowledge he has acquired on agriculture, and displays perspicacity in the granularity of his suggestions. In fact the detailed referencing to books and journal articles is impressive, and he must have had quite a team helping him with such referencing, which borders on scholarship.

He notes that 61% irrigation is now from groundwater with the share of districts with semi-critical or over exploited blocks at 33%. Gandhi rightly emphasises the need to shift back to dryland farming. 'Rajasthan, despite the lowest rainfall in the country, is buffering by having subsidiary farm enterprises like dairy, poultry, sericulture and goat rearing. States like Haryana, with little rainfall, can be encouraged to shift back towards oilseed and coarse cereals. Rice cultivation can be increased in rain-fed Odisha and Assam.'

With sensible proposals like these, one can only hope that Gandhi would push harder for these proposals in parliament.

# Geopolitical strings

Why so many countries are involved in Syria's war

STANLY JOHNY

**W**hen protests in Syria against the regime of President Bashar al-Assad that broke out in March 2011 turned into a full-scale civil war, many nations, especially those in the West, thought Assad's days were numbered. The U.S. called for his resignation. The EU backed rebels and housed the political branch of the Syrian opposition. Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Jordan were involved in varying degrees in the conflict through their proxies. But almost eight years on, Assad has not only survived, but almost won the most disastrous civil conflict in post-war West Asia. This wouldn't have been possible without help from Iran, Russia and the Hezbollah, Syria's strongest allies. Ghaidaa Hetou, an academic and the founder of iStrategic LLC, a U.S.-based political risk analysis firm, tells this story in *The Syrian Conflict: The Role of Russia, Iran and the US in a Global Crisis*.

Much has already been written on the Syrian crisis. But Hetou sees the Syrian conflict through the geopolitical prism. She doesn't dispute the arguments that the initial response of the Assad regime towards peaceful protesters was brutal. But she also says the Syrian government had taken some reform measures in 2012, including passing a new Constitution, "which was by many accounts a fundamental step towards political reform".

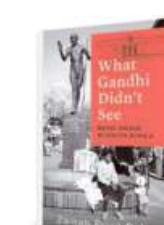
The new Constitution abolished a fundamental Article that had practically guaranteed the one-party rule of Assad's Baath Party. But this measure failed to end violence. Nor did



**The Syrian Conflict: The Role of Russia, Iran and the US in a Global Crisis**  
Ghaidaa Hetou  
Routledge  
₹550

plaining the causes of the conflict. But Hetou sees the Syrian conflict through the geopolitical prism. She doesn't dispute the arguments that the initial response of the Assad regime towards peaceful protesters was brutal. But she also says the Syrian government had taken some reform measures in 2012, including passing a new Constitution, "which was by many accounts a fundamental step towards political reform".

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**What Gandhi Didn't See: Being Indian in South Africa**  
Zainab Priya Dala  
Speaking Tiger  
₹499

about negotiating a complicated history on a daily basis. Dala writes about, the book holds up a mirror to ourselves. The South African Indians have moved far away from the cane-fields and the time they felt Gandhi was far above them, says Dala, arguing that young people need to be able to reach out to the Mahatma and his words. She wonders whether South Africa has "begun engineering a relevance to Gandhi that serves popular politics now in a country that is scratching the dust for heroes."

A slim volume of essays that combines history, memoir, and opinion, the book also talks

foreign countries who backed rebels accept this as a measure of reconciliation. As the war went on, first Iran, then Hezbollah and finally Russia came for the regime.

For Iran, the survival of the Assad regime was vital for its own interests. "The diplomatic amalgam of the Syrian opposition and the international recognition that they received, as the only legitimate representative of the Syrian people by the U.S., EU and GCC was further proof, from Iran's perspective, that this was indeed a Western manufactured crisis." As for Russia, by interfering in Syria, it sent a message to Western powers about its foreign policy resolve.

While Hetou convincingly lays out this geopolitical narrative, the book lacks a moral argument given that at least 400,000 people were killed in Syria and millions were displaced. In places it also reads like a compilation of news reports as the author is rebuilding developments drily and chronologically since the outbreak of the crisis. Still the perspective it offers distinguishes it from other books on Syria.

# Lines of separation

Gandhi's impact on the Indian diaspora in South Africa

R. KRITHIKA

**O**ne of the things we learnt about Gandhi in school was his sojourn in South Africa – and specifically being thrown out a train at Pietermaritzburg – led to a shift in his politics and social views.

Last year much was made about the fact that it was the 125th anniversary of his eviction from the train and Zainab Priya Dala's *What Gandhi Didn't See: Being Indian in South Africa* has an account of re-enactment that ends with the question "If he came here today, to modern-day South Africa, would only the rich be allowed to have an audience with him? Would anyone else even care?" She wonders whether South Africa has "begun engineering a relevance to Gandhi that serves popular politics now in a country that is scratching the dust for heroes."

A slim volume of essays that combines history, memoir, and opinion, the book also talks

Dala offers quick sketches of life in South Africa post the abolition of apartheid, how Indians who had been treated marginally better than the Black South Africans now face animosity and hate, of how caste didn't quite matter but what did was whether one arrived as indentured labourer or as trader.

Today, Dala writes, the line of separation is money. For a country that is grappling with many of the issues that Dala writes about, the book holds up a mirror to ourselves. The South African Indians have moved far away from the cane-fields and the time they felt Gandhi was far above them, says Dala, arguing that young people need to be able to reach out to the Mahatma and his words. She wants Gandhi to be taken out of the 'manicured glass box' by people who keep him like a 'memento'. Just one grouse: was it necessary to go on repeating her family's antecedents?



This volume contains some of the best fiction and non-fiction that has been written on the violence that permeates every layer of Indian society. Fault-lines of religion, caste, gender, language, class and geopolitics are explained by a host of writers including Khushwant Singh, Mahasweta Devi, Udayan Ghosh, Salam bin Razzaq, Suketu Mehta, Vijayan Detha and Sanjoy Hazarika.

# For Italy, it is a stroll in the garden

Beats India soundly to earn a place in the Finals

## DAVIS CUP

N. SUDARSHAN  
KOLKATA

Italy travelled to India for the Davis Cup qualifier without its best player, World No. 15 Fabio Fognini. But once here, it didn't even feel the need for the second-best, Marco Cecchinato (No. 19), as India was beaten by a handsome 3-1 margin at the Calcutta South Club on Saturday.

Do the Italians have a grass court hidden in a corner back home, captain Corrado Barazzutti was asked after the victory. "No, we have a garden," he replied in jest. Either way, it was nothing more than a stroll.

Rohan Bopanna and Divij Sharan had thrown a lifeline by beating Matteo Berrettini and Simone Bolelli 4-6, 6-3, 6-4. But other than arresting the slide of Indian doubles in recent years – the last win at a similar stage came in the 2014 World Group Playoff against Serbia – it achieved nothing.

### Evaporating hopes

Andreas Seppi handed Prajesh Gunneswaran, the India No. 1, a second dispiriting defeat in two days, winning 6-1, 6-4, as the crowd watched their beloved nation's hopes evaporate stea-



**Madrid, here we come!** The Italians are over the moon after booking a berth in the finals.

■ DEBASISH BHADURI

dily under the winter sun. The result now consigns India to the Asia-Oceania zonal level for the eighth year running, even as it sent Italy to the inaugural Davis Cup Finals to be held in Madrid in November.

The morning, for the hosts, started with hope. In the opening four holds, Bo-

panna and Divij lost all of three points.

The duo found its return game too, as two down-the-lines at 2-1 threatened the Bolelli serve. But where India couldn't capitalise on the solitary break point it earned, Italy nailed it at the first opportunity, breaking Bopanna to 5-4 and taking the set one

game later.

When the Italians lost serve in the fourth game of the second stanza, it didn't seem out of turn. They appeared to struggle against the varying speed of their opponents' serves. Berrettini, who is the sort of player who likes pace, snatched at his shots while facing Divij.

whose slower serve seemed to throw him off.

A string of such errors meant Italy spurned the two break chances it had in the ninth game. Divij held his nerve through four deuces to level the match.

### Capricious

The final set was capricious. Berrettini and Bolelli made the play in the fourth game to go up 3-1. But Bopanna and Divij responded by breaking Bolelli back-to-back.

The two holds – at 3-4 and 5-4 – demanded steady nerves, and they had them in plenty, sending their supporters into raptures. But by the time crowd settled, Seppi had raced to a 3-0 lead. Prajesh does strike a fine forehand, but rarely hits through the court.

The kind of penetrative power he needed for point-ending shot deserted him throughout. Seppi, whose movement was top-notch, covered every blade of grass.

And with efficiency, he combined some artistry, a mix Prajesh had no answer to.

**The result:** Italy bt India 3-1 (Matteo Berrettini & Simone Bolelli lost to Rohan Bopanna & Divij Sharan 4-6, 6-3, 6-4; Andreas Seppi bt Prajesh Gunneswaran 6-1, 6-4).

# Top 100 player a must: Bhupathi

But says that things are looking up despite reverse

## SPORTS REPORTER KOLKATA

In each of the last five years, India has fallen at the World Group Playoff stage.

After another reverse, this time against Italy in the qualifier (rechristened following the Davis Cup revamp), captain Mahesh Bhupathi felt a nation could only do so much without a player consistently staying in the top 100 and playing Grand Slams.

"We need to live in the real world," Bhupathi said. "If you look at the Madrid field [for Davis Cup Finals], I don't think there will be any team without a player in the top 100. This is one of the most global sports. So it is tough."

### Optimistic

Yet, Bhupathi said there was much to feel optimistic about.

"The story is changing. Rome wasn't built in a day. Ramkumar [Ramanathan] is up from where he was. Yuki [Bhambri] is getting back to fitness.

"Prajesh [Gunneswaran] was ranked in the 300s and now he is nearing 100. So once we get a fully fit squad, we can certainly challenge."

The next step, Bhupathi felt, was for the government to step in. "It is not easy for

the AITA to support the players financially.

"The government needs to support the game. They are doing it for a lot of other sports like wrestling, hockey etc."

"Tennis hasn't got that yet. Rohan [Bopanna] and Divij [Sharan] are now in TOPS [Target Olympic Podium Scheme]. But I think the singles boys need support."

The 44-year-old said he would do everything within his means to improve the bunch.

### Untapped potential

"I took on the job knowing the kind of depth we had. I feel there is a lot of untapped potential. All of them now have their own teams, but they all like engaging. I think they respect me enough to take inputs and

## DAVIS CUP RESULTS

**At Guangzhou:** China 2 lost to Japan 3.

**At Adelaide:** Australia 4 bt Bosnia and Herzegovina 0.

**At Tashkent:** Uzbekistan 2 lost to Serbia 3.

**At Astana:** Kazakhstan 3 bt Portugal 1.

**At Bratislava:** Slovakia 2 lost to Canada 3.

**At Frankfurt:** Germany 5 bt Hungary 0.

**At Biel:** Switzerland 1 trails Russia 2.

**C** If you look at the Madrid field [for Davis Cup Finals], I don't think there will be any team without a player in the top 100. This is one of the most global sports.

that will continue."

The AITA, on its part, hinted that Bhupathi would continue as captain.

"We haven't started talking about it," said Hironmoy Chatterjee, AITA secretary-general.

"I think we lost to a superior side and there is no shame in that."

"Personally I feel we have a good bunch of boys and it would be good if they can all develop [as a group] without us changing the captain."

# Dhoni boost for India seeking an improved show

New Zealand will look to dish out another superlative performance going into the T20I series

## INDIA IN NZ

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
WELLINGTON

Pushed out of its comfort zone by some incisive swing bowling in challenging conditions, a jolted India will gain confidence from Mahendra Singh Dhoni's return as it aims to finish the five-match series against New Zealand on a high.

India's most experienced

ODI player was out with hamstring injury during the last two matches and his return couldn't have been timed better after the inexplicable collapse for 92 in Hamilton.

**Windy conditions**

The windy conditions could just be the shot that Trent Boult needs as he again marks his run-up. And, that's where Dhoni's presence will

be a factor in the middle order, which still isn't rock solid if skipper Virat Kohli isn't around.

Dhoni's calmness in anchoring the innings will be priceless and young Shubman Gill might make way in the playing XI.

Hardik Pandya showed his value in the ODI team and will look to continue to deliver. It will be interesting to see whether Mohammed Shami comes back for the final game with Bhuvneshwar Kumar getting a rest.

**The team (from):** India: Rohit Sharma (Capt.), Shikhar Dhawan, Mahendra Singh Dhoni (wk), Kedar Jadhav, Dinesh Karthik, Vijay Shankar, Shubman Gill, Yuzenra Chahal, Kuldeep Yadav, Mohammed Shami, Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Mohammed Siraj, Khaleel Ahmed, Ravindra Jadeja and Hardik Pandya.

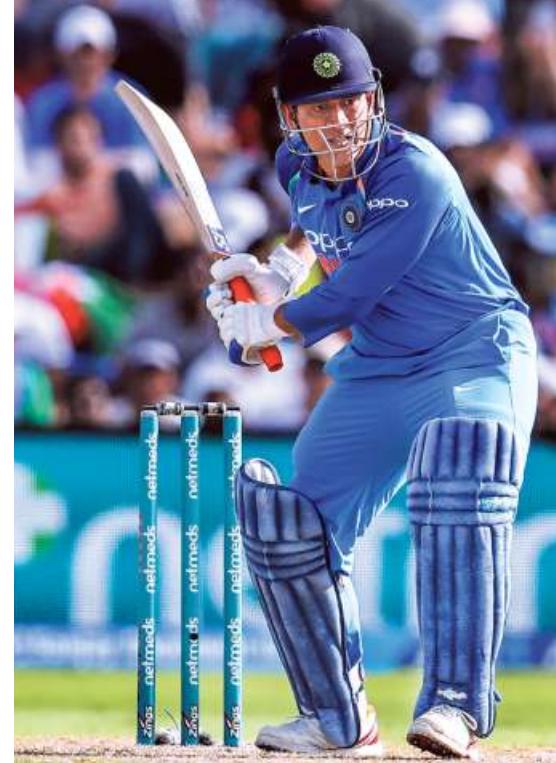
**New Zealand:** Kane Williamson (Capt.), Todd Astle, Trent Boult, Colin de Grandhomme, Lockie Ferguson, Martin Guptill, Matt Henry, Tom Latham (wk), Colin Munro, Jimmy Neesham, Henry Nicholls, Mitchell Santner, Tim Southee and Ross Taylor.

Match starts at 7.30 a.m.

**Stat attack**

- India has a 2-1 advantage in bilateral series against New Zealand at Wellington, with two other games ending in no result.
- The most number of ODI wins India has secured in a series is three (2008-09). The visitors have the chance to go one better.
- New Zealand has lost its three most recent matches at the Westpac Stadium, the venue for the final one-dayer.

Since Kohli's debut, India has played only eight ODIs without either him or Dhoni in the XI



**The fulcrum:** The presence of M.S. Dhoni will be the tonic India needs after the batting debacle in the last match. ■ AP

# West Indies fights back

Bravo drops anchor as England turns on the aggro

## SCOREBOARD WEST INDIES VS ENGLAND, SECOND TEST

**England – 1st innings:** 187.

**West Indies – 1st innings:** K. Brathwaite c Jennings b Moeen 49, J. Campbell c Buttler b Stokes 47, S. Hope c Bairstow b Broad 44, D. Bravo st. Bairstow b Moeen 50, R. Chase b Broad 4, S. Hetmyer c Anderson b Moeen 21, S. Dowrich c Buttler b Broad 31, J. Holder c Bairstow bt Anderson 22, K. Roach c Stokes b Anderson 6, A. Joseph

c Burns b Stokes 7, S. Gabriel (not out) 1; Extras (b-8, lb-13, nb-2, w-1): 24. Total (in 131 overs): 306.

**Fall of wickets:** 1-70, 2-133, 3-151, 4-155, 5-186, 6-236, 7-281, 8-289, 9-298.

**England bowling:** Anderson 29-57-3, Broad 36-15-53-3, Stokes 27-8-58-2, Curran 13-0-38-0, Moeen 25-4-62-3, Denly 1-0-1-0.

effort with figures of three for 53. Moeen Ali, top-scorer with 60 on day one, underlined his all-round value to the England cause with three wickets when the tourists enjoyed a period of dominance and threatened to dismiss the West Indies before the end of the day.

### Broad rewarded

Exasperated by his lack of success in the morning, Broad was finally rewarded with the dismissals of Shai Hope and Roston Chase in the same over when play resumed after lunch.

Bravo, the only West Indies batsman to fail in both innings of the first Test, held firm with wickets falling around him until Shane Dowrich joined him in putting on exactly 50 for the sixth wicket.

## Proteas end Pakistan's winning run

### PRESS TRUST OF INDIA CAPE TOWN

Faf du Plessis and Reeza Hendricks shared a record stand as South Africa ended a nine-match Pakistan T20 winning streak in the first international.

South Africa prevailed by six runs in a tense finish after being sent in and making 192 for six. Pakistan scored 182 for nine.

In the end, it was the fielding of David Miller that made the difference. His two direct-hit run-outs, including the key wicket of Babar Azam, and a South African record four catches, meant that Pakistan kept losing wickets.

**The scores:** South Africa 192 for six in 20 overs (Reeza Hendricks 74, Faf du Plessis 78, Usman Shinwari three for 31) bt Pakistan 186 for nine in 20 overs (Babar Azam 38, Hussain Talat 40, Shoib Malik 49, Beuran Hendricks two for 40, Chris Morris two for 39, Tabraiz Shamsi two for 33).

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### Almost 100 per cent

Ashwin said later, "I'm almost back to 100 per cent. I bowled close to 40 overs in the last game but I would like to keep going through the journey."

Along the way, he has not allowed disappointments to consume him. "I've always loved playing matches together. It's quite unfortunate that when I was bowling really well overseas, I had to encounter injuries back to back. It's frustrating but you have to put it behind and keep moving."

Looking back at the triumphant Test series in Australia,

The past few months tested his resolve. Fitness concerns proved a roadblock. Now, his focus unwavering, he is back on the road.

Off-spinning all-rounder R. Ashwin missed the last three Tests of the historic four-match series against Australia because of an abdominal strain.

He has recovered well. So much so that he is batting and bowling without any discomfort in the TNCA first division league, where he notched up a half-century for MRC-A here on Saturday.

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Looking back at the triumphant Test series in Australia,

## Ashwin – working his way back

Continues to pursue the game he loves and the goals he has set

S. DINAKAR  
CHENNAI

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Looking back at

# Vidarbha and Saurashtra vie for the top prize

The former will look to extend its lease on the title, while the latter eyes maiden success

## RANJI FINAL

AMOL KARHADKAR  
NAGPUR

The practice area of the VCA Stadium at Jamtha saw interesting interactions between the rival camps on the eve of what could be perceived as a low-profile Ranji Trophy final.

Cheteshwar Pujara, the run-machine that has led Saurashtra's charge in the knockouts after wearing

Australian bowlers down in another continent, walked up to Wasim Jaffer, his Indian Oil senior who has surpassed 1000 runs in the season, after finishing his stint in the nets.

A little while later, Saurashtra captain Jaydev Unadkat and his Vidarbha new-ball counterpart Umesh Yadav were involved in a hearty exchange.

### Contrasting styles

While the four pillars, on whom the fate of the Ranji final will hinge on, were trying to relax themselves and their teammates ahead of the big final, the two men in charge of the teams continued their contrasting styles.

Chandrakant Pandit, who will be a part of the fourth consecutive Ranji final – and sixth in his glittering innings as coach – was a typically hard task-master, hardly breaking into a smile. Shitanshu Kotak, the Saurashtra coach, lived up to his billing as a smiling assassin by constantly trying to keep his wards calm.

It will be the ability of these six men – to lead from the front and manoeuvre others in their groups – that could be the difference bet-



**Batathon men:** Cheteshwar Pujara of Saurashtra and Vidarbha's Wasim Jaffer could well be involved in a battle of their own.

• VIVEK BENDRE

been Vidarbha doubling its Ranji title count and Saurashtra overcoming the horrors of its last two Ranji finals.

### Sterling role

Pujara, ever since he has joined the team for the quarterfinals, has played a sterling role in Saurashtra overhauling two mammoth fourth-innings chases against formidable opponents in the last two rounds.

If he can counter the hostility of Umesh – who is on a roll since returning from Australia with 21 wickets in the two knock-outs games – Saurashtra can surely hope to walk away with the coveted trophy for the first time.

Similarly, Unadkat has not only led the troupes well but

has been consistent with his left-arm pacers, scalping seven wickets apiece in Saurashtra's victories versus Uttar Pradesh and Karnataka.

It will be the other mini-battle between him and stalwart Jaffer that will play a pivotal role in the outcome on what appears to be a typical five-day Jamtha pitch.

With the focus on the leading stars, Saurashtra will bank on the seasoned Sheldon Jackson and left-arm spinner Dharmendrasinh Jadeja to keep up their consistency. Similarly, Vidarbha will look to captain Faiz Fazal to make an impact, along with wicketkeeper-batsman Akshay Wadkar and all-rounder Aditya Sarvate.

If the big guns are on fire,

the next five days will witness a clash of the equals.

### The teams (from):

**Vidarbha:** Faiz Fazal (Capt.), R. Sanjay, Atharva Taide, Wasim Jaffer, Ganesh Satish, Mohit Kale, Akshay Wadkar (wk), Siddhesh Wath, Aditya Sarvate, Akshay Karnewar, Akshay Wakhare, Umesh Yadav, Rajneesh Gurbani, Yash Thakur and Sunil Bingevar.

**Saurashtra:** Jaydev Unadkat (Capt.), Snell Patel, Harvil Desai, Vishwajir Jadeja, Cheteshwar Pujara, Sheldon Jackson, Arpit Vasavada, Prerak Mankad, Chirag Jani, Avi Barot, Kishan Parmar, Dharmendrasinh Jadeja, Hardik Rathod, Vandan Jivrajani, Kamlesh Makwana and Chetan Sakariya.

**On-field umpires:** Anil Chaudhary and Shamsuddin; **Third umpire:** Nitin Menon; **Match referee:** Col. Chimay Sharma.

A sneak peek into the recent Ranji finals:

## Stat attack

### The final frontier

▪ Jaffer will feature in his 10th Ranji final. The veteran has ended up on the winning side on all nine occasions, eight times for Mumbai and for Vidarbha last season

▪ Pandit will be involved as a coach for the fourth Ranji final in succession. While Mumbai won the 2015-16 final and lost to Gujarat the season after, Faiz Fazal's Vidarbha rolled over formidable Delhi in last year's final

▪ Saurashtra will feature in its third final in six years. Skipper Unadkat and seasoned batsmen Sheldon Jackson and Arpit Vasavada are the only three players to feature in all three

▪ Nagpur will host the Ranji Trophy final for the first time



## Super six

A hard task-master and a successful coach

**2017-18:** Vidarbha bt Delhi by 9 wickets at Indore

**2016-17:** Gujarat bt Mumbai by 5 wickets at Indore

**2015-16:** Mumbai bt Saurashtra by an innings and 21 runs at Pune

**2014-15:** Karnataka bt Tamil Nadu by an innings and 217 runs at Mumbai

**2013-14:** Karnataka bt Maharashtra by 7 wickets at Hyderabad

**2012-13:** Mumbai bt Saurashtra by an innings and 125 runs at Mumbai

## Captainspeak

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NAGPUR

No one would have thought of a Ranji Trophy final between Saurashtra and Vidarbha 10 years back.

That's how cricket has spread in India. It's not just about the big teams anymore. Everyone is believing now.

We have played away even in quarters and semis. It's not about playing home or away but belief. It's really great at the moment.

– **Jaydev Unadkat, Saurashtra**

Somebody asked who we get inspiration from. I had said the inspiration lies in the team.

We get inspired by each other. The team has enough inspirations.

In every game since the last two years, somebody or the other raised their hand to take responsibility.

– **Faiz Fazal, Vidarbha**

year in succession, the team he has been in charge of has been in the Ranji final.

When Pandit took over as the Mumbai Under-19 coach soon after retiring in 2000-01, his coach Ramakant Achrekar, the coach of Sachin Tendulkar among others, had told him: "You will carry on my mantle of grooming youngsters".

If Vidarbha can win its second successive title, it will be a fitting farewell by Pandit to his coach, who passed away four weeks ago.

## Higuain eases pressure on Sarri

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
LONDON

Gonzalo Higuain eased the pressure on Maurizio Sarri as the Chelsea striker's first goals for his new club inspired a 5-0 demolition of Huddersfield on Saturday.

Amid reports the Italian is already in danger of the sack less than a year after taking charge, he was indebted to his old friend Higuain for lifting the gloom around Stamford Bridge.

Higuain, signed on loan from Juventus at Sarri's behest, opened his account early in the first half of Chelsea's biggest win of the season.

Earlier Tottenham left it late again, but Son Heung-min's strike seven minutes from time earned a hard-fought 1-0 win over Newcastle.

The results: Premier League: Tottenham 1 (Son 83) bt Newcastle 0; Brighton 0 drew with Watford 0; Burnley 1 (Barnes 90+4-pen) drew with Southampton 1 (Redmond 55); Chelsea 5 (Higuain 16, 69, Hazard 45+1-pen, 66, Luiz 86) bt Huddersfield 0; Crystal Palace 2 (Milivojevic 25-pen, Schlupp 87) bt Fulham 0; Everton 1 (Gomes 27) lost to Wolves 3 (Neves 7-pen, Jimenez 45, Dendoncker 66).

Serie A: Empoli 2 (Caputo 45+2, 52) drew with Cheivo 2 (Giacherini 31, Stepinski 45+1).

Bundesliga: Hoffenheim 1 (Kramaric 16-pen) drew with Fortuna Duesseldorf 1 (Henning 47); Bayer Leverkusen 3 (Bailey 53, Volland 63, Alario 89) bt Bayern Munich 1 (Gotz 41); Eintracht Frankfurt 1 (Jovic 36) drew with Borussia Dortmund 1 (Reus 22); Hertha Berlin 0 lost to Wolfsburg 1 (Weghorst 66); Nuremberg 1 (Ishak 45) drew with Werder Bremen 1 (Eggestein 64).

On Friday: La Liga: Huesca 4 (Gallego 19, Pulido 50, Moises 53, Avila 77) bt Real Valladolid 0.

## + Sir Cecil and Star Superior should fight it out

MUMBAI Sir Cecil and Star Superior should fight out the finish of the Kingfisher Ultra Indian Derby (Gr.I), the most prestigious race of the Indian Turf, to be run on Sunday (Feb.3) at Mahalaxmi race course.

Rails will be placed at the original point.

Bonanza for Punters: A gross amount of Rupees One Crore will be added to the combined Jackpot pool collection.

**TATTERSALLS MILLION** (1,400m), Cl. IV, rated 20 to 46, 2.30 p.m.: 1. Barack (I) L. Roche 61.5, 2. Perpetual Winning (8) R. Downey 60.5, 3. Hodson's Horse (2) S. Amit 59, 4. King Khalil (3) Yash 59, 5. My Precious (4) A. Imran Khan 56.5, 6. Ustad Pedro (9) S. Chino 55.5, 7. Cormorant (7) Zervan 54, 8. Hells Belles (6) Malam 49.5 and 9. Navigator (5) C. Umesh 49.5.

**1. BARACK, 2. KING KHALIL, 3. PERPETUAL WINNING.**

**2. RUSI PATEL TROPHY** (Gr.3) (2,1600m), 4-y-o & over, 3.00: 1. Sergeant At Arms (6) Akshay Kumar 59, 2. Cambridge (4) Neeraj 56, 3. Your Royal Majesty (8) L. Roche 56, 4. Big Sur (5) David Alilan 53, 5. Costa Brava (2) Trevor 53, 6. Grand Accord (3) Bhawani 51, 7. New England (1) Sandesh 51 and 8. Phoenix Tiger (7) Zervan 54.

**1. DESERT GOD, 2. SALAZAAR, 3. MATHAIYUS.**

**3. B.K.RATTONSEY MEMORIAL** (1,200m), Maiden, 3-y-o only, 4.45: 1. Cliffs Of Capri (2) Trevor 53, 2. Desert Empire (10) David Al-

lan 56, 3. Gods Plan (4) Imran Chisty 56, 4. Headway (7) Zervan 56, 5. Resolution (11) Yash 56, 6. Sandman (1) Chouhan 56, 7. C'est L'Amour (8) C. Umesh 54.5, 8. Conscience (12) Neeraj 54.5, 9. Divine Glory (5) Sandesh 54.5, 10. Elation (9) L. Roche 54.5, 11. Missing You (6) Suraj Narredu 54.5 and 12. See The Sunrise (3) Merchant 54.5.

**1. MISSING YOU, 2. DESERT EMPIRE, 3. HEADWAY.**

**4. S.M.SHAH ECLIPSE STAKES OF INDIA** (Gr.2), (2,000m), 4-y-o & over, 4.15: 1. Desert God (10) David Allan 60, 2. Caprice (4) R. Downey 58, 3. Mathaiyus (7) Srinath 58, 4. Salazar (2) Suraj Narredu 58, 5. Jack Frost (9) Chouhan 56, 6. Raees (3) Sandesh 55, 7. B. Fifty Two (8) Imran Chisty 55, 8. Selfie Star (II) Neeraj 52, 9. Oomph! (1) Akshay 51, 10. Smasher (6) Parmar 50 and 11. Supreme General (5) Bhawani 50.

**1. DESERT GOD, 2. SALAZAAR, 3. MATHAIYUS.**

**5. PADMINI & GOBIND JHANGANI MILLION** (1,200m), Maiden, 3-y-o only, 4.45: 1. Stars Of Capri (2) Trevor 53, 2. Star Councillor (9) A. Imran Khan 62, 2. Intense Stylist (5) Trevor 60.5 and 14. Merlot (5) Imran Chisty 55.

**1. SIR CECIL, 2. STAR SUPERIOR, 3. MATHAIYUS.**

**6. KINGFISHER ULTRA INDIAN DERBY** (Gr.1), (2,400m), Indian Horses 4-y-o only, 5.30: 1. Augustus Caesar (2) Neeraj 57, 2. Bushtoppa (10) Chouhan 57, 3. Mr Handsome (13) Yash 57, 4. Pioneer (6) Trevor 57, 5. Sacred Roman (1) Srinath 57, 6. Sir Cecil (7) David Allan 57, 7. Star Superior (11) Suraj Narredu 57, 8. Tasawwur (8) A. Imran Khan 57, 9. Valegro (4) Parmer 57, 10. Vintage (3) Zervan 57, 11. Adjudicate (9) Sandesh 55.5, 12. Bluebell (12) L. Roche 55.5, 13. Eyes For You (4) R. Downey 55.5 and 14. Merlot (5) Imran Chisty 55.

**1. DIVINE POWER, 2. MIGHTY RAVIOR, 3. BONAFIDE.**

Day's Best : SERGEANT AT ARMS. Double : BARACK – HUNT FOR GOLD.

Treble : (i) 5, 6 & 7 (ii) 6, 7 & 8. Tanala : All races.

Super Jackpot : 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 & 8.

Super Jackpot : 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 & 8.

Super Jackpot : 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 & 8.

Super Jackpot : 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 & 8.

Super Jackpot : 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 & 8.

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Super Jackpot : 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 & 8.

Super Jackpot : 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 & 8.

## TV PICKS

**India vs New Zealand:** 5th ODI, Star Sports 1 & HD, 7.30 a.m.  
**Australia vs Sri Lanka:** 2nd Test, Sony Six (SD & HD), 5 p.m.  
**NBA:** Sony Ten 1 (SD & HD), 5.30 a.m.  
**West Indies vs England:** 2nd Test, Sony Ten 1 (SD & HD), 7.30 p.m.  
**South Africa vs Pakistan:** 2nd T20I, 6 p.m.  
**Pro Volleyball League:** Sony Six (SD & HD), 7 p.m.  
**ISL:** Star Sports 1 (SD & HD), 7.30 p.m.  
**EPL:** Star Sports Select 1, 6.30 p.m.

## IN BRIEF



## Pucovski leaves Australia Test squad

CANBERRA Young batting prospect Will Pucovski has left the Australian Test squad to deal with mental health issues that have sidelined him in the past, Australian cricket officials said. The 20-year-old smashed a superb 243 for Victoria against Western Australia this season, which saw him parachuted into the national squad for the two Tests against Sri Lanka. He was overlooked for the first one in Brisbane and again missed out on selection for the second Test. AFP



## Irving shines as Celtics beat Knicks

LOS ANGELES Kyrie Irving, who could become a free agent at the end of the season, finished with 23 points, 10 rebounds and six assists as Boston Celtics defeated New York Knicks 113-99 on Friday. The contest came just one day after Knicks traded injured Kristaps Porzingis to the Dallas Mavericks which will give New York the funds to go after top free agents this summer.

**The results:** Denver Nuggets 136 bt Houston Rockets 122; Miami Heat 102 lost to Oklahoma City Thunder 118; New York Knicks 99 lost to Boston Celtics 113; Utah Jazz 128 bt Atlanta Hawks 112; Charlotte Hornets 100 bt Memphis Grizzlies 92. AFP

## Ajay Malik clinches ITF grade-5 title

INDORE Ajay Malik defeated second seed Kabir Hans 6-2, 6-3 to clinch the boys title in the ITF grade-5 junior tennis tournament at the Indore Tennis Club courts on Saturday. Ajay had earlier won the doubles title with Yash Chaurasia. In the girls final, Shreya Gulia outplayed eighth seed Sanjana Sirimalla 6-1, 6-0. **The results (finals):** Boys: Ajay Malik bt Kabir Hans 6-2, 6-3, Girls: Shreya Gulia bt Sanjana Sirimalla 6-1, 6-0.

## Schools India Cup athletics from today

NEW DELHI: More than 300 athletes from 13 States will participate in the Schools India Cup athletics championships to be held at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium warm-up track on February 3 and 4.

The Schools India Cup was launched by the School Sports Promotion Foundation (SSPF) in collaboration with the Sports Authority of India (SAI) in 2015 and is recognised by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, and supported by the Ministry of HRD to implement the National Talent Search & Nurture program (NTSN).

## Qatar coach hailed after stunning triumph

Almoez Ali scored a tournament-record nine goals; The Maroons conceded only once

## ASIAN CUP

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
ABU DHABI

Qatar coach Felix Sanchez shrugged off comparisons to Pep Guardiola on Friday after masterminding a breathtaking Asian Cup football victory just three years before the 2022 World Cup on home turf.

Almoez Ali scored a tournament-record nine goals and the Maroons conceded only once as they swept to the first continental title in their history, beating Japan 3-1 in the final.

## Shades of Guardiola

Almoez said he saw shades of Manchester City's Guardiola in Sanchez, who coached Barcelona's youth players before joining Qatar's national academy in 2006 and working his way through the ranks.

"I've been working with him for nine years, he's highly intelligent," said the 21-year-old striker. "I compare him to Guardiola because he

No concerns about the World Cup, it's in 2022 and you don't even know what's going to happen in two weeks.

- FELIX SANCHEZ,  
Qatar coach

has the same ideas."

But Sanchez said that Almoez only made the comment "because I'm there (listening) and he wants to keep playing".

"I've worked with Almoez for a very long time and we have good relationship," the Spaniard said. "He's very easy to coach because he's a hard worker and he deserves everything that has happened to him in this tournament."

Qatar upset former champion Saudi Arabia, Iraq and South Korea during its march to the final, but they weren't the only challenges it faced.

The Qatar players were pelted with shoes and plastic bottles by a hostile home crowd as they beat the Unit-

ed Arab Emirates 4-0 in the semifinals.

The UAE then lodged a protest over the eligibility of Almoez and defender Bassam Al-Rawi which was dismissed just hours before the start of the final.

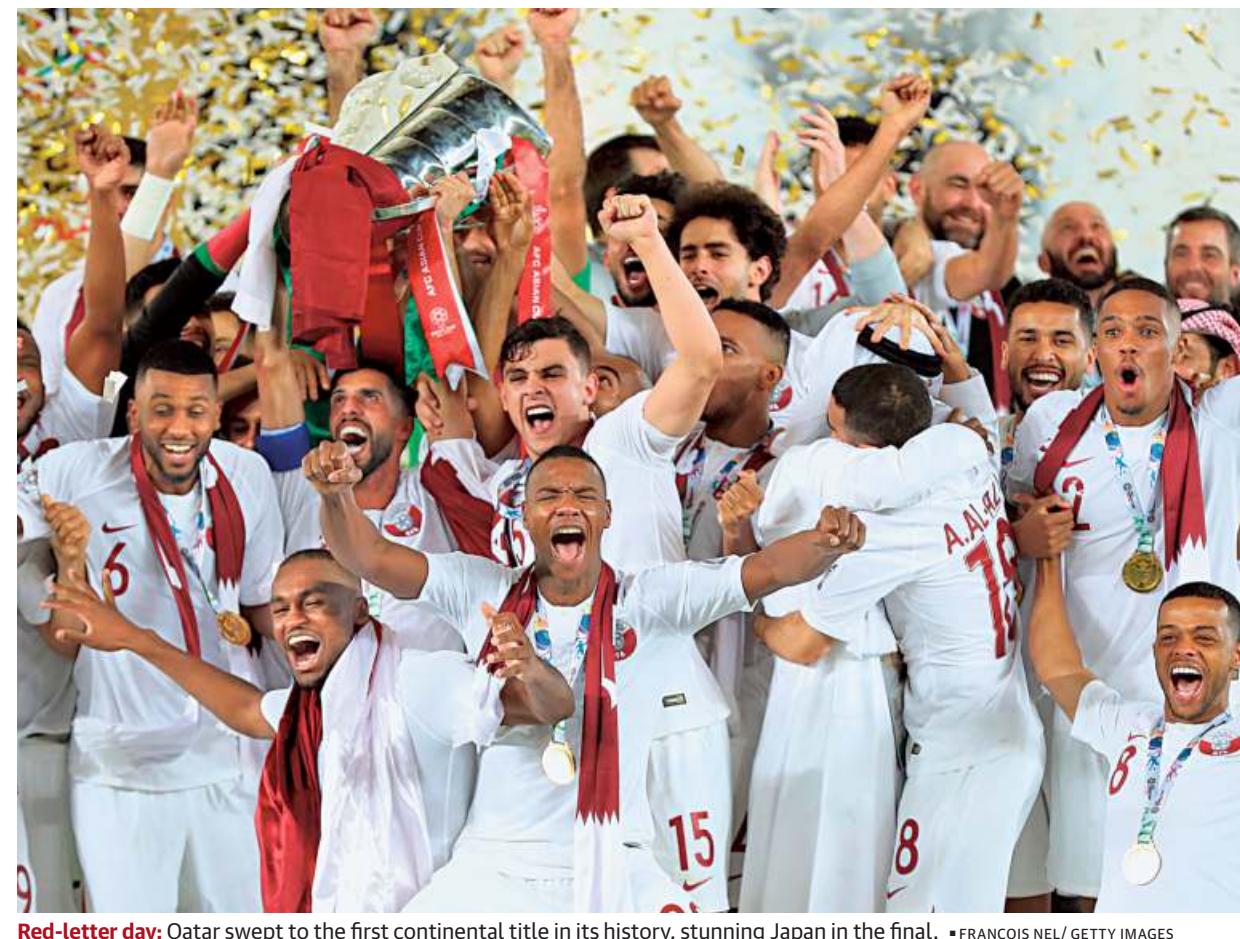
Sanchez insisted he had "no concerns" about the eligibility row and also dismissed speculation that notoriously trigger-happy Qatar might replace him with a big-name coach before the World Cup.

## Proud'

"I'm very proud to be the Qatar national team coach. Today we made history. I'm only thinking about today. It's a great day for me and the players and the country," Sanchez said.

"There's always news about this person and that person but we're focused on our work and we have the full support of the QFA."

"No concerns about the World Cup, it's in 2022 and you don't even know what's going to happen in two weeks."



Red-letter day: Qatar swept to the first continental title in its history, stunning Japan in the final. ■ FRANCOIS NEL/GT GETTY IMAGES

## India has a lot to learn from France'

Lizarazu puts it down to the structured training in his country and other European nations

## VIJAY LOKAPALLY

NEW DELHI Two schools from Srinagar making it to the National Finals of the 'Adidas Football The BASE' and watched by 1998 World Cup winner and FC Bayern Hall of Famer, Xivente Lizarazu, must inspire many more from across the country to play this beautiful game.

"This tournament," said Lizarazu, "is like a World Cup for the young. It gives a chance to young players in India to play a world tournament which is unique. They play against other countries like USA, Thailand, Singapore, and get a chance to train and play in Allianz Arena and talk with professionals of FC Bayern Munich."

"I have been a player with Bayern Munich for nine years and I know they will have a fantastic experience. They will have to tell the story to their friends in India, to see what is the level in Europe and how they can improve here."

## Sustaining the success

According to Lizarazu, sustaining the success of the 2018 FIFA World Cup win will be important for France.

"In France we have very good schools. That is why we are bringing a lot of talented and young players. We are very strong in this aspect.

"But then you need to train in the good way to improve and to be good during 10 years. To be good when



Bixente Lizarazu. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

you are 20 years is one thing and then to make a fantastic career during 10-20 years, like Messi and Ronaldo, is another. The most difficult work now for France will be to beat other teams who can be very good in the next competitions like Euro Cup

(2020) and World Cup in the correct way."

The Indians have a lot to learn from France and a few other teams. "India is learning from the structure and organisation of Bayern which is a very good organisation. Germany did not have success in this WC but they have a very fantastic school of football."

"At the moment we are talking about France because they are the world champion. In Europe, (nations like) Germany, Spain and France have the best schools and the best way of learning football. India can learn from these countries and take the best things. You need a trainer to come to India to help the players train

## Future Messi or Ronaldo

Can the world see another Messi or Ronaldo from the current lot? "To be Messi or Ronaldo is not something so easy. It is easy to be good for one year and these guys have been good for 15 years. They are making 60-70 goals in a year.

"At the moment the best young player is (Kylian) Mbappe. Neymar is also very good. Let's see if they are able to do same thing like Messi and Ronaldo. A lot of very good players are good only for three to five years and then they fall because they are not professional. Messi and Ronaldo are amazing."

## Mehuli hits the bull's eye again

## INTERSHOOT

## EGYPT

**The results:** Men: Air pistol: 1. Dharmandra Singh 246.4 (583); 2. Julio Almeida (Bra) 243.9 (579). 3. Jitu Rai 223.1 (579); 6. Shahzar Rizvi 159.9 (580); 7. Om Prakash Mitharval 139.7 (577).

**Junior men:** 1. Bastian Strack (Ger) 237.4 (572); 2. James Miller (Wal) 235.9 (573); 3. Jan-Hendrik Waldvogt (Ger) 215.6 (571); 6. Deepak Dhariwal 155.7 (570); 7. Milan Chaudhary 130.2 (556).

**Air rifle:** 1. Sandeep Singh 251.5 (628.6); 2. Yu Haonan (Chn) 229.6 (626.8); 4. Deepak Kumar 207.0 (628.4); 5. Vishwajeet Singh Jhala 185.8 (623.8); 8. Rahul Lal Chauhan 120.8 (622.8); 9. Pankaj Kumar 617.6.

**Junior men:** 1. Akshat Seth 247.8 (613.8); 2. Jon-Hermann Hegg (Nor) 247.1 (621.6); 3. Aleksander Teisrud (Nor) 225.0 (621.9).

**Women:** Air pistol: 1. Afaf El-hodhod (Egy) 239.3 (571); 2. Heena Sidhu 238.6 (570); 3. Zhang Mengxue (Chn) 218.0 (584); 6. P. Shri Nivetha 155.2 (575).

**Junior women:** 1. Karen Quezada (Mex) 236.3 (559); 2. Harriet Watson (Eng) 224.9 (534); 3. Hannah Beishaw (GBR) 204.4 (532); 5. Mufaddal Deewawala 163.9 (549).

**Air rifle:** 1. Mehuli Ghosh 248.7 (621.8); 2. Gao Mingwei (Chn) 248.0 (631.0); 3. Vinita Bhardwaj 227.5 (630.0); 7. Ayonika Paul 143.6 (625.9).

## Ireland holds India

## PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

## MURCIA (SPAIN)

Drag-flicker Gurjit Kaur scored in the first half to put the Indian women's hockey team ahead before World Cup silver medallists Ireland fought back to a 1-1 draw in the opening friendly match here on Friday.

India will end the 10-day tour of Spain with the second and final friendly match on Sunday.

Ireland got off to a good start as it made a first breakthrough in the fourth minute when it created a PC opportunity. But the chance went amiss with the Irish defending well.

Gurjit made no mistake in putting the ball past the Irish goalkeeper Emma Buckley in the 18th minute.

Ireland's 1-0 lead put the Irish on the backfoot. It was only in the 45th minute when Ireland struck a field goal through Sarah Hawkshaw that levelled the score to 1-1.

However, in the 45th minute Ireland struck through Sarah Hawkshaw.



On the mark: It was the second successive gold in women's air rifle for Mehuli Ghosh. ■ FILE PHOTO

## ATK-Jamshepur in intriguing battle

Both are fighting for a berth in the final phase

## ISL

## AMITABHA DAS SHARMA

## KOLKATA

The contest for a top-four finish is drawing a lot of interest in the Indian Super League which will see another such battle when host ATK meets Jamshepur FC in a match at the Salt Lake Stadium here on Sunday.

Jamshepur, which is currently on 20 points from 13 matches, is fifth in the table and will be trying hard to log full points and regain its position in the top-four. Host ATK, which follows behind

with 17 points from 13 outings, will also be going for a win and keep its qualification hopes alive.

Interestingly, both sides have a defence-oriented approach as evident from their high number of draws. Jamshepur, like the current leader Bengaluru FC, has lost just one game but eight draws (and four wins). Bengaluru, on the other hand, has won nine and drawn three (30 points from 13 matches).

ATK, which has suffered four reverses, has also shared points on five occasions.

the latest of which came against Kerala Blasters, which it drew 1-1 in the last outing at Kochi.

## On the attack

Realising the need for a win, ATK head coach Steve Copell urged his team to go on the offensive. "We have to be more unrestrained in terms of attacking. We have to play a little bit more off the cuff. We talk about (Manuel) Lanzzarote and Edu (Garcia), who are capable of scoring out of nothing. Jayesh (Rane) and Hitesh (Sharma) are also there. We need the players to

produce goals for us," Copell said.

Jamshepur FC coach Cesario Ferrando said the big number of draws are hurting his side.

"Yes, we have drawn a lot of matches. I think we played very well in many games but that has not been enough to win. We are a good team but we need to improve our attacks," Ferrando said.

Compounding Ferrando's problems will be the absence of Australian star Tim Cahill, who is injured, and Spanish winger Carlos Calvo, who is suspended.

## Punjab &amp; Sind Bank pips PNB

## PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

## GWALIOR

Punjab & Sind Bank (PSB) defeated Punjab National Bank 3-2 while the formidable Services Sports Control Board (SSCB) was held to a 3-3 draw by Hockey Chandigarh in the National A-district competition.

In Pool-A, Maninder Singh (32, 59) scored twice for Chandigarh while Captain Preetinder Singh (36) scored once. For SSCB, Rajant (45), A.P. Siraj (58) and Sayeed Rahim (60) scored to ensure that the teams split points. Comptroller & Auditor General of India (CAG) drew with 2-2 in Pool-B.

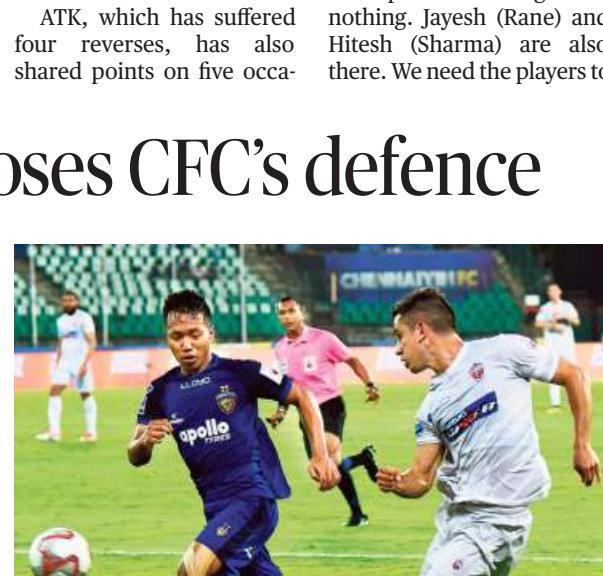
In the only match that had a decisive outcome, PSB scored through Parvinender Singh (3), Gaganpreet Singh (8), Ashish Sharma (21), while PNB scored through Gurjinder Singh (35) and Shamsher Singh (51). In Pool-D, Hockey Odisha drew with Canara Bank 0-0.

Chennaiyin took the lead through C.K. Vineeth. Chennaiyin dominated possession after going behind but Pune defended much better.

## The result:

Chennaiyin 1 (Vineeth 55) lost to FC Pune City 2 (Marcelinho 59', 60').

A minute later, Pune took the lead when Ashique Kuruvilla



On the prowl: Marcelinho did the star turn for Pune.

■ M. VEDHAN

Chennaiyin took the lead through C.K. Vineeth.

The lead, however, lasted just two minutes. Marko Stankovic got past a half-hearted challenge and cut the ball back to Marcelinho who found the equaliser with a first-time finish.

The Blues' first shot on target came in the



सत्यमेव जयते



# Mission Delivering Development



**Satya Pal Malik**  
Governor, J&K

## Narendra Modi

Prime Minister

to

**Lay Foundation Stone of  
AIIMS Kashmir at Awantipora &**

**Transit Accommodation for Kashmiri Migrant State Government Employees**

**Dedicate**

**Jalandhar-Samba-Rajouri-Shopian-Amargarh (Sopore)  
Transmission Line (1000 MW Capacity) 400 KV D/C**

**Declare**

**Electrification of 100% households  
in J&K under SAUBHAGYA**

**Inaugurate**

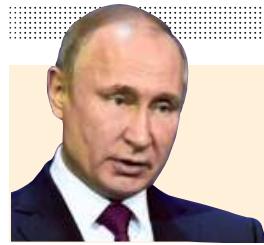
**Facilities for Rural BPO Bandipora &  
Multipurpose Indoor Sports Facility Ganderbal**

**Lay Foundation Stone/ Inaugurate**

**RUSA Colleges, Entrepreneurship, Innovation & Career Hubs,  
Women's University**

**SKICC, Srinagar  
3<sup>rd</sup> February 2019**

**TURNING THE CORNER – THROUGH NEW VISION, NEW DIRECTION**



Putin takes Russia out of Cold War-era missile treaty  
page 3



Nawaz Sharif shifted to hospital from jail after government order  
page 3



Garg hopes FY2018-19 will end with fiscal deficit of 3.3% of GDP  
page 7

SECTION 2



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## IN BRIEF



## Hague court frees Ivory Coast's former President

THE HAGUE  
Former Ivory Coast President Laurent Gbagbo was freed from detention by the International Criminal Court on the condition that he stay in the country that agrees to take him in. On Saturday, Belgium said it was willing to host Mr. Gbagbo, pending an appeal against his acquittal on January 15.

WORLD ▶ PAGE 3

## Virginia Governor 'sorry' for racist yearbook

WASHINGTON  
Ralph Northam, Democratic Governor of the U.S. State of Virginia, is facing calls to resign after he confirmed that he appeared in a racist yearbook photo, and said he is "deeply sorry."

WORLD ▶ PAGE 3

## Macedonia to become NATO's 30th member

BRUSSELS  
The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) said on Saturday that its 29 members would on Wednesday clear the way for Macedonia to become the alliance's 30th member, following its historic name change. Macedonian Foreign Minister Nikola Dimitrov will attend the ceremony.

WORLD ▶ PAGE 3

## Good catch



**Fish eye:** A cheeky seagull fishing from a net in the Chilika Lake in Odisha, considered the second largest lagoon in the world. The waterbody is a major source of livelihood for fishermen, and attracts over 10 lakh migratory birds annually. ■ K.R. DEEPAK

## J&amp;K police bust JeM terror module

Breakthrough came while police were probing grenade attack on CRPF camp

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
SRINAGAR

The Jammu and Kashmir police on Saturday busted a Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) terror module by arresting three persons, an official said.

The breakthrough came while the police were investigating the grenade attack on a Central Reserve Police

Force (CRPF) camp at Sopore on January 25, a police spokesperson said. The three were picked up for questioning in connection with the attack.

"During questioning, the suspects confessed to their involvement in the attack. They were then formally placed under arrest," the spokesperson said.

Gulham Qadir Rather alias Kasir, Ajiaz Ahmad Khan and Owais Khalid Dar were arrested from their home town of Sopore in Baramulla district.

**Support from militants**  
"They revealed that JeM terrorists active in Sopore provided two grenades to these individuals for attacking the

security forces to cause damage to life and property and instil fear in the public," the spokesperson said. The official said one live grenade had been recovered.

On January 25, a grenade was hurled at a CRPF camp at Sopore, but it missed the target and exploded outside the camp. No one was injured.

## Money laundering case: Vadra gets interim bail

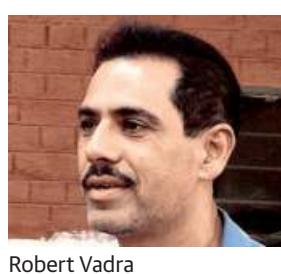
Court directs him to join ED probe

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI

A Delhi court on Saturday granted interim bail till February 16 to Robert Vadra in a money-laundering case and asked him to appear before the Enforcement Directorate and cooperate in the investigation.

Mr. Vadra, who is abroad, on Friday filed an anticipatory bail application in the case linked to the allegations of money laundering in the purchase of a London property – 12, Bryanston Square – worth £1.9 million. The property is allegedly owned by Mr. Vadra, the brother-in-law of Congress president Rahul Gandhi.

Counsel for Mr. Vadra said he would return to Delhi from London on February 6 and join the probe.



## Citizenship Bill stir: no inputs of extremist role

Assam police chief says probe needed

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
GUWAHATI

The Assam police are ascertaining the role of extremist groups in the ongoing protests in the State against the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2016.

Addressing a press conference with Chief Secretary Alok Kumar on Saturday, Director-General of Police Kuladhar Saikia, however, said security forces did not have specific inputs about the involvement of extremists in the movement.

"Eight cases have so far been registered over stray incidents of violence, and several people arrested. We can ascertain the involvement of underground outfits only after a thorough interrogation," Mr. Saikia said.

Finance and Health Mi-

nister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Friday said the United Liberation Front of Assam-Independent was remote-controlling the protests. He claimed that the Bill was needed to save the State from "going Jinnah's way."

**Appeal for restraint**  
Appealing for restraint, Mr. Alok Kumar said, "The State is passing through a challenging phase, although the law and order situation [arising out of the protests] is under control. The people have a right to protest, but there have been certain deviations."

Mr. Saikia said the police were overburdened with cases of social media abuse. Such cases, he felt, were taking up much of the time of police personnel.

## Temples stave off extinction of turtles here

Species that have disappeared in the wild are being bred in Assam's shrines

RAHUL KARMAKAR  
GUWAHATI

It received 'divine protection' for many years and now, the rarest of India's 28 turtle species is back where it belongs – in the wild – where it went extinct years ago.

The black softshell turtle (*Nilssonia nigricans*) figures in the International Union for Conservation of Nature's (IUCN) Red List as "extinct in the wild". But a few temple ponds in Assam and Bangladesh are bringing these turtles back from the brink.

**Released into wetlands**  
One such pond is in Hayagriva Madhab Temple at Hajo, about 30 km west of Guwahati. Locals regard the turtles in the pond as Kurma avatar of Lord Vishnu to



A black softshell turtle being released in the water.

whom the Hajo temple is dedicated.

"On January 27, we released 35 hand-reared turtle hatchlings, including 16 black softshells, in the Haduk Beel (wetland) of Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary. These turtles were bred in the Hayagriva Madhab temple pond," Jayaditya Purkayasta of Help Earth

said. Pobitora, often referred to as 'Mini Kaziranga', is about 50 km east of Guwahati.

The other turtle species moved from the temple pond to the wild was Indian softshell (*Nilssonia gangetica*) and the peacock softshell (*Nilssonia hurum*).

Hatchlings of the three turtle species were moved to the Assam State Zoo in Guwahati, where they were monitored for a quarantine period of 39 days, before being released into the wild.

"This is a milestone in Assam's turtle conservation history, and it would not have been possible without the interest shown by the temple authorities in the artificial breeding programme. The Forest Department and Turtle Survival Alliance provided

logistical support," Mr. Purkayasta said.

Pradipta Baruah, Divisional Forest Officer, Guwahati Wildlife Division, said that a certain degree of faith attached to turtles has helped them survive in temple ponds.

Taking the turtle conservation story forward is seen as a major challenge for wildlife officials in Pobitora, vulnerable to poachers because of a sizeable one-horned rhino population.

India hosts 28 species of turtles, of which 20 are found in Assam. But consumption of turtle meat and eggs, silt mining, encroachment of wetlands and change in flooding pattern have had a disastrous impact on the State's turtle population.

## Tangled food: forest animals near villages 'gulp' down plastic

Deer, foxes cannot separate waste from food and ingest it

AATHIRA PERINCHERY  
KOCHI

Plastic has found its way into the stomachs of numerous animals – from street-dwelling stray cattle to elephants in forests. More recently, wildlife biologists discovered carry bags and packets of gutka, chips and biscuits in elephant dung in northern Bengal.

However, some animals, including carnivores and ruminants such as deer, run a higher risk of consuming plastics because they are 'gulpers', lacking 'dexterous' hand or mouthparts, and consequently not able to separate food from plastic and other indigestible matter", write the authors of a study published recently in *Current Science*.



**Deadly mix:** A macaque with a wrapper removed from municipal waste. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

bags with waste while trying to feed. 'Handlers' and 'peckers' encountered plastic

during the day. At night, activity at the dumps was captured on camera traps.

The dumps drew 32 species (19 birds and 13 mammals), they found.

## Peck, sift or tear

The team classified the animals based on their feeding strategies to see if the differences in this behaviour put certain animals more at risk of consuming plastic. 'Peckers' included birds that could pull out food from other inedible waste, 'handlers' were dexterous-fingered animals such as rhesus macaques which could separate food material, and 'gulpers' were unable to sift out plastic. In half of the instances, animals tore open

bags with waste while trying to feed. 'Handlers' and 'peckers' encountered plastic more than twice as frequently as 'gulpers'. But the 'gulpers' – sambar deer and carnivores such as red foxes, which could not extract food efficiently from bags – spent more time foraging at dumps and were more likely to tear open polythene bags.

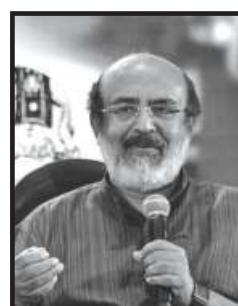
"This puts 'gulpers' more at risk of consuming plastic," said Ms. Katlam. Elephants (though not among mammals observed in the study) are 'gulpers,' as they cannot sift through unsegregated waste well, said Sreedhar Vijaykrishnan, a researcher at the Nature Conservation Foundation.



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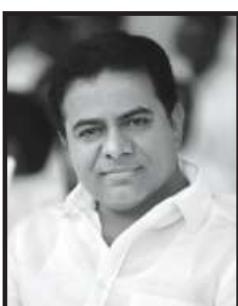
Date: February 9 & 10, 2019 | Venue: ITC Gardenia, Bengaluru



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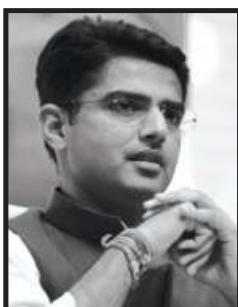
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K T Rama Rao



Krishna Byre Gowda



Sachin Pilot



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## Sunday, February 10

10.50 am to 11.40 am

*The future of the South: The southern states in a changing economic and political landscape*

**Krishna Byre Gowda**, Hon Minister for Rural Development and Panchayat Raj, Karnataka

**Ma Foi K Pandiarajan**, Hon Minister for Tamil Official Language and Tamil Culture, Tamil Nadu

**K T Rama Rao**, Working President, Telangana Rashtra Samithi

**T M Thomas Isaac**, Hon Minister of Finance, Kerala

In conversation with **Narayan Lakshman**, Associate Editor, *The Hindu*

3.35 pm to 4.25 pm

*Reviving the Congress: The way forward to 2019 & beyond*

**Sachin Pilot**, Hon Deputy Chief Minister of Rajasthan

In conversation with **Amit Baruah**, Resident Editor, Delhi, *The Hindu*

## IN BRIEF



## Efforts on to reopen Jammu-Srinagar NH

JAMMU With an improvement in the weather condition, the authorities have stepped up efforts to reopen the Jammu-Srinagar National Highway, which was closed for traffic since Thursday owing to landslips and snowfall. The 270 km highway links Kashmir to the rest of the country. PTI

## Six held for threatening Deputy Speaker, MLA

BALAGHAT Six persons, who allegedly wrote threatening letters to Madhya Pradesh Assembly Deputy Speaker Hina Kawre and MLA Sanjay Uike posing as naxals and demanded money, were arrested on Saturday. Efforts were on to arrest three more accused, Balaghat District Superintendent of Police Abhishek Tiwari said. PTI

## Suspected woman Maoist killed in shootout

RAJPIUR A suspected woman Maoist was killed and another injured on Saturday in an exchange of fire between security forces and ultras in Chhattisgarh on Saturday, the police said. The skirmish took place in the forest of Rengaigaon village, around 450 km from Raipur, Sukma SP Jitendra Shukla said. The condition of the injured suspect is stable. PTI

## Jeweller shot at in Raipur, ornaments stolen

RAJPIUR A 45-year-old jeweller, Jasraj Soni, was shot at allegedly by three men who snatched his bag containing jewellery, believed to be worth lakhs, when he was heading home from his shop here in Chhattisgarh, the police said on Saturday. Mr. Soni's son Mohit was also injured in the attack at Changorabhata. PTI

# The soulful music that calmed Assam six decades ago

A documentary resurrects the 1960 tour by Assam's Bhupen Hazarika and Bengal's Hemango Biswas at the peak of the Assamese-Bengali conflict

SUVIJIT BAGCHI  
KOLKATA

With cracks resurfacing in the relationship between the Assamese and the Bengalis due to the updation of the National Register of Citizens in Assam, a documentary intends to serve as a reminder of how music brought peace to Assam during the language riots of 1960.

The documentary has been made by Rongili Biswas, daughter of legendary Bengali singer Hemango Biswas. As a precursor to the film, she has released online a music album, titled 'Hemango-Bhupen: A Song for Everyone – Tales of the 1960 peace initiative against the linguistic riots in Assam'.

The tracks play in the background while stills – many of them rare photographs – tell the story of the 1960 riots, which broke out after Assamese was made the State language. This triggered large-scale violence and arson across Assam, home to many Bengalis.

It was then that Bengal's Hemango Biswas and Assam's Bhupen Hazarika (singer-lyricist recently honoured with Bharat Ratna) travelled with a peace caravan to pacify the mobs.

The duo travelled with a 30-member caravan across undivided Assam. "The artists came from all walks of life, representing a very rich folk tradition of various communities of Assam. Predominantly, they were from the Assam chapter of the leftist cultural movement IFTA (Indian People's Theatre Association), which completed its 75th year in 2018," said Ms. Biswas, an academic and musician in her own right.

Ms. Biswas made the documentary, 'A Song for Everyone', with a grant from the Bengaluru-based India Foundation for the Arts. The title



**Amity caravan:** Hemango Biswas and Bhupen Hazarika during their 1960 tour. At right is the cover of the album on the tour, which has been released online.

**C** At Nagaon, one of worst riot-hit areas, as Hemangoda and Bhupenda came down the stage, with arms around each other, many people started crying

RUBY HAZARIKA  
Member of the 1960 caravan

has been borrowed from a poem on the mission, composed by the Bengal poet Shankha Ghosh. "But I need to re-edit the film," Ms. Biswas said.

**Many hurdles**  
In the film, Ms. Biswas has interviewed many of the dancers, singers and musicians – now mostly in their late eighties – associated with the 1960 caravan. They narrate how the caravan slowly evolved, overcoming obstacles.

"It was not an easy situation," recalls Uma Dutta, a danseuse with the troupe, in the film. "A local person told us before our performance in Goreswar (in northwest Assam), one of the worst-hit areas: 'You Bengalis (there was another Bengali dancer, Sandhya Das) have come to

perform here. Don't you know how Bengali women were tortured here a few days back?"

Hemango Biswas noted in a small piece, 'Let Us Meet – A report on 1960 Peace Mission', that at almost every step of organising the event, for which he summoned Bhupen Hazarika from Kolkata, the team had to negotiate hurdles: "...both the communities tried to dissuade us. Some even made fun of us." But the show – which had artists from Khasi, Jayanta, Nepali, Assamese and Bengali communities – was a resounding success.

*Shillong Observer* had noted, "Out of the gloom of riot-torn life we emerge as brothers, each with distinctive culture and language orchestrated into a magnificent harmony united in creative labour for a prosperous future."

The high point of the performance was a song, specially produced for the occasion by Hazarika and Biswas, *Haradhan-Rongmon Katha*, a conversational ballad that narrated the story of two farmers Haradhan and Rongmon, one Bengali and another Assamese, who had come

together to survive in the backdrop of a fratricidal riot.

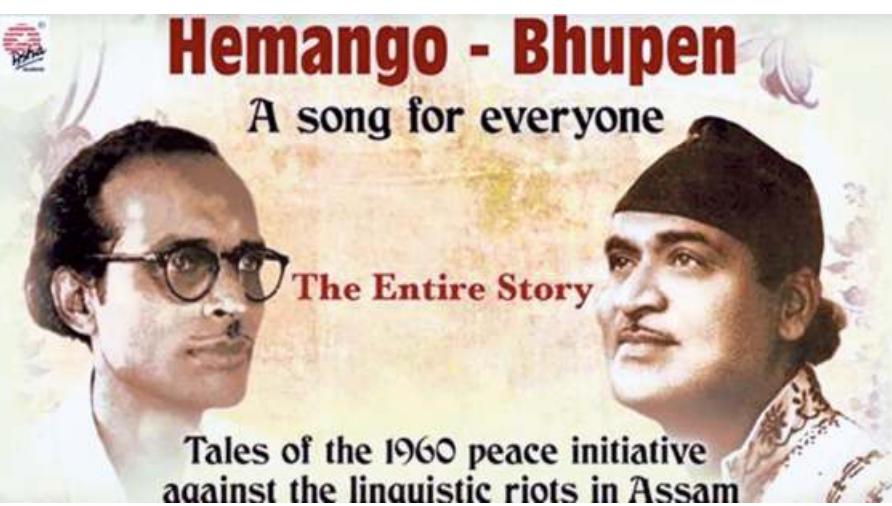
"Just as Bhupen's sensitive and mellifluous voice resonated with the sorrows of Haradhan, perhaps the meandering strains of Bhatiali in my voice too echoed Rongmon's grief. The audience was overwhelmed," noted Biswas.

**Strikes a chord**  
"I remember after the programme in Nagaon, one of worst riot-hit areas, as Hemangoda and Bhupenda came down from the stage, with arms around each other, many people started crying," recalls Ruby Hazarika, a team member. "The Gopinath Bordoloi Hall was chock-a-block and the song had a huge emotional impact," remembers Gyanada Bora, who attended the performance as a school student.

Bhupen Hazarika, who joined the BJP much later in 2004, joined IFTA after his return

Rongili Biswas,  
daughter of singer  
Hemango Biswas.

■ K. MURALI KUMAR



eration," he wrote.

In Tezpur and later in Mongoldoi, Assam IFTA's president and cultural icon Bishnu Prasad Rabha "demonstrated how the [British] colonial rule created a division and rift between different ethnic and linguistic groups" and the post-independence Congress government continued the "legacy forward."

Interestingly, it was the Congress government which arranged for the peace tour after the caravan's maiden performance in Shillong, realising that the Assamese-Bengali conflict was spiralling out of control.

"Bhupen and I got an invitation from the Chief Minister [Bimal Prasad Chalihal] and administrative responsibilities were delegated to Home Minister Fakhruddin Ali Saheb (later President of India)," noted Biswas.

Tez Hazarika's initial comments on hearing that Bharat Ratna was conferred on his father echoed the sentiment: "Awarding Bhupen Hazarika with the Bharat Ratna is a win for humanity, diversity and India as a secular democracy."

Their friendship consolidated as they jointly organised the third Assam conference of IFTA in 1955, when the likes of Balraj Sahni, Salil Chowdhury and Hemanta Mukherjee participated, among others.

So in 1960, "Bhupen arrived as soon as he received the telegram" to initiate his battle against fratricide. No wonder, his U.S.-based son

from the U.S. around 1952 and was "one of the most active and creative members of IFTA", noted Hemango Biswas.

They friendship consolidated as they jointly organised the third Assam conference of IFTA in 1955, when the likes of Balraj Sahni, Salil Chowdhury and Hemanta Mukherjee participated, among others.

The caravan – with the 30 performers in three cars and a jeep – moved from one district to another as the audiences started swelling. Not only the locals (some of whom were engaged in the conflict) joined, but many requested a performance in their localities.

"After so much of travelling we, the members of the Let Us Meet cultural troupe – who hardly used to know each other in the beginning – became one unit, a family," Hazarika says in the film.

Ms. Biswas plans to bring out, by next summer, a book containing short memoirs of Hazarika and Biswas, their letters, the songs and poems performed on the tour and small essays by them on each other. "Perhaps this is the most fitting time to revisit their works as the situation is appearing to be more complex than ever in Assam," she said.

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## Blowing hot and cold



**Fire amidst ice:** A firefighter in Toronto, Canada, working in subzero temperatures, caused due to the polar vortex, to tackle a blaze that destroyed the Agincourt Recreation Centre in the city. It is not yet known what caused the fire. ■ REUTERS

## Virginia Governor apologises for posing in 'racist, offensive' outfit

An old photo of Northam has prompted calls for him to quit

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
WASHINGTON

Ralph Northam, the Democratic Governor of the U.S. State of Virginia, is facing calls to resign after he confirmed that he appeared in a racist yearbook photo and said he is "deeply sorry".

"Earlier today, a website published a photograph of me from my 1984 medical school yearbook in a costume that is clearly racist and offensive," Mr. Northam said in a statement on Friday. "I am deeply sorry for the decision I made to appear as I did in this photo and for the hurt that decision caused them and now," he said. The photo, which was carried by various U.S. media outlets, depicts two people, one in blackface, the other dressed in a Ku Klux Klan robe and hood.

Mr. Northam did not spec-



Ralph Northam. ■ AFP

he would run in 2020. California Senator Kamala Harris, another African-American White House hopeful, meanwhile tweeted that "the stain of racism should have no place in the halls of government". The Governor has also been under fire over remarks about a bill that would have rolled back restrictions on late-term abortions.

Republicans took particular issue with comments he made when asked if the Bill would allow for abortions to be performed when a woman was already in labour.

The Bill failed to advance out of committee, but Republicans, including President Donald Trump, pounced on the comments. "Democrats are becoming the Party of late term abortion, high taxes, Open Borders and Crime!" Mr. Trump tweeted.

Last month's accord with

Brokers by U.S. Presi-

dent Ronald Reagan with last Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, the treaty ended a superpower build-up of warheads that had frightened Europeans. It banned ground-launched missiles with a range of 500 km to 5,500 km.

The deal addressed Soviet nuclear-tipped ballistic missiles targeting Western capitals, but put no restrictions

on other major military actors such as China. President Donald Trump said on Friday that Washington was starting a process to withdraw from the agreement in six months.

#### 60-day deadline

The U.S. in December gave Moscow a 60-day deadline to dismantle missiles it said breached the agreement. But Moscow has insisted that the disputed 9M729 missile is allowed under the treaty.

Mr. Lavrov on Saturday repeated Russian accusations that Washington itself has been in violation of the deal for many years. The Foreign Minister said Russia had "tried everything to save the treaty" in several rounds of diplomatic talks.

Mr. Putin also said Russia would "not be drawn into a costly new arms race". Rus-

sia would only deploy intermediate- and short-range missiles in Europe or elsewhere in answer to similar moves from the U.S., he added. European leaders have voiced fears over the consequences of the treaty's demise and called on Russia to address concerns before the U.S. formally leaves in August. Beijing on Saturday also expressed concern over the mutual suspension, calling for the U.S. and Russia to engage in "constructive dialogue".

Mr. Lavrov at Saturday's meeting voiced concerns that Washington's decision to withdraw from the INF could jeopardise the extension of the New START treaty. That agreement, which caps the number of nuclear warheads held by Washington and Moscow, expires in 2021.

## Russia suspends participation in N-pact

Move comes a day after U.S. said it was starting a process to withdraw from the INF treaty



**Framing a response:** Russian President Vladimir Putin, centre, at a meeting with Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, left, and Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu in Moscow. ■ AP

Mr. Putin said during a televised meeting with Foreign and Defence Ministers Sergei Lavrov and Sergei Shoigu that Russia would no longer initiate talks with the U.S. on disarmament. "We will wait until our partners have matured enough to conduct an equal, meaningful dialogue with us on this important topic," the President said.

Brokered by U.S. Presi-

dent Ronald Reagan with last Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, the treaty ended a superpower build-up of warheads that had frightened Europeans. It banned ground-launched missiles with a range of 500 km to 5,500 km.

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**Soaking in the Kumbh adulation:** Laxmi Narayan Tripathi, chief of the Kinnar Akhara and former reality TV star, has become an icon at the Kumbh Mela in Prayagraj, leading her group of 15 to 20 transgender monks to the festival for the first time.



**Benediction time:** Pabitra Mai, disciple of Laxmi Narayan Tripathi, meets devotees during the Kumbh Mela.



**A leader's trait:** Laxmi Narayan Tripathi listens to her disciples during the Kumbh Mela.



**Prayer time:** A Kinnar performs a puja in Kinnar Akhara during the Kumbh Mela in Prayagraj.



**Much in demand**  
A devotee takes the blessings of Laxmi Narayan Tripathi.

**Prayer dance:** Pabitra Mai performs in a function during the Kumbh Mela.

## Kumbh's watercolours

Transgender monks of the Kinnar Akhara had their finest hour at the Prayagraj mela

TEXT AND IMAGES BY RITU RAJ KONWAR

It was the maiden entry of the Kinnar Akhara, a group of transgenders referred to as saints, in the Prayagraj Kumbh. The group of 15 to 20 members, which attended the Ujjain Kumbh in 2016, has been taking part in the holy baths at the Kumbh Mela this year along with other akharas. The Akhara has provided a forum for transgenders to pursue a dignified life with religious rituals. It does not believe in caste.

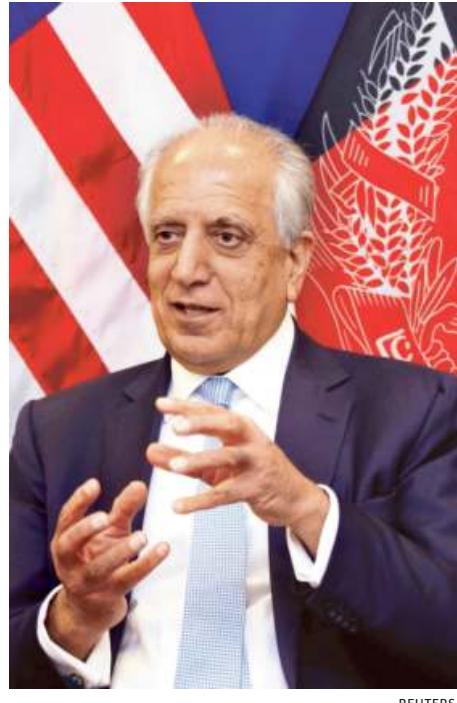
The Akhara is led by 10 *Mahamandaleshwaras* (leaders) from Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal, Assam, Tamil Nadu, Odisha, Maharashtra and others. It is yet to be recognised by an umbrella organisation of 13 recognised monastic orders of India known as the Akhil Bharatiya Akhara Parishad. Recently, the Juna Akhara, a traditional and powerful akhara with four lakh members, most of them Naga Babas, has given recognition to the Kinnar Akhara and allowed it to be a part of the Shahi Snan in Kumbh.

Special arrangements have been made at the Kumbh Mela ground to accommodate the members of each Akhara. In total, 13 Akharas are taking part in the mela. Laxmi Narayan Tripathi, chief of the Kinnar Akhara, along with her supporters, had been preparing to participate in the Prayagraj Kumbh for two years to reclaim the lost religious identity and religious freedom of the transgender community. People from all over India and from across the world have joined the Kinnar Akhara, and it is one big family now.



**In step:** Pabitra Mai and other Kinnars celebrate the Kumbh Mela.

## 6 DESPATCHES



KABUL

**America's war and peace with Taliban**

New developments in the peace talks between the U.S. and the Taliban have raised both hopes and concerns of the Afghan people.

In the latest round of meeting between the U.S. special envoy, Zalmay Khalilzad, and Taliban representatives, which lasted six days, both sides agreed in principle to the framework of a deal. While there are several unverified accounts in the media as regards this framework, one thing is certain – the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Afghanistan.

"We made progress on vital issues in our discussions and agreed to agreements in principle on a couple of very important issues," Mr. Khalilzad told the media in Kabul on Monday, when he arrived in the Afghan capital to inform President Ashraf Ghani on the new developments. Due to strong resistance from the Taliban, the Afghan government has not yet been fully included in the talks. "There is a lot more work to be done before we can say we have succeeded in our efforts, but I believe for the first time that I can say that we have made significant progress," Mr. Khalilzad noted.

Mr. Khalilzad also attempted to quell the rumours surrounding the discussion of an interim government. Several international media houses reported that the proposal for an interim administration was discussed with the Taliban, raising concerns over the reasons for the delay of the upcoming presidential election.

Following talks with Taliban, U.S. envoy Khalilzad sounded positive when he spoke on a framework pact. But the prospect of the militants sharing power has raised concerns among Afghans

tion. "We met with Ambassador Khalilzad and he rejected discussion on an interim government. He quite openly said that the future political system is for the Afghans to decide and not something they [the U.S.] want to control," Hekmat Azamy, deputy director at the Centre for Conflict and Peace Studies, a Kabul-based think tank, told this writer. Mr. Azamy, however, speculated that an interim government could encourage the Taliban to accept a more intra-Afghan dialogue since the current government will no longer be a legitimate, constitutional body after the end of Mr. Ghani's current term. "You remove the term 'government' from the Afghan government, the Taliban will talk to them," he reasoned.

**Vulnerable groups**  
However, despite assurances from both Mr. Khalilzad and the Afghan government, several Afghans have expressed concerns over a framework that will allow the return of the Taliban; this is more evident among vulnerable groups like women and minorities, who suffered under the extremist regime in the late 1990s. "The first [point of] fear me and a lot of women who are educated and working outside [have] is that we might lose our freedom once again. Second, our schools will be closed again," Mariam Alimi, an Afghan cameraperson, told this writer, adding that she fears severe restrictions will be imposed on life in Afghanistan. Ms. Alimi's views are not isolated and several posts on social networks reflected this anxiety.

Responding to critics, Mr. Khalilzad took to social media on Thursday, urging Afghans and stakeholders to be patient. "You can't eat an elephant in one bite," he wrote, adding that work on all issues was still in progress. "We made significant progress on two vital issues – counterterrorism and troop withdrawal. That doesn't mean we're done. We're not even finished with these issues yet, and there is still work to be done on other vital issues like intra-Afghan dialogue and a complete ceasefire," he said.

"Sceptics have rushed to judgment based on just the first part of a much larger effort, as though we have a completed agreement. And a 40-year-old war won't be resolved in one meeting, even if that meeting runs for close to a week," he said.



DHAKA

**Bangladesh's bid to retrieve stolen money**

After a long delay, Bangladesh sued a Philippine bank on January 31 to retrieve the funds stolen from its central bank in 2016 in a major reserve heist. Bangladesh Bank accused the Manila-based Rizal Commercial Banking Corporation (RCBC) of helping North Korean hackers steal \$101 million from its account with the Federal Reserve Bank of New York.

The complaint filed with the U.S. District Court in Manhattan alleges a "massive, multi-year conspiracy" to steal its money. Much of the fund disappeared in the Philippines' casino industry and gambling junctets. It was funnelled through a series of complicated account transfers, according to the complaint. Of the amount, \$20 million was returned by a Sri Lankan bank because of the erroneous name of the recipient.

"RCBC and its senior personnel had full authority and control over these accounts, and all of the RCBC personnel who touched them – from the opening of the fictitious accounts, to terminating the short-lived hold and to allowing the numerous transactions to continue despite their knowledge or reckless disregard of the nature of the stolen funds," Bangladesh Bank said.

For its part, the New York Fed will provide technical help to Bangladesh Bank under a new agreement in its litigation against those who were "complicit" in the heist. "That technical assistance includes, among other things, the New York Fed and Bangladesh Bank meeting jointly with the relevant agencies or parties in the Philippines to strongly encourage them to assist in the recovery of stolen funds," according to a joint statement.

The New York Fed and Bangladesh Bank believe that safe and reliable funds transfer services are critical for global financial stability and that the type of fraud perpetrated on Bangladesh's account at the Fed represents a threat to the international funds transfer system. "The purpose of the case is to recover the stolen funds and bring those who were either beneficiaries or complicit in the heist to justice," Bangladesh Bank Governor Fazle Kabir said at a media briefing on January 30.

While Bangladesh Bank hired Cozen O'Connor, an American law firm, for its legal battle, RCBC hired another U.S. law firm, Quinn Emanuel.

In a complaint filed with the U.S. District Court in Manhattan, Bangladesh Bank says the Manila-based RCBC helped North Korean hackers steal \$101 million from its account with New York Fed

nuel, to defend the suit. "We will show that this suit is nothing more than a political stunt by the Bangladesh Bank to try to shift blame from themselves to RCBC," the Philippine bank said in a court exchange filing on February 1, citing Tai-Heng Cheng, Quinn Emanuel's lead attorney to the case.

**Lazarus Group**

In 2018, the U.S. Justice Department charged a North Korean man, Park Jin Hyok, with computer fraud, saying he was part of a government-sponsored team, known as the "Lazarus Group", behind the hack of Sony Pictures, the Bangladesh Bank theft and global ransom attacks. "A review of the facts shows that Bangladesh Bank's errors, omissions, and lapses in security protocols are the cause of its loss," the Quinn Emanuel lawyer was quoted as saying in the RCBC filing.

On January 10, a Philippine court found Maia Deguito, who managed RCBC's Makati City branch, guilty of eight counts of money laundering tied to the heist. It sentenced her to varying prison terms from 32 years to 56 years and a \$109 million fine.

Ms. Deguito is a defendant in the lawsuit filed by Bangladesh. The case is just the beginning of a long journey ahead through the American court. It appears that the lawsuit will take a long time to settle. A Bangladesh Bank official says it will take at least three years to reach the resolution of the case.



LONDON

**U.K.'s troubled anti-terror strategy**

Late last month, as attention was focussed on Britain's unending Brexit saga, the Home Office (the department which Theresa May led for six years till becoming Prime Minister) made a major climbdown. It agreed to an independent review of its anti-radicalisation strategy, 'Prevent', a demand which human rights and community groups had long raised.

'Prevent' predates the current Conservative government and was initially developed in the environment of the post-September 11 and post-July 7, 2005 (the London attacks) anti-terror programmes rolled out across Western nations. It was refined over the years as part of a four-plank strategy to "prevent", "pursue", "protect" and "prepare".

However, from its early days, Prevent – intended to focus on preventing the radicalisation of individuals through obligations placed on a host of public sector institutions, from schools and universities to health services – has faced criticism. It has been accused of being a domestic spying programme, targeting Muslims, and reinforcing the caricaturisation, stigmatisation and alienation of Muslims, underpinning Islamophobia.

Last year, a group of human rights groups warned that the strategy was often pursued without evidence and involving a vague and expansive definition of terrorism that left it open to abuse and misinterpretation. Two

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years earlier, the union representing British teachers – on whom the strategy had placed onerous responsibilities – called for the programme to be scrapped, arguing that it had failed to support them properly, rendering it an ineffective system.

Indeed, campaigners have pointed to a series of concerning instances that highlighted the problematic nature of the strategy. In one such case, a two-year-old boy with learning disabilities was referred to social services for "concerning behaviour" and in another, two college students were reported merely for the way they had "made way for two female students, and out of respect, lowered their gaze". Such instances were too common to be dismissed as mistakes due to a lack of training, the Muslim Council of Britain warned in a 2016 report.

**Tackling homegrown terror**

The question of tackling homegrown terrorism in the U.K. has become all the more important given the wave of terrorist attacks in the past couple of years across Europe, by those who have identified themselves with the Islamic State (IS) terror group.

These include the attacks in Westminster, London Bridge and the Manchester Arena in 2017 that killed 34 people. The 2016 assassination of the Labour MP Jo Cox by a far-right extremist and the 2017 terrorist attack outside a mosque in central London highlighted the multi-ideological nature of the threat against the U.K.

Last month, Britain's counterterrorism chief Neil Basu warned of the threat of far-right extremism, as far-right groups exploited the tense atmosphere over Brexit to gain a foothold. He noted that of 18 terror plots foiled since 2017, four had been from the far right.

The government's decision to hold an independent review only came through as a House of Lords-led amendment to counterterrorism and border legislation. Minister Ben Wallace struck a defiant tone, accusing human rights groups and others of making allegations about the programme without any evidence behind them. Whatever the outcome now, the review is a clear acknowledgment that a key plank of Britain's anti-terror strategy is struggling with its credibility.



COLOMBO

**Wage struggle stirs Sri Lanka's tea sector**

'LKR 700 (Rs. 275) it is,' said Sri Lanka's plantation companies earlier this week, fixing tea estate workers' new basic daily wage. It is 300 rupees lesser than the LKR 1,000 that the workers demanded, but the negotiating trade unions concurred with the employers, and signed a collective agreement.

While employers have since been proclaiming the 40% rise as a significant step, the matter is far from resolved. The workers' protest for a 1,000-rupee basic wage, which began in 2016, is bound to persist. Not because they are fixated on the number 1,000, but because they know for a fact that a fair wage can't be anything less, that too amid spiralling living costs. Even LKR 1,000 is some 100 rupees lesser than what a 2018 study, done by the Institute of Social Development in Kandy, found as the necessary minimum living wage.

The issue of wages paid to the tens of thousands of workers employed in Sri Lanka's famed tea estates has been a recurrent one in the sector that is known for the historic exploitation of its tea-pluckers, most of whom hail from Sri Lanka's Malayala Tamil community. Withstanding colonial-era exploitation – their ancestors were brought down by the British from India – that spilled over into post-Independence decades when the state and later private companies managed tea production, the workers toiled in the estates, steadily building Sri Lanka's economy, through crucial foreign exchange. However, every time the workers sought a wage hike, the employers and their sympathisers were quick to brand the call unreasonable.

In the last couple of years, the workers' struggle has exposed several other contemporary challenges in the ecosystem – the bearish tea sector that is ever-ready to cut costs in workers' wages, the limits of patronage networks maintained by the traditional unions, the widening disparity in production by small holders and privately-owned estates, and significantly, a community that is increasingly averse to working in the sector.

Further, the ongoing struggle has shown how the concerns of workers, concentrated in the Central, Uva, Sabaragamuwa and Southern provinces, were no more theirs alone. The plantation companies may have ready sym-

The struggle of tea estate workers for a living wage is drawing widespread support – as was seen in the agitations that spread well outside the confines of their unions and location

pathisers in government and even among the union leadership, but the workers' long-standing demand is drawing widespread support in the country – as was seen in agitations that spread well outside the confines of their unions and location, to capital Colombo and even as far as Jaffna in the north.

**A sea of black**

In October last year, Colombo's iconic Galle Face witnessed a sea of black, when several thousand protesters thronged the beach front, calling for a wage hike for estate workers. The crowd largely comprised youth from the Malayala Tamil community employed in the capital in varied jobs, spanning the professional and service sectors.

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After the recent round of negotiations and the subsequent signing of the collective agreement on Monday, the companies have effectively allowed a wage increase of up to LKR 855, including EPF/ETF benefits and incentives tied to productivity. Photographs that appeared in local media showed a room full of powerful men negotiating the wages of a predominantly female workforce, emerging triumphant as they found common ground. All the same, they will know that the discord with workers has not ended yet.



TOKYO

**With flying cars, it's back to the future**

For those who grew up on 20th-century science fiction, it may soon be 'Back to the Future'. Flying cars are set to soar out of the realm of fantasy and into the Tokyo skyline within the next few years.

Last August, Japan established the world's most comprehensive public-private partnership to investigate and develop the flying car. The group brings together government Ministers with international heavyweights like Boeing, Airbus and Uber, as well as domestic players like delivery firm Yamato Holdings, carmaker Subaru and e-commerce company Rakuten. The group has since produced a roadmap that envisages test flights to begin in 2019, leading up to commercialisation of flying cars by as early as 2023.

The speed with which the project is moving forward is surprising for a conservative country, whose last world-changing innovation was the Walkman. But the long gap since the Walkman is in part what is driving Japan's determination to succeed with flying cars. China and the U.S. dominate the biggest shifts in the global transportation and mobility industries: electric cars and drones. The flying car remains up for grabs.

Kenji Mikami, director for digital strategy manufacturing industries at Japan's Ministry for Economy, Trade and Industry, stressed Tokyo's determination to be in the pilot's seat. Speaking at a briefing, he said, "The govern-

A conglomerate created in conservative Japan has a clear road map to create a flying car. The aim is to make the mode commercial by 2020s, and allow passenger travel by the 2030s

ment is determined that the flying car not remain a pie in the sky. We will make all-out efforts to achieve our targets."

The road map lays out a step-by-step progression from test flights and feasibility studies in 2019, to the use of flying cars for goods by the mid 2020s. Air transportation of people will first take place in rural and mountainous areas, before being introduced to cities in the 2030s.

**Opening up the sky**

Mr. Mikami referred to a study by Uber that envisages the company rolling out 1,000 flying cars across 50 cities worldwide by 2030. These would cruise at speeds of about 250 km per hour, at an altitude of 1,000 to 2,000 feet, and could travel about 100 km on a single charge. The ultimate goal is to have electric-powered, autonomous, vertical take-off and landing vehicles that would cost passengers no more than a taxi. With congested roads being a major gripe in most parts of the world, opening up of the sky, a vast and underutilised transportation resource, makes intuitive sense. Further, the technology to make these machines – miniature and powerful motors, long-lasting batteries, lightweight materials – is available. The jump from self-driving cars to flying ones is not a big one technologically.

A greater challenge is what Mr. Mikami called "social acceptability". Concerns over safety, noise and the environment must be met. Moreover, a whole new set of air traffic control rules will have to be formulated to deal with "roads in the sky." All of which raises the question of whether risk-averse Japan is the country best suited to take the lead. "Yes, we are conservative and people might be hesitant in accepting," admitted Mr. Mikami. "But, if it can be accepted in Japan, it is like a stamp of viability that all the world will recognise."

Whether the scenario outlined in Japan's road map becomes a reality is as much up in the air as a flying car. A more immediate goal is the one declared by the Toyota-invested, flying car start-up, Cartivator: to use a flying car to light the Olympic torch next year. In response to a question by this writer on whether this is likely to happen, Mr. Mikami smiled and said, "We are open to all proposals."



RUCHI KUMAR is a freelance journalist based in Kabul



ARUN DEVNATH is a journalist based in Dhaka, Bangladesh



VIDYA RAM works for The Hindu and is based in London



MEERA SRINIVASAN works for The Hindu and is based in Colombo



PALLAVI AIYAR is an author and journalist based in Tokyo

## IN BRIEF



## NFL Q3 profit almost doubles to ₹104 cr.

NEW DELHI State-owned fertilizer firm NFL on Saturday reported a nearly twofold jump in net profit to ₹103.92 crore for the December quarter on higher sales, especially of non-urea products. Net profit stood at ₹52.50 crore in the year-earlier period, the company said in a regulatory filing. Total income rose to ₹3,797.91 crore during October-December quarter of the current fiscal from ₹2,872.93 crore. PTI

## NBCC to build hospital in Goa for ₹268 crore

NEW DELHI State-owned NBCC said it will construct an ayurveda and naturopathy hospital in Goa at a cost of ₹267.81 crore. A memorandum of understanding with the Ministry of AYUSH has been signed in this regard. NBCC would complete the 50-acre project in 24 months, the company said. The All-India Institute of Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy would cater to more than 500 students every year. PTI

## Shanthi Gears Q3 net profit soars 45.99%

CHENNAI Shanthi Gears Ltd. reported a 45.99% increase in its net profit for the third quarter ended December 31 to ₹9.84 crore against ₹6.74 crore in the year-earlier period on higher revenue. Total income rose 14.60% to ₹64.92 crore from ₹56.65 crore. The board declared a one-time special interim dividend of ₹5 per share. Meanwhile, M. Karunakaran has been named as CEO in the place of Rajiv Narayananamoothy.

# DHFL promoters sell stake in Aadhar Housing to Blackstone

Parent firm Wadhawan Global to sell 70% stake; move aimed at reducing debt

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI

Wadhawan Global Capital, the parent company of Devan Housing Finance, has agreed to sell its 70% stake in Aadhar Housing Finance Limited to private equity player Blackstone for an undisclosed amount.

DHFL, which has 9.15% stake in Aadhar, also sold its stake. International Finance Corporation, which has 16.9% stake, and ICICI Bank with 1.5%, are among the other shareholders. Sources said the deal value was around ₹2,500 crore.

Aadhar Housing, which started operations in 2011 with a focus on affordable



**Shedding debt:** The decision is in line with DHFL promoters' intention to exit non-core assets. ■ REUTERS

housing, has ₹9,300 crore worth of assets under management. "The deal will significantly reduce WGC's outstanding debt," a statement from the firm said.

The decision is in line with DHFL promoters' intention to exit non-core assets. According to sources, DHFL, which put Aadhar Housing on the block three-and-a-half

months ago, received 16 bids in the first round, eight in the interim bid and five bids in the final round, with one in the closing round.

The DHFL stock has been under pressure since September after the IL&FS crisis broke out. Last week, after an online portal alleged that promoters had siphoned off ₹31,000 crore, the stock lost 30% in the next three trading sessions. On Friday, it fell another 18%. DHFL has denied the allegations.

"The transaction with Blackstone is a part of our strategy to reduce corporate debt levels and strengthen our balance sheet," chairman Kapil Wadhawan said.

## Catalyst sells ZEEL shares worth ₹267 cr.

## PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI

Catalyst Trusteeship Ltd. sold Zee Entertainment Enterprises Ltd.'s (ZEEL) shares worth over ₹267 crore through open market transactions on Friday, according to market data. It offloaded 74 lakh shares amounting to 0.77% stake in the entertainment firm, bulk deal data available with NSE showed. The shares were sold at an average price of ₹361.42 apiece, valuing the transaction at ₹267.45 crore. However, the buyer could not be immediately ascertained.

Catalyst Trusteeship is a Pune-based private firm that operates in the areas of debenture trusteeship and management of private provident funds.

# Industrialist K. Mahesh breathes his last

He steered Sundaram Brake Linings

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

CHENNAI

K. Mahesh, chairman of Sundaram Brake Linings Ltd. (SBL), passed away on Saturday. He had been ailing for a while.

Born on October 11, 1943, he was the youngest of the four siblings of T.S. Krishna of the TVS Group. He is survived by wife, two daughters and son Krishna Mahesh, who is the managing director of SBL.



K. Mahesh

Born on October 11, 1943, he was the youngest of the four siblings of T.S. Krishna of the TVS Group. He is survived by wife, two daughters and son Krishna Mahesh, who is the managing director of SBL.

Mr. Mahesh earned a bachelor of technology degree in metallurgy from the Indian Institute of Technology Madras.

He was also the whole-time director of T V Sundaram Iyengar & Sons Private Ltd.

He held the posts of chairman and managing director but relinquished his position as managing director on May 26, 2014 to pave way for his son Krishna Mahesh. After retirement, he continued to be a director and non-executive chairman.

A man of principle, a dedicated leader and a soft-hearted person, Mr. Mahesh was also known to be a perfectionist and a taskmaster.

He deeply imbibed the TVS philosophy, and looked after not only his company but also the health of the automotive component industry.

"He [Mr. Mahesh] was an avid photographer," said Harsha Viji, deputy chairman, Sundaram Finance. So much so, according to V.R. Janardhanam, former COO of the company, Mr. Mahesh used to visit Madurai every year during the 'Chitrai' to capture the festivities. His fondness for taking pictures of bison in Kodaikanal was well known.

## Keen eye for details

"A man with a keen eye for minute details, he (Mr. Mahesh) was a champion of environmental causes. And, he insisted on SBL making only asbestos-free brake linings," said T. Kannan, chairman of Thiagarajar College of Engineering.

That Mr. Mahesh took his union leaders, too, to Japan to receive the Deming Prize spoke volumes for not only his man-management skills but also his caring attitude towards workmen.

A philatelist with a fine collection, Mr. Mahesh, insiders felt, had stamped his place in the annals of Indian auto component industry.

His

drive

and

candid

feedback

helped

to

motivate

## Tech Mahindra to acquire Dynacommerce

## PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI

IT services major Tech Mahindra said it would acquire Dynacommerce Holding BV in a deal valued at more than €15 million.

"Tech Mahindra has signed an agreement to purchase 100% of shares in Dynacommerce Holding BV. As a result, Dynacommerce will play a key role in further enhancing Tech Mahindra's customer experience strategy," the company said in a statement.

The two companies have been partners for a number of years, working together to offer omnichannel, multi-play sales and delivery orchestration solutions to customers worldwide, it added.

## RAGHUVEER SRINIVASAN

In the passing away of K. Mahesh, the Indian industry has lost a passionate engineer who was obsessed with quality and perfection. Sundaram Brake Linings, of which he was chairman, was only the second Indian company and the first friction materials manufacturer in the world to win the coveted Deming Application Award from the Japanese Union of Scientists and Engineers.

The company won the award, which is given for the highest levels of total quality management, in 2001 under Mr. Mahesh's leadership.

"I'm a foundry man. My place is in the shop floor not in the air-conditioned room," he once told this writer.

## Fan of Tata Nano

Mr. Mahesh was a big fan of the Tata Nano as well. He would drive around Chennai in a Nano, and always felt that the Tatas had a winner in their hands but lost the

plot in marketing the car. His faith in the Nano was so high that he would even drive his customised car up the ghat road to his hill-top home in Kodaikanal, and he would proudly talk about it.

He would fondly refer to the Tata 407 LCV as "Jap Killer" for capturing the LCV market in competition with well-known Japanese brands.

## OBITUARY

He took great pride in keeping the Sundaram Brake Linings factory in Padi spotlessly clean and green. You could not return from visiting him at Padi without having the customary glass of tender coconut water from a tree in the factory premises!

For such an accomplished man with the pedigree of one of the most respected and well-known industrial houses in India, Mr. Mahesh

was self-effacing and extremely modest. He would often call me on the phone even when I was a rookie journalist.

Exactly a year ago, he called and we spoke in length about his illness. When I told him that I would like to visit him, his question was: "Why do you want to meet me? What will you get out of meeting me, I'm not such an important person."

I met him sometime in April last for the last time. We spoke just a couple of months ago when he told me about how they were trying a new line treatment on him and it was working well. I told him I would visit him soon. Alas, that will never happen now!

## + 10 public sector units lined up for IPO next fiscal, says FinMin

Sector-specific ETFs to help meet disinvestment target

### Asset monetisation framework will see the light of day next year

ATANU CHAKRABORTY,  
Secretary, DIPAM

which are lined up already. Then there are lot of companies which have to meet their minimum public shareholding target. We will also bring new theme-based ETFs. Then, there would be strategic disinvestments and post elections we would top it up sharply and asset monetisation framework will see the light of the day next year," Mr. Chakraborty told PTI in an interview.

The Interim Budget has set a target of ₹90,000 crore to be mopped up from CPSE disinvestment in 2019-20, higher than ₹80,000 crore

in the current fiscal. In the 10 months of the current fiscal so far, ₹36,000 crore has been raised through stake sale in CPSEs, as well as tranches of ETFs and share buybacks. The government has an uphill task of mopping up another ₹44,000 crore from disinvestment by March-end.

**Share buyback offerings** "All transactions are in place to meet the ₹80,000 crore target set for current fiscal," Mr. Chakraborty said. The government is expected to raise around ₹12,000 crore from share buyback offerings by CPSEs, including ONGC, Coal India and IOC.

Further, the strategic disinvestment of Pawan Hans is also expected to be completed by March 2019.

## 'We may end 2018-19 with 3.3% fiscal deficit'

Can credibly do 3% by 2020-21: Garg

## PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI

Economic Affairs Secretary Subhash Chandra Garg on Saturday exuded confidence that fiscal year 2018-19 will end with a fiscal deficit of 3.3% of the GDP, marginally lower than the revised estimate of 3.4% for the year.

He also said the government had maintained the glide path towards achieving the fiscal deficit target of 3% by 2020-21 and eliminating primary deficit.

**Deviation, very nominal** "Deviations, which have happened in the last two years, are very nominal. Secondly, these don't go beyond the trend of the glide path ... this year it was to be 3.3%, it has been 3.4% which is lower than 3.5%.

We might actually end up the year with 3.3% and stick to the Budget Estimate," Mr. Garg told PTI in a post-Budget interview.

"So, the path leads to 3% by 2020-21. The adjustment required is 0.3% or 0.4%. I think we can credibly do it in 2020-21. I think we have no plans to revise it [Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Act]," he said.

**Fiscal slippage** However, there was a 0.1% slippage in the fiscal deficit estimate for the current fis-

## 'Sovereign rating profile to be based on post-poll Budget'

Budget will offer guidance on medium-term outlook: Fitch



rise to a second consecutive year of fiscal slippage by a modest margin, thereby delaying plans to reduce the high general fiscal deficit and debt burden.

"Longer term fiscal trends are more important to the sovereign rating profile, and we will evaluate these in the context of the post-election Budget, which should provide additional guidance on the medium-term outlook," he said. In November last year, Fitch had retained sovereign rating for the country at 'BBB', the lowest investment grade, with a stable outlook.

Fitch Ratings head of Asia-Pacific Sovereigns, Stephen Schwartz, said the Interim Budget was largely as anticipated, with pre-election spending pressures giving

## EID Parry to shutter sugar unit

Poor availability of sugar cane forces closure

## N. ANAND

CHENNAI

E.I.D. Parry (India) Ltd., one of the largest manufacturers of sugar, has decided to shut down its non-operating sugar unit in Puducherry following continuous non-availability of adequate sugar cane.

The plant would not be operated in future as the expectation of revival of cane cultivation in the area is abysmally low following a variety of factors, the company said in a regulatory filing.

Regarding the sugar unit's assets, the company proposes to transfer some assets to other units and dispose the remaining assets as may be deemed appropriate.

**Firm to raise ₹250 crore** The board, meanwhile, also decided to issue non-convertible debentures to raise up

pacted on account of the depressed sugar prices together with the reduced sales volumes due to the release order mechanism.

"For the quarter, the cane crush quantity has been lower compared to the same quarter of the previous year. However, the overall crushing for the sugar season is expected to be normal," said S. Suresh, managing director, EID Parry.

During January 2019, overall sales of two-wheelers grew 2% from 2.63 lakh to 2.69 lakh units. In the domestic market, the firm sold 2.29 lakh two-wheelers against 2.27 lakh lakh units.

In the scooter segment, it sold 28,299 units against 85,521 units. Motorcycle sales rose 13% to 1.11 lakh units against 98,649 units.

Total exports grew 23%

to 52,650 units from 42,802 units. Two-wheeler exports rose 13% to 40,623 units from 36,003 units. Sales of three-wheelers grew 52% to 13,353 units.

Performance of the company continued to be im-

## TVS Motor sales rise 4% in January

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

CHENNAI

TVS Motor Company, a two and three-wheeler maker, registered 4% growth in sales during January, selling 2.83 lakh units against 2.72 lakh units in the year-earlier period.

During January 2019, overall sales of two-wheelers grew 2% from 2.63 lakh to 2.69 lakh units. In the domestic market, the firm sold 2.29 lakh two-wheelers against 2.27 lakh units.

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Total exports grew 23% to 52,650 units from 42,802 units. Two-wheeler exports rose 13% to 40,6

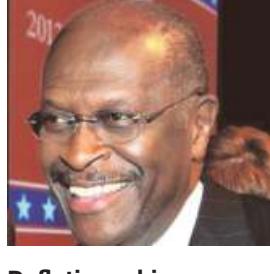
## 8 BUSINESS ABROAD

## IN BRIEF



## Exxon net rises as production rebounds

Houston Exxon Mobil reported a quarterly profit that topped analysts' estimates, pushing its shares up as oil and natural gas output rose slightly on a year-over-year basis. Net income fell to \$6 billion from \$8.38 billion a year ago. But earnings, excluding the impact of tax reform and impairments, rose to \$6.4 billion from \$3.73 billion a year ago. **REUTERS**



## Deflation, a bigger concern, says Cain

Washington Herman Cain, who is under consideration for a seat on the Federal Reserve's board of governors, said the Fed U.S. central bank should be more concerned about deflation than inflation. "I will try to encourage the Fed not to make inflation a fear factor because deflation ... is more of a fear factor than inflation," he said. **REUTERS**



## Toyota's U.S. sales fall 6.6% in January

Toyota Motor reported a 6.6% fall in U.S. vehicle sales for January, hurt by lower demand for its Camry and Prius cars. The automaker sold 1,56,021 vehicles, down from 1,67,056 vehicles a year earlier. Fiat Chrysler Automobiles NV reported a 2% rise in U.S. auto sales for January, helped by higher demand for its Ram pick-up trucks. **REUTERS**



## U.S. job growth surges, hiring at 11-month high

Washington U.S. job growth surged in January, with firms hiring the most workers in 11 months, pointing to underlying strength in the economy despite an uncertain outlook that has left the Federal Reserve wary about more rate hikes this year. The brisk pace of hiring suggested there was strong momentum in the economy. **REUTERS**

## Digital media: what went wrong

With BuzzFeed stumbling, the way ahead looks more old-school than ever

EDMUND LEE

The digital publishing industry took a big hit in recent days, when more than 1,000 employees were laid off at BuzzFeed, AOL, Yahoo and HuffPost. Vice Media started the process of laying off some 250 workers on Friday, and Mic, a site aimed at younger readers, axed much of its staff two months ago before a competitor bought it in a fire sale.

Coupled with recent layoffs at Gannett, the company behind USA Today and other dailies nationwide, the crisis in the digital sphere suggested that the journalism business was damned if it embraced innovation and damned if it didn't.

The cuts at BuzzFeed were the most alarming. Wasn't this the company that was supposed to have it all figured out? Didn't its team of wizards, led by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology-trained chief executive, Jonah Peretti, know tricks of the digital trade that lay beyond the imagination of fusty old print publishers?

Chris Hayes, the author and MSNBC anchor, summed up the bleak outlook with a tweet that asked, "What if there is literally no profitable model for digital news?" But look past the gloom, and a complicated narrative emerges that does not lend itself to a one-size-fits-all interpretation of What Went Wrong or a handy forecast of journalism's future.

While leading digital publishers have resorted to harsh measures, legacy titles such as The Washington Post, The Atlantic, The New Yorker and The New York Times have seen growth as



**No stopper:** BuzzFeed's revenue grew over 15% in 2018, not enough to stave off its decision to cut about 220 jobs. **AP**

they accommodate the habits of their increasingly digitally oriented readers.

At the same time, a digital-native business, Vox Media, the owner of The Verge and Eater, turned a profit last year, its first as a large company, according to two people with knowledge of the matter who were not authorized to discuss it publicly.

Even BuzzFeed may hit its financial marks this year. If it does, the reason will most likely be a combination of old-school business methods tried elsewhere (including layoffs), rather than its ability to crack some esoteric digital code.

## Riding on Facebook

It was simpler in the days of print. Even when radio and television laid waste to certain newspapers and magazines, the industry as a whole racked up steady profits. Twentieth-century readers were more or less unchanging in their habits, so media executives did not have to revise their business models much from year to year. That has changed, to say the least.

Mr. Peretti seemed to be

on the right track with his reliance on sponsored posts to generate revenue before his reluctant pivot to banner ads last year.

The company's revenue grew more than 15% in 2018 – not quite enough to stave off Mr. Peretti's decision to cut about 220 of BuzzFeed's roughly 1,500 employees.

Ben Thompson, an analyst, argued that BuzzFeed had inadvertently devalued its content by mostly relying on the kindness of digital giants to distribute its articles.

In BuzzFeed's youth, Facebook was not the dominant traffic driver it is today, and online sharing was just as likely to occur away from social media platforms. Five years into its existence, in 2011, the site got newsier, with the addition of Politico's Ben Smith as its editor-in-chief, along with a team of editors and reporters. In 2015, Mr. Thompson called BuzzFeed "the most important news organisation in the world." After that, Mr. Peretti adjusted his approach again. He determined that Facebook had already built the pipes for distribution, so in

stead of trying to amass audiences around a single venue, like BuzzFeed.com, he went where the audience was: Facebook.

The plan to go big on video proved difficult to monetize, however.

"They need to make a lot more progress to truly compensate for the value that media companies are creating for them," Peretti said in the interview.

As television viewers continued their migration to the Web, big TV companies like NBCUniversal, Turner Broadcasting and Discovery Communications followed them, plowing hundreds of millions of dollars into digital companies. Now they would like to see a return on their investments. And they are getting impatient.

## Thorny, digital path

It wasn't supposed to be this hard for digital publishers.

In 2011, when The Times drew criticism for its decision to charge online readers, creating a paywall, BuzzFeed was taking off, thanks to its knack for harnessing the power of social networks.

In that context, the paywall strategy struck media gurus as the last-ditch gambit of a slow-moving stalwart, and the conventional wisdom was that digital mastersmiths would soon outperform or perhaps even vanquish their print-beholden rivals.

By end 2018, the picture looked vastly different. BuzzFeed generated more than \$300 million in sales, while still bleeding money, and The Times was on a pace to exceed \$650 million in digital revenue. **NY TIMES**

## U.S. corporate earnings spur concerns about 2019 outlook

Growth rate slower than in the 3 earlier quarters of 2018

REUTERS

NEW YORK

U.S. companies are beating analysts' expectations this earnings season, but to a smaller degree than normal, and S&P 500 companies are now barely expected to eke out an increase in profits for the first quarter of 2019.

The trend underscores fears about a potential decline in earnings this year, even as stocks just closed their best January in more than three decades, as the benchmark S&P 500 index rebounded from a swoon late last year.

"It does get tricky here as this quarter plays out, if companies continue to see weakness. Then, there's going to be an issue and investors will become very concerned," said Michael O'Rourke, chief market strategist at JonesTrading in Greenwich, Connecticut.

Fourth-quarter earnings are estimated to be up 15.5% from a year ago, based on results from nearly half of the S&P 500 companies and forecasts for the rest, according to IBES data from Refinitiv, compared with about 14.5% three weeks ago.

That growth clip is historically strong but disappointing on two fronts.

The rate is noticeably slower than the three earlier quarters in 2018, when the Trump administration's corporate tax cuts fueled double-digit earnings gains.

Estimated profit growth for all of 2018 is at 23.6%, based on Refinitiv's data.

Also, given recent historical trends in earnings rates,



**Bumpy road:** A 38% drop in U.S. oil prices in the last quarter has hit profit estimates for the energy sector. **REUTERS**

up in the growth rate, he said.

With results in from 66% of the S&P 500 financials, the sector's median earnings surprise is just 0.4%. That's on track to be well below the sector's 4.4% median surprise of the last eight quarters.

Also affecting the fourth-quarter's growth rate, profit estimates for the energy sector were still falling in recent weeks, following a 38% drop in U.S. oil prices in the fourth quarter, analysts said.

Oil prices have recovered somewhat this year, and Exxon Mobil and Chevron both reported stronger-than-expected results on Friday.

At the same time, the percentage of reports beating expectations for the fourth quarter – 70.9% – so far is below the 78% average of the past four quarters, based on Refinitiv's data.

**Hit by financials sector**  
The inability of the financials sector to meaningfully outdo earnings expectations is at least partly to blame for the slower-than-usual pickup

## Amazon jitters offset upbeat jobs data on Wall Street

Shares of e-tailer, Walmart fall as India e-com rules kick in

REUTERS

Wall Street ended mixed on Friday, as optimism from a surge in January U.S. job growth was offset by a weaker-than-expected outlook from Amazon.com Inc. that battered retail stocks.

The online retail heavyweight slumped 5.38% after its quarterly sales forecast fell short of Wall Street estimates, overshadowing its record sales and profit during the holiday season.

Those results put the Nasdaq in negative territory, while retailers Walmart Inc., Macy's Inc. and Kohl's Corp. each dropped more than 2%. The S&P consumer discretionary index fell 1.77%.

A U.S. Labor Department report showed non-farm payrolls jumped by 3,04,000 jobs last month, the largest gain since February 2018 and beating economists' expectations for an increase of 1,65,000.

That report, along with

better-than-expected ISM manufacturing activity numbers for January, pointed to underlying strength in the economy despite an uncertain outlook that has left the Federal Reserve wary about more U.S. interest rate hikes this year.

"What the unemployment report is telling you is that people want to go back to work," said Tom Martin, senior portfolio manager at Global Investments in Atlanta. "The consumer needs to be strong, and if the consumer is employed, the consumer will stay strong."

The Dow added 1.3% for the week and the Nasdaq gained 1.4%.

During Friday's session, Exxon Mobil Corp and Chevron Corp jumped more than 3% apiece after the oil majors reported better-than-expected quarterly profits, boosting the Dow Jones Industrial.

The S&P energy index rallied 1.83%, also helped by higher oil prices.

risks for global growth amid a trade war with United States.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average climbed 0.26% to end the week at 25,063.89 points, while the S&P 500 edged 0.09% higher to 2,706.53.

The Nasdaq Composite dropped 0.25% to 7,263.87.

The S&P 500 rose 1.6% for the week and the benchmark index is up 8% so far in 2019, but it still remains 8% below its record high close on Sept. 20, 2018.

The Dow added 1.3% for the week and the Nasdaq gained 1.4%.

Even as the U.S. economy remains on a stable footing, investors are concerned that a slowdown overseas could hurt profit growth, with high-profile companies such as Apple Inc. warning of slower demand in China.

Data showed China's manufacturing sector shrank in January for the second straight month, heightening

## Chugging on hydrogen



**Healthy ride:** A hydrogen-powered train by French train-maker Alstom stands in the station of Leipzig, eastern Germany, ahead of its first ride on a commuting connection between Leipzig and Grimma, Saxony. **AFP**

## China's state energy giants to focus on adding natural gas reserves to boost local supplies

Firms will spend more on domestic drilling in 2019 to the highest level since 2016; more drilling, however, is unlikely to reverse the country's declining oil outlook, say analysts

REUTERS

SINGAPORE/BEIJING

China's state energy giants are set to raise spending on domestic drilling this year to the highest levels since 2016, focusing on adding natural gas reserves in a concerted drive to boost local supplies.

Responding to President Xi Jinping's call last August to boost domestic energy security, China's trio of oil majors – PetroChina, Sinopec Corp. and CNOOC Ltd. – are adding thousands of wells at oil basins in the remote deserts of the northwest region of Xinjiang, shale rocks in southwest Sichuan province and deepwater fields of the South China Sea.

Firms are showing greater risk appetite, expanding investments faster in exploration than production, emboldened by Beijing's political push and oil near \$60 a barrel, said State oil executives and analysts at consultancy Wood Mackenzie.

"We shall carry through resolutely the State Council's call on stepping up domestic exploration and development and launch an offensive war," PetroChina chairman Wang Yilin was cited as saying in an in-house newspaper in December.

Offshore specialist CNOOC Ltd. said last week it was confident of achieving its spending target this year, the highest since 2014. It pledged to spend twice as much this year in domestic exploratory drilling as in 2016.

"With oil prices at \$50, \$60 and \$70...we're making decent profits," Yuan Guanyu, CNOOC's chief executive officer, said last week.



**Oil push:** Sinopec, which has pioneered China's nascent shale push, is expected to boost spending this year. **REUTERS**

recent years – an overwhelming focus on new gas production, leading to continued decline in its oil output," said Angus Rodger, research director of Asia-Pacific upstream at Wood Mackenzie. With Beijing pushing to reduce energy import dependence and hit environmental targets, gas output is forecast by analysts to rise at 6-8% a year through 2020. China, the world's

No.3 gas consumer, overtook Japan as the world's top gas importer in October.

PetroChina, which produces some 70% of the country's gas output, will lead the drive, adding thousands of wells in southwestern Sichuan, northern Ordos and northwest Tarim basin, CNPC says on its website.

The major is also ramping up shale development in Sichuan, seeking to catch up with Sinopec Corp., which has pioneered China's nascent shale push.

Despite almost a decade of drilling, shale makes up just 6% of China's total gas output because of complex geology and high costs of development. PetroChina raised its shale gas output 40% last year to 4.3 billion cubic metres (bcm), while Sinopec's production was largely flat at 6 bcm.

"Controlling the largest and best acreage, CNPC has been ramping up aggressively capital and human resource deployment over the past 3-4 months in Sichuan shale," said Woodmac analyst Max Petrov.

"Natural gas is becoming increasingly popular under the government's green push. And its relatively less risky than oil under long-term off-take deals," said a State oil executive.

Companies, however, will hold off drilling in disputed territorial waters of the South China Sea due to technological challenges and the lack of experienced global partners willing to risk exploring those areas, analysts said. Beijing claims about 90% of the South China Sea, whose estimated energy potential varies widely, although geologists believe it holds more gas than oil. Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia, Brunei and Taiwan also claim parts of the key waterway.

Sinopec, traditionally a refiner rather than a driller, has the smallest resource base and may lag its peers, analysts say.

Sinopec's proven oil reserves by end-2017 could last less than six years of production, versus CNOOC's 10 years, while Sinopec's gas reserve life of 8 years is dwarfed by PetroChina's 24 years, according to calculations based on company filings.

Sinopec is expected to boost spending this year.



## A martyr's mother

JAYANTHI CHANDRASEKARAN

**M**y cousin Mala Murthy, a martyr's mother, breathed her last recently. It takes courage to send one's son to war. Losing soldiers to a war is tragic enough, but how do you come to terms with many of our sons losing their lives in the proxy war of these times? Major Dinesh Raghuraman was one such courageous officer, who lost his life on October 2, 2007, combating insurgency in Kashmir.

Mala and I grew up in the same household with the usual camaraderie and rivalry any siblings will have. She is three years older to me but we were in the same class due to some disruption earlier in her education.

A natural linguist, she had mastered quite a few Indian languages. Her culinary skills would awaken even a dead palate. Her garden was an expression of her green fingers. Her hospitality and kindness were legendary among kith and kin. She made friends with ease in any neighbourhood her husband's transfer took her. At 24 and 27 years of age we were more like best friends than anything else and only six weeks apart in our pregnancies (my first, her second). She gave birth to a baby boy on April 6, 1978, a brother to her daughter.

To our great admiration, Mala and her husband Murthy had motivated her daughter and son to serve our nation and humanity. Her daughter Aparna serves as the most-loved and well-respected gynaecologist in a military hospital. Dinesh Raghuraman joined the National Defence Academy in 1996 and was commissioned into the 19 Battalion of the Jat Regiment and later became a Major. It's not easy to find a life partner when you are constantly living in the shadow of death. He was fortunate to find his wife Latha, with whom he lived on and off as his duty would allow, for three years.

## Brave end

In June 2007, Major Raghuraman conducted a successful operation, 'Op Narawar'. On October 2, 2007, he was assigned the task of launching an operation in Baramulla to flush out terrorists hiding there. During the operation he crawled towards his fellow-officer who had been injured in hostile fire and moved him and two more injured soldiers to a safer area. Soon afterwards, he took several bullets from another front of gun battle opened by terrorists, and was seriously injured. He succumbed to his injuries in a Srinagar hospital. At that time his wife Latha was pregnant with their daughter Shrishti.

Ever since Dinesh joined the NDA, Mala had kept pushing aside her fears and anxieties. She immersed herself into the lofty ideal that her son joined armed forces to make the world a better place. But the void created by the demise of her son never felt right in spite of all the felicitations regarding her son's courage. Her grief was heart-wrenching. Dinesh was the first thing in her mind when she woke up and the last thought whenever she fell asleep.

Major Raman was given the nation's highest peace-time gallantry award, the Ashoka Chakra, for his exceptional courage, camaraderie, fighting spirit and supreme sacrifice. Yet, her wound never healed and the void never vanished. At 67, she was too young to die, but 12 years of inward grief took a toll. Her kindred spirit has now become part of our family folklore.

jayanthi@gmail.com

# The art and charm of shoshin

The often-undiscovered excitement of wondrous moments, such as of pebble-skipping on water

SAUMYA BALASUBRAMANIAN

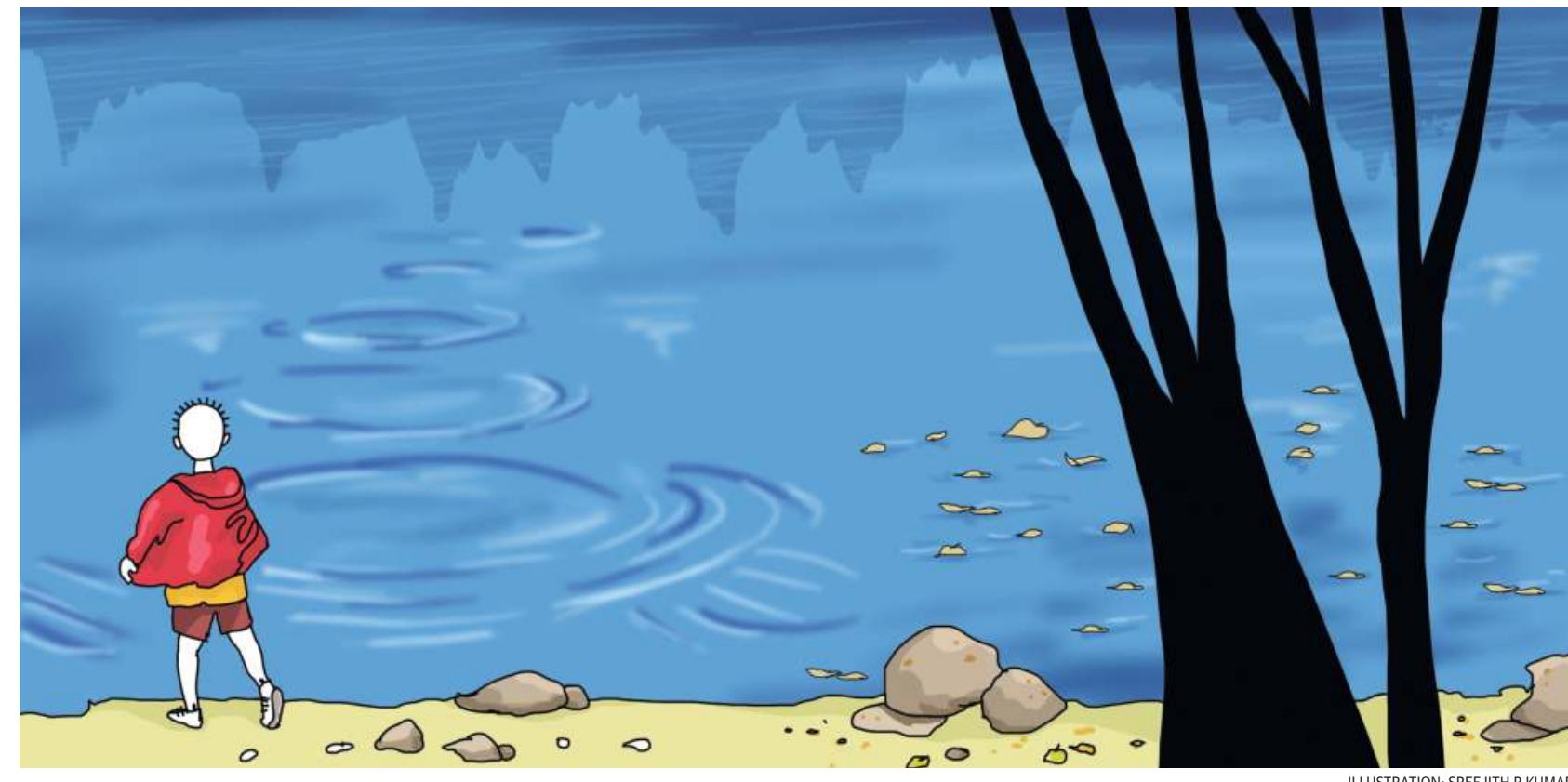
**P**ebble-skipping on water is an art that isn't appreciated enough ever. If anyone has spent time watching pebbles make ripples across ponds as they skim along the surface, they will know what I am talking about.

If not, I encourage you to take on your person a couple of pebbles, as flat as possible, and hike up the high hills and mountains, or cut through the pristine forests, in search of a puddle, pond or lake of reasonable size to set off those ripples. Then, with the hand held flat, proceed to skip the pebbles across. The skilful amongst you may get the pebble to skip and skim the water in the first few attempts, causing beautiful rippling waves as they go along. I did not.

The elementary school-going son attempted a large stone throw in a small lake nearby, and I held on to him lest he launched himself with the stone. Size matters: large stones and small boys could cause the cannon to fly with the missile. This is the kind of thing that would have made Newton come up with complex mathematical calculations to support the theory of pebbles and ripples, missiles and cannons, and extend it to comets and stars.

We, on the other hand, laughed, and substituted a flatish stone in his hand. Father and son threw pebbles and I sat watching mesmerised at the beautiful rippling effect it had on the water.

I raised my face upwards to-



wards the sun and my thoughts drifted. As I sat there thinking of this and that, a beautiful thing happened. The mind snapped out of the mundane and omnipresent things that occupied it, and went into a lovely, meditative state. Watching the sun sparkles drift meditatively on the waters was marvelous. The world seemed to be throwing these tiny diamonds into the water for our enjoyment and they drifted obligingly with the tiny waves – little shimmers bobbing up and down, dancing and shining in

the sun's rays, set to the perfect rhythm of the breeze rustling through the bare winter branches of the trees nearby. The earth was bursting with new shoots and moss lined drifts.

Ducks, coots, pelicans, and geese were bobbing on the waters in the distance. Birds were chirping and swooping, and I enjoyed the swift, elegant swoops of swallows as much as the impressive regal swoops of the hawks overhead. Some people were biking, some others walking. The white clouds drift-

ed lazily across the skies, as though they too enjoyed the sunshine and did not want to hide the sun. The air smelt fresh and clean with little wafts of eucalyptus and fir-scented drifts.

Nature's shows are marvelous. For a moment I forgot about the to-do lists, the worries and tensions that the concept of a New Year brings, and enjoyed the free show in front of me, feeling revived and refreshed in spirit with every passing moment. All my senses were keen, alert and marvelling

at the wonder around me. I looked at the little fellow enjoying himself by the waters, and hoped he would remember these simple pleasures as he grows up and takes his place in this frenetic world.

The writing of the poet laureate, Mary Oliver, who died recently, spoke to my heart (emphasis added):

"Teach the children. We don't matter so much, but the children do. Show them daisies and the pale hepatica. Teach them the taste of sassafras and wintergreen. Give them per-

mit to put in their pockets as they go to school. Give them the fields and the woods and the possibility of the world salvaged from the lords of profit."

My hope is for everyone to savour moments like these every now and then, to keep the capacity to wonder alive in us, to capture the beauty of shoshin. Shoshin is the Zen Buddhist word for 'beginner's mind', denoting the capacity to bring wonder and open-mindedness to learning anything.

saumya.bala@gmail.com

## The devil in the details

A diabolic discourse on the ancient origins of some satanic traditions

RANJAN ANILKUMAR

**R**ecently I came across a news article about the Spanish city of Segovia, whose local council commissioned a statue of the devil, commemorating the legend that the Roman aqueduct in the city was built by the devil himself overnight. The statue was intended just to make the lesser-visited areas of the city more popular among tourists, but was challenged in court by a local group. It did so on the ground that the apparently funny figurine of satan was 'insufficiently repellent'. It expressed fears that the city might become a 'satanic tourism' centre. Incidentally, the plea was dismissed by the court.

Segovia is an ancient city in the Castile region of Spain, and apart from the 'satanic' aqueduct, it hosts the Alcazar de Segovia, said to have inspired the Cinderella castle in Disneyland.

According to local folklore, a young girl, tired of walking all the way up the hill to fetch a pail of water, prayed to the devil to solve her problem.

The devil answered but asked for her soul in return if he should finish the job before the cock crows at sunrise. The devil started building the aqueduct and later, as a pejorative term for non-Christians) wouldn't give away so easily. It is said that a



**Beyond the legend:** A section of the Roman-era aqueduct system in Segovia, Spain, linked to a satanic fable. ■ GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

the girl just cocked a snook at him.

The poor old devil was well outside the popular consciousness until the medieval ages when, Christians, after years of oppression and suffering, were never more eager and aggressive to spread their religion in Europe and nature-worshippers or 'pagans' as they were called (initially because they were mostly country-dwellers in the times of Christianised Roman Empire and later, as a pejorative term for non-Christians) wouldn't give

away so easily. It is said that a pictorial representation of the

devil was not made until the late 9th century A.D., when the devil took the horns from Pan, the pitchfork from Poseidon and wings from Bes – all 'pagan'.

It was indeed a clever plan to incorporate pagan deities and symbolism into the devil, an embodiment of all things evil according to Christians, and thereby creating an illusion that pagans are evil too. This turned a substantial number of people around, and those who stood stiff were branded as witches, tried at kangaroo courts and brutally murdered publicly to create fear and intimidation

among members of the public. Since then, the devil, who now was not only the embodiment of all things evil but also appointed as the god to pagans went underground, and only popped up rarely, in shady paintings and statues, the likes of Vesper's 'Sam'l' (1908) and now, in Segovia.

With pagan-god-inspired superheroes, Gothic subculture and the rise of neopaganism in today's world, a statue of the devil may as well draw the attention of men and women who are eager to break free from the constructed limits of traditional Abrahamic religions. Many of them would want to dig deeper back to a more traditional and ancient paganism due to the pagan features applied to this embodiment of evil, though with ulterior motives in the past.

This makes 'satanic tourism' something that is not impossible as dismissed by a Segovian counsellor.

Apart from all the effigies and symbols associated with it, paganism brings with it the spirit of superiority of nature to human beings on contrary to the Abrahamic notion of human paramountcy, which aligns with the modern realisation that an unexploited and respected nature is crucial to human survival.

ranjan.kaliyath@gmail.com

## Where is originality?

When clichés compete with creativity

MANGESH PRABHAKAR ADGAONKAR

**I** am not much with words. Or sentences. Original sentences, that is.

English is of course not my first language. I have read enough literature in the Queen's language, though. And the only thing I have achieved by doing that is, now I have collected a sackful of clichés and idioms.

I feel all these great authors have ensured that there is no original thought left unexpressed. Even my smart phone knows and predicts what I am going to write next.

Not that I get a lot of creative thoughts in my own mother tongue. But it would be nice once in a while to be the first in putting those thoughts in words in a different manner.

They say an average human being uses just a handful of words in his or her lifetime. Was it a thousand words? Or perhaps two thousand? If they did some research on the usage of phrases, the number would be far fewer.



If only I had a magic wand (cliché warning!), I would just wipe my slate clean (!), and clean up the clutter (!) of clichés, to let the originality flow through the crevices of its own formation! The euphemism for this is 'inspiration'. By that logic, I must be one of the most inspired persons on earth!

My quest for that unique thought with unique expression continues. But I wonder how in the name of Goddess Saraswati, do all these other authors on this Open Page manage to be so expressive and creative. I bet they have some

special tool in their phones that warns them as soon as it detects a worn-thin phrase!

Anyway, you have just wasted two precious minutes of your life on this article of nothingness. Now go ahead and read the other articles here while I go and learn some Japanese.

Just in case I run out of clichés in the English language.

mangesh8@yahoo.com

## The making of an urban nomad, sans commitments

These wanderers are actually running away from it all for their own survival

SANDEEPA SAHAY

**A** simple Net search at urbandomnomad.com brought me the precise meaning of 'urban nomads' as 'a small but diverse section of society that lives and works in an urban area, yet does not rent, own or otherwise reside permanently in any one location.' The term 'nomad' suggests a chosen lifestyle, as opposed to a 'refugee' by compulsion, and it also suggests that nomads feel they have a home, as opposed to the 'homeless'.

The definition of an 'urban nomad' is, someone who refuses to settle down in just one home, but chooses to live in multiple locations around the globe or just keep moving across locations.

Mind you, he or she does not need to be a bachelor to become an urban nomad!

People have become more mobile today than in the case of past generations. It has become easier to move abroad for work or studies.

In the ancient past, nomads used to travel to find food, and the modern urban nomad instead travels to find work or simply to work in another workplace.

The historical nomad travelled in large groups. The modern urban nomad travels alone and is city based. What makes the modern urban nomad still a nomad is the fact that he exists in community through the wireless and Internet technology and is constantly immune to the urge to belong to some place.



"A global nomad, or globetrotter," say Richards and Wilson in their book, *The Global Nomad: Backpacker Travel in Theory and Practice* (2004), "is a person who is living a mobile and international lifestyle." They go on: "Global nomads aim to live location-independently, seeking detachment from particular geographical locations and the

idea of territorial belonging."

So why do we have these nomadic lifestyles in modern times? I feel that the above-mentioned definitions and meanings of the urban nomad are grossly misleading. It is so because they are covering up something real and deeper with a morphological aspect of the term.

The way I see it, it is not about geography at all. It is about some deeper human crisis – like a phobia of commitment. Some people can simply not feel like belonging anywhere. While the lifestyle challenges

faced at various workplaces are kids' stuff, belonging to humans, such as having one's own kids and family is actually an absolute no-no.

So dear, the urban nomads are not what Google makes you believe; you should be able to read between the lines! They are the ones who are running away from something or the other for their own survival.

At the end of the road, he or she is a mad urban wanderer because the modern relationships offer fewer benefits and takes you away from your comfort zone. To add to these, the cost of commitment is higher than ever!

Have I graduated to being truly an 'urban nomad'?

sandeepasahay18@gmail.com

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AMIT KUMAR

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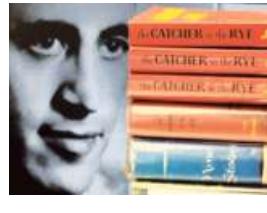
#### Is an elder missing?

How to identify early and cope with the signs and manifestations of dementia

C. UMA MAHESHWARI

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## IN BRIEF



## Unpublished Salinger works to be released

One of the book world's greatest mysteries is finally ending: J.D. Salinger's son said previously unpublished works by his late father will be coming out soon. Matt Salinger confirmed longstanding reports that the author of *The Catcher in the Rye* had continued to write decades after he stopped publishing books. He said that he and Salinger's widow, Colleen, are "going as fast as we freaking can" to prepare the material for release. AP



## 40 mummies unearthed in Egypt's Minya province

A number of ancient burial chambers containing some 40 mummies have been unearthed in the desert province of Minya, south of Cairo. The chambers, which were cut out of rock, belonged to a middle-class family who probably lived during the Ptolemaic, early Roman or Byzantine period. The mummies are in good condition and at least 10 are of children. AP

## 'Snow wedding' brings good tidings for tourism industry in Valley



Guests came on skis to Gulmarg's historic church

PEERZADA ASHIQ  
SRINAGAR

The wedding of an Australian couple at snow-filled Gulmarg has lifted the spirits of the flagging tourism industry in Kashmir, where tourists' footfall has recently

seen an unprecedented decline. The pictures of the couple went viral on the Internet on Saturday, putting the spotlight back on the destination, just 55 km from Srinagar.

Tim Robertson and Kate Hamilton described their wedding as "nothing less than a fairy tale", after the pictures shot at the snow-bound 100-year-old St. Ma-

ry's Church on Thursday were widely shared by local residents.

The couple chose to wear Indian attire on the day of the wedding. However, they had to settle for snow boots to reach the church. Most guests arrived on skis and kept warm with the kangri, a pot of hot embers. The temperature in Gulmarg has been minus 10° Celsius at

night. "A local gifted me a scarf on the occasion. It was very touching," said Ms. Hamilton.

## Local cuisine

Kashmiri music and local cuisine were highlights of the wedding. Mr. Robertson said they had been planning a "white wedding" in the mountains. "I am glad we decided to have it in Gulmarg. 30 years since the last one,

Gulmarg's historic church plays host to another wedding," he tweeted.

Nazir Ahmad, a tour operator, said the viral pictures of the wedding had come as a shot in the arm for the tourism industry, which has suffered due to militancy in the Valley. "From 13 lakh tourists in 2012, the footfall has dropped by an alarming 35%," said a tourism official.

## 'Microplastics found in dolphins'

Scientists find tiny particle in 50 marine animals, including seals and whales

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
LONDON



Microplastics have been found in the guts of every marine mammal examined in a study of animals washed up on Britain's shores, scientists say.

Researchers from the University of Exeter and Plymouth Marine Laboratory (PML) in the U.K. examined 50 animals from 10 species of dolphins, seals and whales – and found microplastics in them all.

Most of the particles (84%) were synthetic fibres – which can come from sources, including clothes, fishing nets and toothbrushes – while the rest were fragments, whose possible sources include food packaging and plastic bottles.

"It's shocking, but not surprising that every animal

them, might have on marine mammals," she said.

"More research is needed to better understand the potential impacts on animal health," she added.

Though the animals in the study died of a variety of causes, those that died due to infectious diseases had a slightly higher number of particles than those that died of injuries or other causes.

"We can't draw any firm conclusions on the potential biological significance of this observation," said Brendan Godley, of the University of Exeter.

**Effects the food chain**  
"We are at the very early stages of understanding this ubiquitous pollutant. We now have a benchmark that future studies can be com-

pared with," said Mr. Godley.

"Marine mammals are ideal sentinels of our impacts on the marine environment, as they are generally live long and many feed high up in the food chain. Our findings are not good news," he said.

"It is disconcerting that we have found microplastic in the gut of every single animal we have investigated in this study," said Penelope Lindeque, from PML.

In total, 26 species of marine mammal are known to inhabit or pass through British waters. The species in this study included Atlantic white-sided dolphin, bottlenose dolphin, common dolphin, grey seal, harbour porpoise, harbour seal, pygmy sperm whale, Risso's dolphin, striped dolphin and white-beaked dolphin.

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## Unseen Beatles footage becomes movie project

Peter Jackson to work with 55 hours of videos

REUTERS  
LONDON

**Lord of the Rings** director Peter Jackson is making a movie about The Beatles with previously unseen studio footage, the band's website said – 50 years after the Fab Four performed live together for the final time.



The Beatles standing by the window of a train in London. AP/FILE

on the wall' experience that Beatles fans have long dreamt about," Jackson said in a statement.

"It's like a time machine transports us back to 1969, and we get to sit in the studio watching these four friends make great music together."

*Let It Be* album in January 1969.

The footage, plus 140 hours of audio, "ensures this movie will be the ultimate 'fly

as they worked on their

THE HINDU  
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## Creating change, one child at a time



THE HINDU  
**#UNDERMYWATCH**

I WILL ELIMINATE CHILD LABOUR

Virgil D'Sami of Arunodhaya Centre for street and working children creates awareness about child labour as well as rescues children from deplorable work environments and provides them with education. Arunodhaya Centre, Chennai has also established community based learning centres to help children.

## A 'No Screening' policy

THE HINDU  
**#UNDERMYWATCH**

CHILDREN WILL HAVE ACCESS TO EDUCATION

Mannivakkam is a vibrant town with students who have international exposure. It was once called as Murdervakkam owing to the high number of crimes. Realising the root cause for this situation was a lack of sufficient education, Shri Natesan Vidyalaya Matriculation Higher Secondary School was started 23 years ago by Dr. N Ramasubramanyan says the school's principal Gayathri Ramachandran.

## A God-sent gift for the abandoned



THE HINDU  
**#UNDERMYWATCH**

I WILL BE A COMPANION TO THE NEEDY

Gowtham from Hyderabad who's seen people in different age groups die due to poverty, has performed rituals for around 400 people in his last 2 years of service. He says that 70% of deaths are due to old age while the rest are children who did not receive proper medical care.



## Going the extra mile for animal rights

THE HINDU  
**#UNDERMYWATCH**

I WILL BE COMPASSIONATE TO ANIMALS

Arun Prasad from Bengaluru, an animal lover rescues kittens to canine, working tirelessly to aid animals in distress. He has rescued several stray dogs and other animals and has provided them with food as well as medical care at his own expense.

## Safety, a persistent upper hand



THE HINDU  
**#UNDERMYWATCH**

I WILL TAKE FIRE DRILLS SERIOUSLY

Beyond Carlton, a charitable trust in Bengaluru initiated after the Carlton Towers fire tragedy that took place in Bangalore, 2010 has been active in propagating awareness on fire safety. This registered trust was set up by people, whose family members were affected during the tragic incident.



## A place to call home

THE HINDU  
**#UNDERMYWATCH**

I WILL PROVIDE SHELTER FOR THE ABANDONED

Popularly known to the people as "Auto Raja", his contribution to the society speaks volumes. He has come across a lot of old people on the road who were on the verge of dying due to thirst, hunger and poor sanitation facilities seeing this he rented out a house to provide adequate accommodation for abandoned older people in Bengaluru.



What's killing Kolkata's kites?  
Mobile phones? Or climate change? Or just time?

page 7

Madam/Sir, I saw the Padma Shri list. Ok fine. Then I saw the name of Sivamani...

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The most important activity of godmen is real estate:  
Manu V. Devadevan

page 2



**Hidden world** (Clockwise from left) The ruins of striking Roman arches at Arikamedu; and fishing boats along Ariyankuppam river. S.S. KUMAR & ZAC O'YEAH



## COVER STORY

# FINDING AN AMPHORA IN ARIKAMEDU

An archaeological site near Puducherry holds the key to India's ancient relationships with the rest of the world. That is, if you can find the place first

BY ZAC O'YEAH

**I**t's as if I were trying to hitch a ride from Puducherry to ancient Rome. No one wants to go to Arikamedu. Eventually, a rickshaw driver shows mercy by agreeing to take me for ₹350. It's twice the amount I paid 10 years ago but I accept his price offer, because I recall the archaeological site being a seven-kilometre drive from Puducherry, deep inside a jungle.

The rickshaw crosses the bridge over Ariyankuppam River, which is more of a lagoon, but the suburbs of Puducherry continue to sprawl in a multi-storeyed, concrete landscape rather than giving way to the huts that I remember. As we turn off the Cuddalore highway, the road meanders past Le Paradise Inn AC Bar – which I'm absolutely sure wasn't there before. Women sell fresh catch squatting in the roadside dust and a narrow path between boxy houses leads to what's left of the jungle. We bump on a dirt track through rubbish-strewn greenery, the occasional cactus stares back aggressively, until the discreetly green-painted Archaeological Survey of India fence comes into sight. No information board welcomes me to Arikamedu. A handful of cud-chewing cows are the only other visitors.

The fence protects a striking ruin with very Roman arches. But it's actually the remains of a 250-year-old French mission, built around the time the first rudimentary excavation took place. French scientist Guillaume Le Gentil observed that villagers were already busy recycling the ruins, which explains why there's no ancient town above ground. But looking closely at the mission's walls, I notice two different types of bricks: one of a familiar size used even today, whilst others are flatter, larger slabs. I let my fingers slide across their rugged surfaces. I feel I've seen similar flat bricks at historical places around the Mediterranean. It seems the mission was built with looted bricks.

**Romans and the romantics**

In the absence of signposting, the way to explore the site is to follow a path that leads off from the ruin through the jungle and towards the river. Butterflies are disturbed by my steps and flutter up from the grass. Souls of Romans? Reborn as tropical insects? According to excavation reports, somewhere underneath are the foundations of a 45-metre-long 1st century warehouse, surrounded by streets and drains and pits – the latter perhaps used for dyeing the fine muslin cloth that Tamil bards called 'milky mist'. Archaeologists found imported Roman tableware and wine amphorae shards suggesting that somebody who lived here had extravagant habits, but there were also traces of bead-manufacturing, signifying that the harbour housed a mixed population of indigenous artisans and foreign businessmen.

The site runs half a kilometre along the river and reaches 200 metres inland at its widest, and it may harbour more secrets than archaeology has so far uncovered. In



one clearing, myopic as I am, I come upon a meadow of bluish flowers, which on closer inspection turns out to be mineral water pouches and the explanation for their presence is in a nearby grove – empty whisky bottles and discarded plastic cups. A romantically inclined couple scamper out of the undergrowth. I don't know whether to apologise for disturbing or take the uncle approach and explain that historical places should be used for history purposes only. But in the end, I tell myself that if Romans drank wine here, then why shouldn't a certain romantic tradition continue?

At the riverfront one may descend at one's own risk by an old rope down the scarp. It's dicier than expected and I tumble to the bottom of the steep embankment, which is basically a mud-caked flat. As I crawl in the black goo, I'm amazed at the fact that nothing has been done to develop this as a tourist destination. Yet it directly links two of the greatest ancient civilisations, the Indian and the Roman. As if to prove this, I spot pot shards in the mud and layers of bricks in an archaeological jigsaw puzzle laid bare by recent cyclones. This

then is the quay that used to jut out into the river and from where, 2,000 years ago, Indian spices, cloth, jewellery and other luxury products were shipped to European markets.

**Unsolvable riddle**

Holding on to that thought and with my shoes slowly sinking in the mud, crabs running amok whenever I move, I'm struck by how, without appropriate signage, this remains an unsolvable riddle for anybody who isn't an expert. It's not as if nobody has thought of doing something about it. One scholar, S. Suresh, discusses in his book *Arikamedu: Its Place in the Ancient India-Rome Contacts* a plan for a Tamil trail to highlight sites that in ancient days traded with the West. There has also been talk about an on-site interpretation centre. Years ago, a UNESCO World Heritage tag was proposed and Arikamedu is currently on a tentative list of 'Silk Road Sites in India'. But nothing has happened and when someone built a museum nearby, he was forced to shut it down because it's illegal for private citizens to collect and display archaeological finds.

Back in town, where the French left an ocidental esprit behind in 1954, I head for Rue Saint Louis where a merchant's 18th century villa has been converted into the Puducherry Museum. Unfortunately, there's not much information available here either: when I ask the man at the ticket counter, who speaks a tiny bit of English, if I can buy a catalogue or an ASI excavation report, I'm

given a free tourist brochure that deals mostly with shopping in Puducherry. I enquire if there's anybody, perhaps a curator or director, who knows anything about the Arikamedu objects, but he says no.

The museum displays a whimsical collection of European leftovers like rotting piñons and a pousse-pousse type of car from the 18th century powered by two natives who ran behind pushing it. There's also a room housing Arikamedu discoveries including an informative display of beads curated by a British archaeologist 35 years ago, making it a valuable museum piece in itself. Their minuscule size made beads the perfect export product – fancy Arikamedu style microbeads have been found as far east as Vietnam and Bali.

**Wheeler's discoveries**

Luckily, I've been doing some additional reading. Finds made by the French in the late 1930s suggested that Arikamedu might be a ville romaine that drew the attention of Mortimer Wheeler, Britain's celeb archaeologist who at that time headed the ASI. Wheeler excavated in 1945 and announced his discoveries with great enthusiasm: his report has many quotable if factually dicey statements such as the claim that Arikamedu 'represents the site of a considerable buried town on the Coromandel coast.' No 'considerable' town has been unearthed, but Wheeler's team catalogued scores of shards representing almost every imaginable kind of Mediterranean pottery. Regard-

**C** Their minuscule size made beads the perfect export product – fancy Arikamedu style microbeads have been found as far as Bali

ing amphorae, it is possible to pinpoint not only the place of origin but even date of export, as the styles changed with fashions. A normal-sized amphora held the equivalent of 36 of today's bottles and considering that imported wine costs more than ₹1000 the value of each amphora (at a time when shipping was so much trickier) is easy to imagine.

**A coin-sized hole**

But I'm especially interested in inspecting the Arretine tableware that Wheeler identified: a standardised high-quality pottery that was used throughout the Roman Empire from 1st century BCE to 300CE. I recall seeing, on a previous visit, a fragment stamped with the name of a prominent potter based at Arezzo in Italy, suggesting that the plate was manufactured around 25CE. Since it belonged to a limited period product line it was significant for dating all the finds, prompting Wheeler to declare: 'Upon the imported Mediterranean wares the whole chronology of the site, and its special importance therefore to Indian archaeology, depend.'

I locate a handwritten label, 'Italian Terra Sigillata Plate (imported from Roman Empire)', but the holder is empty. Despite all the sari-clad museum guards keeping a sharp eye on tourists to ensure that nobody clicks a pic, somehow the treasure of the collection has disappeared. I'm in mortal shock. There's also a display of Roman coins – of emperors Gallienus Antoninianus (a single piece) and Tetricus Antoninianus (three pieces) – but the occasional empty coin-sized hole suggests that things have gone missing here as well.

There's still enough evidence left for us to buy the idea that Roman influence was present. However, along with his path-breaking discoveries, Wheeler spread an inflated narrative of Arikamedu being a full-fledged Roman port. Later archaeologists, such as Vimala Begley who excavated comprehensively in 1989-92, disagreed with him. According to Begley's findings, Arikamedu was inhabited and had lapidary industry as well as pottery production long before any foreigner set foot here – which is probably why Romans came in the first place to trade wine and fine-quality plates. The rich bead finds suggest an indigenous export-oriented business that perhaps started as early as the 3rd century BCE; that is, at a time when Rome was an expanding city state but not yet a vast empire.

*Continued on page 2*

**C** As I crawl in the black goo, I'm amazed that nothing has been done to develop this as a tourist destination

# 'The temple was not a Vedic institution'

Religious identity was not a thing to be inherited – but that changed in the 11th century CE, says the historian



BY VIKRAM ZUTSHI

**K**annada poet, historian and political theorist Manu V. Devadevan's most recent work, *The Prehistory of Hinduism*, received much acclaim. In this interview, Devadevan talks about the factors leading to the formation of modern Hinduism – the unprecedented proliferation of temple-building between 1000 and 1200 CE, giving rise to inherited religious identities among the laity; the rise of the 'guru' as a central authority figure resulting in older texts and practices going out of fashion; and the emergence of popular Indian 'godmen', catalysed by private television channels and the Constitutional provision that confers on them the right to acquire and manage property in the name of religion. I also asked Devadevan about the recent controversy over Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey holding up a 'Smash Brahminical Patriarchy' placard and he speaks of the hollowness of terms like 'brahminism' in today's political climate. Excerpts:

In your book, you posit two approaches to studying Hinduism: the 'primordialist' and the 'constructionist'. Can you elaborate?

Until very recently, it was believed that Hinduism was one of the oldest religions in the world. Its beginnings were placed in mid second millennium BCE which is the date generally assigned to the *Rig Veda*. At times, its antiquity was pushed back to early half of the third millennium BCE, when Harappan urbanism began to develop. This view, which lays emphasis on Hinduism's putative antiquity, is what I have called the primordialist position. Opposed to this, an interesting body of writings produced in recent decades argues that Hinduism, as an idea and an identity, is not older than the 19th century. This is the constructionist approach. The constructionists show greater awareness about the political and economic processes that enable or assist the making of religious identities. In their understanding, religious identities – such as Hindu, Muslim, Christian – are consciously constructed under specific historical conditions. They hold that such identities do not exist in any essential or homogeneous form for several hundred years. Informed by this historical insight, it has been possible for constructionist research to show that the making of a Hindu religious identity does not antedate the early 19th century.

You have argued that inherited religious identities only existed for specialist 'renouncer' communities and were non-existent among the laity before 1000 CE...

Constructionist research has made us sceptical of the claim that Hinduism is more than 3,000 years old. Nevertheless, historians have shied away from extending its insights to explore the emergence of religious identities *per se* in the Indian subcontinent. A close examination of the sources shows that these identities were monastic in nature before 1000 CE. Until the close of the first millennium CE it was possible to become a Buddhist or Jaina or Shaiva or Vaishnava only by initiation as a monk or nun. Religious identity was the preserve of a renouncer, and did not extend to the laity. It was not inherited. This changed between 1100 and 1200 CE in what is arguably among the most momentous of historical transformations in India. In these centuries, local elites – including peasant proprietors, merchants, chiefs, and warlords – began to associate themselves with religious life on a hitherto unnoticed scale. Temple building was the means through which this relationship found expression. The laity now flaunted religious identities and bequeathed them as inheritance.

How did the sudden interest in temple building lead to the formation of separate religious groups?

The oldest written references to temples are from 300 and 400 CE, and the earliest surviving temple structures date back to 500 and 600 CE. The temple was not a Vedic institution. Its origin was intertwined with the

Until the close of the 1st millennium CE, it was possible to become a Buddhist or a Jaina or a Shaiva or a Vaishnava only by initiation as a monk or a nun

**Article 26 confers upon godmen the right to acquire and manage property in the name of religion**

evolution of *pooja*, a form of idol worship based on the *agamas* and *tantras*, different from the sacrifice-based worship of the Vedas. Not surprisingly, temple worship was met with resistance from the Vedic orthodoxy.

By 700 CE, the Pallavas of Kanchipuram, the Chalukyas of Badami, and other such monarchical states had begun to promote temple building. What happened between 1000 and 1200 CE was an unprecedented proliferation in temple building. I have been able to count as many as 170 temples built in these two centuries from a mere eight taluks in Karnataka.

A major fallout was that the focus of religious life shifted to the temple. With inheritable land endowed for its maintenance, the temple became an economically autonomous institution, wielding great power

- After high school, Devadevan joined the Indian Railways
- Has translated Malayalam and Bangla poetry to Kannada
- Specialises in the political economy of precolonial South India
- Teaches at IIT-Mandi in Himachal Pradesh

and influence. It helped in cementing the agrarian and other economic relations of the day as well as in forging new ties of trade, kinship, matrimony and fealty.

Your book looks at the growth of monasteries in the 15th and 16th centuries, and the guru emerging as an authority figure. What are the parallels, if any, with today's godmen?

The guru emerged as a major figure at about the same time as the making of religious identities among the laity. From the 12th century onwards, we find him an indispensable part of religious life. As we reach the 15th and 16th centuries, our sources give the impression that all of religious life hinges on the guru. There is an intimate bond between guru and disciple, which lasts for a lifetime and spills over into the

next birth as well. Long-standing texts and practices retain their significance only to the extent that they find endorsement from the guru. We must remember that for much of history, the masses were an unlettered lot. As late as 1901, the literacy level in India was just over 5%. It is not unreasonable that erudite textual traditions made way for the guru as source of knowledge and deliverance.

I don't think there are parallels in our times. There has, of course, been a proliferation of godmen since the early 1980s. This has a history of its own. These godmen have much to say on religion and ethics, but the experience of the divine they speak of is no match to that of saints from the recent past – Ramana Maharshi, Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Nisargadatta Maharaj. Our godmen have made a name not so much by religious experiences as through instructions in healthy living, stress reduction, fitness through yoga, meditation and pranayama, etc. They have a clientele that's mostly urban, middle-class, espousing neoliberal capitalism, and lamenting the death of tradition.

At least two other factors have led to the rise of godmen. The most important activity of godmen is real estate management. Article 26 confers upon them the right to acquire and manage property in the name of religion. This is a fundamental right. The second factor is the emergence of private television channels since the early 90s, which helped many godmen to expand businesses exponentially.

Your comments on the brouhaha over Jack Dorsey holding up a placard saying 'Smash Brahminical Patriarchy'?

I find such slogans very interesting for a rather bizarre reason. They embody a strange contradiction as it were, for they occur as value-loaded expressions even when they are semantically hollow. The word 'Brahminical' is reduced to a porous signifier that can contain anything and everything that a progressive mind abhors. It is in this sense similar to the shallow ways in which terms such as 'feudal' and 'medieval' are used as adjectives for anything that is authoritarian and undemocratic. The time is perhaps ripe now for us to admit that progressive movements in India have not only used the word 'Brahminical' with little sense of awareness or discretion, but have dogmatized it beyond redemption, even by the standards of mediocre political rhetoric.

The interviewer is a filmmaker, columnist and scholar. When not travelling, he hangs out with his cats, toucans and pet iguana.

SKETCH BY SREEJITH R. KUMAR

## Finding an amphora in Arikamedu

Continued from page 1

disprove the agency of Indian traders.

In some recent texts, ironically, more importance is given to Indians in the Roman empire, which tilts the entire affair in the opposite direction, despite there being only fragmentary evidence for Tamil merchant settlements in Egypt – though this paucity could be due to the perishability of Indian goods: spices, textiles. One of the rare Indian objects discovered within the Roman Empire, significantly enough in a merchant's house, is an 'ivory statuette found in the Roman town of Pompeii, which was buried in lava' as noted by Partha Mitter in his *Indian Art*, which means that this sculpture – some experts suggest it is Lakshmi and others that it's a Yakshi – would have reached Italy before the volcano's eruption in 79CE. Might it have come from Arikamedu? It's an archaeological fact that wines produced in the Neapolitan region found their way here.

### Soma and an olive

Drinking in the sight of the amphora shards, I can't help but wonder what wine meant to ancient Tamilians. Some scholars argue that imported wine was for the consumption of Romans settled here, yet Tamil poets eulogised 'cool and fragrant wine' that was guzzled from golden pitchers 'that have been fashioned with high artistry' such as mentioned in the 56th poem of the *Purana-nuru*. Sanskrit texts mention that each Indian village had a tavern, while cities had entire quarters reserved for bar-hopping. Jeannine Auboyer, in *Daily Life in Ancient India*, provides a vivid description of 'rooms filled with seats and couches, and also counters where



**Ancient find** (Clockwise from above) The road leading to Arikamedu; stones of different colours excavated at Arikamedu on display at Puducherry museum; some of the excavated idols. ZAC O'YEAH & T. SINGaravelou

perfumes, flowers and garlands could be bought. It was a lucrative business, for the sale of fermented and alcoholic drinks continued throughout the day and well into the night.'

But the bar at my heritage hotel offers a mocktail named 'Arikamedu' – a mix of mango, cranberry and lime juices – which feels off, considering what heady beverages the place seems to have served up in ancient days. If one were to name a cocktail 'Arikamedu', it

ought to contain a splash of Mediterranean wine, lashings of soma (can be substituted with beer), and an olive.

On my last morning in town, I decide to see what the mouth of the Ariyankuppam River, which the Romans sailed up, looks like. I presume I'll find it if I walk south for as long as the beach stretches, so I head down the seaside promenade. Where Goubert Avenue ends, the beach continues past a popular bar called Seagulls to the old French pier which is off-limits for tourists.

### Sea of bottles

Behind the pier, black boulders have been stacked to stop erosion. I climb up the rocks and stumble upon a narrow street in front of huts belonging to fisherfolk – men mending nets, women dry fish on the asphalt surface. I cross a stretch of sand to a makeshift tar-

paulin camp from where a kuccha road leads further. After another kilometre I see fishing boats moored in a creek. There's a hillock I climb for a better view of the Ariyankuppam, only to bump into a defecating gentleman. A sewage pipe vomits out a dark waterfall into the river, as if all the puke of Puducherry's winter party season is channelled this way.

A wading fisherman throws his net out again and again. Occasionally the tempestuous sea reaches his neck and I worry for his safety. Nearby, three men on a motorboat trawl the inlet, shrieking 'yahoo!' I climb down to where the Ariyankuppam and the ocean meet and some youths are finishing a pre-lunch whisky bottle while filming themselves dancing surrounded by hundreds of beer empties – which makes me wonder what future

archaeologists will think if they dig here?

The sea of bottles is a curious analogy to the amphorae shards just about a thousand metres upriver, but on the other side.

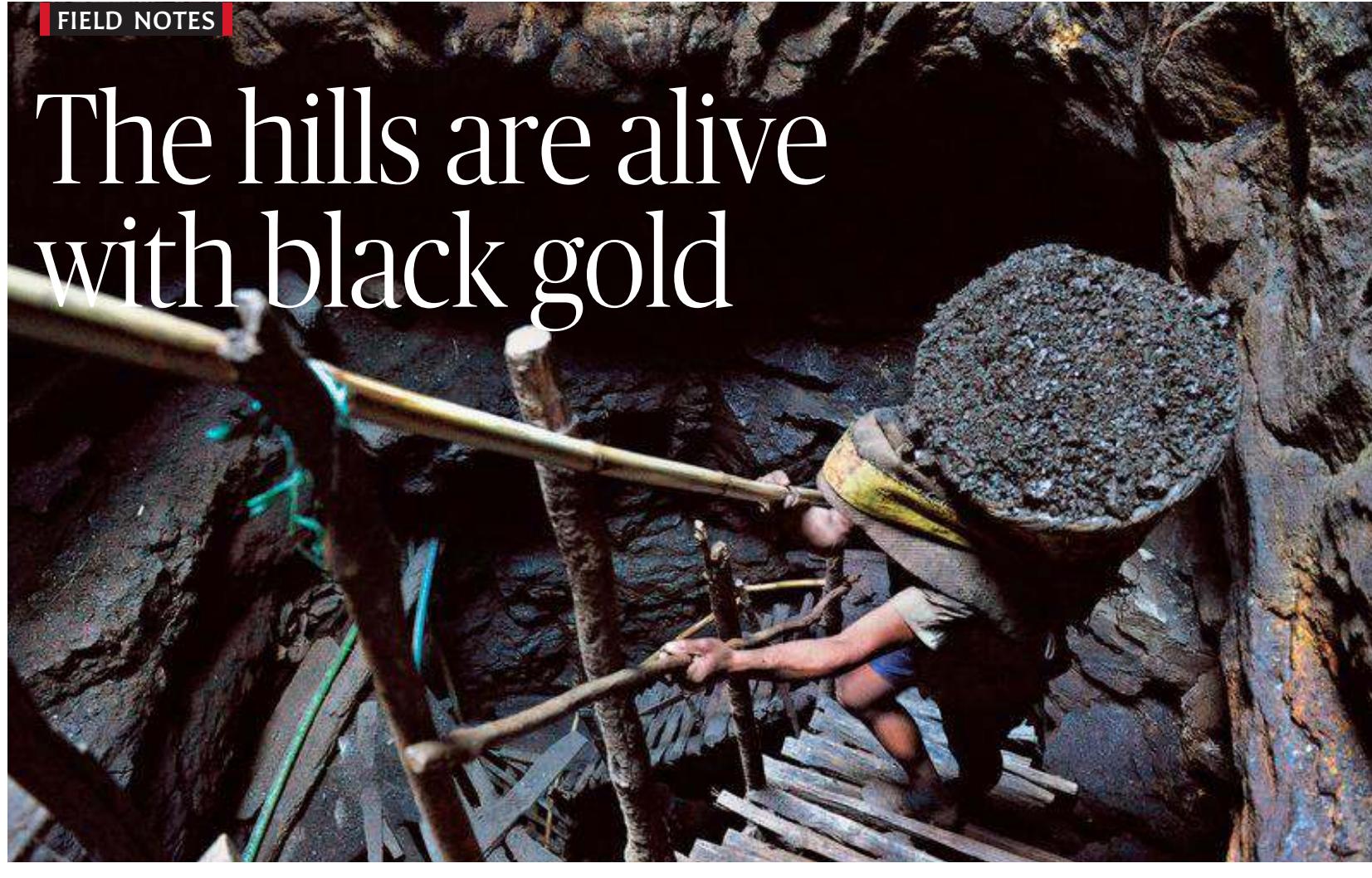
The other side of history, one might add. But with a little sign-posting Arikamedu might develop into a centre for understanding India's ancient relationships with the rest of the world – from Europe to the Far East, for the Arikamedu site was obviously close to the heart of it all.

The author is fascinated with places where tourists don't go, especially if there's something to eat that he hasn't tried before.

**Drinking in the sight of amphorae shards, I can't help but wonder what wine meant to ancient Tamilians**

## FIELD NOTES

# The hills are alive with black gold



Despite the tragedy, rat-hole mining in the Jaintia Hills is likely to continue

BY ANKUSH SAIKIA

**F**ifty-one days have passed since 15 miners were trapped inside a flooded "rat hole" coal mine at Khlo Ryngksan (Ksan for short) in Meghalaya's East Jaintia Hills district, some 130 km from the state capital Shillong. The miners would have probably perished instantly inside those narrow tunnels spreading out horizontally from the main shaft, which is about 350 ft deep. Indeed, if a few miners hadn't providentially escaped, the whole incident might well have been hushed up. It has been a Sisyphean task for rescuers engaged in draining the shaft as the water level hasn't gone down much despite high-powered pumps being used. Navy divers (a group of 15 from Visakhapatnam) and underwater ROVs or remote operated vehicles supplied by a Chennai-based company have helped retrieve one body and detect a second.

Coal-mine shafts in the Jaintia Hills are usually 100 to 200 ft deep. This particular one, according to reports, was dug in a secluded area, possibly to avoid detection after the 2014 NGT ban on mining. The deeper than usual main shaft must have been necessary to reach the coal seams far inside the hill.

Back when it was business as usual, submersible pumps were used to 'throw out' water after each monsoon (which

in turn led to acid water runoffs into fields and subsoil) before the miners would go underground again in the dry season.

The river Lytein runs through this area, and it's likely there are many abandoned mines around the new one filled with rainwater and water seeping in from the river. One or more of the ill-fated miners must have dug into one of these flooded mines, leading to water surging up their main shaft. This seems to be why, even after lakhs of litres of water has been pumped out, there's been no discernible drop in levels.

#### Underground network

Miners, mine-owners, and 'sordars' or managers who have worked in the area will perhaps have an idea of the tunnel network below, but they must have long fled the area.

Growing up in Shillong during the 1980s and 90s, the coal trade was something you knew about without being conscious of it: the coal-filled trucks

that came creaking down the slopes of the city at night, the smoke-belching trucks that held up traffic on the Shillong-Guwahati highway, the stories of mine-owners in chappals entering Shillong banks carrying lakhs of rupees in shopping bags, the tales of murder in Lad Rymbai and Soo Kilo and the bodies thrown down abandoned shafts. As what had been a cottage industry in the 70s grew larger and larger, generating more and more money, hundreds of crores, politics and administration gradually came to be influenced and then subverted by the coal trade.

There are three notable peculiarities of coal mining in the Jaintia Hills (and elsewhere in Meghalaya). First, being a tribal state where the 6th Schedule applies, all land is privately owned, and hence coal mining (like limestone mining) is done by private parties (however, since the 6th Schedule doesn't explicitly refer to mining, environmental activists are calling for the coal trade to come under central mining and environmental laws).

Second, the sizeable coal deposits in the State, mostly in the Jaintia Hills, occur in horizontal seams only a few feet high that run through the hills – which is why rat-hole mining is practised instead of open cast mining.

Third, most of the labour (including children) comes from Nepal, the poorer areas of Assam, and Bangladesh.

**C**oal mining is part of a larger trend in the Northeast: the decimation of natural resources

In Meghalaya, the non-tribal is a second-class citizen, as is the poor tribal. This explains the general lack of concern even within the State about the trapped miners, who are a mix of Bengali Muslims from Chirang district in Assam, Nepalis, and three local tribal boys. The State was busy celebrating Christmas and New Year.

Besides, the coal trade has gone on for too long now for people in Meghalaya to be shocked by events connected to it, whether it is about polluted rivers or drowned miners, hired killers, or even police inspectors bumped off. The web series *Narcos* shows drug money subverting Colombian society at all levels; the coal trade in Meghalaya is somewhat similar, although thankfully on a much smaller scale. The ones who suffer, as always, are the poor and the weak.

In the middle of 2014, just after the NGT banned coal mining in Meghalaya, I went to the Jaintia Hills to write about it. What was immediately noticeable then was how an entire economy had ground to a halt. When I wrote this, I was surprised by some of the reactions: it was almost as if I was writing on behalf of the miners.

Now, five years later, we can see how it has played out. When the coal trade wasn't regulated, how could the NGT order be implemented, especially when mining money greased the State's wheels?

Poor, desperate labourers can always be found to go down the rat holes; only, they're now dug in remote areas. Fresh-

ly mined coal is passed off as old stock, as the NGT first allowed the transport of coal mined prior to the ban (and then kept extending the time period for this). Before the 2018 State elections, people didn't even bother with *challans* for the transport of coal – trucks would wait on the lay-bys of highways for a signal to move toward the inter-state border, after payments had been made.

There has been a crackdown now, but mostly it's the labourers being arrested. Whether the bodies are retrieved or not, coal mining will continue, in far-flung pockets. The miners say it's the government's responsibility to come up with a plan to protect the environment, but the state government and district councils have long adopted a hands-off attitude towards coal extraction, preferring only to collect money from it.

#### A miner's story

A mine owner I met in 2014 illustrated the complexities between coal and Jaintia society. He came from a family of farmers, and had worked first as a labourer loading coal, then a truck driver, then bought his own truck, then became a mine owner. An active man of medium height, he was wiry and muscular. He dressed flashy, wore expensive sneakers. His hands were calloused from working as coal loader. "I would make ₹500-600 then, and gave it to my mother after keeping ₹100 for myself. Now, I have several houses in Shillong."

The next time I met him was in a café in Shillong, where he was accompanied by two young, thuggish looking assistants. He had begun to invest in other people's land, he said. Once coal was struck, it would be divided 50:50 between him and the landowner. He spoke of mine grabbing, of intimidation of landowners in villages. I didn't ask if he was involved.

Ironically, he knew the measures to be taken to improve things: filling up and sealing abandoned mines, treating water pumped out of mines to restore pH levels, safety equipment for workers. But he could not be bothered because the State government was not.

That was the last we met. A year or two later I heard he was supplying coal outside Meghalaya. Then last year, I heard he had died of cancer, leaving a few crores each to his sisters, his wife, and reportedly to a mistress as well.

Coal mining is part of a larger trend in the Northeast: the decimation of natural resources. There is large-scale deforestation going on in the Garo and Khasi Hills of Meghalaya, besides limestone mining in the Jaintia Hills.

Assam, which has lost most of its once extensive forest cover, sees poaching in the Dima Hasao region, coal mining in Upper Assam, and sand/stone mining from river beds.

The Northeast is no pristine wilderness any more: the pressures of population and the need for livelihoods are stripping the land bare.

The writer is the author of the popular Detective Arjun Arora series.



**Deep end**  
(top) A miner carries wet coal up the wooden slats of a rat-hole mine in the East Jaintia Hills; (left) A daily wage labourer loads coal into a truck at a depot in Meghalaya  
AFP & RITU RAJ KONWAR

## PEACE IN A POD

# Seamless conversations

The Ezra Klein Show has held on to a place in the iTunes top 100 podcasts for doing what most interviews don't

BY USHA RAMAN

**T**he interview is the staple of journalism. It gives us information, opinion, perspective, background. Gossip. Anecdotes. Okay, so, just about everything. The best interviews are free-flowing conversations that while being purposive also allow for a natural movement of ideas in both directions. There's acknowledgement and exchange, points made and countered, assertions questioned and explored, all to gain insights that only truly open dialogue can provide.

There is distinct pleasure in listening to a conversation between two competent and articulate people – one skilled in the art of asking engaging questions and the other representing a wealth of domain knowledge and experience. And it gets even better when the distinction between the journalist and expert get blurred, opening up the subject in unanticipated ways.

A large number of interviews we watch or read or listen to in Indian mainstream media tends to be one-sided, in that someone asks the questions (usually the journalist) and someone offers the responses (the 'expert' or 'source').

Very often the one-sidedness slides into deference, even plain obsequiousness, and we are left with something substantially less than a conversation. Also, the time or space-bound formats of most genres don't really encourage exploration.

The Ezra Klein Show, the eponymous

podcast by Vox Media co-founder and editor-at-large, has held on to a place in the iTunes top 100 podcasts (see-sawing between 65 and 82) precisely because it does what most interviews don't.

#### Long and lovely

The episodes are long (an hour or so), reflective, meandering, unpredictable, and Klein very often challenges and disagrees with his guest... but in a way that moves the conversation ahead. Klein aims to 'get into the heads' of the people he speaks to, mostly famous or successful individuals from a range of fields – politics, media, culture, academia – people described by the show as 'newsmakers and power players'.

To achieve this entry into their headspace, he seems to do a prodigious amount of preparation, getting deep into the subject in general as well as into his interviewee's work in particular. The questions therefore are not only pointed, but suggest that Klein has thought enough about it all to have opinions of his own, which he uses to counter or clarify points made by the guest.

In its 192 episodes (at the time of writing), the show has featured conversations with both famous and not-so-famous individuals, including such notables as Barack Obama, Melinda Gates and Francis Fukuyama as well as those with a significant niche following such as stand-up comedian Hasan Minhaj, fantasy writer N.K. Jemisin

and tech philosopher Jaron Lanier (who has been a guest more than once).

Klein notes in an introduction to one of the recent episodes: "I love that on this podcast, downloads are not correlated with the fame of whoever is talking."

The latter three, in fact, are among my favourite episodes, each offering a different aspect of Klein's felicity as an interviewer. The Hasan Minhaj episode (December 13, 2018) might be of special interest to Indian listeners who follow comedy, for his views on growing up in two cultures and the perspective this gives him on politics and on people, and his unique 'take' on contemporary issues.

Klein describes this as one of the episodes he had the most fun doing. Much like the conversation with Jemisin (re-posted December 31, 2018), where he engages her in an exercise of fantasy world building.

The interaction with Jaron Lanier, on the other hand, despite being punctuated by much laughter and light banter, is a sobering reflection on social media, and it's one of those where Klein often disagrees with his guest.

What makes these conversations so good to listen to, even when one may not be particularly connected to the issues discussed? Apart from the level of preparation that goes in, it's the choice of interviewees – engaging speakers who aren't afraid to be challenged, and in fact seem to enjoy being pushed to rethink their arguments.

Klein explains, in a prelude to an episode featuring Chris Anderson of TED, "Before a conversation can be meaningful to someone, they have to want that conversation to be meaningful." Both parties must be open-minded and willing to encounter – and consider – the unexpected. Sometimes, though, this ends up in a situation where we listen to a lot of Klein – and somewhat less of the guest than we would like! But then again, the show does carry his name.

(A fortnightly series on podcasts.)

The Hyderabad-based writer and academic is a neatnik fighting a losing battle with the clutter in her head.



**C** The questions therefore are not only pointed, but suggest that Klein has thought enough about it all to have opinions of his own

## CREDITS



**Leaving Neverland**  
240 minutes  
Dan Reed

Michael Jackson stands accused in this four-hour film in which Wade Robson and James Safechuck, two men now in their 30s, describe being sexually abused by the late singer in the 80s and 90s – and the decades of denial that followed, during which they maintained their support of Jackson. *Leaving Neverland* premiered at the Sundance Film Festival on January 25 to largely appreciative reactions from critics and a standing ovation for Robson and Safechuck. The Jackson estate has denied the allegations, saying, "This is yet another lurid production in an outrageous and pathetic attempt to exploit and cash in on Michael Jackson."



**Extreme Flight: Indian Air Force**  
44 minutes  
National Geographic

National Geographic teamed up with the Air Force to bring us this Republic Day offering, focusing on "the dangers and difficulties of the IAF encounters while operating in the country's most hostile environment and weather conditions – from Jammu and Kashmir to the North East." It zooms in on real service personnel as well as the "latest machines" in the arsenal. An IAF spokesman was quoted as saying, "We have worked closely with the channel to bring out the lesser-known stories of our operations in such harsh climatic conditions. I am confident that the documentary will take viewers a step closer to understand the challenges and motivations of our officers."

A curation of some of the most interesting news films and videos from around the world.



BY MALINI NAIR

**A** terminally ill woman living out the last days of her life has decided not to talk about tiring medicines, doctors, aches and pains. Talk to me about black holes, she tells her daughter, about their minuscule points of singularity that hold giant dead stars, and where everything will eventually return when the universe ends.

Can science help us deal with existential angst? Can astrophysics offer us a path to understanding mortality? Can principles that define time and space teach us how to negotiate a relationship?

*Black Hole*, actor Jyoti Dogra's brave new work, looks at the fascinating connection between our lives, earthly and otherwise, and the final frontier where stars go to die. A fascinating mix of astrophysics and our everyday life, the play made its debut at Delhi's Oddbird Theatre last December. More interestingly, it is now playing out often to an

unusual audience: cosmologists and astrophysicists across the country who are curious to know how their world of dry facts finds resonance in human emotions.

On February 18, *Black Hole* will be staged at the International Centre for Theoretical Sciences during a three-day global cosmology conference. Then it travels to the physics department of Guwahati University. Its first unusual audience after the debut at Oddbird was the department of astrophysics at University of Delhi, and that set off a buzz in the world of science.

**90 and counting**  
*Black Hole* is Dogra's fourth solo devised play, and comes on the heels of her wildly popular work, *Notes On Chai*. There aren't many theatre enthusiasts who are likely to have missed *Notes*, which has been staged nearly 90 times so far. There are fans who have watched the play multiple times and await its reappearance in the city.

Like *Notes*, *Black Hole* is a curious mix of the everyday and the abstract, real

and surreal, cerebral and emotional. The minimal storyline is of a woman with a deep interest in the idea of black holes grappling with the impending death of her terminally sick mother.

**Back to the beginning**  
For the rest, the play weaves in and out of remarkable ideas: helium and the fragile hope of immortality, for instance. "Helium particles are the only part of us that leave this planet and move to outer space, all other atoms and subatomic particles are absorbed by the earth," says Dogra. There will then be tiny bits of us travelling through space when we die, the mother says. How far will her own helium particles travel? And if they can reach the closest black hole, would they eventually also enter the singularity, returning a part of her to the beginning?

"I have always been interested in and moved by astrophysics. I asked myself if the black hole can represent our life, ideas of loss, absence, death, void?" says Dogra. "The idea pushed me towards some personal experiences,

some of them excruciatingly painful. The black hole is all-encompassing but it is all in nothing."

Proximity with death, she says, brings many of these ideas close to how the cosmos works. "A dying person whose pain you know but cannot share, when things close down and you cannot penetrate the shell... Where is that person going?"

The conventional search for answers to these questions takes us to religion and spiritualism. But could the path lie through astrophysics? "You are after all your universe," she points out.

**Unrelated worlds**  
Once she found the connection between the two seemingly unrelated worlds, Dogra says she was moved and surprised by how forged they were. She ensured that the science was correct, the last thing you want with a work like this is to have someone point out that an equation is out of place or a link non-existent. But was the context correct? Would the play survive scientific scrutiny?

**C** *The storyline is of a woman with an interest in the idea of black holes grappling with the impending death of her sick mother*

At the astrophysics department of Delhi University, the answer was a resounding yes. There were two black hole specialists, two scientists from CERN at the performance, which was followed by a two-hour Q&A session. The response, she says, came as a huge relief at the end of the nerve-racking no-frills performance in a tiny hall next to the department head's office – no lights, no stage, just a white sheet.

"They have never looked at science like this, in terms of human emotions. Science has one place in the world, and life another. But their response was astounding – they opened up to talk about poetry and philosophy," she recalls.

Dogra's works, which make very inventive use of the human voice and movement practices like yoga, are always a fascinating plumb into the recesses of the mind. But she is never, not even when she is delineating a laughable cliché, lacking in compassion. Every character, even the most loathsome, has a story to tell. Every banal action, pointless babble is wired to something deeper as we try to make sense of our days.

In *Notes*, for instance, the so-called *benjhi* we sneer at, the government clerk with eyes glazed over, the lech with hands on his crotch: everyone gets a shot at relevance. Even at its funniest, the play is deeply melancholic.

"The reason why *Notes* worked was because people see their own masks slipping, they recognise themselves, like a 'Caught you!' There is a lot that is said but there is a lot that is there in the unsaid as well where viewers locate themselves," she says.

The author writes on and lives for music, dance, theatre, and literature.

# Where stars go to die

After the wildly successful *Notes On Chai*, Jyoti Dogra takes on black holes and existential angst in her latest trademark solo performance



Agony and astrophysics Jyoti Dogra in *Black Hole*, and *Notes on Chai*.  
MALINI NAIR & A.M. FARUQUI

## SCANNER

### Rolling art galleries



Jeepney, the singularly Philippine minibus, is facing the scrapheap. These rolling art galleries adorned with images of everything from Batman to babies

to beasts, are set to give way for non-polluting, mass-produced eco-jeepneys. Less than a dozen of the craftsmen who hand-painted them are left. The jeepney is seen as a genuine modern folk art form, whose end will mean the death of a piece of Filipino culture. Fashion designer Christian Louboutin launched a jeepney-themed handbag collection last year.

### Pierre Bonnard: The Colour of Memory



A little old man – so it's said – was once caught red-handed at an art gallery in France, armed with palette, paints and brushes, trying to alter one of the exhibits, a painting by Pierre Bonnard. The culprit was Bonnard himself. The Tate

Modern is hosting a major exhibition of the painter's works until May 6, focusing on the period from 1912 to his death in 1947, when he came into his own as one of the great colourists of the age.

### Kleptocracy



A play, *Kleptocracy*, by Kenneth Lin on the depravities of contemporary Russia has just premiered in Washington, D.C. – where else? Reportedly, the outstanding character is a chillingly depicted Vladimir Putin, played by Christopher Geary, whose rise to power and relentless hounding of oligarch Mikhail Khodorkovsky is the heart of the plot. At one point,

Putin appears as a literal butcher clad in a bloody apron, carving red meat with a cleaver.

## POP-A-RAZZI

# The city's winter of content

Bengalis were never equipped for winter. The monkey cap is a cliché, but it's also not untrue



SANDIP ROY  
is the author of *Don't Let Him Know*, and like many Bengalis likes to let everyone know about his opinions whether asked or not

**Y**ou are such a Kolkatan. Where is your monkey cap?" chortled a writer friend.

I was trying to fashionably brave the Jaipur Literature Festival's Writers Ball at the opulent Rambagh Palace Hotel. There were smoky Talisker whisky and salted maple cocktails with names like the Pregnant King. An entire goat was roasting fatty on the spit. But all I could think of, in the chilly night air, was that I should have worn a cap.

We are Bengalis. We were never equipped for winter. The monkey cap is a joke and a cliché. It's also not untrue. I spotted the pioneering writer Manoranjan Byapari, winner of the Hindu non-fiction prize for 2018, in the authors' lounge at Jaipur. He had on his monkey cap. I congratulated him for winning the prize. He replied "How are you? Isn't it very cold here?"

Yet winter is also Kolkata's season of content. Goibibo says, "It is the best time to visit Kolkata as the weather is cool and pleasant too." That's when the migratory birds arrive from London and New York and Mumbai and Gurgaon. They gossip and drink and have devilled crab with a dash of nostalgia at Mocombo restaurant where no reservations are allowed.

### Jolly & holly

The clubs are jolly with ho-ho-ho Santas, the lines for plum cake are long and Park Street is dressed up in lights for a Didi-ordained Christmas festival while its 'continental' restaurants are offering duck specials.

Sweaters are out, quilts have been sunned, and the bazaar is filled with cheap local broccoli as opposed to 'imported' expensive broccoli. Clay pots of nolen gur or the new date palm jaggery,



**Isn't it cold?** Winter is Kolkata's jolly season. The photo shows people gathered at Victoria Memorial around Christmas time. PTI

show up in the market glowing darkly, a promise of the all too fleeting taste of winter. Winter reminds us of a time when mothers sat in the balcony in the afternoon sun knitting sweaters and baby booties and well-oiled kids were made to run around the terrace before bath time to absorb the sunlight.

Winter sees not one, not two, but three literary festivals for Kolkata in the space of barely one month. Some might think it's a little excessive but all three persist, jam-packed with authors, sometimes to the confusion of the writers who forget which one they signed up for. But it's just part of winter thrills and chills.

**C** *The mist is pure smog. An early morning jog sounds healthy but it is not. Neither is the marathon*

dex even managed to trump Delhi at 380 PPM whereas the capital only managed 300. A satellite picture shows ominous sulphur dioxide clouds hanging over the city. The city is full of masks these days. But Kolkata's politicians are loath to stir into action, smugly content that Delhi has it worse. But the persistent ugly hacking cough never goes away, a phlegmatic reminder of the new grim underside of Kolkata's happiest 'season'.

**C** *Winter is a remembrance of things past – of polo matches, vintage car rallies, dog shows*

We always wanted winter to last longer, much more than we want the carnival madness of Durga puja to last forever.

Over the years though winter has become shorter and shorter, arriving late, leaving early, making a mockery of the quilts brought out of storage and put out into the sun. I have never known a pleasure as enveloping as crawling under a quilt at night.

But like a Kolkata winter it's a short-lived pleasure. Just like the nolen gur that heralds winter and which we eat dribbled on everything, from rotis to cocktails, our own maple syrup as it were. These days the State government in a brainwave has figured out how to put nolen gur in a tube and sell it, a bit of Kolkata winter, squeeze-and-serve nostalgia. Purists might shudder. But the non-resident Bengali heart rejoices as they carry nolen gur back to other parts.

Perhaps it's wrong to try and bottle winter like that, to artificially expand its life by putting it in a tube.

A Kolkata winter is meant to be fleeting and ephemeral. But then if my hacking cough is going to last beyond the expiry date of a Kolkata winter, why not a bit of nolen gur to sweeten the pain?



## BIG SCREEN

# Lives beyond our own

The domestic help, usually relegated to the margins in cinema and in life, has recently been resurrected thoughtfully

BY NEHA BHATT

In a memorable still from the film *Roma*, Cleo, the central character, is framed looking out of a car window, her arm tenderly holding a pair of dozing children in her charge. At that moment, when her mind seems adrift, her eyes soft, she could be anyone. But she isn't anyone – she is a live-in maid whose story is centrestage in the widely acclaimed *Roma*.

When Yalitza Aparicio, who plays Cleo in the film, heard she was nominated for an Academy Award in the Best Actress category, she reacted, saying: "As a daughter of a domestic worker and an indigenous woman myself, I am proud this movie will help those of us who feel invisible be seen."

The character of the domestic help, usually relegated to the margins both on and off screen, has on occasion surfaced to serve a larger dramatic purpose. It has been used to draw our attention to class prejudice, social justice



or family dynamics. We have been treated to intricate upstairs-downstairs drama of the likes of *Downton Abbey*, and watched the idea cloaked in fantasy as the nanny story of *Mary Poppins*.

Between romcoms and melodrama, in India and in Hollywood, the 'help' has served several plotlines. Of late, a

**C** I am guilty of having the same prejudices that the film is trying to expose, said Tillotama Shome

**On the sidelines**  
(Clockwise from left)  
Still from *Roma*, *Lust Stories*, *Sir* and *Shame*.



This, at first glance, is what the recent short film *Shame*, directed by Anusha Bose and starring Swara Bhaskar, seems to say. Bhaskar, playing a member of the housekeeping staff at a hotel, takes us through the efficient way in which these workers bring back spotless order to dishevelled rooms – but she then gives us something more.

When she happens to see through an unlocked door a pair of guests getting cosy, her reticence, as neatly pressed as her uniform, comes undone – and that's unacceptable to her employers.

**Patchy but important**

*Shame* snowballs into a patchy, incredulous revenge drama but it is, all the same, noteworthy for some of the questions it raises. Can we acknowledge those who work for us and do menial

**C** The films set up the deep interdependence between the ones who are served and the ones who serve

are archaic, prejudices that are redundant, prejudices that really shouldn't exist but they do. They exist within me."

Gera chose to make the movie on this subject because the class issue is something she has struggled with her whole life, having grown up with live-in help, she said in an interview. "But we live with this sort of racism and segregation within the house and it's complicated as a child, because you love this person and she takes care of you but you learn very young that there are barriers..." she said. In *Sir*, Gera explores how we choose who to love, how we allow ourselves to love who we love.

What these films do well is to set up the deep interdependence between the ones who are served and the ones who serve – and the terribly existence of the latter. As Cleo in *Roma* goes about her daily tasks – washing away dog poop from the driveway, cleaning the house, taking care of the children – she also has to handle personal tragedies, with no space or time to mourn, because she can't afford to lose her job.

**Class act**

Filmmaker Alfonso Cuaron, who based the film on his own childhood and his nanny, said in an interview to *The Guardian*: "...It has made me reassess many things, including my own complicity in certain situations – such as hierarchical society and the relationship between class and race that is prevalent not only in my country, but throughout the world." He spent almost a year looking for the right person to play Cleo.

These are roles that demand a display of quiet strength, the ability to tuck away your own problems to focus on the problems of the more privileged. Bhumi Pednekar played Sudha in Zoya Akhtar's short that was part of the anthology *Lust Stories*, and did an excellent job. Sudha takes humiliation on her chin, stoically serving tea to the employer with whom she shared a passionate relationship till only a few days ago and who is now getting ready to marry someone else.

As one of the most vivid portrayals of the casual cruelties of class prejudice, Alice in Mira Nair's memorable *Monsoon Wedding* comes to mind. Played with sensitivity by Shome, Alice looks up in horror when a harmless flight of fantasy – trying on her employer's jewellery while dusting a room – ends in her being branded a thief, snatching away not just a private moment but also the right to benefit of doubt.

Cinema has the power to make the invisible visible, and these sensitive moments remind us of our complicity, the powers we use and misuse, and how blind we can be to those who are intimidated in our lives.

The freelance journalist is a lover of cakes, chai, bookshops and good yarns.

## FILMY DIALOGUE

## The kids get it right

A sweet story that shines more because January's releases have been so awful



NAMRATA JOSHI  
is Associate Editor-Cinema with *The Hindu* in Mumbai

The year has just begun but January is already staking a claim to being the cruellest month for Hindi cinema. Propaganda, jingoism and parochialism; aggression, conflicts and attacks; latent hostility and outright hatred – there's a lot of negativity on screen in the overblown hagiographies and obsequious recreations of events from the recent past.

It has taken a bunch of children in a Marathi film called *Dhappa* to change the overriding narrative of belligerence and sectarianism, and underscore the spirit of camaraderie, inclusivity and harmony. The adults may have lost the plot but the kids are certainly alright.

Winner of the Nargis Dutt Award for Best Feature Film on National Integration, *Dhappa* has been directed by Nipun Avinash Dharmadhikari and co-produced by two of the finest talents in Marathi cinema, filmmaker Umesh Kulkarni and actor Girish Kulkarni, who has also written the story and screenplay, inspired from a true incident.

**Outside the bubble**  
The children in *Dhappa* don't just feel real but Girish also makes their views shine through; and pivots the film on their perspective. "In India, we hardly have any films where children actually feel like children. It's like the point-of-view of a grown-up has been imposed on the child's psyche," says Umesh.

Girish has managed the near impossible: he has penned a children's film that steers clear of moral grandstanding and doesn't talk down to

jape, Basu Chatterjee and Hrishikesh Mukherjee.

In fact, it seems as though there isn't much else going on, until the apartment complex decides to stage a play on environment issues for Ganesh Chaturthi. A drama on trees that walk, a monkey that talks, and time-travel, it brings together Jesus Christ and Sant Tukaram as they break bread and bhaakri on stage, while chiding human beings for reducing earth to a disaster zone. The play riles the local politician/ goon, Bhau, who can't digest the blurring of religious and cultural boundaries. The only way he can retort is through force and violence. How will the children counter him?

*Dhappa* may feel sentimental and cute in turns but it certainly isn't shorn of profundity. "You need a child's mind to understand complex issues," says Umesh. It's why the youngsters don't find anything offensive about Christ being a part of the Ganesh festival.

The film is about the urgency to return to the simplicity and innocence of a child. Caste, class, and religious disparities may be all around but the children are able to rise above it all. They are the ones who hold a candle for tolerance. Therein lies much-needed subtlety and nuance.

**C** It's a simple slice of middle-class life, the kind we associate with Paranjape and Mukherjee



Straight talk The film pivots on the children's perspective.



## TRIBUTE

## Chronicler of the oppressed

The filmmaker who refused the fake comfort of happy endings

BY S.R. PRAVEEN

Prem Nazir, the reigning star of Malayalam cinema, is on the sets, shooting a car chase for his latest film. In the middle of the scene, another vehicle arrives, and whisks him away into the forest. News spreads that the star has been kidnapped. The industry is in shock. Productions come to a standstill. The police department is under pressure. *Prem Nazirine Kanmania* (*Prem Nazir Has Gone Missing*), 1983, begins with this intriguing sequence. The filmmaker Lenin Rajendran passed away last month.

The film came at a time in the industry when older stars were on the wane, and a new set of superstars (who are now on the wane) had arrived. Rajendran did a little trick here, using a star to mock the star-centric industry. But the star himself was not the focus of the story. The filmmaker trained his lens instead on the captors – four unemployed youngsters with broken childhoods who did the kidnapping because of sheer helplessness.

The film reflects Rajendran's cinematic and political sensibilities, which he would stand by through the 35 years of his career. Even while picking independent, serious cinema, he never fully eschewed the mainstream. So, his films were often relatively fast-paced, had songs like 'Oru Vattam Koodi' or 'Neermizhi Peeliyil', which are counted among the biggest hits in the industry. All this, while talking about issues that mainstream cinema shied away from.

**Grounded in reality**  
In *Meenamasathile Sooryan* (Midsummer Sun), 1986, he focussed on the revolt of the Communist peasants of Kayur against the landlord and the British. In *Puravrumam* (The Past), 1988, Om Puri plays a man who revolts and breaks the village 'tradition' of offering newly-wed brides to the landlord to sleep with.

None of his films have a happy end-



Subtle storytelling A snapshot from Lenin's *Puravrumam*.

ing. It was almost as if he refused to offer the fake comfort of a happy ending, which would be a world away from reality. The four men who kidnap Nazir, and end up befriending him, are later caught and crushed under police boots.

In *Puravrumam*, the landlord first gets his men to almost murder the protagonist, then the man is arrested with fake cases foisted on him. He is released many years later, only to face the next battle. Lenin thus made his films links in a continuum of struggle. But none of his films are sloganizing, they were handled in subtler ways. Like *Vachanam* (The Word), 1989, a film on fake gurus and human gods, a gripping crime thriller around a dead body that is never found.

It is hard to pin Rajendran to a specific genre. He endeared himself to audiences with several intensely personal films, on love and loss. In *Mazha* (Rain), 2000, city-bred teenager Bhabra comes to live in her father's village, where she falls in love with her music teacher. Love fuels poetry and rebellion in her, only to be quelled when she is married to another man.

**C** Lenin made his films links in a continuum of struggle

Years later, after her husband's death, she returns to find an equally broken man who has lost his voice.

**Strong women**

Rajendran's films have strong, independent women right from the early days. His debut *Venal* (Summer), 1981, had a woman who refuses to have her life be destroyed by an abusive, loveless marriage and goes to college to start life afresh. In *Chillu* (Fragments), 1982, the protagonist Annie is in love with a college mate, who is jealous of her friendship with a young artist. Her honesty and independence is defeated by his jealousy.

Rajendran made two autobiographical films, on Swathi Thirunal, the musician ruler of the erstwhile Travancore kingdom and on artist Raja Ravi Varma, placing them in a contemporary context. He also often drew inspiration from Malayalam literature. *Daivathinte Vikrithikal* (The Ways of God), 1992, was drawn from a story by M. Mukundan. It featured Alphonso, a magician, who stays behind when the French leave the coastal town of Mahe in the 1950s. The film chronicles the slow disintegration of Alphonso and his family, as he struggles to keep up, unaware of the world changing around him.

But unlike Alphonso, Rajendran was acutely aware of the world around him. And cinema was his tool to change that world.

## 6 HERITAGE

## RUBRIC

# A college by the Cauvery

One of the country's oldest colleges, the one where Ramanujan studied briefly, is about to get a makeover



**Old photographs and paintings show students punting down from the other bank; now there's a foot bridge**

BY SOMA BASU

**S**unlight peeps through the latticed walls along the dark corridors of the chemistry lab. Bats flit about beneath the high ceiling of the physics lab. The plaster has peeled off the classroom walls, wooden beams are decaying, and the musty smell is overpowering. Wild vegetation grows all over the narrow corridors that connect rooms on either side of open courtyards. And I spot a large snake coiled on the debris of a partially collapsed roof.

The eeriness of the abandoned building can't stop me visualising what must have been among the most scenic college campuses in the mid-1800s, and one of the most reputed academic institutions of the Madras Presidency during the Raj. History and art are still infused in every corner of the ruins of the government college on the banks of the Cauvery in the temple town of Kumbakonam.

There are old photographs and paintings that show students punting down from the other bank to attend classes. By 1943 they could cycle or walk across the narrow Aranmanai Rama Iyer wooden bridge. The bridge was pulled down in 2006 and replaced with a modern 75-metre long pedestrian bridge, but you can get a glimpse of the old bridge in the Tamil film *Sethu*.

**Started as a school**  
The 22-acre campus was undoubtedly stunning in 1854 when it was established as a provincial school, with the river as picturesque backdrop. There is a quaint simplicity to the single-storey flat-roofed structures that go on for almost a kilometre along the river.

An 1880 bell from C.S. Bell & Co, Hillsboro, Ohio, still rings every hour to beckon students to class in the new

buildings constructed in 1975. Until the 1970s, the college had a canoe club that conducted the annual regatta. "The inter-college Thiruvaiyaru boat race competition was revived briefly in 1999 for three years. We still have six of the old canoes," says A. Gunasekaran, controller of examinations.

#### Tagore, Raman et al

Through the sepia photos, old letters, journals and souvenirs, memoirs and stories handed down over generations orally, or penned by alumni, you get a sense of the institution's history: Rabindranath Tagore visited in 1918, C.V. Raman in 1940; you learn that Srinivasa Ramanujan was offered a scholarship to study here after his headmaster introduced him as an outstanding student who deserved scores higher than the maximum. Ramanujan studied for a year between 1904 and 1905, but intent on mathematics, he failed in most other subjects, and lost the scholarship.

"I tell every batch of students that I am a privileged junior of Ramanujan and so are they," says the head of the maths department, K. Gunasekaran. The college has a list of prominent alumni, including the statesman Srinivasa Sastri, and the scholars Thyagaraja Chettiar and U.Ve. Swaminatha Iyer.

With visible pride, Gunasekaran opens the lock to the classroom where Ramanujan attended maths classes more than a century ago. "You will find here stories that wow generations of students," he says, as we remove our sandals and enter the dust-laden room.

Long wooden benches with attached desks are propped up by elaborately carved iron legs. Sunlight pours in through a broken glass pane in the high ceiling. An explosion of weeds knocks against two large, locked windows. In fact, uncontrolled vegetation has colonised most empty spaces and even burst through the roof and ceilings dislodging frames and creating cracks in columns and walls.

#### River view

"You can imagine how the students sitting in these classrooms would have had a magnificent view of the river through these windows," says R. S. Sundararajan, the head of physics department and the man who played Ramanujan's father in a Tamil biopic on the genius. "This institution has produced great scholars and it will be a tribute to all of them if we are able to restore the college to its old glory," he says.

Founded by Dewan Bahadur R. Raghu Nath Rao in a mansion donated by the

**Slice of history** (Clockwise from extreme left) A part of the old college building with carvings on the pillars; the old library block; the 1880 bell from C.S. Bell & Co., Ohio, that still rings every hour; the classroom where mathematician Srinivasa Ramanujan studied; and students returning home after classes. M. MOORTHY & SOMA BASU



senior Rani of Tanjore of the time, the school first taught English to the children of the rich. Nicknamed 'Cambridge of South India', it introduced undergraduate courses in physics, chemistry, maths, geography in 1864. At that time, there were only four other colleges in South India: Madras Christian College, St. Joseph's College, Trichinopoly; Presidency College, Madras, and Noble College Masulipatnam.

More than a hundred years later, new buildings were added to make room for more departments. The entire college shifted to the new campus.

In 2016 the renovation project was set rolling when INTACH (Kodaikanal) member Girija Viraghavan visited. "My grandfather D.S. Sarma taught here in the early 1900s. Three years ago I visited the place with my brother and found it in a shambles," she says.

A team of heritage restoration architects joined Sakthi Murugan of Intach (Tanjore) to study the extent of damage and submitted a preliminary report in December 2017 based on which the State government sanctioned ₹16 crore. Last December a detailed project report was finalised, paving the way for the Public Works Department to invite quotations for the restoration work.

Says Chennai INTACH co-convenor Tara Murali: "People need to understand that restoration does not mean just breaking and rebuilding. It means understanding the building, the purpose it served during a different time period, retrieving the artisanal work, and traditional building materials. We hope the PWD upholds this spirit and restores it for adaptive use."

It is not easy to patch up a building that's more than 100 years old. There's still a long way to go, but a piece of history has for the moment been saved from being lost for ever.

BY MATIAS ECHANOVE &  
RAHUL SRIVASTAVA

**I**t is hard to overemphasise the depth of indoctrination in urban planning departments and urban design studios. Neighbourhoods are drawn by architects who are trained to produce neat plans at all costs – even if that means imposing geometries that oppress the people who will eventually live inside the plan.

Even architects who would like to emancipate themselves from the bird's eye view and conceive of spaces that focus on users' experience – and there are many – have their hands tied. There are very strong mechanisms in place to prevent the emergence of complex urban forms. Incremental development is nearly impossible in the modern planning regime. Mixed-use is seen as complicated, live-work arrangements don't seem to fit legal categories, and low-rise, high-density spaces mess up finances.

#### Unable to hybridise

The bureaucracies that oversee urban plans hate nothing more than ambiguity. For them, a plan can never be about two things at once. Space should either be public or private, residential or commercial, open or closed. At most, one can neatly stack functions on top of each other, but you can't hybridise or worse, create new typologies.

The exact opposite happens in neighbourhoods that develop outside planning norms, in spaces that are creatively re-appropriated by inhabitants. Functions are mixed and multiple. Places are readapted and modified over time.

Such habitats are more complex to manage and nearly impossible to plan within existing regulatory frameworks. In fact, they are seen as the natural enemies of urban planning.

According to anthropologist Marilyn Strathern, an 'audit culture' prevails in public administrations. Audits and balance sheets work best with binaries where everything, from living standards to environmental quality, is calculated in seemingly precise terms.

#### The 'audit' culture

Calculations need numbers with degrees of variation that eventually create maximum and minimum quotients, they thrive on polarities and value judg-



PLACE, WORK, FOLK

## CITIES IMAGINED AS EXCEL SHEETS

The binary trap: everything is either planned and well-managed or informal and ill-managed

gements. Auditing is inevitably accompanied by evaluation. Acts of evaluation come loaded with values. Auditing systems work insidiously, shaping institutional goals, educational agendas, and development objectives, and dictate urban planning through measuring resources and spaces in reductive ways.

In urbanism, audit-based variables

are best represented in the all-pervasive though simplistic binary that operates so casually these days – of cities as either formalised, planned and managed on the one hand, or informal, unplanned and ill-managed on the other.

Quite simply, cities are either readable by auditing systems or not. This binary pushes all the living processes of

what makes cities alive for everyone, especially newcomers, the young and capital-deprived, into the space of the informal – the unreadable, actually incalculable, spaces – those most difficult to audit.

It leaches away agency and dynamism and creates a situation where some of the most exciting urban con-

texts with healthy local economies and great ecological quotients get classified as 'informal'.

And governing mechanisms are unleashed to bring them back into the audited or 'formal' fold.

Sadly, smartly planned neighbourhoods and cities increasingly look like 3D Excel sheets: cubes, grids and boun-

aries, elevated into rectangular cubes on a vertical plane.

Buildings are essentially boxes, stacked upon each other. They are easy to draw, audit and manage. They are even easier to fit into financial plans and investment portfolios.

**The 3D spreadsheet**  
We live in the age of 'spreadsheet urbanism', the spatial expression of the merging of urban planning and real estate speculation. The result is a hard-shell city that forces users to adapt to urban structure, rather than the other way

**The bureaucracies that oversee urban plans hate ambiguity. For them, a plan can never be about two things**

around. It is the polar opposite of what visionary urban planner Kevin Lynch had in mind when he imagined cities as "adaptive learning ecologies".

Does it have to be this way? Do cities and neighbourhoods have to become increasingly standardised and generic? The forces at work are very powerful. The state and the market are driving our cities in the same dull direction worldwide. Voters and consumers don't get much of a say about the kinds of places they want to live in. We assume that what we see on hoardings is all we can aspire to.

However, a new generation of planners seems willing to challenge this and imagine ways of putting people back at the centre of the plan. This involves conceiving new ways of financing development, lobbying to change or adapt regulation, overcoming the modernist dogma in architecture and urbanism, and, of course, planning along with the inhabitants.

The writers are co-founders of urbz.net, an urban network that's active in Mumbai, Goa and beyond.

# Where are Kokata's kite flyers?

Nawab Wajid Ali Shah brought the sport to the city, but now it's all but forgotten here



BY SUDIPTO SANYAL

**M**obiles have killed kites," Ajit Dutta complains as he daubs a paste of white flour and Bengal gram onto a flimsy wooden kite frame almost lovingly, as if he's feeding a child breakfast. "Look at kids these days, they're always on their phones. Who wants to fly kites?"

**Once upon a time**  
This is a far cry from the regal beginnings of kite-flying in Calcutta in 1856, when the last Nawab of Awadh was exiled by the British to the banks of the Hooghly. Wajid Ali Shah brought his passion for kite-flying with him. For the next 150 years, the Calcutta sky would be confettied with coloured paper. It is

believed that Wajid Ali Shah, tired of his strings getting cut during kite fights, insisted they be coated with madam dust. But that was then. "We don't sell as many as we used to," says Dutta. "Not as many as when I started this shop." That was 45 years ago, when he opened India Kite in Central Kolkata, next to the small park that has now become Santosh Mitra Square. He looks like he has been sitting in the same dark corner for ages, twisting wood into fragile bows and crosses, sticking delicate paper onto them to create airborne diamonds. "We don't sell as much manja (kite string) either," he sighs.

**The most unexpected catalyst for the nosedive this ancient pastime has taken may be Kolkata's changing weather**

**Big price**  
A retailer drops by, looking for a bulk purchase to ship to U.P. and Gujarat, but the price isn't right. "No one will pay so much, not any more," the retailer complains and leaves empty-handed. "It's a dead industry," says Souvik Ghosh, a third-generation kite-seller and owner of one of Kolkata's oldest kite shops, Air-Play Gobindo.

Kite-flying, like other traditions,

**Not so soaring** Kite-flying, like other traditions, has been edged out by change. REUTERS / SUDIPTO SANYAL

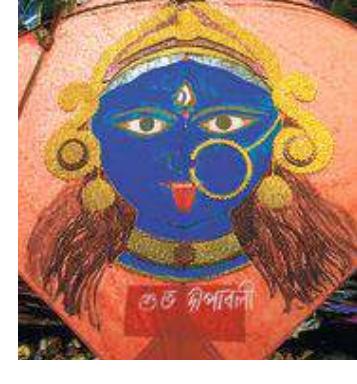
has been edged out by change, for which there are the usual suspects like market economics, and unusual ones, like the Goods and Services Tax of 2017, which has put a 5% tax on kites, in addition to 12% on kite paper and 5% on *manja*.

Mahavir Singh, in his 60s, has been a taxi-driver in Kolkata for many decades. He grew up near Ayodhya in Uttar Pradesh, the spiritual home of Indian kites, in a village tiny enough to have escaped the cartographer's pen. He wants his granddaughter to be out flying kites in the evenings. Instead, "she studies and then picks up her phone," he says. "Mobile wohle ke liye hi nahai uadaati." (She doesn't fly kites because of mobile phones.)

## Bad forecast

But the most unexpected catalyst for the nosedive this ancient pastime has taken may be Kolkata's changing weather.

"We're afraid of rains during Vishwakarma Pujo these days," says Dutta. "It wasn't like this 10 years ago." He holds up a kite, checking its balance. "It's harder to keep your kite up in this heavy air." Recent climatological statistics seem to bear Dutta out. September rains in the city have "most certainly" increased dramatically since 2001, says Lakshminarayan Satpati, professor of geography at the University of Calcutta.



ta. And a 2015 study in the *Journal of Applied and Natural Science*, on long-term patterns of rainfall in Gangetic West Bengal, finds a "significant increasing trend in September rainfall" in and around Kolkata.

"Is it El Niño? Global warming? Local land use? We need more research to explain it," says Satpati.

A paper in *Journal of Geophysical Research* puts it down to "large-scale climate variability". In other words, global warming seems to be engendering cloudbursts in September. "September is the time for kites, because September is Vishwakarma Pujo," Ghosh murmurs into his third cup of cardamom tea in the little office behind Air-Play Gobindo. "But how do you fly kites if it rains? Who'll buy kites if it's always cloudy?"

For now, though, the monsoons have departed, and the cool evening has brought a few schoolboys to Dutta's shop, which soon vibrates with shouts and giggles as kites are picked up, scrutinised, discarded.

"He cuts coaching classes every day to fly kites," says the smallest one, pointing to one of his friends. He adds proudly, "I never cut class."

Some of the kids rush to rooftops, others to the little park opposite, where they're joined by children from the neighbouring slum. Soon, there's a yellow diamond in the sky, in a pas de deux with a bright red one. The boy who never skips classes is there, the string sliding through his fingers deftly as he tries to keep his kite in the air. He turns and winks at me: "Today I'm cutting class. I really want to fly a kite today."

*This essay is from a National Geographic Society and Out of Eden Walk journalism workshop.*

The writer teaches American literature and worries about climate change in Kolkata.

## Notes from Kyoto

BY SUNANDA SESHADRNATHAN



GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

**T**he Arashiyama Bamboo Grove, in the far west of Kyoto, is one of the most photographed spots in Japan's erstwhile capital. I stand transfixed when confronted with the green corridor of gentle, tall bamboo trees that seem to engulf all who enter. As I follow the designated path through the grove, I can almost hear the bamboos whispering like willows, and I walk up and down several times trying to decode their secrets. Of course, my mission to commune with them is interrupted by a multitude of selfie-sticks. *Shinrin-yoku*, translated as 'forest bathing' is a popular Japanese healing concept where one is encouraged to take in the 'forest atmosphere' for its therapeutic benefits.

I cannot help but reminisce about two spectacular Kyoto-esque meals I had in the vicinity, both belonging to *shojin-ryori* cuisine – the traditional dining style of Buddhist monks. A tray of delicate seasonal and mountain vegetables, accompanied by rice and soy-bean-based items, is presented to

appeal to all five senses without the use of animal products or pungent vegetables like onion and garlic. While regular Japanese food plating by itself is impeccable, *shojin-ryori* cuisine, with its emphasis on Zen elements, goes one step further in ensuring you will cringe before dissecting the beautiful tray of delicate food, which often includes edible flowers. Believe me when I say it takes a special kind of willpower to pop petals into your mouth.

### Home-cooked bliss

While our first *shojin-ryori* meal was at the highly rated Shigetsu, a restaurant located within the precincts of Arashiyama's exquisite Tenryu-ji shrine, the second was in 'Arashiyama-kan', a quaint establishment where an elderly gentleman charmingly served us his wife's home-cooked Buddhist meals. When we asked if we could meet her to express our appreciation, he went into the small kitchen, exchanged a few words with her and came back and told us in halting English that she would not meet anyone without putting on makeup!

A *torii*, literally 'bird abode', is a traditional gate shaped somewhat like a 'pi' symbol, commonly found at Shinto shrines. The Fushimi Inari-taisha, a shrine dedicated to Inari Okami, the god of rice, has over 32,000 torii leading to the main shrine. We were mesmerised by the effect created by the labyrinth of orange-red, dedicated by various

**C** *At the golden Kinkaku-ji temple, time freezes as the mind and eye try to grab as much beauty as one can take*

establishments as an offering to the gods. And when faced with the grandeur of the golden Kinkaku-ji temple, Kyoto's most popular destination, time freezes for a halting second as the mind and eye try to grab as much beauty as one can take. A towering gold-plated shrine in the midst of water, surrounded by splendid gardens, this temple was the retirement villa of a yesteryear shogun. Burnt to the ground several times during civil wars and once in 1950 by a fanatical monk, it was restored to its former glory each time, and is now a Zen temple. Most of Kyoto's temples and shrines are dotted with food vendors selling local treats and delicacies like senbei, crunchy sesame crackers dusted with spicy seasoning or sugar, mochi, a chewy sweet made with rice flour and drenched in brown molasses, and assortments of cookies and traditional cakes.

During his 2014 visit to Japan, Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Kyoto to sign a partner agreement between the city and Varanasi. He visited two ancient Buddhist shrines – the tall pagoda at Toji and the golden temple at Kinkaku-ji. When my parents visited in 2015, my visibly excited father, inspired by our PM's trip, made choosing from the multitude of shrines in Kyoto relatively easy. "I want to go to the shrines that Modi visited," he exclaimed. "Take me to the Modi shrines."

The writer has lived in 'The Land of the Rising Sun' since 2013 and continues to walk around Tokyo with tourist eyes.



No, the food wasn't great. But the friends and debates made it all seem perfect

BY VASUNDHARA CHAUHAN

**S**o the alma mater is 50 years old this year. This week has been one of hectic reconnection – and probably crazy work for the organisers of a reunion in Hyderabad. I'm looking forward to it but, in the meanwhile, I'm going through a prolonged burst of nostalgia.

What is it about JNU that inspires such strong emotion? Someone said it's because we went through intense times together. That sounds about right. Even physically the campus was designed to foster inter-

action; buildings were connected by open walled corridors and there were teashops dotted under the shade of the few and sparse trees.

The campus now is much larger, with many more hostels and eating places than we could have dreamt of. Hostel mess food being what it was, institutional, it was unattractive from the word go – you could smell the fog before you reached the actual dining hall and the unimaginative potato-rich menus were repeated with boring regularity.

So the dhabs provided all the sustenance that we desired, social, affecting to be intellectual, and al-

imentary. There was tea in chipped Khurja mugs, "fans", some form of Danish, and, if you were really hungry, 'bun-omelette'. This was what the teashop across the lawn from my hostel sold. It was then called, eponymously, Kashi Ram, now I hear it's Ganga Dhaba. The other cluster of hostels had a tea shop called Nilgiri, or popularly, Chachaji's.

**Nameless but nourishing**  
The menu was the same. But if we had funds, we ate at the shopping complex that had a paratha joint run by Kamal, after whom the entire shopping complex was named.

mentary. There was tea in chipped Khurja mugs, "fans", some form of Danish, and, if you were really hungry, 'bun-omelette'. This was what the teashop across the lawn from my hostel sold. It was then called, eponymously, Kashi Ram, now I hear it's Ganga Dhaba. The other cluster of hostels had a tea shop called Nilgiri, or popularly, Chachaji's.

**They had minced mutton served in a dosa rolled into a cone. Pretty awful, but those were desperate times**

dosas, vile sambar, and, for when you were feeling luxurious, mango shakes. But only in the daytime.

As the action moved away from the old campus Gopal also moved up, to the boundary wall between Ganga and Jhelum. New campus Gopal had a small window set into the wall through which transactions were made.

### Tea set

The old campus also had two tea shops, one outside the old library, which made samosas and bread pakoras at tea time, and one behind the admin block. This latter was owned and run by two doughty men, Lalaji, short and cubic, and his brother, less short and less cubic. They were so much part of our lives that when Madhavi and Uday got married, Lalaji was part of the wedding party that entrained to Dehradun.

The tea in all these was uniformly disgusting: treacly sweet and with the flavour only of milk, because the tea leaves, never fresh and fragrant, were boiled and re-boiled to death. Coffee was a rarity but the canteen in the Club Building, run by the original Coffee Board, did decent coffee, with cream poured on to a cupful of black coffee that was stirred constantly so the cream didn't get a chance to settle, and you could sip your coffee through a layer of thick white cream. They had the usual potato mash and they had minced mutton, which was served in a dosa rolled into a cone. Pretty awful, but those were desperate times.

Even with the patina of nostalgia, I don't remember the food itself as great. What's memorable is the company, the excitement, the belief that we were part of important events. Then, samosas and ketchup or omelettes sandwiched in soft white bread seemed perfect.

From the once-forbidden joy of eggs to the ingratitude of guests, the writer reflects on all associations with food.

vasundharachauhan9@gmail.com

# Easy like Sunday morning

...Write under a pseudonym for a week. That allows young men to write as women, and women as men: Joyce Carol Oates

BY BERTY ASHLEY

**1** On February 3, 1863, this person first used this pen name in a Virginia City newspaper, *Territorial Enterprise*. Earlier, he wrote under the names 'Josh' and 'Thomas Jefferson Snodgrass'. The pen name was actually a term used by sailors on river-boats. It meant a depth of 2 fathoms, which is 12 feet – the correct depth to ensure the boats did not scrape the bottom. These boats also make frequent appearance in his works. Who is this beloved author?

**2** This author uses two initials and then her family name. She became an author quite late in life and her publishers asked her to use initials rather than her full name as young boys might not want to read a book written by a woman. As she had no middle name, she chose her paternal grandmother's name as the second initial of her pen name. She also has another pseudonym when she writes adult fiction. Who is this author?

**3** Alisa Zinov'yevna Rosenbaum was a Russian-Jewish writer and philosopher. She began writing screenplays at the age of eight and novels at the age of 10. She emigrated to America and became a screenwriter. Her first major success as a writer came in 1943 with a romantic and philosophical novel about an uncompromising young architect and his struggles with those who attempt to live through others. She used a pseudonym to protect her family back in Russia but it was actually just an abbreviation. Who is this author?

**4** Mark Sinclair Vincent is an American actor. His involvement with theatre came about when he, along with his brother and some friends, broke into a theatre with the intent to vandalise it. They were caught by the theatre's artistic director, who offered them roles in the upcoming show instead of calling the police. He came up with his pseudonym when he applied for work as a bouncer in a night club. What is the name which fittingly enough goes well with the type of movies that made him famous?

**5** 'X' Martin Lieber was born in New York in 1922. One of his first assignments for the comic company he was working for was a story entitled 'Captain America Foils the Traitor's Revenge'. The pseudonym he chose was basically a split of his actual first name. He changed it because he wanted to become famous as a novelist and didn't want to use his real name on "these silly little comics". Who is this legend whose name has forever become associated with those very comics, and what was his first name?

**6** Caryn Johnson is an American actress and comedian who is one of the few people to have won an Emmy, Grammy, Academy and a Tony award. The first name of her pseudonym comes from the fact that she used to have a gas problem and when performing onstage, she would just let go, which led to her co-actors teasing her saying, "You're like a \_\_\_ cushion!", referring to a practical joke device. Who is this actor who has a



**What's in a name?** She began writing screenplays at the age of eight and novels at the age of 10. DAVID LEO VEKSLER

Jewish family name but no Jewish ancestry?

**7** This multi-faceted gentleman used a variety of pseudonyms – Anthony Afterwit, Alice Adderton, Celia Shortface and Martha Careful, to name a few – in his career. When he was 16, in the hopes of getting his letters printed in a magazine, he came up with Silence Dogood, 'a middle-aged widow', and it worked. How better do we know this person who loved writing letters when not trying to fly kites in the rain?

**8** Early in this prodigious author's career, the publisher limited his publications to one book a year. This led him to creating a pseudonym 'Richard Bachman' (named after a rock band he was listening to) under which his novels were published. This was also an attempt to make sense of his career and try to answer the question of whether his success was due to talent or luck. Who is this writer who is described as the 'King of Horror'?

**9** Francois-Marie Arouet was a witty aristocratic French enlightenment writer who wrote plays, poems, novels, and historic and scientific works. He was renowned for his criticism of the French state and Cathol-

icism. He got his pseudonym from the anagram of 'Arouet Li' – the Latinised version of his surname, Arouet. How better do we know this author?

**10** Gordon Matthew Thomas Sumner was born in a ship-building town in North England. He became a teacher and taught English at a school. On weekends, he used to play in a band and when onstage, would wear a sweater knitted by his girlfriend. It was black and yellow and had hoops. This led to the band calling him by the name he is famously known as today. How better do we know Sumner?

A molecular biologist from Madurai, our quizmaster enjoys trivia and music, and is working on a rock ballad called 'Coffee is a Drink, Kaapi is an Emotion'. @bertyashley

ANSWERS  
1. Mark Twain  
2. JK Rowling  
3. Alan Rand  
4. Jim Dresel  
5. Sean Lee, Stanley  
6. Whoopi Goldberg  
7. Benjamin Franklin  
8. Stephen King  
9. Voltaire  
10. Shashi

## LETTER FROM A CONCERNED READER

### Bharat fraud awards

Respected Madam/Sir,

**D**on't talk to me. Don't even look in this direction. Upset means I am upset like anything.

Tell me madam/sir, in this country any reward is there for good, humble people? Or only for fraud and chicanery? Decency means anything? Or tomorrow onwards I should also behave like criminal?

Unbearable country.

Madam/sir, three days back I suddenly got one phone call. I immediately recognised it is Mrs. Guruprasad, who is steering committee member of Residents Association.

Many years ago, in Mrs. Mathru-bootham's native place in Nagercoil, very boring place please avoid, nothing is there, her family decided to put one borewell behind the kitchen. They said Mathru-bootham, you are oldest *mappilai*, you also please come to put supervision during drilling.

#### YOU GIVE ESTEEM TO YOUR FATHER! BLOODY NONSENSE THIS IS BRAND NEW VAN HEUSEN I KEPT IN PACKET SINCE 2014. ESTEEM IT SEEMS. OK I WILL PUT ONE EMPTY FLOWER VASE ON SHOWCASE AND I WILL SAY OH IT IS FULL OF ESTEEM I GOT IN 2019.

Many years ago, in Mrs. Mathru-bootham's native place in Nagercoil, very boring place please avoid, nothing is there, her family decided to put one borewell behind the kitchen. They said Mathru-bootham, you are oldest *mappilai*, you also please come to put supervision during drilling.

#### Justice lost

In my mind I was thinking, rascals, when I have some work, not one rascal will offer help. But when your family is drilling, I should put privilege leave and come and see, is it? But quietly I went. Marriage means justice gone forever. Drilling company fellows are drilling and drilling and then in between one fellow said, uncle can I have one glass of water. I said of course no problem but if you call uncle again, I will put Ranipal in water.

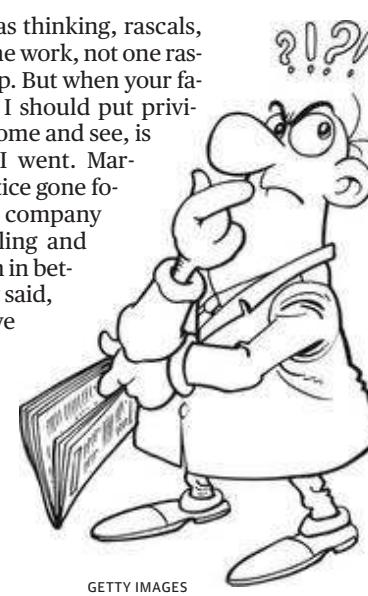
Then tragedy. He dropped steel tumbler right

inside the borewell hole and it went inside the drill. Madam/sir, till the day of my death in 2050, I will never forget the horrible sound. Khaa kheee kheee khooo kheeee. Oh my god, I said, whether borewell giving birth to another borewell?

Mrs. Guruprasad's voice is ditto like that sound. So only immediately I recognised.

She said hello can I speak to Mathru-bootham Uncle. I said sorry wrong number, there is no uncle in this house. She called again. Hello uncle? Again I cut. After 11 times, she said hello Mr. Mathru-bootham? I said oh my god Mrs. Guruprasad, what a pleasant surprise.

She said uncle will you please at-



GETTY IMAGES

Madam/sir, I was very agitated. So Mrs. Mathru-bootham brought me home before I took Gandhi statue and gave one esteem across Dr. Shankaramon's face.

Mrs. Mathru-bootham said relax, Dr. Mathru-bootham, relax. It is ok.

Next year you will get award. I am sure. I said, fine Kamalam, please make me one tea, I will read newspaper to reduce tension.

Madam/sir, in newspaper there was list of latest Bharat Ratna winners and all. I thought fine, Residents Association is criminal underworld organisation. But at least Government of India is better?

I saw Padma Shri list. I went through. Ok fine. Ok fine. Then I saw name of Sivamani, buffoon who stands near cricket ground and makes sound like train accident.

Immediately I took the newspaper and threw it from the balcony.

Yours in exasperation,  
J. Mathru-bootham

## GOREN BRIDGE

### Best line?

+ North-South vulnerable,  
North deals



BY BOB JONES

slam that had a chance. How would you play it after the opening club lead went to the king and ace, and the jack of clubs came back?

At the table, declarer shed a low diamond from his hand and won with dummy's queen. The ace of spades was followed by a spade ruff, and dummy was re-entered with the ace of hearts for another spade ruff. On this unlucky lie of the cards, that line of play promoted a trump winner for West and South went down one. Can you do better?

Of course you can! Discard a spade on the queen of clubs at trick two. Ruff a spade, cross back to dummy with the ace of hearts, and ruff another spade. Draw the trumps and claim. What's the problem?

Many a makeable contract goes down after a careless play by declarer at trick one. Sometimes the play to trick one is routine and the critical decision comes at trick two.

**M**ost experts, we believe, would open the North hand one spade, hoping that they could control the auction better after that start. Two clubs, however, would be the popular choice for most players. North-South did well in the auction, arriving at the only

**A-N-A-T-O-M-I-Z-E**

Atta chicken

● Whole chicken is marinated overnight in a blend of spices and hung curd

● Seared off in a tandoor to seal in moisture

● Wrapped in banana leaf for a unique taste

● Finally coated in wet atta dough and baked for 20 minutes

UNPLUGGED COURTYARD GURGAON

BY RAUL DIAS

**T**he idea of rich, buttery pastry encasing a succulent piece of meat is represented to great culinary success by two of my all-time favourite dishes – the French poultry wonder that is *poulet en croute* and the very British dish of beef Wellington. It also finds itself (albeit, handled a tad differently) in another dish I'd wage war for – parda biryani! Unlike the earlier two Western preparations, where the 'croute' or pastry covering the meat is meant to be eaten, the 'parde' draping the Awadhi-style biryani, made up of a thick sheet of rolled whole wheat flour, is discarded to reveal the fragrant rice preparation within.

On a recent trip to Delhi NCR, I encountered a very interesting preparation that had elements of both styles baked right into it. The Atta chicken at Unplugged Courtyard Gurgaon is a succulent, spiced whole chicken wrapped in a dough made from wheat flour and then baked. Chef Akshay Bhardwaj, the restaurant's corporate chef who has

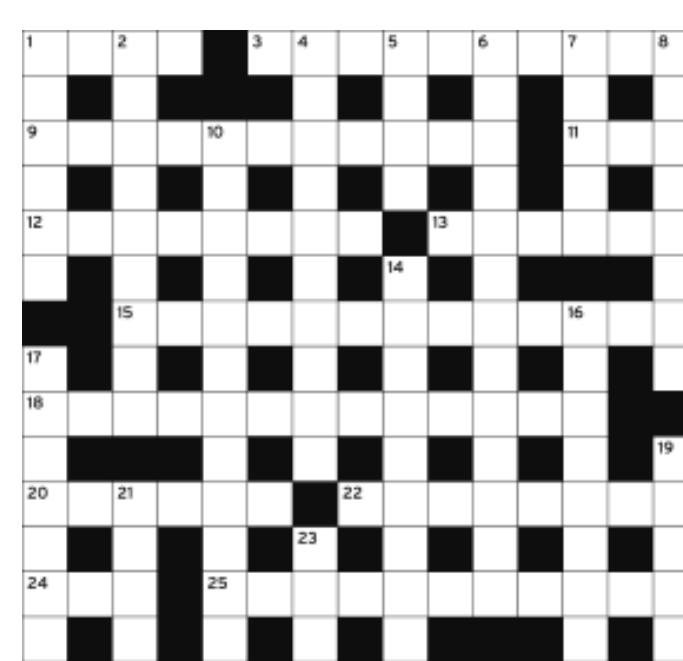
in the past worked at Chef René Redzepi's two-Michelin star restaurant Noma in Copenhagen, came up with the idea of blending these two very different, yet strangely similar techniques to create this dish.

Using a mixture of aromatic spices like ground cardamom, black stone flower, the ubiquitous garam masala, with raw mango and lemon rind powders thrown in for a tangy hit, the chicken is marinated overnight along with hung curd. To seal in its moisture, it is then seared off in a hot tandoor for a few minutes.

But before that all-important layer of wet atta covers the whole bird, a sheathing of banana leaves is used to give the dish a unique taste. Designed to keep in the juices, the atta covering is scored in a hedgehog pattern and the chicken is baked in an oven for 20 minutes at 180°C. Once at the table, the baked dough seal is broken to reveal its steamy contents that are a treat to the senses.

The Mumbai-based writer and restaurant reviewer is passionate about food, travel and luxury, not necessarily in that order.

## THE SUNDAY CROSSWORD NO. 3033



#### Across

- 1 Revolutionary handles exchange (4)
- 3 Exiled sailor found going round islands (10)
- 9 Perennial communist joining photo arranged by king with hesitation (3-3,5)
- 11 Boring thing, litigation, beginning to end (3)
- 12 Minister and agent in retirement keeping contact (8)
- 13 Make joke about time needed to produce identification (3,3)
- 15 Sitcom from past, one's noted, being broadcast (7,3,3)
- 18 Engraved by last item in puzzle book? Answer of course fitted (4-2-7)
- 20 Outdated lot had to change (3,3)
- 22 Editor, on reflection, right to cut biblical book? Rubbish (8)
- 24 Restrain language in speech (3)
- 25 Soldier left, given cover by popular pilot, without a supervisor (11)
- 26 Is main rule altered for famous people? (10)
- 27 Fight using force with beam (4)

#### Down

- 1 Sentimental spot about your university (6)
- 2 Directed commercial in costume (9)
- 4 Issues raised about superior part of day for meal (10)



## Solution No. 3032



## ECOTISM

BY ASHVINI MENON



I CANNOT IMAGINE STEPPING OUT WITHOUT THIS...WHAT DID YOU HAVE FOR SUN-PROTECTION BACK THEN, GRANDMA?