



India, Saudi Arabia
to launch Strategic
Partnership Council
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Modi's claim of fighting
corruption is empty
rhetoric: Kirti Azad
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Seven Labour MPs quit
over Jeremy Corbyn's
approach to Brexit
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NEARBY



'Delhi is safer but we
have to be cautious'

NEW DELHI
Ever since the terror attack in Pulwama, Kashmiris in the Capital have been living with a sense of fear. Though they have not faced any open hostility, they still exercise "caution" every time they have to step out of their homes. Even so, they feel Delhi is safer than other cities.

DELI METRO ▶ PAGE 1



DELI METRO ▶ 6 PAGES

3 Jaish men killed in Pulwama

Major among four Army personnel dead after 18-hour gun battle with terrorists

PEERZADA ASHIQ
SRINAGAR

An Army officer and three Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) terrorists were among the nine persons killed in an 18-hour gunfight in Pulwama's Pinglana area on Monday, four days after 40 CRPF jawans lost their lives in a suicide car-bomb attack in the region. The dead included three other Army personnel, a policeman and a civilian.

A Brigadier and a Deputy Inspector-General were among the nine injured.

Role in suicide attack

Among the three slain JeM terrorists was Kamran alias Fahad, a Pakistani, who took over as operational commander of the JeM after the killing of Mufti Waqas last year. The police said he might have played a role in the February 14 suicide blast



In the line of fire: Flames billowing from a building that caught fire during the gunfight in Pulwama. ■ NISSAR AHMAD

at Pulwama's Lethpora. "Kamran's role is being probed," said a police officer. The other slain terrorists were identified as Hilal Ahmad from Pulwama, who joined the JeM in 2017, and Rashid alias Gazi alias Lukaman, another Pakistani.

Four weapons and ammu-

nition were recovered from the site. Four houses, including one in which the terrorists were holed up, caught fire and were damaged.

The Army personnel, including Major Vibhuti Dhondiyal of 55 Rashtriya Rifles, were killed in "indiscriminate fire" from the ter-

RDX being analysed

Forensic experts are analysing the chemical signature of the high-grade RDX explosive used in the suicide attack on the CRPF convoy in Pulwama last week in order to trace its source, a senior government official said. The probe is likely to be handed over to the National Investigation Agency. ▶ PAGE 10

rorists at the beginning of the pre-dawn operation. The others were havildar Sheo Ram, and sepoys Ajay Kumar and Hari Singh.

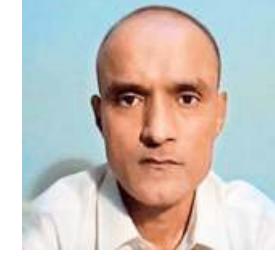
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SAD, BJP TARGET SIDHU ▶ PAGE 10
300 KASHMIRI STUDENTS FLEE
TO JAMMU AND DELHI ▶ PAGE 10

Quash Kulbhushan verdict, says India

Pakistan flouted Vienna Convention'

VIDYA RAM
THE HAGUE

The first day of oral arguments in the Kulbhushan Jadav case at the International Court of Justice in The Hague concluded on Monday, with India accusing Pakistan of "knowingly, wilfully and brazenly" flouting the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations. India also attacked the "farcical" trial of Mr. Jadav, who was found guilty of spying and sentenced to death by a Pakistani military court in 2017.



India termed the military trial of Kulbhushan Jadav "farcical."

This will take the Centre's total receipts from the RBI as surplus transfer in 2018-19 to ₹28,000 crore. The central bank had earlier paid ₹40,000 crore to the government as its final share of surplus for 2017-18. The RBI follows July-June accounting year.

The interim surplus transferred by the RBI now is crucial to the Centre's ability to meet the revised fiscal deficit target of 3.4% for this fiscal.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 10

RBI to pay govt. ₹28,000 cr. in interim surplus

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

Ending the suspense, the Reserve Bank of India announced on Monday that it would transfer ₹28,000 crore to the Centre as interim surplus for the half-year ended December 2018.

This will take the Centre's total receipts from the RBI as surplus transfer in 2018-19 to ₹28,000 crore. The central bank had earlier paid ₹40,000 crore to the government as its final share of surplus for 2017-18. The RBI follows July-June accounting year.

The hearing took place without former Pakistani Chief Justice Tassaduq Hussain Jillani, who was taken ill before the proceedings commenced and before he could be sworn in as an ad hoc ICJ judge. He is expected to take part in the proceedings on Tuesday.

DETAILED REPORT ▶ PAGE 13

Pulwama shows that time for talks has passed, says Modi

'The world must unite against terrorism and its supporters'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The "cruel" attack in Pulwama shows that the "time for talks has passed," Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Monday, reiterating that terrorism is a serious danger to the world's "peace and stability."

"Now, it is required that the world unite against terrorism and those who support it. Hesitation to take action against terrorism and those who support it is akin to encouraging terrorism," Mr. Modi said, addressing a joint press conference with the visiting Argentine President Mauricio Macri.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi on Monday. ■ PTI

Mr. Macri condoled the death of the CRPF jawans in the February 14 attack and said India and Argentina must work together to fight terrorism.

MAMATA QUESTIONS TIMING OF
PULWAMA ATTACK ▶ PAGE 10

Ex-President Yameen arrested

MEERA SRINIVASAN
COLOMBO

Maldivian authorities on Monday arrested former President Abdulla Yameen on money laundering charges after a court order.

The arrest followed a preliminary hearing into the charge that Mr. Yameen, termed a strongman by critics and rivals, had taken bribes, amounting to \$1.5 million, ahead of his re-election bid. He has denied receiving any illicit payment. In December 2018, the court froze his local bank accounts holding \$6.5 million, reports said.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 10
'WE NEED TO BUY BACK OUR
SOVEREIGNTY' ▶ PAGE 11

Shiv Sena makes U-turn, ties up with BJP

ALOK DESHPANDE
MUMBAI

Barely 13 months after the Shiv Sena passed a resolution at its national executive meeting to go it alone in all future elections, it made a U-turn by announcing an alliance with the BJP on Monday.

Under the agreement, the BJP will contest 25 of the 48 Lok Sabha seats, while the Shiv Sena will contest 23.

At a press conference addressed by BJP president Amit Shah, Sena chief Uddhav Thackeray and Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, the parties announced their decision to contest the Lok Sabha and Assembly elections together.

'Same ideology'
"Both parties have been together for over 25 years, and though there have been

some misunderstandings in recent times, the original ideology of both parties is the same – Hindutva. At a time when certain parties and individuals are posing a threat to national interests, it is important that parties with national interests should come together. This is the public sentiment and, therefore, we have decided to come together for the Lok Sabha and Assembly elec-

tions," Mr. Fadnavis said. He said one of the Shiv Sena's major demands was the construction of a Ram temple in Ayodhya. "The government has shown its commitment to it by giving 63 acres of undisputed land. It is a matter of national pride," he said.

Mr. Shah said the alliance would win 45 seats.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 10

No tie-up with AGP for polls: BJP

Assam's regional party had snapped links but said it may rekindle relations

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI

The Bharatiya Janata Party has ruled out any tie-up with the Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) in Assam for the Lok Sabha election.

The AGP, in January, snapped ties with the BJP, its ruling ally since May 2016, over the latter's push for the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2016. The regional party, however, indicated that it could forge ties with the BJP again after the Bill could not be passed in the Rajya Sabha on February 13.

"We took a decision a few days ago not to have any electoral tie-up with the AGP, which walked away from the government. We in-



Raging protest: Former Assam Chief Minister Prafulla Kumar Mahanta and AGP workers at a rally against the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill earlier this month. ■ PTI

timated this to our party president, Amit Shah, during his visit [on Sunday],

indicating that his party had closed the doors on the AGP.

The BJP, he said, was keen on improving upon its 2014 Lok Sabha election perfor-

mance. That year, the party bagged seven of the 14 seats in the State, while the Congress and the All India United Democratic Front won three each.

An Independent candidate won a seat.

Congress stance

The Congress, meanwhile, ridiculed the AGP for "lack of clarity" on the resignation of its three Ministers from the Sarbananda Sonowal government.

"They handed over their resignation letters to the Chief Minister, but they have apparently not been processed further," Congress MLA Abdul Khaleque said in the Assembly.

SC sets aside NGT order to reopen Sterlite plant

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday set aside the decision of the National Green Tribunal (NGT) to reopen the Sterlite copper plant in Thoothukudi.

The plant was shut down on April 9 last year after the Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board rejected its application for renewal of consent to operate for non-compliance with certain conditions laid down under the Air Act and the Water Act.

However, the Supreme

Court Bench, led by Justice Rohinton Nariman, gave Vedanta (the parent company of Sterlite Copper) the liberty to file a writ petition before the Madras High Court.

The Supreme Court said Vedanta was free to apply to the Chief Justice of the Madras High Court for "expeditious hearing" of its writ petition. The petition would be heard on merits of the case.

The court gave Vedanta permission to apply to the High Court for interim relief after considering the fact that the plant has remained shut since April 9, 2018.

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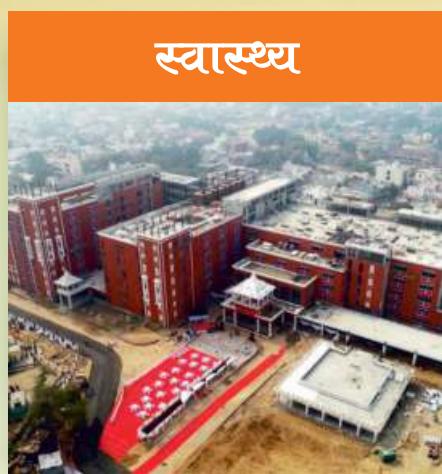
साफ नीयत-सही विकास



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मृदुला जायसवाल

महापौर, वाराणसी

डॉ. लक्ष्मण आचार्य

विधान परिषद सदस्य, वाराणसी

योगी आदित्यनाथ

मुख्यमंत्री, उत्तर प्रदेश

सुरेश कुमार खन्ना

मंत्री, नगर विकास, उत्तर प्रदेश

ई. अपराजिता सोनकर

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विधायक, पिण्डरा

नील रत्न सिंह पटेल (नील)

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राज्य मंत्री, उत्तर प्रदेश

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लोकार्पण की जाने वाली परियोजनाएं

स्वास्थ्य: • महामना पं. मदनमोहन मालवीय कैंसर सेन्टर (MPMMC) बी.एच.यू.। • होमी भाभा कैंसर हास्पिटल (HBC) लहरतारा। • 150 बेड वाले ईएसआईसी चिकित्सालय, पाण्डेयपुर में सुपर स्पेशियलिटी एवं कैजुअल्टी वार्ड का निर्माण। • पं. दीनदयाल उपाध्याय राजकीय चिकित्सालय, पाण्डेयपुर का उच्चीकरण। • आराजीलाइन परिक्षेत्र में पशु चिकित्सा पॉलीक्लीनिक का निर्माण। • नगरीय सामुदायिक स्वास्थ्य केन्द्र, शिवपुर।

पेयजल: • पेयजल सम्पूर्ति योजना प्रायरिटी-1, फेज-1 • पेयजल सम्पूर्ति योजना प्रायरिटी-2 (द्रान्स वर्णन)। • अमृत योजनान्तर्गत शहर के 05 जोन में 47,272 पेयजल गृह संयोजन।

रेलवे: • वाराणसी-प्रयागराज रेलवे खण्ड का विद्युतीकरण। • वाराणसी शहर-मंडुवाडीह रेलवे लाइन का दोहरीकरण। • लोहता-भदोही (39 किमी.) व भदोही-जंधई (31 किमी.) रेलवे लाइन का दोहरीकरण। • मंडुवाडीह रेलवे स्टेशन पर दूसरे प्रवेश द्वार पर चौथे वारिंग पिट और कोच गाइडेंस सिस्टम। • वाराणसी जंक्शन के प्लेटफार्म-1, 6/7 व 8/9 पर संवर्धित यात्री सुविधाएं।

सौन्दर्यकरण एवं स्वच्छता: • सीवरेज ट्रीटमेन्ट प्लान्ट, गोइरहां। • हेरिटेज स्ट्रीट लाइट की स्थापना। • स्मार्ट सिटी मिशन के अन्तर्गत 03 पार्कों का सौन्दर्यकरण। • 03 घाटों (प्रभु घाट, निशादराज घाट एवं जैन घाट) का पुनर्स्थापन कार्य।

सड़क एवं सेतु: • पंचकोशी मार्ग का चौड़ीकरण एवं सुदृढ़ीकरण (हरहुआ से राजातालाब तक 20 किमी.)। • भोजूबीर सिन्धोरा मार्ग-भोजूबीर से रिंग रोड तक चौड़ीकरण एवं सुदृढ़ीकरण। • विजया सिनेमा से रविन्द्रपुरी लंका मार्ग। • वरुण पुल से लहुराबीर मार्ग के सतह सुधार का कार्य।

आवास एवं विद्युतीकरण: • दीनदयाल उपाध्याय ग्राम ज्योति योजना के अन्तर्गत 403 मजरूरों का विद्युतीकरण। • आसरा आवास योजना-अकथा (वरुणापार जोन)। • आसरा आवास योजना-सरायडंगरी (टिकरी)। • आसरा आवास योजना-ऐडे। • आश्रय गृह योजना-सिकरौल। • आसरा योजना-जोलहा-बजरडीहा (भेलपुर)। • लाल बहादुर शास्त्री अंतर्राष्ट्रीय हवाई अड्डा परिसर में 02 मेगावाट सोलर पावर प्लान्ट की स्थापना।

अन्य: • काशी इन्टीग्रेटेड कमाण्ड कन्ट्रोल सेन्टर। • आई.आई.टी., बी.एच.यू. में सुपर कम्प्यूटरिंग सेन्टर। • 4 लाख लीटर दैनिक क्षमता का डेयरी फूड प्रोजेक्ट (रामनगर औद्योगिक क्षेत्र)।

• काशी हिन्दू विश्वविद्यालय में केन्द्रीय अन्वेषण केन्द्र (Instrumentation Central Discovery Centre) की स्थापना। • आभासीय अनुभूति संग्रहालय, मान महल। • पं. दीनदयाल उपाध्याय आश्रम पद्धति विद्यालय, सातोमहुआ।

शिलान्यास की जाने वाली परियोजनाएं

• संत रविदास जी की जन्मस्थली सीरगोवर्धन का पर्यटन विकास (फेज-1)। • भारत सरकार की प्रसाद योजना फेज-2 के अन्तर्गत वाराणसी का पर्यटन विकास। • वाराणसी शहर-सारनाथ रेलवे स्टेशन के मध्य पूर्वोत्तर रेलवे के सम्पाद संख्या-23ए पर दो लेन (7.50 मीटर) रेल उपरिगमी सेतु का निर्माण कार्य। • विधान सभा क्षेत्र सेवापुरी, ग्राम-बरकी में राजकीय महाविद्यालय का निर्माण। • वाराणसी जंक्शन के प्रत्येक प्लेटफार्म पर एसकेलेटर एवं लिफ्ट आदि आधुनिक सुविधाओं से युक्त अतिरिक्त 10 मीटर चौड़ा एफ.ओ.बी.। • लोहता से सीधे रेल के आगमन/प्रस्थान के लिए कॉर्ड लाइन एवं शिवपुर से आने वाली मालगाड़ियों के लिए बाईपास लाइन।

अपने वाहन में रिप्लेक्टर अवश्य लगवाएं

सूचना एवं जनसम्पर्क विभाग, उत्तर प्रदेश

4 WEST

THE HINDU
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2019

The 'tiger' has finally 'bowed down', says Opposition

Congress, NCP call Sena-BJP alliance unholy, unethical, opportunistic

ALOK DESHPANDE
MUMBAI

The 'tiger' has finally 'bowed down', the opposition parties said on Monday soon after the announcement of alliance between Shiv Sena and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). They also called it an opportunistic, unholy and unethical alliance made out of fear of losing the Lok Sabha polls.

"Uddhav Thackeray has himself swallowed his pride by joining hands with a party whom he labelled with many names. It is the unethical al-

liance of a corrupt and a despondent. I stand with the honest Sena workers who stand firmly for the good of the country and the State. I am confident that these honest Sena workers will vote against Modi in coming elections," said Maharashtra Pradesh Congress Committee (MPCC) president Ashok Chavan.

Changing colours
Mr. Chavan said that both the parties, while fighting against each other, destroyed the State in the last

four years. "Even a chameleon would feel ashamed in front of Uddhav Thackeray over his ability to change colours," taunted Mr. Chavan. The Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) said it was the Sena which claimed that support won't be given before temple is built in Ayodhya. They had also called chowkidar (Prime Minister) a thief. "The people have seen through the reality of these two parties. They both will be taught a lesson just like in 1998 when Congress-led front won 38 seats in

Maharashtra," said NCP spokesperson Nawab Malik.

Leader of Opposition Radhakrishna Vikhe-Patil said that the BJP threatened Sena with the wrath of Enforcement Directorate and forced it to accept the alliance. "By forming an alliance with the BJP, Sena has once again showed that it has known nothing but *dalali*. BJP on the other hand too has lost its self-esteem as it had to bow down in front of the party which has been criticising it severely," said Mr. Vikhe-Patil.

In transit



Quest for jobs: A large group of farmers and their family members travelling from Madhya Pradesh to Wardha, near Nagpur, in search of jobs. ■ S. SUDARSHAN

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CM YK

Shiv Sena targets Modi over Pulwama

Says PM's assurance of taking perpetrators to task should reflect in his actions

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI

In a veiled attack on Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Shiv Sena on Monday said no political "wave" had ever solved the Kashmir issue or stopped the killing of soldiers.

The Sena, an ally of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) at the Centre and in Maharashtra, said it was time to "attack" Pakistan to seek revenge for the killing of soldiers, adding that the Prime Minister's assurance of taking the perpetrators of the Pulwama terror strike to task should reflect in his actions.

It was not the time to launch a "surgical strike" against political opponents, the Uddhav Thackeray-led party remarked in an editorial in its mouthpiece, *Saamana*.

At least 40 Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) personnel were killed and five injured in one of the deadliest terror attacks in Jam-



For the bravehearts: Hundreds of people participate in an impromptu candlelight march in Thane late on Sunday night to offer tributes to the CRPF personnel who died in the Pulwama terror attack. ■ VIBHAY BIRWATKAR

mu and Kashmir on February 14 when a Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) suicide bomber rammed a vehicle packed with explosives into their bus in Pulwama district.

Mr. Modi had on Friday warned Pakistan that such attacks will not weaken India and those responsible for such strikes will have to pay a "very heavy price".

He had also said the security forces will be given com-

plete freedom to crack down on terrorism.

The Sena said while the government patted itself for "isolating" Pakistan at the international level, the neighbouring country was still carrying out terror attacks on Indian soil.

"The country has seen waves of anger and political triumphs, but it neither solved the Kashmir issue nor stopped the killing of soldiers," it noted.

Referring to the Army's surgical strikes in 2016 on seven terror launch pads across the Line of Control (LoC) as a response to an attack on its base in Uri, it said the action was followed by "chest thumping" on how a lesson was taught to Pakistan.

"But we must understand what exactly a real surgical strike is. The way the US entered Pakistan and killed (al-Qaeda chief) Osama bin Laden (for the deadly 9/11 terror attacks in America), that is called a surgical strike," it opined.

"This is not the time for carrying out surgical strikes on political opponents, but it is the time to attack Pakistan and seek revenge for the killing of our jawans.... The prime minister has talked about seeking revenge, now it should reflect in actions," the Marathi publication said.

"This is not the time to indulge in politics but to stand firmly behind our jawans," it added.

'Goa will have to work out mining resumption on its own'

Move necessitated by no assurance from Centre, says Vijai Sardesai

PRAKASH KAMAT
PANAJI

With no assurance from the Central government over the resumption of mining in Goa, a solution to the crisis has to be worked out at the State-level, said Minister for Agriculture and Goa Town and Country Planning, Vijai Sardesai, on Monday.

Mr. Sardesai told press persons after attending a Cabinet meeting at ailing Chief Minister Manohar Parrikar's private residence near Panaji that the issue of mining resumption was discussed.

"People are asking us and the Centre has not given any solution. So we will have to work out some solution at the State-level," said the Minister.

The Supreme Court banned mining from March 2018 after it quashed the second renewal by the State government of all 88 iron ore mining leases in the State.

Members of the Legislative Assembly as well as the Goa Mining People's Front (GMPF), an umbrella organisation of mining-affected people, have launched a cam-

paign against the government seeking a solution to the mining ban ever since the Supreme Court banned the activity, the second time in six years, over the issue of illegalities and irregularities.

Recently, a GMPF delegation met Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi, but returned unhappy with Mr. Modi's assurance that he would "look into the matter within the framework of the law and the Supreme Court order".

Meanwhile, the Congress,

the main Opposition, stepped up its attack on the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), for failing to resolve the mining deadlock, despite heading governments both at the Centre and in the State.

"For 12 months, the BJP did nothing except give false assurances to people dependent on the mining industry. And now they say, they cannot do anything about it. The BJP will pay for this betrayal in the upcoming elections," warned Leader of the Opposition Chandrakant Kavlekar on Monday.

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IN BRIEF



Anantkumar Hegde gets threat call

HUBBALLI
Union Minister of State for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship Anantkumar Hegde received a threat call on Sunday. The Minister's wife Roopa Hegde received the call, and an unknown person spoke in Hindi, warning her of dire consequences if Mr. Hegde continued speaking against Muslims, according to a complaint. Mr. Hegde was not at home at the time.

Woman dies during police fitness test

KARIMNAGAR A woman candidate died while participating in physical fitness tests during the recruitment for constables in Karimnagar town on Monday. Sources said that 20-year-old Mamatha, a resident of Velichala village of Ramadugum mandal, was participating in the running competition when she collapsed on the track.

Cong. to start seat-sharing talks with JD(S) soon

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU
With the Lok Sabha election expected to be announced shortly, the Congress in Karnataka has decided to expedite the process of seat-sharing with its coalition partner JD(S).

The Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee (KPCC) coordination committee, headed by former Minister Ramalinga Reddy, met here on Monday and decided to start talks regarding the shar-

Anger in Kerala against sudden hartal call

Protest was called by Youth Congress to condemn the murder of two of its activists in Kasaragod

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The impromptu hartal called by the Youth Congress in Kerala early on Monday in protest against the murder of two of its activists, Kripesh and Sarath Lal, in Kasaragod late on Sunday came like a bolt from the blue for people who were caught unawares by the sudden shutdown on the first working day of the week. Though the killings caused widespread revulsion and sorrow in society, the public mood was generally one of antipathy to recent "drop-of-the-hat" hartals.

The hartal hit public transport as strike supporters blocked roads, stoned vehicles, forced the closure of shops, and tussled with the police. The police had to fire water jets to disperse demonstrators in Thiruvananthapuram.

Officegoers, travellers, patients, white and blue collar workers, and tourists felt the bite of the strike most. Television channels were replete with images of angry stranded commuters, an over-



Hard hit: Youth Congress workers taking cover from a water cannon in Thiruvananthapuram on Monday. ■ C. RATHEESH KUMAR

whelming number of them women.

Buses stoned

Strike supporters stoned KSRTC buses in Kozhikode, Kannur, Thiruvananthapuram and Kasaragod, prompting the public utility to suspend services, including long-distance operations.

The tension was palpable in Kasaragod district where emotions ran high as family, friends and party workers cremated the bodies of the young men.

Inspector General of Police, Kannur Range, Balaram Kumar Upadhyaya said the probe was on the right track

and preventing reprisal attacks was a priority.

The strike disrupted school and college examinations, vexing parents and students. Thousands of students who had prepared for the SSLC/Plus One model examinations could not appear for them.

UDF's charge

United Democratic Front leaders held the CPI(M) responsible for the murders. Opposition leader Ramesh Chennithala said the police had ignored the death threats received by the youths, including on social media.

In another development, the Kerala High Court has decided to initiate *suo motu* action

Will ensure justice: Rahul

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Congress president Rahul Gandhi on Monday termed the "brutal murder" of two Youth Congress workers in Kerala as "shocking" and said the party would not rest till the murderers were brought to justice.

Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan termed the killings "unfortunate."

He said he had instructed the police to bring to book those responsible for the murders.

A Kasaragod report said that according to the police, the murder was well planned and politically motivated.

Kasaragod district police chief A. Sreenivas told reporters at Periya that a special team had been constituted to probe the case.

HC steps in

In another development, the Kerala High Court has decided to initiate *suo motu* action

"The brutal murder of two members of our Youth Congress family in Kasaragod is shocking. The party stands in solidarity with the families & I send them my deepest condolences. We will not rest till the murderers are brought to justice," Mr. Gandhi tweeted.

against Youth Congress State president Dean Kuriakose, United Democratic Front Kasaragod district convener M.C. Kamarudeen and Kasaragod District Congress Committee secretary A. Govindan Nair for the hartal call given on Monday.

A Division Bench consisting of Chief Justice Hrihosh Roy and Justice A.K. Jayasankar Nambiar noted that the "call for hartal was made without giving seven days' public notice," which amounted to "contumacious act on their part."

The Bench called for the personal appearance of the leaders on February 22.



Poll talk: Chief Ministers of Delhi and A.P. Arvind Kejriwal and N. Chandrababu Naidu in Vijayawada on Monday. ■ PTI

Kejriwal meets Naidu

CMs discuss 'Mahagathbandhan'

STAFF REPORTER
VIJAYAWADA

Delhi Chief Minister and Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader Arvind Kejriwal met Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu

to discuss a pre-poll alliance, Common Minimum Programme (CMP) and the action plan of the non-BJP parties' 'Mahagathbandhan', at his residence on Monday. It is learnt that Mr. Kejriwal discussed national issues and his party's plans to contest in Haryana, Punjab and Delhi in the general election.

Mr. Kejriwal discussed the alliance with the non-BJP parties there. Mr. Naidu is likely to hold talks with the Congress and other political parties on alliance or seat sharing in those seats.

Also, the next meeting of the non-BJP parties is scheduled to be organised in Guwahati or Delhi on February 26, sources said.

The Delhi Chief Minister, a couple of days ago, said the Congress had more or less ruled out an alliance with the AAP, and the BJP would benefit in a three-cornered contest.

TDP MP joins YSRCP

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD

Defections from the ruling Telugu Desam Party of Andhra Pradesh are continuing with one more MP joining the Opposition YSR Congress Party on Monday.

After Anakapalle MP Avanti Srinivas, it is now the turn of Amalapuram Lok Sabha member P. Ravindrababu to switch loyalties to the YSRCP.

The TDP MP called on YSRCP president Y.S. Jagan

mohan Reddy and announced his decision and Mr. Reddy welcomed him into the party fold.

Deo to join TDP

Former Union Minister Kishore Chandra Suryanarayana Deo will join the TDP on February 24 in Vijayawada in the presence of Mr. Naidu.

He is expected to get ticket for the Araku Parliament seat, which he won as the Congress nominee in 2009.

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E-NIT NO: - 28 of 2018-19 DATED: 12.02.2019

Principal GCET, Chak Bhawal, Jammu on behalf of Governor of J&K State invites Tenders by e-tender mode from Original Manufacturers / Authorised Dealers / Approved Agencies "For Supply of Electrical Items" as detailed in APPENDIX-1 to this e-NIT in Govt. College of Engineering and Technology, Chak Bhawal, Jammu whose particulars are given below:-

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1. Date of issue of tender Notice 13.02.2019
2. Period of downloading of bidding documents 15.02.2019 to 07.03.2019 from 10.00 AM upto 04.00 PM.
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शुद्धि पत्र

इस कार्यालय के पत्रांक-141 दिनांक-13.02.2019 द्वारा आमंत्रित हैं- WRD/MID Simdega/IB/02/2018-19 दिनांक-22.02.2019 द्वारा आमंत्रित हैं। जिन्होंने दिनांक-15.02.2019 को बैठक करके जिसका फॉर्म दिनांक-22.02.2019 को आपराह्य रूप से संशोधन किया जाता है।

SI No.05-Last date /Time for submission of Bids	25.02.2019 (upto 5:00 PM) के लागत पर 27-02-2019 (upto 5:00 PM) तक जाए।
SI No.06-Date of opening of e-tender	27.02.2019 के लागत पर 01-03-2019 (2:00 PM) पढ़ा जाए।
SI No.10-Last date for receipt of bid Fee, Security and other documents	26.02.2019 (upto 5:00 PM) के लागत पर 28-02-2019 (upto 5:00 PM) पढ़ा जाए।

नियिदा की अन्न शर्तें पूर्ववत् रहेंगी। विस्तृत जानकारी हेतु वेबसाइट www.jharkhandtenders.gov.in. एवं कार्यालय के सचिवालय पर देखा जा सकता है। कार्यपालक अधिकारी, P.R. 202520 Minor Irrigation(18-19)-D लघु शिराई प्रमण्डल, सिमेंट

EASTERN RAILWAY

e-Tender Notice No. : PE-53-Running Room-KWAE, dated : 12.02.2019. Tender is invited from Assistant Mechanical Engineer (Power), Eastern Railway, Howrah for the following work : Name of Work : Maintenance & cleaning, mopping, sweeping of entire Running Room complex including gardening, changing & distribution of washed linen, maintaining reception lobby with different register, cooking and serving food to crew, supplying of field comm. LPG cylinder at Katwa Running Room round the clock for a period of 03 years through open tender basis. Place of Work : Running Room/KWAE, (Under SSE(L)/ KWAE). Tender Value : ₹ 44,83,281/- Earnest Money Deposit : ₹ 89,700/- Date and Time of Closing of tender : 05.03.2019 upto 14.00 hrs. Expression HWH-274/2018-19

Tender Notice is also available at websites : www.indianrailways.gov.in / www.reps.gov.in

E-Tender No. No. 240_2018-19, dated 13.02.2019. Following e-Tender is invited by Divisional Railway Manager, Eastern Railway, Howrah from tenderers having experience of similar nature of work and required financial capabilities including those registered with Irrigation/CPWD/SEB/MES or any public sector undertaking for the following work under Sr DEN/3 HWH.

Description of Work : (i) CTR(P) MUG-TBAE(SL) Km 0.00 to Km 3.700=3.700 Km under SSE/P/Way/BCD & on UP main line Km 61.146 to 65.00 = 3.854 Km under SSE(P/Way)/PDA, Total - 7.554 Km under AEN/Bandel. (ii) Through fitting & renewal (TFR) of existing worn out fittings with new fittings on DN main line Km 65.0 - 70.0 = 5.0 Km and KM 80.0-91. Km, 11.0 Km = Total 16.0 Km in the section of SSE(P/Way)/PDA under AEN/Bandel. Approximate Cost : Rs. 81,64,650.17. Earnest Money : Rs. 1,63,300/- Closing Date and Time : 15.03.2019 at 14.00 hrs. The details of tenders is available at website www.reps.gov.in No manual offer will be accepted. Expression HWH-275/2018-19

Tender Notice is also available at websites : www.indianrailways.gov.in / www.reps.gov.in

WESTERN RAILWAY

VARIOUS WORK

Tender Notice No. & Date: BCT/18-19/56 dtd.14.02.2019. Work and Location: CCG-VR section: TBR = 46,623 Km (35.357 Km) & TFR = 44.57 Km. Approx. Cost of Work: ₹ 2,95,77,486.07 EMD: ₹ 2,97,900/- Date & Time of Submission & Opening: 18.03.2019 upto 15.00 hrs. & at 15.30 hrs. This has approval of the competent authority. Note: Please visit our website www.reps.gov.in to download the tender document, corrigendum and further details. follows us on [twitter.com/WesternRly](#)

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**Odisha's farmers scheme better than Centre's: CM**

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik on Monday claimed that the Odisha government's 'Krushak Assistance for Livelihood and Income Augmentation' scheme was a better initiative for farmers than the Centre's 'Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojana'. According to the CM, the Central scheme does not include marginal farmers and sharecroppers. "I have written to the PM to include them in the scheme," he said.

BSF jawan drowns while chasing cow smugglers

KOLKATA
A BSF constable drowned in the Padma while chasing cow smugglers near the Indo-Bangla border in West Bengal's Murshidabad district, an official said. A BSF patrol team apprehended 11 Indian and one Bangladeshi miscreant and caught 74 cattle heads during the operation, the official said. PTI

Man held for cheating in IB recruitment test

SIMHLA
A Haryana resident has been arrested for allegedly cheating in an Intelligence Bureau recruitment test in Himachal Pradesh here, the police said on Monday. An FIR has been lodged against Shalik, a Sonipat resident, at the Sadar police station, SP Pramod Shukla said. PTI

Manipur orders inquiry into poacher's death

IMPHAL
The Manipur government on Monday ordered a magisterial inquiry into the custodial death of an alleged poacher, Heisnam Saratkumar, from Khodrak village in Bishnupur district, following protests by villagers over the cause of his sudden demise.

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SCHOOL BUZZ

A Newspaper exclusively curated for School Students

REPUBLIC DAY CELEBRATED

Delhi Police Public School, Safdarjung Enclave, celebrated Republic Day. The students saluted the National Flag and took a pledge. Shri Devesh Chandra Srivastava, Jt. CP Southern Range & General Secretary, Police Foundation for Education, Delhi, graced the occasion as the Chief Guest. The Chief Guest planted a sapling in the school garden. The Principal, Ms. Ruby Malhotra, in her address to the gathering, expressed pride in the rich cultural heritage of the country. The school's choir performed a musical rendition which was followed by a bharatanatyam performance.

ANNUAL DAY

Noida Public School and Nilgiri Hills Public School celebrated their Annual Day on 9th February. Members of Management, Ms. Madhulika Singh Rajput, Administrative Officer, encouraged the students. The Chief Guest was Sh. Deepak Dwivedi, Chairman & Editor-In-Chief, Dainik Bhaskar. The Guests of Honour were Sh. Sandeep Marwah, Founder & Chairman, Film Ballia U.P. and Prof. Ashok Acharya; Political Science, Delhi University. The students performed various programs that were enjoyed by the guests and the dignitaries.

YOGA COMPETITION

Yoga Competition under the banner of DAV National Sports 2018 was organized at Shaheed Rajpal School, Dayanand Vihar from 4th to 6th December, inaugurated by Padmashri Ms. Nouf Al Marwaai, Yogacharya, Entrepreneur, Founder of Arab Yoga Foundation. The event was held under the aegis of DAV College Managing Committee. The overall championship trophy was bagged by Delhi NCR team. Mrs. Renu Laroiya, Principal, in her address stressed upon the role of yoga in harmonizing the mind, body, soul.

For Subscription related queries, please contact Kapil Nagar:
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After Pune varsity backs out, Bhopal to host History Congress

79th session of IHC to be organised at Barkatullah University from February 26



Savitribai Phule Pune University had postponed the event in December last year. ■ FILE PHOTO: DATTATRAYA ADHALGE

Financial reasons'

"However, it was cancelled by the local hosts apparently due to financial reasons," said IHC secretary Mahalakshmi Ramakrishnan.

She was speaking at a joint press conference with Madhya Pradesh Public Relations Minister P.C. Sharma.

"As an organisation, this cancellation was unprecedented in the history as the only time we had not held the congress session was in

times of national need like 'Quit India' movement in 1942 and the wars in 1962 and 1971," Prof. Ramakrishnan said.

"In the moment of crisis, the Madhya Pradesh govern-

ment has come forward to support the IHC. Bhopal's Barkatullah University will be hosting it at such a short notice," she said.

Prof. Ramakrishnan, however, evaded a reply when asked if there was any political reason behind the Pune university's refusal to host the IHC.

Savitribai Phule Pune University had then said that the session had been "postponed until further notice". The varsity had drawn flak over the decision.

Over 1,000 delegates, including prominent historians, are expected to participate in the IHC in Bhopal, Prof. Ramakrishnan said.

Prime accused in TMC MLA murder arrested

Five persons arrested in the case so far

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

KOLKATA
The prime accused in the murder of Trinamool Congress MLA Satyajit Biswas was arrested by the West Bengal Police on Monday.

Ahijeet Pundari was missing since February 9, the day the MLA was shot dead. He was apprehended from Radhamohanpur Railway Station in Paschim Medinipur district.

With his arrest the number of persons apprehended in the case has gone up to five. The police had nabbed Sujit Mondal and Kartik Mondal on the night of the incident, while Kalipada Mondal and Nirmal Ghosh

were arrested a few days later from Nadia district.

Biswas, MLA from Krishnaganj constituency, was killed in full public view at a Saraswati Puja event in Fulbari area on February 9. He was descending from the stage when he was shot from point-blank range. A number of senior TMC leaders, including newly inducted Minister Ratna Ghosh, were present at the event when the incident happened.

BJP leader Mukul Roy was among those named in the FIR in connection with the murder. The Calcutta High Court had on February 13 directed the State police to not arrest Mr. Roy till March 7.

NPP threatens to snap alliance with BJP

If citizenship Bill is brought again

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

SHILLONG
Meghalaya Home Minister James P.K. Sangma on Monday said the ruling National People's Party will snap ties with the NDA if the contentious Citizenship (Amendment) Bill is brought again and passed in Parliament.

Mr. Sangma's statement came a day after BJP national president Amit Shah announced in Assam on Sunday that the party will bring the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill again if voted to power.

"Our [NPP] president [Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma] was very clear when he said that if the Bill

is passed, we will break ties with the BJP," the senior NPP leader said on the sidelines of a programme here.

Harmful for NE'

"The Citizenship (Amendment) Bill is very harmful to the region. We will keep opposing the CAB in whatever format it comes in. Our stand is very clear on that," he said. "We must all fight against it unitedly [in the Northeast region]. If it is brought again, we will continue to oppose it," Mr. Sangma added.

The State leadership of the BJP has also expressed its opposition to the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill.

The Bench remained unimpressed and said: "At this stage, we are not interested in entertaining this petition. Dismissed."

SC turns down petition on use of 'Dalit' by media

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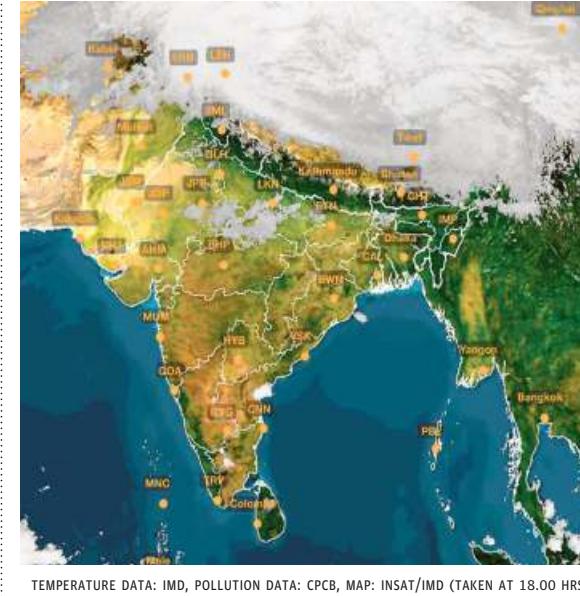
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday refused to entertain a petition challenging Centre's notification advising the media not to use the term "Dalit" to describe members of Scheduled Castes.

A Bench headed by Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi and Justice Sanjiv Khanna said it was not interested in entertaining a petition that challenged the 2018 advisory of the Information and Broad-

WEATHER WATCH

RAINFALL, TEMPERATURE & AIR QUALITY IN SELECT METROS YESTERDAY



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

Forecast for Tuesday: Thunderstorm accompanied with hail-storm, lightning and gusty winds likely at isolated places over west Rajasthan

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	8.5...	29.0...	12.0	Kozhikode	—	36.2...	23.8
Ahmedabad	—	32.9...	11.6	Kurnool	—	36.5...	20.5
Aizawl	8...	30.2...	—	Lucknow	—	26.1...	12.6
Allahabad	—	27.2...	11.0	Madurai	—	36.6...	24.8
Bengaluru	—	34.0...	19.2	Mangalore	—	33.6...	20.4
Bhopal	—	29.6...	12.0	Mumbai	—	31.4...	15.6
Bhubaneswar	—	34.1...	17.9	Mysuru	—	35.6...	15.4
Chandigarh	0.2...	20.4...	11.3	New Delhi	—	25.2...	11.2
Chennai	—	32.6...	25.8	Port Blair	—	31.2...	23.1
Coimbatore	—	37.1...	22.6	Puducherry	—	32.5...	26.0
Dehradoon	—	18.8...	11.2	Pune	—	34.6...	11.8
Gangtok	—	—	6.0	Raipur	—	29.7...	15.5
Goa	—	30.5...	17.6	Ranchi	—	25.0...	9.5
Guwahati	—	24.5...	13.6	Hubballi	—	32.0...	14.0
Hyderabad	—	32.0...	14.0	Shillong	—	14.5...	6.0
Imphal	—	23.1...	8.0	Shimla	—	7...	1.7
Jaipur	—	29.5...	12.2	Srinagar	—	6.5...	0.4
Kochi	—	31.4...	24.2	Trivandrum	—	34.5...	25.0
Kohima	—	21.0...	6.8	Tiruchi	—	37.0...	26.2
Kolkata	—	28.6...	16.5	Vijayawada	—	35.1...	23.5
				Visakhapatnam	—	31.0...	24.4

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES	SO ₂	NO ₂	CO	PM _{2.5}	PM ₁₀	CODE
Ahmedabad	86	122	26	161	—	■■■
Bengaluru	.8	44	73	—	130	■■■
Chennai	30	14	55	73	—	■■■
Delhi	48	69	33	279	336	■■■■■
Hyderabad	2	152	33	139	176	■■■■■
Kolkata	12	103	28	299	176	■■■■■
Lucknow	10	40	58	213	—	■■■■■
Mumbai	24	39	86	100	130	■■■■■
Pune	30	14	45	131	122	■■■■■
Visakhapatnam	27	51	31	99	105	■■■■■

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

SO₂: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

NO₂: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

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

PM_{2.5} & PM₁₀: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

HIMACHAL PRADESH STATE ELECTRICITY BOARD LIMITED
(A State Govt. Undertaking)
***PRESS TENDER NOTICE* (e-Tendering Mode Only)**

Online tenders (Two part bid) are invited for the supply of following items, on the prescribed form (Tender Documents). The dates of Sale, Submission and Opening of techno commercial bid of tender is as per detail given below. The Detailed Tender Notice can also be downloaded from website <https://www.tenderwizard.com/HPSEB>.</



Discord in Puducherry

The CM's protest against the L-G raises key issues that must be resolved early

This round of conflict between Puducherry Chief Minister V. Narayanasamy and Lt. Governor Kiran Bedi has been more serious than those in the past. Mr. Narayanasamy sat in protest for six days, before the two could meet to hold talks to resolve a set of issues he raised in a letter earlier this month. He has been opposing what he calls Ms. Bedi's "high-handedness" and tendency to interfere in the administration. The two have had differences on many issues over the last two years. Such problems are an obvious consequence of the political structure of Union Territories, in which the Administrator, as the nominee of the President, enjoys powers superior to the Chief Minister and the Council of Ministers. The trigger for the latest stand-off seems to have been Ms. Bedi's move to enforce the rule for two-wheeler riders to wear helmets. While the Chief Minister believes it can be enforced only after raising awareness, Ms. Bedi wants it implemented immediately. However, the Chief Minister insists that his protest has nothing to do with this. He lists the blocking of welfare schemes such as the free rice scheme and enhanced scholarship for Scheduled Caste students, among other actions of the L-G, as the real issues. Whatever be the origin of this conflict, the sight of a Chief Minister on an indefinite dharna is not seemly. It could not have gone on indefinitely, and the fact that a dialogue was formally initiated, albeit after much delay, is a welcome development.

Central to the conflict is the question whether Ms. Bedi is acting within her powers or exceeding her brief in seeking to play a proactive role in the affairs of the Union Territory. Under the Constitution, the territory belongs to the President, who runs it through the L-G as Administrator. However, under Section 44 of the Union Territories Act, 1963, the Administrator has to act on the 'aid and advice' of the Council of Ministers. At the same time, any difference of opinion between them can be referred to the President, and in the meantime the Administrator's action prevails on any urgent matter. This scheme, which gives a clear edge to the Centre, can work only if there is harmony between the Council and the L-G. It would be unfortunate if individuals occupying Raj Nivas in any Union Territory with a Legislative Assembly get carried away and ignore or undermine the elected body. Last year, ruling on the limits of the L-G's powers in Delhi, the Supreme Court stressed the need for the L-G as well as people's representatives to "function in harmony within constitutional parameters". The L-G was cautioned against having a hostile attitude towards the Ministers. There is no reason why that principle cannot be extended to Puducherry, which has a longer record of elected governments.

The bane in Spain

Snap elections could deepen fissures in its fragmented polity

The snap poll called for April 28 by Spain's minority Socialist Party government could deepen the fissures in the fragmented polity. The new anti-immigrant Vox party, which made inroads in December in Andalusia, Spain's most populous region, is the latest addition to the smaller formations that can hold the balance in a future coalition. The stability of the short-lived government of Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez, whose fall has triggered the third general election since late 2015, had been under threat from the start. It was propped up last June by Catalan separatist parties, which were bound to turn into a liability for Mr. Sánchez. For the governing Socialist Party has, no less than the conservative People's Party, consistently regarded the Catalonian demand for separation as a violation of the integrity of the Spanish union. The previous centre-right government took a hard line on the separatist cause: it dissolved the regional parliament and imposed rule from Madrid following the October 2017 referendum and the unilateral declaration of independence. But Mr. Sanchez's efforts to renew a political dialogue have proved futile in the face of the volatility. Last year's commemorations marking Catalonia's national day and the first anniversary of the controversial 2017 plebiscite saw large turnouts at separatist protests. Meanwhile, a recent government proposal to appoint a rapporteur to negotiate with the secessionists has been condemned as a betrayal by the conservatives. The anti-government protests drew large crowds championing a united Spain and demands to vote out the Socialists.

A trial that started last week against the masterminds of the 2017 referendum is the latest flashpoint. Many of the defendants appearing before the Supreme Court were part of the regional Catalan government and face long prison terms if convicted. The trial has sealed any hope of the Socialist government conceding its coalition Catalan allies' demand for a referendum on statehood. Within days, the separatists hit back, voting down the national budget, alongside the Opposition conservatives whom Mr. Sánchez unseated in June. Whereas prolonged instability has marred Spanish politics in recent years, the country had so far seemed immune to the populist surge spreading across the rest of the European Union. The entry of the extreme right Vox party to the Andalusian legislature has unsettled that *status quo*. The Socialists are expected to emerge as the single largest party in April, but well short of a clear majority. The two centre-right parties are also unlikely to muster enough numbers to form a government on their own. Opinion polls indicate that Vox could have a significant presence in the next parliament and be in a position to play kingmaker. This is not an attractive prospect for either the majority of moderates or the Catalan separatists. Spain needs stability at any cost today.

Not without an explanation

Judges must give their reasons in writing for recusing themselves from specific cases



SUHRIT PARTHASARATHY

When must a judge disqualify herself from hearing a case? Must decisions of this gravity be left to the wisdom of individual judges? Under what circumstances does a decision of recusal transgress a judge's general responsibility to sit and deliver impartial justice? Should not a judge who disqualifies herself be compelled to deliver an order explaining her reasons for recusal?

Cases at hand

These questions have been brought to sharp focus with a rash of recusals made by judges of the Supreme Court over the course of the last few weeks. In one case alone – challenging the appointment of M. Nageswara Rao as interim director of the Central Bureau of Investigation – three judges recused themselves. First Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi disqualified himself, purportedly because he was set to be a part of the selection committee tasked with choosing a new CBI Director. He then assigned a bench presided by Justice A.K. Sikri to hear the case. But Justice Sikri too recused, on grounds, one assumes, that he was part of a panel that removed the previous CBI Director Alok Verma from his post. Next, Justice N.V. Ramana recused himself for apparently personal reasons. "Nageswara Rao is from my home state and I have attended his daughter's wedding," he told the petitioner's counsel.

However, none of these orders of recusal was made in writing, and, by themselves, the professed oral reasons for the decisions do not quite point to why the judges ought to have thought themselves incapacitated.

The recusals in the CBI case weren't the only ones to make the news. Last month Justice U.U. Lalit recused himself from hearing the dispute over land in Ayodhya after senior advocate Rajeev Dhavan pointed out that the judge had appeared for former Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Kalyan Singh in a related contest. Although Mr. Dhavan said he had no specific objection to Justice Lalit continuing to hear the case, the judge, the court's order notes, "expressed his disinclination to participate in the hearing any further." But because we don't have a written order specifically justifying the recusal, it's difficult to tell whether the disqualification was really required.

Last September two judges of the Gujarat High Court withdrew from a set of controversial cases by merely saying, "not before me." Similar orders were passed by three judges of the Nagpur bench of the Bombay High Court, who refused to hear a plea filed by a lawyer Satish Uke concerning the death of Judge B.H. Loya. Unsurprisingly, though, none of the judges recorded their reasons in writing, allowing, in the process, plenty of scope for conjecture and surmise.

In taking oath of office, judges, both of the Supreme Court and of the high courts, promise to perform their duties, to deliver justice, "without fear or favour, affection or ill-will". While "fear and favour", as Stephen Sedley, a former judge of the Court of Appeal of England and Wales, has



written, are "enemies of independence, which is a state of being", affection and ill-will "undermine impartiality, which is a state of mind". The purpose of recusal, Mr. Sedley added, is to underpin these twin pillars of independence and impartiality. A decision, therefore, on a demand for a judge's disqualification is an especially solemn one. A gratuitous recusal, much like a failure to recuse when faced with genuine conflicts of interest, traduces the rule of law. To withdraw from a case merely because a party suggests that a judge do so impairs judicial fairness. It allows parties to cherry-pick a bench of their choice.

Formulating rules

Given these implications, one can be forgiven for thinking there exists a set of concrete rules that tell us when a judge must recuse herself. But as T.R. Andhyarujina wrote some years ago, what we really have are different elucidations of a principle against an apprehension of bias. No doubt, in some cases, prejudice is presumed – for example, where a judge has appeared for one of the litigants at some stage in the same dispute. It's also by now an axiomatic rule that no person should be a judge

in her own cause. But there are cases where somebody else's cause becomes the judge's own.

In disputes where a judge has a financial interest in the litigation, where a judge owns shares in a company which is party to the case, the fact of owning shares is, in and of itself, considered disqualification. This rule is derived from an 1852 House of Lords judgment, which held that Lord Cottenham ought not to have delivered a verdict in a case where he owned shares in one of the parties to the litigation. The tenet here appears clear enough, but it's today muddled by the ubiquity of shareholdings by judges and judges' relatives – Mr. Sedley cites the example of a 1980 appeal against Shell and BP in which "the registrar of civil appeals was unable to assemble three judges who had no shares in either defendant." Invitably, therefore, when a judge owns shares in one of the litigants what we expect is disclosure of the fact, and if neither party objects one might think it's acceptable for the judge to hear the case. But in the absence of a well-defined rule that helps establish basic standard, a decision of this kind can provide troubling somewhere down the line.

The closest we've come in India to carving out a definite rule was a formulation made by Justice J. Chelameswar in his opinion in *Supreme Court Advocates-on-Record Association v. Union of India* (2015). Here, the 99th constitutional amendment was challenged, and a claim was made seeking Justice J.S. Khehar's recusal. The plea was rejected, but Justice Chelameswar attempted to establish something akin to an elementary canon. "Where a judge has a pecuniary in-

terest, no further inquiry as to whether there was a 'real danger' or 'reasonable suspicion' of bias is required to be undertaken," he wrote. "But in other cases, such an inquiry is required, and the relevant test is the 'real danger' test."

Even with this formulation, what constitutes real danger of bias remains a matter of construal. And whether an individual judge should be allowed to decide for herself on pleas of recusal is equally a point of contention. Yet the test does provide a plausible solution, so long as judges make their choices by reducing their reasons to writing. For when judges choose without a rational motive, without expressing their decisions in writing, they hurt the very idea of judicial rectitude.

Equally destructive

Ultimately, a mistaken case of recusal can prove just as destructive to rule of law as those cases where a judge refuses a recusal despite the existence of bias. We mustn't allow recusals to be used as a tool to manoeuvre justice, as a means to picking benches of a party's choice, and as an instrument to evade judicial work. As the Constitutional Court of South Africa held, in 1999, "the nature of the judicial function involves the performance of difficult and at times unpleasant tasks," and to that end judicial officers "must resist all manner of pressure, regardless of where it comes from. This is the constitutional duty common to all judicial officers. If they deviate, the independence of the judiciary would be undermined, and in turn, the Constitution itself."

Suhrit Parthasarathy is an advocate practising at the Madras High Court

The contractual functionary

Sanitation workers represent a wider phenomenon of exploitative contractual work



KRISHNA KUMAR

Sewage pipes and drains represent the bleaker side of India's struggle to modernise its cities. Last month, Kishan Lal, 37, a sanitation worker, died inside an underground drain in the nation's capital. Called to repair a blocked drain in the Wazirabad area of Delhi, he had no safety kit with him. The details of his death that have appeared in newspapers make for sordid reading: he died of asphyxiation. When he did not come out, the police and fire department were called. They could not find him. It was the National Disaster Response Force that found his body after an eight-hour search. Reports of deaths in similar circumstances appear regularly in the local press in different cities. They attract public attention for a day or two, but fail to sustain it.

Caste and contract work

Reports identified Kishan Lal as a 'contract worker'. The meaning of this term has grown and the scope of its use has greatly expanded over recent decades. Depending on who your contractor is, you could have a vastly different experience of work under a contract. There was a time when the term was

used only in the context of private sector employment because the government alone gave 'permanent' appointments. Economic reforms introduced under liberalisation changed that.

From the early 1990s, government jobs could also be given on contract. Among sanitation workers, thousands in each major city are serving on contract. Few statistics exist to guide us in the jungle of norms and procedures governing contractual work. We also don't know the share of permanent staff in the total sanitation staff in the country. What we do know for certain is the relation between caste and contract work in the sphere of sanitation. Sanitation workers on contract mostly belong to the Scheduled Caste (SC) category. Surveys indicate a small proportion of other castes in permanent sanitation staff. It is also reported that these non-SC permanent functionaries often get proxy workers from SC backgrounds to do the actual work. So, the bond between caste and work continues to be strong decades after B.R. Ambedkar had analysed and highlighted it.

In the case of sanitation, contract work means gross vulnerability and exploitation. The terms of contract are minimalist, and a contractor feels free to enhance his own share of the contract with impunity, by nibbling away the worker's share. Though the government is supposed to regulate the functioning of this contract, it



does not show much active interest in doing so. It has been following the general policy of privatisation as a matter of faith, without putting in the effort it takes to work out the details for different sectors and departments.

The realisation that one solution does not solve every problem is absent. Such a realisation is also unpopular, especially among people who present themselves as the gurus of efficiency. A tacit pact guides their relations with the bureaucracy. Hardly any politician in office has the time or the inclination to disturb this pact and force both sides – the efficiency gurus and the civil servants – to take stock of different nooks and crannies of the vast apparatus of the state. Decline in efficiency and quality of different services is quite apparent to the public, but it is flatly denied by political leaders, civil servants and consultants.

Quality takes a hit

They also deny the urgency of reviewing the working of the contractual system in areas directly

related to welfare, such as sanitation, health and education. Little attempt has been made to study how contractual work has affected reliability in the postal services, railways and accounts. Even in functions such as data gathering, which are crucial for economic planning and decisions, the contractual workforce has proved detrimental to quality. In a paper published in the *Economic and Political Weekly* (February 15, 2014), Professor Sheila Bhalla made this point with reference to the use of contractual enumerators in the National Sample Survey Office.

In many spheres, contractual appointments do not involve a private contractor, but that makes little difference to the quality of work done. In education, for instance, many State governments have been hiring teachers on contract. Their service conditions are totally different from those serving as permanent staff, yet they are expected to deliver higher quality in teaching. The mantra upholding this expectation is that contractual teachers will work harder because they are insecure. In State after State, this mantra has not borne fruit, but no one wants to acknowledge that. Nor do governments want to admit that contractual work in professions such as teaching discourages motivation to improve one's performance. The reason is that contractual functionaries see no definite prospect of a career or future in the

same profession. Also, their wage is much too small to sustain the growth of substantial professional commitment.

The case of sanitation workers on contract is worse. They work for small-time contractors who have absolutely no idea of the role of a sanitation worker. The contractor feels free to exploit the worker, conveniently hopping over whatever barriers and checks, including digital devices, that the government attempts to use for providing financial security to the worker. The government – in the case of sanitation, it is often the municipality – shows little sustained interest in imposing stringent norms for provision of equipment, including those for safety, necessary for sewer cleaning. As for training, no one seems to believe that sanitation involves complex work, requiring both knowledge and training. Such a thought is fully precluded by the strong and enduring bond that exists between caste and sanitation. Sanitation campaigns do not articulate an acknowledgement of the relationship between the caste system and cleaning jobs. An ideological barrier prevents such articulation. The media too does not highlight the connection between caste and cleaning. That is why whenever sanitation workers die in underground drains, the news simply passes into unsorted history.

Krishna Kumar is a former director of the NCERT

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Letters emailed to letters@thehindu.co.in must carry the full postal address and the full name or the name with initials.

No cover

The decision to withdraw state security cover to separatist leaders in Kashmir, which the Home Minister referred to obliquely as "acting against those who get money from across the border and are hand in glove with Pakistan's ISI", is a step in the right direction (Page 1, "J&K administration withdraws security to separatist leaders", February 18). The money saved should be utilised for the welfare of ordinary Kashmiris. Separatist leaders have been enjoying the best of both worlds. This is also the time for the cover of all protected persons, including mainstream and separatist leaders, to be reviewed. C.G. KURIAKOSE, Kothamangalam, Kerala

■ A number of steps may have been taken after the

Pulwama terror attack. But what we need to do, most of all, is to address the core issue: why is it that the educated Kashmiri youth is being drawn to terror?

Kashmir, a festering wound, needs a multi-pronged strategy that can prove effective.

SANGEETA KAMPAANI, New Delhi

■ In an atmosphere of heightened emotions, one would tend to applaud the decision. But this is a case of emotions overtaking judicious reasoning. So long as separatist leaders continue to be Indian subjects and as long as the perception of a threat to their lives remains, it is incumbent on the government to provide them adequate protection. At a time when proactive steps are needed to win over the Kashmiri mainstream, arm-twisting instead of reaching

out will be counterproductive and deepen the alienation.

AYYASERI RAVEENDRANATH, Aranmula, Kerala

■ It is clear that neither the U.S. nor China can influence Pakistan so that it turns over a new leaf as long as the state is controlled by the all-powerful Pakistan Army. The peace overtures made so far by the deep state seem to be an eyewash. To add to this is the attitude of the leaders of various political parties in the Kashmir Valley who do not seem sincere about ending terrorism. The numerous separatist outfits too have their own agenda. Ultimately it is innocent civilians who are paying the price.

A. MICHAEL DHANARAJ, Coimbatore

■ Reports of Kashmiri students facing intimidation following the Pulwama terror

strike are unfortunate. The very idea of India is one that is rooted firmly in its pluralistic character and liberal and secular outlook. What binds Kashmir to India is not a military force or a political pact signed decades ago, but the un-selfconscious movement of people from Jammu and Kashmir to other parts of the country in search of jobs and better opportunities. It stems from the idea of India that they can find a home anywhere in the country. We should not let this idea of India be besieged by forces inimical to the unity and integrity of the country. It is incumbent upon the administration, civil and political leadership to maintain peace.

M. JAYARAM, Sholavandan, Tamil Nadu

Verified

The Readers' Editor's column (OpEd page, February 18) and the former

RE, K. Narayanan's column, "Venturesome, vainglorious" (April 13, 2009), prove that *The Hindu* is still guided by the principles laid down in the very first editorial titled "Ourselves" (September 20, 1878): "The principles that we propose to be guided by are simply those of fairness and justice..." I am reminded of the time when I had sent my article, "Learning from the birds", to be published in the Open Page. I was asked about the veracity of the accompanying photograph, of a sunbird which had built its nest from a hook on the ceiling of our verandah, feeding its nestlings. The article/photograph were published on May 12, 2015 only after the picture was found to be authentic.

SUKUMARAN C.V., Palakkad, Kerala

Immigration debate

In the U.S., the basic institutions that make up a

successful democracy have been compromised for sheer political gains, and this is sure to have multitudinous ramifications (Editorial, "Strange emergency", February 18). If the exorbitant amount of money that could be set apart to splurge on "the Wall" is channelled towards affordable and quality education to the children of immigrants, they could metamorphose from "drug dealers" to becoming indispensable assets of America.

There is no doubt that U.S. President Donald Trump needs to enlighten himself about immigrants having played a paramount role in helping the U.S. become a superpower and engendering "the American dream".</p

India's options after Pulwama

India would do better than Pakistan in a conventional war, but it may or may not remain conventional



HAPPYMON JACOB



"How is it that a plan to carry out such a major attack on a national highway in a troubled State went undetected?" Security forces after a gunbattle with militants in Pinglan, Pulwama district, south Kashmir. ■ PTI

The deadly terror attack against a Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) convoy in South Kashmir's Pulwama district, which was orchestrated by a Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) suicide bomber, Adil Ahmad Dar, 22, has once again brought nuclear-armed India and Pakistan closer to a potential armed confrontation. There are widespread calls to respond to the attack which killed 40 CRPF personnel. The question, however, is how. The general election may complicate the answer to this question. The BJP leadership knows that if it plays its cards well, it might stand a chance to form the next government. If it bungles, that chance would become weak. This makes the situation far more dangerous in terms of payoff structures and associated risks.

Pakistan needs to act

So far, Pakistan's response to the attack has been blanket and unhelpful denial. Prime Minister Imran Khan has chosen to be quiet about it despite the seething anger in India, even as his Ministers are issuing unconvincing denials. Pakistan needs to stop issuing denials and start acting. Let us be clear: the JeM's leaders are roaming about freely in Pakistan. This is unacceptable. They must be taken to task immediately and there should be a clampdown on other terror organisations as an emergency measure. The Pakistani establishment's usual answers – 'we will come to them eventually' or 'we are also already fighting them' – won't cut ice any more. If Pakistan truly desires peace with India, it needs to play its part honestly. Pakistan should realise that it would be doing a favour to its citizens by cracking down on terror organisations that are thriving on their soil. And why has Pakistan still not invited India's National Investigation Agency to investigate the Pathankot terror attack even though India had allowed the visit of the Pakistani team to Pathankot in 2016? Pakistan needs to take action against the terror elements on

its soil, now.

Having said that, let's face some facts: Dar was a local Kashmiri boy, the vehicle used in the attack was local, we do not yet know the source of the explosive, and there is a raging insurgency in Kashmir today. Don't these facts tell us that New Delhi's Kashmir policy has been a failure? That it has been unable to calm tempers in Kashmir in the past four and a half years? If so, we must ask the difficult but important question: How did we get to where we are today in Kashmir? Here is some perspective: While in 2013, only six local Kashmiris had joined the ranks of militancy, last year, the figure was close to 200; between 2014 and 2018, ceasefire violations increased five times; between 2015 and 2018, the increase in infiltration attempts more than doubled; and, terrorist-related violence in the Valley has spiked drastically over the past five years.

Despite all this, the government was hardly keen to initiate a serious dialogue process with the Kashmiri dissidents. The BJP-PDP government, which fell last year, ensured that the so-called soft separatist space was given away to militants, and the use of aggressive tactics turned south Kashmir's popular opinion against India. Make no mistake: India finds itself in a bind in Kashmir, and it will take a great deal of political sophistication, backchannel reaching out, and comprehensive political vision to get Kashmir back

on track. Do the politicians in New Delhi realise this? I am not sure. Even as the nation stands behind its government, the Central government, when reflecting on the next steps, must accept that its politically unimaginative policy was a failure.

Then there is intelligence failure. How is it that a plan to carry out such a major attack, by a local who was on the radar of the local police and other agencies, on a national highway in a troubled State went undetected? Why is it that 78 buses with CRPF jawans were allowed to travel in one convoy?

India's options

If New Delhi seeks to respond to Pakistan for the Pulwama attack, what options does it have? For the BJP government, given that the elections are so close, its retaliation has to be credible, prompt and visible, thereby limiting its options. Stopping the flow of waters to Pakistan is neither practical nor possible. Withdrawing the Most Favoured Nation status would hardly hurt Pakistan, given the low trade volume involved. Isolating Pakistan internationally is easier said than done – China is closer to Pakistan today than ever before, Russia is warming up to it, and given the impending American drawdown in Afghanistan, there is a sense of triumphalism in Pakistan. This is especially so because of the geopolitical importance of the region – it won't be long before the U.S. makes a

comeback.

One possible way out is perhaps to talk to China discreetly to get Pakistan to crack down on the JeM, but that will take patience, persuasion and discretion. A government caught in an election season may have too little of any of it.

What about military options? One can think of four types of kinetic options. The first could be to carry out surgical strikes, like India did in 2016. However, while the Pakistani side did not respond to it then, the reaction this time could be different. If Pakistan responds, the two sides may soon find themselves in an escalating military crisis with little clarity about the outcome, something an election-bound government might fight shy of. The second option is to use strike aircraft to carry out precision strikes in locations across the Line of Control (LoC). But such air incursions are likely to be detected and intercepted by Pakistani radars and air defence systems. If an aircraft is shot down or pilots are captured, it could become a bigger headache for the government. Pakistani retaliatory strikes cannot be ruled out either. The third option is to go in for stand-off strikes without physically crossing the border, using heavy artillery or other precision-guided weapons such as rockets. Stand-off strikes, or fire assaults, across the LoC would be responded to in kind and eventually might not achieve anything. The final option is to carry out covert operations inside Pakistan to take out high-value human targets such as leaders of terror outfits. This might be the least costly and most optimal strategy. However, this would require a great deal of preparation and might not be domestically useful given the amount of secrecy and lack of optics surrounding it.

In short, the fundamental problem with kinetic options is uncertainty with regard to what those options would lead to if Pakistan decides to respond. India would do better than Pakistan in a conventional war of attrition, but it may or may not remain conventional and there would be attrition on both sides. Would New Delhi be willing to run those risks so close to a crucial election?

Happymon Jacob teaches disarmament studies at Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi

SINGLE FILE

Pay people for data

Imagining a future in which we can remunerate people for their contributions to the digital economy

ANIL K. ANTONY & ANKUR PRASAD



The raw materials driving today's digital economy are data, leading many, including industrial tycoon Mukesh Ambani, to say that data is the new oil. Nowadays, wealth is increasingly built upon information. Companies that aggregate and analyse information the fastest accumulate unprecedented power and wealth. For example, social media companies gather and analyse huge amounts of data related to customer behaviour and preferences. They use this to build features to ensure that customers constantly browse, and to show customers advertisements that they are most likely to click on. This information translates into huge revenues and profits.

An overlooked fact is that ordinary people are crucial for companies to create disruptive technologies that earn them billions. Algorithms rely on statistics to make decisions, and it is the people who feed companies the data.

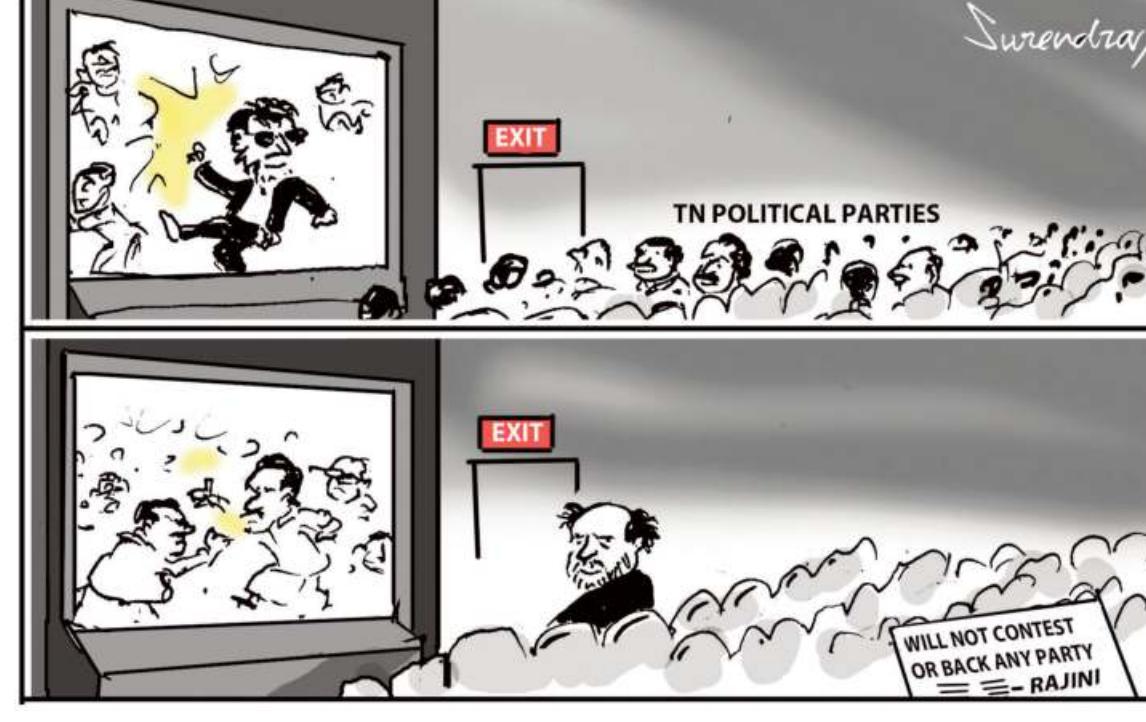
Despite this vast amount of data fuelling massive value and wealth creation, the new digital economy is increasingly shaping up to be like the feudal or robber-baron economies of the past, where wealth was concentrated among a very select few. The general public, who predominantly contribute the raw data, get a negligible portion of the pie.

The digital economy without doubt is creating jobs that were previously inconceivable. Who could have imagined the role of a search engine optimisation expert before Google, or a video streamer before YouTube? These new jobs will likely not be as abundant as the current jobs being eroded due to advancements in artificial intelligence and automation. This means that the jobs to share the massive wealth created in the digital era are steadily decreasing.

At present, seven high-technology firms find themselves among the list of the top eight most valuable companies in the world, with a cumulative market capitalisation of almost \$5 trillion (almost 2.5 times India's GDP). However, they directly employ fewer than 11 lakh people among them.

These days, the primary discourse during any election in the world is on how to create conditions for a more equitable distribution of wealth. For this to happen, we need to conceptualise an approach that can remunerate people for their contributions in this digital economy. As the primary step, we have to educate our population about the value of the data they generate. Secondary measures, including legislative policies, must be taken to ensure that people can extract their justified pay for their digital activities. Technologies such as blockchain can facilitate nano-payments, proportional to the degree of contribution, and value creation to each individual in the digital space. The right redistributive policies can turn this world of technology-driven inequality into one that is truly participatory and egalitarian.

Anil K. Antony is the Convenor of INC-Kerala Digital Media Cell and Vice President of Navoohan Foundation; Ankur Prasad is the Head of Product for Amazon Moments and investor in and adviser to early stage blockchain start-ups



NOTEBOOK

Covering a tragedy with empathy

For many 24x7 TV channels, death means a sensational story

MOHIT M. RAO

Accidents, murders, and cases of sexual assault and violence dominate the news cycle. Journalists are confronted with difficult questions when such incidents take place: Whom do we approach for information? When does the quest for details become an intrusion into moments of grief? How do we move beyond basic facts and provide a human face to a tragedy in a sensitive manner?

While many print journalists grapple with this moral quandary, many reporters of 24x7 news channels, especially local channels, have little time to ponder such questions as morbid deaths pique public curiosity. While journalists often hover around a victim's house, waiting for the so-called right moment to ask the kin questions, TV journalists hound bereaved family members.

Camerapersons even jostle for a view of the body in the ambulance.

For me, this macabre fascination was most apparent on April 9, 2013, when a gas tanker exploded close to Mangaluru. The expanding gas ball set fire to everything and everyone within 50 meters. Ten people died in the accident, and many more were injured.

In hospitals in Mangaluru, where victims were shifted for treatment, the staff forgot to man the entry into the burns ward. Journalists entered in droves and camerapersons attempted to go as close to the victims as they could. Wails and screams of pain cut through the chaos.

A few journalists stood by the door. The sister of a victim, who was critically injured, skirted the camerapersons and stood beside us. We tucked our notebooks into our pockets, and she gave vent to her

sighs in disparate words uttered amid uncontrollable sobs. The camerapersons saw this. One quickly gave me the mic and instructed me to hold it close to her face (TV reporters were at the accident site and he had to ensure that his channel logo was in the frame).

She turned away and covered her face. She clearly did not want her private moment of mourning to be telecast. When he was done with his shot, he went to the other families.

In another hospital nearby, the brother-in-law of a delivery man, who had been riding behind the gas tanker, stepped out of the ICU. He was in shock, but answered questions calmly. But long after the TV cameras moved away, he sat on a chair and wept. Only two reporters remained. We sat beside him in silence. The family, he said, was in debt. It had been only six months since his sis-

ter's wedding. She hadn't been informed of the accident yet. Our end-of-the-day deadline allowed us the time to console him.

Later that evening, when I was struggling to file the copy within the allotted word length, he called up to say his brother-in-law had died. He asked if I could request the district administration to expedite formalities. By then, gory images had been repeatedly telecast, and many people had come forward to help the affected families.

Minutes later, a TV reporter called me to say he had visualised a man in flames running on the road. Could I ask the man whether it was his brother-in-law in the video, he asked. No, I said. Soon after, I switched on the TV. The channel announced his death and played visuals of the man in flames and his brother-in-law crying on loop.

A catalyst for the Congress

It makes sense for the party to give Priyanka Gandhi Vadra a bigger role



BADRI NARAYAN

In late January, Priyanka Gandhi Vadra was appointed by the Congress as a general secretary in-charge of Uttar Pradesh-East. She will be in charge of around 42 parliamentary seats. This is the region where the constituencies of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and U.P. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath lie. It is also the region that includes the important constituencies of Allahabad, Phulpur, Amethi and Rae Bareli. How is Ms. Vadra going to influence the general election, given that she's campaigning in the State with 80 Lok Sabha seats, which can determine which party or coalition goes on to form the government at the Centre?

Mobilising party workers

First, Ms. Vadra could work as a catalyst for the Congress. She is not new to politics; she has been consulted on important decisions concerning the party several times in the past. Her presence is known to energise Congress workers and give them greater confidence. Reports say that her campaigning will be restricted to U.P., but if she chooses to campaign outside the State, it could enthuse more party workers. Her direct presence in rallies, meetings and road shows may help mobilise scattered old-time Congress voters and sympathisers, who have remained inactive for many years. It will also stop Congress voters from shifting to the BJP, wherever they are not happy with the ruling government in the State. In the Tripura Assembly election, for instance, political analysts found that Congress voters shifted to the BJP where the Congress did not have a strong presence. This could happen in a State like West Bengal where some disgruntled cadres of the Congress, which is practically in a direct fight with the Trinamool Congress, could shift to the BJP, which is emerging as a strong Opposition party in the State. Ms. Vadra's presence could help reduce the shift of voters to the BJP. Even in south and western India, where the Congress is not the main Opposition party, voters could be mobilised so that they don't shift to other parties.

Second, many have pointed out how Ms. Vadra resembles her grandmother, former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. She evokes memories of Indira Gandhi for those who are above 50 years of age. This could help forge an emotional link with voters who admired

the former Prime Minister. Of course, Indira Gandhi reminds people of the Emergency, but a large section of voters returned to the Congress in the 1980 parliamentary election. In fact, many were Congress voters for a long time and shifted to the BJP only when the Congress became weak in 2014. Ms. Vadra could help bring them into the Congress fold again. Then there is the question of her personality. A young Muslim boy in a village near Allahabad, for instance, said about Ms. Vadra: "She communicates in a very impressive manner with the people."

Attracting new voters

In U.P., Ms. Vadra's presence will affect the performance of not only the BJP but also the Samajwadi Party (SP) and Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) to some extent. The Congress's growing visibility in U.P. could impress upper caste voters. This may be a loss for the BJP. The Congress also seems to be impressing a section of Muslims and many smaller Dalit communities which are not supporters



of the BSP. Many Scheduled Caste communities voted for the BJP in the 2014 election. They may support the Congress for two reasons: they are disenchanted with both the BSP and the BJP, and the Congress's outreach is stronger now. The Congress seems to be placing emphasis on mobilising Other Backward Classes and Dalit communities for their new politics.

The discourse of the 2019 general election is centred around personalities: Mr. Modi, Congress president Rahul Gandhi, Ms. Vadra, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu, Nationalist Congress Party chief Sharad Pawar, etc. However, some of them have an appeal only in their respective States. The Congress would like to promote Ms. Vadra as a leader rooted in U.P. politics, but it would do well to widen her role.

Badri Narayan is professor, Govind Ballabh Pant Social Science Institute, Allahabad

FROM The Hindu ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO FEBRUARY 19, 1969

Communist MPs demand resignation of Union Govt.

The Lok Sabha, on the second day of its Budget session to-day [February 18, New Delhi], took up for consideration a censure motion against the Union Government primarily intended to highlight, among other things, "its failure to promote a balanced development of all regions in the country" and its "encouragement" to aggressive regional movements. Communist members demanded that the Union Government should resign in view of the "rejection of the Congress" in the mid-term poll. The no-confidence motion, moved by Mr. P. Ramamurti (C.P.I.-M) was supported by the C.P.I. and S.S.P. The debate was inconclusive and will conclude to-morrow, according to a recommendation made by the Business Advisory Committee of the House. The Prime Minister, will reply to the debate on Thursday [February 20].

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO FEBRUARY 19, 1919

The Rice Crop of 1918-19.

The total area under rice in the Madras Presidency in 1918-19 is estimated at 9,71,000 acres, which is less by 19,44,000 acres than the area finally reported for the previous year. In fact the area is the lowest that has been recorded since complete statistics were first tabulated in 1907-08. The reasons for this decrease have already been given in the first and second reports, i.e., the failure of the south-west monsoon in July and August and the delay in the establishment of the north-east monsoon until November. The season has in fact been entirely abnormal and it is only in the tracts protected by the major irrigation works and in the tract along the East Coast which received the full benefit of the north-east monsoon, that anything like a normal is greatest in the Deccan and Central district. Conditions are better in the south, and Ramanad and Tinnevelly actually show some increase in area.

CONCEPTUAL

Smoke detector principle

PSYCHOLOGY

This refers to the idea that the human brain is designed by nature to be paranoid as a defence mechanism to protect itself from possible dangers that could be fatal to its chances of survival. While paranoia can lead the brain to commit a lot of false positive errors, it can, however, help human beings avoid a number of false negative errors which could turn out to be extremely costly as well. This is similar to the way a smoke detector is designed by engineers, who want the device to never miss an actual fire even if such a design causes the device to raise a number of false alarms. The term was coined by American physician Randolph M. Nesse in a 2006 paper.

MORE ON THE WEB

How the Egypt experience unfolded as we cruised the Nile

bit.ly/2DQZBuU

FROM PAGE ONE

Three Jaish terrorists killed in Pulwama

Policeman Abdul Rasheed, a personal security officer of DIG Amit Kumar, sustained bullet injuries and later died of the wounds in a hospital. A civilian, Mushtaq Ahmad Bhat, died of bullet wounds at the encounter site, said the police.

DIG Kumar, Brigadier Harbir Singh, another Army officer and a police sub-inspector were among the injured. "They were shifted to Army's 92 Base Hospital with bullet injuries. They are undergoing treatment for bullet wounds," an official said.

The Monday operation was the first joint exercise of security agencies against the JeM, which is recruiting locals. The encounter site was less than 15 km from

Lethpora, where a suicide bomber drove an explosive-laden vehicle into a CRPF convoy on Thursday.

Major Dhondiyal, 33, killed in Monday's operation joined the Army in 2011 and was from Dangwal in Dehradun, Uttarakhand. He is survived by his wife, Havidar Sheo Ram, 36, joined the Army in 2000 and hailed from Jhunjhunu, Rajasthan. He is survived by his wife and a son.

Sepoy Hari Singh, 26, hailed from Raigarh of Rewari, Haryana and joined the Army in 2011. He is survived by his wife and a son.

Sepoy Ajay Kumar, 27, was from Bastikri in Meerut, U.P. and joined the Army in 2012. He is survived by his wife and a son.

The Monday operation was the first joint exercise of security agencies against the JeM, which is recruiting locals. The encounter site was less than 15 km from

Quash Kulbhushan verdict, says India

Speaking outside the court after the proceedings, Harish Salve, India's counsel, expressed his optimism that "justice will be done." However, Pakistan's lead counsel Khawar Qureshi QC said he was "disappointed" by India's arguments, insisting that there was "nothing new" in them, and that "fundamental questions" remained unanswered.

The case stripped of "irrelevances" put forward by Pakistan boiled down to the two main issues – the military court proceedings and consular access, Mr. Salve, told the Monday morning hearing. He said the 2017 provisional measures introduced by the ICJ that required Pakistan to not execute Mr. Jadhav until the full proceedings could take place had saved "the imminent threat of life to an innocent Indian national" and had given "hope" to the whole country.

He rejected Pakistan's contentions that the circumstances of the case - and the fact that Mr. Jadhav is accused of espionage and the case relates to national security - made those consular access requirements redundant, and repeatedly accused Pakistan of using the case for domestic propaganda purposes.

India also maintains that it is the 1963 Convention on consular relations rather than the 2008 bilateral agreement on consular relations that applies to the case, putting it firmly in the jurisdiction of the ICJ.

The lack of consular access had been the prime focus of the 2017 hearing at which India had successfully sought provisional measures from the court requiring Pakistan to stay the execution of Mr. Jadhav.

Sena makes U-turn, ties up with BJP

Though Sena sources said they initially were firm that seat-sharing for the Maharashtra Assembly would be declared with the Lok Sabha seats, Mr. Fadnavis informed that for the Assembly, the other allies would be given seats based on discussions with them and the remaining would be shared on a 50:50 basis between the Sena and the BJP.

Mr. Fadnavis, responding to a question on the demand for appointing a Sena leader as the next Chief Minister, said that following the election, "which would certainly be won by the alliance", the responsibilities would be shared equally.

Ex-Maldives President Yameen arrested

Speaking to *The Hindu*, police spokesperson Izmia Zahir said the police had assisted the Maldives Correctional Services to escort Mr. Yameen to the Maafushi prison located in an atoll 30 km south of the capital Male.

"He will be under the supervision of the Maldives Correctional Services... until the trial is completed,"

she said over telephone. Terming the arrest an "unmistakable political witch-hunt," Mohamed H. Shareef, a former diplomat and Minister in the Yameen administration, said Mr. Yameen's legal team was mulling over an appeal. "The timing too is significant, with the parliamentary elections just over a month away," he told *The Hindu*.

Strategic Partnership "India and Saudi Arabia have strong independent strategic partnership and it will be further strengthened with the launching of the Strategic Partnership Council that will cover critical areas of mutual interest," said a source. The External Affairs Ministry, the NITI Aayog and other govern-

Probe on to trace source of explosives

RDX samples sent to Central Forensic Science Laboratory; NIA, NSG teams camping at blast site

VIJAYA SINGH
NEW DELHI

Forensic experts are analysing the chemical signature from the high-grade RDX used in the car-borne suicide attack on a CRPF bus in Pulwama last week in order to trace its source, a senior government official said.

The probe into the attack, which claimed the lives of 40 CRPF personnel, is likely to be handed over to the National Investigation Agency (NIA), the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said on Monday.

Two teams, one from the NIA and the other from the National Security Guard (NSG), are camping at the attack site for investigation. Samples from the site have already been sent to the Central Forensic Science Laboratory (CFSL) to ascertain the exact composition of the chemicals in the explosive, the official added.

The Centre is also worried by reports of attacks on Kashmiri students and resi-



Safety lock: Jawans moving people to safety during a gunfight with terrorists in Pulwama on Monday. ■ NISSAR AHMAD

dents in other parts of the country in the wake of the Pulwama bombing as it could lead to alienation and also abet radicalisation among people in the Valley, the official said.

The prospect of Kashmiri students fleeing to the Valley fitted well with Pakistan's policy of pitting Kashmiris against the rest of the country, the official added.

'Playing into Pak. hands' "We will be playing into the hands of Pakistan's designs if the verbal and physical attacks are not checked," the official cautioned. "They want Kashmiris to be isolated and fan anti-India sentiments in the Valley."

The official said radicalisation was a major concern in the Valley and the fact that Pakistan-based terror outfit Jaish-e-Mohammad had recruited a local youth, Adil Ahmed Dar, to carry out the suicide strike was extremely disturbing. "There is only one other case of a local

Kashmiri youth carrying out a suicide bombing near Baramulla cantonment in Srinagar almost 20 years ago. The fidayeen always came from Pakistan. We are investigating the exact sequence of events how the attack was planned," the official added.

On Sunday, apprehending physical and verbal attacks from frenzied mobs, about 100 Kashmiri students from various colleges across north India, mostly from Dehradun in Uttarakhand, returned to the Valley.

Another 100 students from Dehradun reached Chandigarh on Monday and arrangements were being made to send them to Jammu and then to Srinagar, Nasir Khuehami of the J&K Student Organisation said.

Plea for probe into Pulwama terror attack

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Advocate Vineet Dhanda on Monday filed a PIL plea in the Supreme Court for an independent probe led by a retired Supreme Court judge into the Pulwama attack.

The petition wants the apex court to set up a judicial commission to investigate any lapses at the local level. It wants the Supreme Court-ordered judicial commission to investigate the "role played by Indian nationals in helping the terrorists from Pakistan in executing the Uri and Pulwama attacks." It also sought direction to the Centre to submit a "detailed report regarding the action taken against the All Parties Hurriyat Conference leaders."

SAD, BJP demand Sidhu's resignation



BJP members also flashed photographs of Mr. Sidhu in which he is seen hugging Pakistan Army General Qamar Javed Bajwa.

Speaker K.P. Ranjith tried to pacify them, but the MLAs did not relent. The Speaker then named all Akali Dal-BJP members and asked the marshals to escort them out of the House. The House was then briefly adjourned.

Mr. Sidhu later told the media, "Terrorism has no religion, no nation. Terrorism will not be tolerated and all those responsible should be punished."

Gehlot's mementos to be auctioned for victims' kin

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
JAIPUR

Mementos and souvenirs presented to Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot will be auctioned here on March 3 to raise money for the families of the 40 CRPF soldiers killed in the Pulwama attack.

The Jaipur-based Bharat Seva Sansthan will auction the mementos.

This is the third auction of mementos for a public cause, Sansthan secretary Girdhari Singh Bapna said here on Monday.

Mr. Gehlot had given away



for auction his mementos for providing relief to the families of the soldiers killed in the Kargil war and the victims of the 2004 tsunami in the southern States.

Row over Kamal's remarks on Kashmir

STAFF REPORTER
CHENNAI

Makkal Needhi Maiam founder Kamal Haasan's remarks hinting at the need to hold a plebiscite in Kashmir have triggered a row.

Participating in the Rota-tract Annual District Conference in Chennai on Sunday, the actor-politician recalled that many years ago, in his magazine *Maianam*, he had called for a plebiscite in Kashmir.

On Monday, television channels reported that Mr. Haasan had called for a plebiscite against the back-drop of the Pulwama terror attack on CRPF personnel.

Meanwhile, his party in a statement said that Mr. Haasan's remarks were being distorted. He had only mentioned plebiscite in the context of a magazine article written three decades ago about an option that was available at a point in time in history.



Mohammed Bin Salman

Saudi Prince praises Imran's bid to restart dialogue with India

Mohammed Bin Salman arrives today as part of Asia tour

KALLOL BHATTACHARJEE
NEW DELHI

India and Saudi Arabia will launch a mechanism for coordinated decisions for strategically important issues, sources said on Monday. The announcement came a day before Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman arrives here as part of his tour of Asia.

With Pakistan as his first destination, he praised the Imran Khan government for the Kartarpur corridor project.

Strategic Partnership

"India and Saudi Arabia have strong independent strategic partnership and it will be further strengthened with the launching of the Strategic Partnership Council that will cover critical areas of mutual interest," said a source. The External Affairs Ministry, the NITI Aayog and other govern-

ment agencies are expected to be the constituent units of this council.

The visit came under focus here as Mohammed Bin Salman declared himself an "ambassador of Pakistan" at an official event during his Islamabad visit.

At the end of the visit, both sides issued a Joint Statement which said, "The Crown Prince praised openness and efforts of Prime Minister Imran Khan for dialogue with India and the

opening of the Kartarpur crossing point and the efforts exerted by both sides, stressing that dialogue is the only way to ensure peace and stability in the region to resolve outstanding issue."

The document also highlighted common position on preventing atrocities against Muslims in the world, and called for "avoiding politicisation of UN listing regime", an oblique reference to India's anti-terror campaign at the UN Security Council.

The Saudi prince, who is known for his mega plans to transform the energy-based economy at home, is coming to India on his first state visit on Tuesday.

The Pakistan visit by Mohammed Bin Salman brought massive investment of \$20 billion even as India had begun to campaign for international isolation of the country after the Pulwama attack.

Mamata questions timing of attack

As a citizen of India, I am in doubt'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
KOLKATA

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Monday raised questions on the timing of the terrorist attack at Pulwama before the Lok Sabha election, and asked why the incident was not prevented despite "intelligence inputs".

"How have they [Pakistan] got this encouragement before elections? After Parliament is over, when this type of thing happens, as a citizen of the country, I am in doubt. Why have we not taken action against Pakistan earlier? Why at the time of elections, you tell me?" Ms. Banerjee said at the State Secretariat.

Referring to the suicide attack that killed 40 Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) personnel at Pulwama on February 14, the Chief Minister said that, like all in the Op-

position, she wanted strong action against terrorists, but emphasised the need to fix responsibility. "Why were 2,005 jawans in 78 vehicles allowed in one convoy when the government had intelligence inputs and information that attacks could happen," Ms. Banerjee asked.

"Now we see that we are quiet and [PM] Modi and Amit Shah are making speeches every day, and through these speeches it appears that only they are patriotic and we are all foreigners," she said.

Speaking to *The Hindu*, police spokesperson Izmia Zahir said the police had assisted the Maldives Correctional Services to escort Mr. Yameen to the Maafushi prison located in an atoll 30 km south of the capital Male.

"He will be under the supervision of the Maldives Correctional Services... until the trial is completed,"

she said over telephone.

Terming the arrest an "unmistakable political witch-hunt," Mohamed H. Shareef, a former diplomat and Minister in the Yameen administration, said Mr. Yameen's legal team was mulling over an appeal. "The timing too is significant, with the parliamentary elections just over a month away," he told *The Hindu*.

CMYK

AN-NDE

IN BRIEF

**Don't expect a miracle from me, says Priyanka**

Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, Congress general secretary in charge of Uttar Pradesh East, told party workers on Monday that they should not expect a "miracle" from her and that the party's performance depended on its booth-level workers. She said that anyone found indulging in anti-party activities would be shown the door, a leader who attended the meeting said. "I cannot do a miracle from above, the workers need to strengthen the party at the booth level," the source quoted Ms. Vadra as saying. PTI

SC dismisses plea to quash interim Budget

NEW DELHI
The SC on Monday dismissed a PIL seeking quashing of the interim Budget on the alleged ground that there was no constitutional provision for it. A Bench comprising Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi and Justice Sanjiv Khanna said it was not inclined to entertain the petition by lawyer Manohar Lal Sharma. Mr. Sharma said there was provision for only a full annual Budget and a vote-on-account under the Constitution. PTI

Oppn. disrupts Governor's speech in Gujarat

AHMEDABAD
Opposition Congress members in Gujarat on Monday disrupted the Governor's speech in the Assembly on the first day of the five-day Budget session that began in the State capital on Monday. The Congress members did not allow Governor Om Prakash Kohli to complete his speech, prompting him to leave the House midway. The Opposition raised slogans seeking farm loan waiver.

CBI tried to use force: Rajeev Kumar

Kolkata Police Commissioner denies claims that he was obstructing probe

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI
Kolkata Police Commissioner Rajeev Kumar on Monday told the Supreme Court that the CBI tried to forcibly enter his residence on February 3 without valid papers.

In separate affidavits, West Bengal Chief secretary Malay Kumar De, DGP Virender Kumar and Mr. Kumar refuted the allegations levelled at them by the CBI of obstructing the apex court-ordered probe into ponzi scams, including the multi-crore Saradha chit fund case.

However, in case the court prima facie felt that their action was contemptuous as alleged by the CBI, the three officials said they were tendering an "unconditional and unambiguous apology."

The officials from West Bengal also accused the CBI



Rajeev Kumar

of levelling vague allegations against them without cogent evidence to back them up. For instance, they submitted that no police officer was part of the protests organised by the Trinamool Congress and led by State Chief Minister Mamta Banerjee.

The CBI, represented by Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta, had argued before a Bench led by Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi that un-

iformed police officers had participated in the protest.

Mr. Kumar said "his presence, adjacent to the site of dharna" was to "discharge his duties".

He said both the Director General of Police and the Inspector General of Police, West Bengal, had come to the protest site, which had also served as a makeshift secretariat/camp office of the Chief Minister.

The police official said he was at the location to ensure that no unforeseen situation arose in a "volatile and evolving situation", adding that 76 cases had been lodged in connection with the chit fund scam.

In his affidavit, Mr. Kumar denied having acted in any manner so as to protect the ruling party's leaders involved in the scam.

"Materials have either been in the exclusive custody of the various Investigating Officers as part of the investigative units under their supervisory officers across the State and/or the appropriate courts in accordance with applicable law," Mr. Kumar submitted.

'Very intriguing'

Mr. Kumar also asserted that it was "very intriguing" as to why the CBI chose the last working day of then interim CBI Director M. Nageswara Rao to question him.

"It seems very intriguing as to why such a major decision could not wait even for a single day for the new Director of CBI to join," he said in the affidavit.

The Supreme Court is scheduled to hear the case on February 20.

Scindia's wife campaigns in his constituency

Fuels speculation of Cong. leader vacating Guna seat to focus on western U.P.

ANUP DUTTA

Bhopal



Priyadarshini Raje Scindia talking to women in Guna Lok Sabha constituency on Monday. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Priyadarshini Raje Scindia, wife of senior Congress leader Jyotiraditya Scindia, began an eight-day tour of her husband's Guna Lok Sabha constituency on Monday, amid speculation that he was planning to vacate the seat for her.

Ms. Scindia reached the Shivpuri Assembly constituency by road from Gwalior in the afternoon and addressed a meeting of women party workers. In the coming days, she is scheduled to spend a full day in each of the eight Assembly segments of the Guna parliamentary constituency. She will meet party workers and address meetings, State Congress

spokesperson Pankaj Chaturvedi said.

Family pocketborough The Guna Lok Sabha seat has been represented by Mr. Scindia's grandmother Raj-

mata Vijaya Raje Scindia and his late father Madhavrao. Mr. Scindia has been representing the seat since 2002, after it fell vacant owing to his father's death a year earlier. He survived the Modi

wave in 2014 when his party won just two of the 29 Lok Sabha seats in the State.

The Congress won five Assembly seats in the November 2018 State elections out of the eight segments constituting the Guna parliamentary constituency.

There is speculation that Mr. Scindia is planning to vacate the Guna Lok Sabha seat for his wife as he has been given charge of western Uttar Pradesh for the upcoming general election and may not be able to devote enough time to his constituency.

A graduate from Mumbai's Sophia College, Ms. Scindia comes from the erstwhile Gaekwad royalty of Baroda.

Kirti Azad joins Congress, says PM making empty rhetoric

Alleges that there is no internal democracy in the BJP

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI



Home run: Rahul Gandhi being honoured by cricketer-turned-politician Kirti Azad in New Delhi on Monday. ■ PTI

ruption, he said, "The faces behind the mask started to come out."

The former cricketer said that when he raised the ₹400 crore scam in the Delhi and District Cricket Association (DDCA) with documents to back his claims, he was "back-stabbed" by the party.

Though he initially believed Prime Minister Modi's assertion about fighting corruption, he said, "There is no internal democracy left in the BJP. Just by getting members through social media doesn't make it the largest party...The only thing I heard in the last five years was *jumla*," he said.

"What happened to Modi's calls of *na khaunga, na khane dunga* (I won't in-

dulge in corruption, nor allow anyone to do so)? I realised that too was *jumla*," he said.

Mr. Azad called the Rafale issue the country's "biggest defence scam", and said even BJP MPs feel there was a scam. "Wherever I go, people ask me what happened to the black money which Modi promised to bring back..." And I have no answers," he said.

EC reviews security measures

May seek another ground report on the situation in J&K

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The Election Commission on Monday assessed security arrangements across the country, especially in Jammu and Kashmir, ahead of the Lok Sabha polls.

Union Home Secretary Rajiv Gauba and senior officials from Jammu and Kashmir, including the Chief Electoral Officer, the Chief Secretary, the Home Secretary and an Additional Director-

General of Police, attended the meeting.

The internal security review was held days after the Pulwama terror attack.

The Commission took note of the submissions made by the officials.

After examining the matter, the poll panel may decide to visit Jammu and Kashmir. Based on the findings, the EC will take a call on whether to conduct the Assembly and Lok Sabha

polls in the State simultaneously.

It is learnt that the Commission took stock of preparedness in terms of availability and timely deployment of security forces during the coming polls, particularly in vulnerable areas in different States.

Over the past few weeks, the Chief Election Commissioner and other senior poll panel officials have visited several States.

**ANDHRA PRADESH SOLAR POWER CORPORATION (P) LTD.
(A Joint Venture company of Govt of AP & Govt of India)**

e - Procurement Tender Notice

APSPCL invites tenders for the works of "Construction of water supply system comprising of Construction of Concrete weir, Intake structure, Pump House & Pumping System, Overhead Tanks and laying of Pumping and Distribution lines for Kadapa Ultra Mega Solar Park at Mylavaram Mandal, Kadapa District of A.P." Approximate Value of Work: Rs.12.53 Crores. For details visit: www.apspcl.ap.gov.in (or) www.approcurement.gov.in

Bharat Coking Coal Limited
A Mini Ratna Company
(A Subsidiary of Coal India Limited)

Sub:- Open Global with Reserve auction Notice No.- 90

Online bids are invited from prospective bidders for Procurement of Gas Chromatograph against Open Global with Reserve auction Tender No. -BCCL/PUR/1781030/Safety/Chromatograph/18-19/90 having estimated value of Rs-176.52 LAKH (Approx). Bid Submission end date: 23/03/2019 & Bid/Tender Opening date is 25/03/2019. Full details of above tender is available on website <https://coalindiatenders.nic.in>, www.bcclweb.in & <https://e-procure.gov.in>. Prospective bidder are advised to visit the aforesaid websites to participation against above tenders and to note time to time the any corrigendum, clarifications etc (if any).

Chief Manager (MM)

SMART CITY THIRUVANANTHAPURAM LIMITED
CIN U75302KL2017SGC05027

E-TENDER NOTICE

Tenders are invited for the projects - Redevelopment of Bus shelters, Redevelopment of public toilets, Selection of contractors for procurement of 15 E-Autos, 15 E-Rickshaws and Installation of Drinking Water Kiosks (RFP) in Thiruvananthapuram Smart City area.

Name of Project	E-Tender ID
1) Redevelopment of Bus Shelters	2019_SCLT_269064_1
2) Redevelopment of Public Toilets	2019_SCLT_269095_1
3) Procurement of 15 E-Auto	2019_SCLT_269120_1
4) Procurement of 15 E-Rickshaw	2019_SCLT_269139_1
5) Installation of Drinking Water Kiosks	2019_SCLT_258896_02

Bid Submission Last Date : 02-03-2019, 4 PM.

Date and Time of Opening Price Bid: To be Intimated Separately to Technically Qualified Bidders by Email all the RFP documents and details are available on the e-Procurement Website <https://etenders.kerala.gov.in>

(Sd/-) CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
SMART CITY THIRUVANANTHAPURAM Ltd.

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA, DEPARTMENT OF SPACE
SATISH DHAWAN SPACE CENTRE SHAR CONSTRUCTION & MAINTENANCE GROUP SRIHARIKOTA-524124.**

PQ Notice No: CMG/C/P1887060 Dated: 18/02/2019

On behalf of President of India, "Group Director, Construction & Maintenance Group, SDSC SHAR" invites applications from bidders for Pre-qualification for the following composite work on item rate tender basis.

Name of work	Orbital Module Preparation Facility (OMPF) for Gaganyaan Project at SDSC SHAR (Civil, Electrical, AC, Mechanical and Allied Works)
PQ Notice No.	CMG/C/P1887060 Dated: 18/02/2019
Estimated Cost	₹ 74 Crores (Tentative Project Cost)
Period of Completion	12 Months
Cost of PQ document	₹ 1,000/- for issue in person (plus ₹ 500/- by post)
Period during which PQ document can be downloaded on websites / obtained from the office of GD CMG, SDSC SHAR	20/02/2019 10:30 hrs. To 27/02/2019 upto 14:30 hrs.
Last date and time for receipt of filled up PQ documents.	01/03/2019 upto 14:30 hrs.
Due date and time of opening of PQ	01/03/2019 at 15:00 hrs.

Detailed PQ notice and other relevant details are available on websites. Interested tenders may please refer Detailed Notice Inviting Tender (NT) from website www.isro.gov.in Ph: 08623 226447, 226420 Group Director, CMG, SDSC SHAR

NLC India Limited
'Navratna' - Government of India Enterprise
Regd. Office - First Floor, No.8, Major Satyamevji Road,
FSD, Egmore Complex of Food Corporation of India, Chennai - 600 031.
Corp. Office - Block-1, Neyveli-607 801, Cuddalore District, Tamil Nadu.
CIN No.: L93090TN1956G0100507, Website: www.nlcindia.com

BRIEF NOTICE INVITING BID THROUGH e TENDER

Online bids in English are invited by NLC India Limited, Neyveli for the Work "RENEWAL OF INSURANCE POLICIES OF ASSETS AND STOCKS OF PRODUCTION & SERVICE UNITS OF NLC India Limited, Neyveli (NLCL) for the period from 01.04.2019 to 31.03.2020".
Tender No.: CO CONTS/0007H/Insurance Policy/e-contrats/2019, dt.. 18.02.2019
B.G.Amount: Nil. Tender Fee: Nil.
Date of NIB available to parties to download: 19.02.2019.
Date of Starting of e-tender for submission of online bid-cover 1 & physical cover and cover II
Last Date & Time for registration: 20.03.2019 at 17.00 Hrs. (IST)
Last Date & Time of submission of online bid-cover 1 & physical cover and cover II
21.03.2019 at 14.30 Hrs. (IST)
Date & Time of opening of Cover-I and physical cover
21.03.2019 at 15.00 hrs. (IST)
For further details contact: The Chief General Manager/Contracts, NLC India Ltd., Corporate Office, Block-1, Neyveli-607 801. (Phone: 04142-252210 & 251620 Fax: 04142-252026 / 252645 / 252646) e-mail: gmcnts_co@nlcindia.in, gmconts@nlcindia.in within 10 (TEN) days from the date of tender.
NOTICE INVITING TENDERS FOR SUPPLIES e-Tender Notices SI.No.1 & 4
SI.No. Tender Ref./Scope of supplies & Qty. reqd.
1. UNIT: M. M. COMPLEX: PTE ENQ/18-19/004495/MM01(03) dt.08.02.2019: M.S. Chain Link sets, Five Part Connecting Strap, Draw Bar & Connecting Rod - 7 Items Due date of opening: 12.03.2019
2. PTE ENQ/18-19/004607/MM18(03) dt.14.02.2019: Procurement of Naphtonic based EHV quality transformer oil as per IS:335/1993 (With latest amendments). Qty: 281450 Litres. Due date of opening: 15.03.2019
3. PTE ENQ/18-19/004617/MM18(03) dt.14.02.2019: Procurement of industrial compressed O₂ gas conforming to IS 309/1974 II revision at 27deg.C. Qty: 180000 Cu.Metres. Due date of opening: 15.03.2019
4. PTE ENQ/18-19/004618/MM18(07) dt.14.02.2019: Procurement of mixture of human soluble insulin 30% Isophane insulin 70% 40 iu/Ml 10 ml vial (intermediate acting). Qty: 30,000 Nos. Due date of opening: 18.03.2019
FOR e-TENDER DOCUMENTS/DETAILS/CORRIGENDUM VISIT: www.nlcindia.com
PUBLIC SECTOR IS YOURS : HELP IT TO HELP YOU

INTERVIEW | MOHAMED NASHEED

In a sense, we now need to buy back our sovereignty from China

Former President of the Maldives has rejected claims on the country's debt

SUHASINI HAIDAR

After returning to the Maldives from exile, and receiving an acquittal on cases against him, former President Mohamed Nasheed is now eyeing a return to active politics by standing for Parliamentary elections due on April 6. On a visit to India, where he met Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Mr. Nasheed spoke about his hopes that the Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP) he leads will work closely with India, and rejects claims on the debt to China.

This is your first visit to India since the elections and the MDP government has already made several moves to better ties with India, including the recent visa agreement. Where does the potential now lie?

■ We must keep working on bringing our countries closer. India is assisting the Maldives on a number of development projects.

There is a need for the Maldives to do a lot of work on facilitating these projects.

Also on our security, for which we completely rely on India, so we must improve our security relationship.

However, in

Seven MPs quit Labour Party over Brexit, anti-Semitism

They complain about the left turn the party has taken under Jeremy Corbyn

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
LONDON

A group of MPs from Britain's Opposition Labour Party broke away on Monday in protest at leader Jeremy Corbyn's support for Brexit and his failure to stamp out anti-Semitism.

The seven MPs included Chuka Umunna, who has led a campaign for a second referendum that could stop Brexit and was once seen as a potential leader of the centre-left party.

Mr. Umunna called for a centrist "alternative" in British politics as the rebel MPs complained about the far-left turn the party had taken under veteran socialist Mr. Corbyn.

"The bottom line is this – politics is broken, it doesn't have to be this way, let's change it," Mr. Umunna said at a hastily-arranged press conference in London.

Breakaway group

The seven MPs will form a breakaway independent group in Parliament, undermining Mr. Corbyn as he attempts to steer the party through the highly divisive issue of Brexit.



Bidding adieu: The Labour MPs who announced their resignation in London on Monday. ■ REUTERS

Many Labour voters, particularly in northern England, chose to leave the EU in the 2016 referendum – but a majority of Labour MPs and members supported staying in.

The referendum cut across party political allegiances also in the ruling Conservative Party, which is now deeply divided between pro-EU moderates and Brexit hardliners.

The Labour rebellion is unlikely to make a major difference in crucial upcoming votes on Prime Minister Theresa May's Brexit deal but the move was welcomed by pro-EU forces.

der fire from europhiles for failing to push for a second referendum. He has instead called on Ms. May to negotiate a customs union with the EU to ease trade ties after Brexit.

Mr. Corbyn has also been criticised for months for his handling of cases of anti-Semitism in the Labour Party, and his own past associations with Palestinian militants.

Another of the seven MPs, Luciana Berger, a victim of anti-Semitic online abuse for years, said: "This has been a very difficult, painful but necessary decision."

Ms. Berger said the Labour Party had become "institutionally anti-Semitic", adding: "I have become embarrassed and ashamed to represent the Labour Party. "I am leaving behind a culture of bullying, bigotry and intimidation."

MP Mike Gapes said one of his main reasons for leaving was because he was "furious that the Labour leadership is complicit in facilitating Brexit". His colleague Chris Leslie said he too was leaving because of "Labour's betrayal on Europe".

Vince Cable, leader of the Opposition Liberal Democrats, said he was "open to working with like-minded groups and individuals in order to give the people the final say on Brexit, with the option to remain in the EU".

'Painful but necessary'

Mr. Corbyn said he was "disappointed" by his MPs' decision.

"Now more than ever is the time to bring people together to build a better future for us all," he said, pointing to the party's strong result in the last general election in 2017.

Mr. Corbyn has come un-

Poland pulls out of Israel summit

REUTERS
WARSAW/JERUSALEM

Poland pulled out of a summit in Israel after Israel's acting Foreign Minister Israël Katz said on Monday that "many Poles" had collaborated with the Nazis and shared responsibility for the Holocaust.

Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki branded the remarks "racist and unacceptable". He had earlier said he would not join Tuesday's gathering of central European leaders – also featuring Hungary, the Czech Republic and Slovakia – sending instead a lower-level delegation, but said on Monday that no Polish officials would now attend.

"Not only can we not accept such racist comments, but with all our strength we want to stress that we will fight for historical truth, for the honour of Poles," he told reporters.

The diplomatic row between Poland and Israel has been escalating since Friday, when Israeli media reported remarks by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu suggesting Polish complicity in the Holocaust.



Pakistan's President Arif Alvi conferring the country's highest civilian award, the Nishan-e-Pakistan, on Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman in Islamabad on Monday. ■ AFP

the two-day visit – seven separate agreements and memorandums of understanding – will boost its struggling economy. Pakistan laid on a lavish welcome for the Prince, including a 21-gun salute, fighter jet escort and honour guard. He also received the country's highest civilian award Monday, the Nishan-e-Pakistan (Order of Pakistan).

Pakistan has also been accused by its western neigh-

bours of harbouring militants who carried out an attack that killed 27 Revolutionary Guards last week. The Guards' commander has also vowed to make Pakistan pay. Mr. Jubeir also noted that Riyadh continues to participate in a month-long push by Washington for peace talks in Afghanistan, saying that if the war-torn country can be stabilised "it will be to benefit... the region as a whole".

Facebook cannot be allowed to behave like a digital gangster'

U.K. parliamentary report calls for probe into recent elections

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
LONDON

A scathing British parliamentary report on Monday referred to Facebook as a "digital gangster" that failed to fight the spread of fake news and violated data privacy. Lawmakers' 18-month investigation into technology companies and disinformation also accused the world's largest social media platform of trying to hide the extent of Russian interference in foreign elections.

Parliamentary committee chair Damian Collins said Facebook "deliberately sought to frustrate our work by giving incomplete, disingenuous and at times misleading answers to our questions".

'Not beyond the law'
Facebook co-founder and chief Mark Zuckerberg turned down three requests to appear before the committee. "Companies like Facebook should not be allowed to behave like 'digital



Damian Collins, chair of the parliamentary panel that gave the report. ■ REUTERS

gangsters' in the online world, considering themselves to be ahead of and beyond the law," the 108-page report said.

The committee urged a compulsory code of ethics for all tech companies that would be overseen by an independent U.K. regulator. It said Facebook should be obliged to take down "sources of harmful content". "We further recom-

mend that the Government launches an independent investigation into past elections – including the U.K. election of 2017, the U.K. Referendum of 2016, and the Scottish Referendum of 2014 – to explore what actually happened with regard to foreign influence," the report said.

Facebook spokesman Karim Palant said executives at the California company "share the committee's concerns about false news and election integrity."

The committee had earlier found that Facebook's engineers had flagged potentially malicious Russian activity as early as 2014 – long before it became public.

Monday's report said the two Facebook officials who did testify "deliberately misled the committee or they were deliberately not briefed by senior executives at Facebook about the extent of Russian interference in foreign elections".

Imposing an emergency

Of the 59 emergencies declared since the 1976 National Emergencies Act was passed, 32 are still active

Think tank Brennan Center says there are two emergency powers that could be used by the President for building border wall

- 10 U.S.C. 2808 (a): This authorises the Secretary of Defense to undertake military construction projects
- 33 U.S.C. 2293: This authorises the Secretary to defer civil works projects and apply the resources to defence construction projects

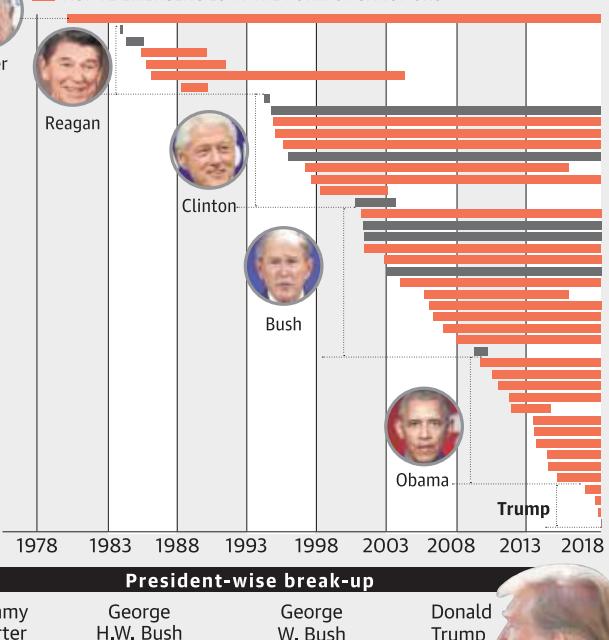
Major emergencies currently active

- Blocking Iranian Government Property – signed on November 14, 1979
- National Emergency by Reason of Terrorist Attacks – active since September 14, 2001
- Blocking Property of Certain Persons and Prohibiting the Export of Goods to Syria – active since May 2004
- Suspending Entry of Persons Contributing to the Situation in Venezuela – March 9, 2015

Executive action

Emergencies have been mostly invoked to impose sanctions against entities and nations the U.S. considers unfriendly and hostile, for instance Iran and North Korea

■ ACTIVE EMERGENCIES IN THE FORM OF SANCTIONS



Trump may have committed a crime in firing Comey: McCabe

Ex-FBI official says removal of President was broached

ASSOCIATED PRESS
WASHINGTON



FBI's ex-Deputy Director Andrew McCabe. ■ AP

last year after being accused of misleading investigators.

Mr. McCabe also said Mr. Rosenstein had proposed wearing a wire to secretly record Mr. Trump.

In excerpts released last week, Mr. McCabe also described a conversation in which Mr. Rosenstein had broached the idea of invoking the Constitution's 25th Amendment to remove Mr. Trump from office.

Mr. Trump on Monday lashed out at Mr. McCabe on Twitter. Mr. Trump said that Mr. McCabe and Mr. Rosenstein "look like they were planning a very illegal act..." He tweeted: "This was the illegal and treasonous 'insurance policy' in full action!"

Venezuela expels five European MPs

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
CARACAS

Venezuela on Sunday expelled five visiting European lawmakers, an act which Opposition leader Juan Guaidó branded "irrational".

The members of the European Parliament were being tossed out with no explanation, said Spanish MEP Esteban González Pons, who led the group.

"We are being expelled from Venezuela. Our passports have been seized. They have not informed us of the reason for the expulsion," Mr. Pons said.

Earlier on Sunday, Mr. Guaidó set a goal of enlisting a million volunteers within a week to confront a government blockade on humanitarian aid.

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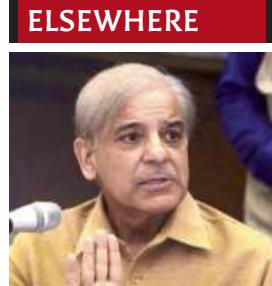
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ELSEWHERE



Shehbaz Sharif indicted in corruption case

Pakistan's Opposition leader Shehbaz Sharif was indicted by an accountability court on Monday for corruption in a ₹1,400 crore housing project. He is accused of misusing his authority by cancelling the contract of a successful bidder and awarding the same to his favourite firm when he was the Chief Minister of Punjab. PTI

Norway nominated U.S. President for Nobel

Oslo
Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe is not saying whether or not he nominated Donald Trump for this year's Nobel Peace Prize, but his name has been put forward by others. "We have nominated him for the positive developments on the Korean Peninsula," said Norway's ex-Justice Minister Per-Willy Amundsen. ■ Reuters

MARKET WATCH

	18-2-2019	% CHANGE
Sensex	35,498	-0.87
US Dollar	71.34	-0.15
Brent oil	66.44	1.21

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	347.30	-2.85
Asian Paints	1380.05	-13.55
Axist Bank	693.30	6.70
Bajaj Auto	2793.50	-32.45
Bajaj Finserv	5885.15	-140.30
Bajaj Finance	2549.45	-11.65
Bharti Airtel	302.55	-2.05
BPL	327.75	-0.10
Cipla	541.15	0.60
Coal India	215.15	-4.80
Dr Reddy's Lab	2565.55	2.20
Eicher Motors	2015.20	-78.00
GAIL (India)	317.45	-0.30
Grasim Ind	699.85	-6.90
HCL Tech	1046.30	-10.95
HDFC	1874.85	-0.05
HDFC Bank	2089.90	-10.75
Hero MotoCorp	2682.55	-12.90
Hindalco	184.55	-2.05
HPL	212.65	-3.70
Hind Unilever	1751.90	-20.90
Indiabulls HFL	623.50	-15.85
ICICI Bank	338.75	-3.40
IndusInd Bank	1517.00	7.50
Bharti Infratech	317.05	10.15
Infosys	741.05	-0.90
Indian Oil Corp	124.95	-0.50
ITC	274.70	-5.40
JSW Steel	261.90	-5.00
Kotak Bank	1277.05	-6.60
L&T	1244.50	1.40
M&M	624.70	-2.85
Maurti Suzuki	6842.70	-87.35
NTPC	137.45	1.20
ONGC	137.10	2.10
PowerGrid Corp	180.75	-0.75
Reliance Ind	1220.10	-24.35
State Bank	259.95	-3.00
Sun Pharma	414.65	-8.25
Tata Motors	162.90	1.25
Tata Steel	465.55	-1.95
TCS	1970.30	-59.40
Tech Mahindra	803.45	3.80
Titan	1027.35	-11.65
UltraTech Cement	3429.25	-10.20
UPL	921.85	3.50
Vedanta	148.00	0.70
Wipro	375.60	-0.50
YES Bank	213.55	-5.45
Zee Entertainment	438.95	7.60

EXCHANGE RATES

CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	71.14	71.46
Euro	80.60	80.96
British Pound	92.00	92.42
Japanese Yen (100)	64.36	64.65
Chinese Yuan	10.52	10.56
Swiss Franc	70.92	71.25
Singapore Dollar	52.48	52.73
Canadian Dollar	53.74	53.98
Malaysian Ringgit	17.40	17.53

Source: Indian Bank

BULLION RATES CHENNAI

February 18 rates in rupees with previous rates in parentheses	
Retail Silver (1g)	43.6 (43.1)
22 ct gold (1g)	3196 (3173)

Source: Indian Bank

Award for The Hindu journalist

STAFF REPORTER

MUMBAI

Piyush Pandey, *The Hindu*'s Corporate Editor, has received the IFFCO Indian Institute of Mass Communication Alumni Association (IMCAA) Jury's Special Mention award in the Economic and Business Reporting category.

IMCAA announced the '3rd IFFCO IMCAA Awards' during its annual alumni meet at the institute's headquarters in New Delhi on Sunday.

Mr. Pandey got the jury's Special Mention Award for the article 'Petroleum Consortium says refusal to display PM's picture is inviting threat of blocked supplies,' published in *The Hindu*'s front page on August 25, 2018.

Bansal row: Infosys settles case with SEBI

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI

IT major Infosys has settled with the SEBI a case of alleged disclosure lapses regarding severance payment made to its former chief financial officer Rajiv Bansal.

The company paid ₹34.35 lakh to settle the case with the markets regulator, according to an order. The watchdog had issued a notice seeking to initiate adjudication proceedings against the company in November 2017.

The notice related to SEBI examining the scrip of Infosys during which the issues pertaining to severance payment to Mr. Bansal was also looked into. Mr. Bansal resigned on October 11, 2015, according to the order. In December 2017, Infosys filed an application under the settlement mechanism.

RBI to transfer ₹28,000 crore interim surplus to government

This is the second successive year the bank is transferring interim surplus

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI

The board of Reserve Bank of India on Monday decided to transfer an interim surplus (dividend) of ₹28,000 crore to the government, the central bank said.

This is second consecutive year that the central bank has transferred interim surplus to the government.

Inclusive of the ₹40,000 crore transferred by the central bank as final dividend for 2017-18, the Centre has earned a total of ₹68,000 crore as dividend from the RBI for the 2018-19 fiscal. The accounting year of the RBI runs from July to June.

Limited audit review

"Based on a limited audit review and after applying the extant economic capital framework, the board decided to transfer an interim surplus of ₹280 billion to the

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI

Central government for the half-year ended December 31, 2018. This is the second successive year that the Reserve Bank will be transferring an interim surplus," the RBI said in a statement.

Sources indicate the sys-

tem of audit of balance sheet twice a year would be continued for the coming years also in order to decide on the interim surplus. Last year, RBI had transferred ₹10,000 crore as interim surplus. The government had been put-

ting pressure on the central bank to transfer more funds from the contingency reserves. A panel, headed by former RBI Governor Bimal Jalan, had been formed to review the economic capital framework of the bank.

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IN BRIEF



HDFC Bank not to cut down on expansion

MUMBAI
HDFC Bank does not intend to cut down on branch expansion, managing director and chief executive officer Aditya Puri said. "Absolutely not," Mr. Puri replied, when asked if the lender will be cutting branches in the future. The private lender would give a choice to the customers to transact either through mobile phone or a laptop or visit a branch. PTI

Glenmark gets USFDA nod for skin foam

NEW DELHI
Glenmark Pharmaceuticals said it had received the final approval from the USFDA for its generic version of clobetasol propionate foam, a steroid used to treat inflammation and itching of skin. The approval has been granted to Glenmark Pharmaceuticals, U.S., for clobetasol propionate foam, 0.05%, a generic version of Olux Foam, 0.05% of Mylan Pharmaceuticals, the company said in a statement. PTI

Car2drive to roll out services across India

CHENNAI
Car2drive, a multi-brand car subscription service firm, has drawn up plans to offer its service pan-India shortly. It also announced that Bahrain-headquartered Exelon Group would invest \$10 million in its venture. Car2drive is a start-up brand headquartered in Hyderabad that offers leasing, ownership, rental options of luxury car brands for corporates and professionals, the company said in a statement.

Passenger car exports dip 5.25%

Barring Hyundai, Renault and M&M, carmakers recorded negative growth

N. ANAND
CHENNAI

Export of passenger cars from India during the calendar year 2018 recorded a 5.25% dip to 7 lakh units.

During 2017, India exported almost 7.39 lakh cars, according to the Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM) data.

"India's overall exports during 2018 witnessed a fall due to various factors, including subdued market conditions. Reflecting the trend, passenger vehicle exports were also down. But, when compared with the export performance by other sectors, automobiles seem to have fared well," said a top official of a leading automobile manufacturer.

Compared with 2017, top automakers barring Hyun-



Silver lining: Hyundai exported 9,000 more cars in 2018 compared with 2017. ■ K.V. SRINIVASAN

dai, Mahindra & Mahindra and Renault reported a negative growth. Hyundai exported 9,000 cars more than 2017, whereas Renault and Honda Cars reported only a marginal growth.

Volkswagen led the pack with a dip of 29,357 units, followed by Nissan India

(11,857), Maruti Suzuki (9,660), Ford India (4,749), Toyota Kirloskar Motor (4,323) and GM India (1,662).

Ford maintains lead

Once again, Ford India maintained its lead over Hyundai in car exports. Ford exported 1.68 lakh cars against 1.60

lakh of Hyundai's various models.

Earlier, carmakers used national highways to move their vehicles from the production site to the port. To cut time, cost and tackle congestion issue, they tried moving cars through coastal waterways and railways. However, after the trial runs, they reverted to roadways following abnormally high freight cost associated with travelling time and distance.

Out of total export of over 7 lakh units, a third was shipped through Kamarajar Port and Chennai Port Trust. Kamarajar Port, which had been catering to the demands of various passenger car manufacturers in and around Chennai, is gearing up to handle 2 lakh units during the current year.

Ashok Leyland unveils new Guru and Boss range of trucks

Customers want more options and customisation

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

Ashok Leyland Ltd. has introduced the latest variants of its intermediate commercial vehicle (ICV) 'Guru 1010' and medium duty vehicle (MDV) variant of Boss – the Boss 1616 and Boss 1916 – in Mumbai.

The Guru 1010 offers a combination of fuel efficiency and payload, ensuring maximum returns per kilometre, while the Boss 1616 and Boss 1916 combine both payload and performance, the company said.

"Our trucking portfolio has been growing at a fast pace, leading to our customers wanting more options and customisation in their vehicle. The new Guru 1010,



The variants are based on customer response, market needs, says Anuj Kathuria.

Boss 1616 and Boss 1916 are a result of customer feedback and market requirements," Anuj Kathuria, president, global trucks, Ashok Leyland, said.

"Both Guru and Boss

range of trucks, are the preferred choice of transportation in their respective tonnage segments. We have carried forward this successful platform for the new versions and added more features that our customers want delivering profitability and driver comfort," he said.

Fuel efficiency

He said these vehicles score highly on fuel efficiency, payload, productivity. Guru, the new generation intermediate vehicle, was introduced in recognition of an untapped need in the segment of rated load, he said.

The Boss range comprises 16 and 18.5 tons designed for enhanced axle-load as per the new regulations.

Ascent Meditech to expand capacity fourfold

Raises ₹70 crore from U.K.'s LeapFrog

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

Ascent Meditech Ltd., a leading player in Orthopedic Soft Goods (OSG), health-care related mobility, wound-care and healthcare products, has finalised plans to expand capacity four times, to cater to growing demand from domestic and international markets.

Wider distribution

The company is also planning for wider distribution penetration in domestic and exports markets.

Ascent Meditech, which markets its products under the Flamingo brand, has raised growth capital of ₹70 crore from the U.K.-based Private Equity player Leap-

Frog to build a modern manufacturing facility in Daman, a top company executive said.

"For 27 years, we have been funding our growth through internal accruals and this is the first time that we have taken growth capital from PE. It is also a first such PE placement deal in the Indian OSG market segment. We will use the money in capacity expansion," Rajiv Mistry, MD, Ascent Meditech, said. The company has now bought 15 acres of land to set up the new facility.

This would spread across 1 million sq.ft. and increase the per day unit manufacturing by four to five times (160,000-200,000 units per day).

Benelli rolls out TRK range of adventure bikes in India

Available at ex-showroom price of ₹5 lakh, ₹5.4 lakh

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

Premium bike manufacturer Benelli in association with Adishwar Auto Ride India of Mahavir Group has announced the launch of adventure-oriented range "Benelli TRK 502" and "Benelli TRK 502X" at starting ex-showroom price of ₹5 lakh and ₹5.40 lakh respectively.

TRK 502 is the perfect travelling companion for long leisure rides, according to the company.

TRK 502 has been enhanced to create an adventure version called the TRK 502X.

Vikas Jhabakh, managing director, Benelli India said, "TRK range is the first ad-

venture offering from Benelli in India. The launch of the TRK range is just the beginning and we are committed to bringing many more exciting Benelli products through 2019."

Online bookings for the TRK range has started and buyers can book their ride on the company's website by paying ₹10,000.



Hitching a ride: Benelli will be bringing many more products through 2019, says Vikas Jhabakh. ■ PAUL NORONHA

IOC signs \$1.5 billion deal to buy U.S. crude

Oil PSU to import 3 million tonnes

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

In the first-ever deal by an Indian company, Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) on Monday said it had signed an annual deal worth \$1.5 billion to import 3 million tonnes of crude oil in the fiscal year beginning April 1.

This is the first time any Indian refiner has signed an annual contract, since the country in 2017 began importing crude oil from the U.S. "IOC has finalised a term contract for import of up to 3 million tonnes of crude oil of U.S. origin grades as part of its strategy to diversify term crude sources," the company said in a statement. The contract was finalised on February

15. The term contract follows IOC signing up to buy crude oil from the U.S. through a term-tender deal in August last year. It had, at that time, bought about 6 million barrels of U.S. crude oil under a single tender for delivery between November 2018 and January 2019.

"The approximate value of the contract works out to \$1.5 billion," the IOC statement said. "This is the first term contract finalised by any Indian PSU oil company for import of U.S. origin crude oil grades."

Prior to this, IOC and other state-owned oil firms bought crude oil from the U.S. on a spot or current tender basis which comprised one shipload of oil.

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Big moment: Vinesh Phogat, who won the women's freestyle 50kg wrestling gold at the Asian Games 2018, is thrilled to be in the company of great sportspersons. ■ AP

After her Laureus moment, Vinesh eyes Tokyo

Ace wrestler is proud to be nominated for the Comeback-of-the-Year award

P.K. AJITH KUMAR
MONTE CARLO

Vinesh Phogat is a bit disappointed when she is told that neither Roger Federer nor Serena Williams will be present at the Laureus Sports Awards this year.

She has always admired those tennis greats, who are also the most successful champions at the Laureus; Federer has been Sportsman-of-the-Year five times and Serena won the Sportswoman-of-the-Year on four occasions.

The 24-year-old gold medallist at both the Asian and Commonwealth Games may not be able to take selfies

with them, but she still is happy to be in Monaco.

First Indian

She is justifiably proud that she has been nominated for the Comeback-of-the-Year award. She is the first Indian in the two-decade-old history of Laureus to make it to the list of nominees.

"I was delighted when I came to know that I was nominated," Vinesh told *The Hindu* on Monday.

"It is a big honour. It is good for the sport of wrestling, and even better for Indian wrestling."

Among her rivals for the award is golfing legend Tiger Woods. "It feels great to be in such company," she says. "It is really nice to be among so many great sportspersons from around the world. And I have enjoyed my time here in this beautiful city."

From here she will travel to Bulgaria for her next assignment, a ranking tournament. She has already set her eyes on Tokyo, where the Olympic Games will be held next year.

"There is nothing like the Olympics," she says. "Watching wrestlers like Sushil Kumar and Yogeshwar Dutt win Olympic medals was a huge inspiration for me."

She is glad that the profile

of wrestling has improved in India.

"More people now know about wrestling and the hard work we put in; the Hindi film *Dangal* has helped certainly," she says. "And more and more girls want to do wrestling now."

Foreign coaches

Vinesh, however, feels India needs better coaches. "With foreign coaches we could do better," she says. "I am glad that I am working with my Hungarian coach Woller Akos."

(The writer is in Monte Carlo at the invitation of Laureus)

I-League teams lodge complaint

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
KOLKATA / CHENNAI

Eight I-League clubs have written to All India Football Federation (AIFF) President Praful Patel, requesting him for an urgent appointment to discuss the future of I-League and the clubs playing in it.

The clubs — Mohun Bagan, East Bengal, Aizawl FC, Chennai City FC, Churchill Brothers, Gokulam Kerala FC, Minerva Punjab and NEROCA — have come together to "seek clarity on our future in the current scenario of Indian football and express our anguish and fear about a plan to kill the clubs."

"Recent news reports suggest that this could be the last season of the I-League, with the Indian Super League (ISL) all set to be branded the top league of the country," a letter from Bagu said on Monday.

Rohit Ramesh, Partner and CEO, Chennai City FC (CCFC), has demanded a truly unified league and has

sought an appointment with AIFF "to give us a time" on February 20 to discuss the issues.

According to CCFC, the top division of the league is sacrosanct and cannot be privately owned and operated.

It must be operated only by AIFF and not by any private entity like FSDL (Football Sports Development Ltd.), it said.

CCFC was very critical of FSDL, whose interference in Indian football, it felt was a clear case of conflict of interest.

Rohit also said it was unfair to target the defending I-league champion Minerva FC for being vocal against FSDL.

"Minerva FC has been targeted by sudden cancellation of broadcast of their [Minerva] matches for being vocal against the interference of FSDL."

"Unless the court intervenes, we are not expecting natural justice."

In a statement, the AIFF said that the match commissioner's report

following the no-show had been sent to the League Committee for further action even as it chose not to comment on the consequences.

The AIFF added: "Despite the tragic events, football for the people of Jammu and Kashmir has been maintained on schedule, with assistance from the security provided by the authorities."

"Qualifying matches for Santosh Trophy were completed on February 16, in Katra, which was, and is still under curfew."

Disappointed
Real Kashmir co-founders Sandeep Chattoo and Shamim Meraj expressed disappointment.

"We had made the necessary arrangements for the visiting team. Despite apprehensions, a lot of locals turned up for the match," they told PTT on a joint statement.

"Even on Monday there was a 12-hour encounter where four armymen have been martyred. And they are saying 'come and play football here'."

"Born in Mumbai, Ranadive moved to USA at the age of 16. After earning his academic stripes at MIT and Harvard University, he went on to become a successful entrepreneur."

In 2013, Ranadive became the first person of Indian descent to own an NBA franchise when he purchased the Sacramento Kings.

A couple of months ago, Ranadive's grand dream came true when it was announced that the city of his birth would host two NBA pre-season games, between Sacramento Kings and Indiana Pacers.

At a media interaction here, the 61-year-old spoke about how the pre-season games will impact basketball in India, and more...

India will produce an NBA star — it's going to happen no matter what. But we're not

Minerva moves Delhi HC

SPORTS BUREAU
BENGALURU

Minerva Punjab moved the Delhi High Court on Monday after the All India Football Federation (AIFF) refused to relocate the I-League match against Real Kashmir.

Minerva did not travel to Srinagar, claiming it was not given the "written" security assurances that it sought, even as the hosts turned up for the match.

"We have filed a writ petition seeking relief from playing in Srinagar at this volatile time," Minerva owner Ranjit Bajaj told PTT.

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India is the next frontier: Ranadive

Hosting pre-season games in the country a dream come true'

NBA

ASHWIN ACHAL
CHARLOTTE

Vivek Ranadive is living the American dream.

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India will produce an NBA star — it's going to happen no matter what. But we're not

waiting for that to happen. We're just moving forward. Right now, we're in the phase where we are trying to popularise the game in India.

NBA's economic impact: There are huge economic opportunities that come with NBA basketball. We've created thousands of jobs around the Golden 1 Centre, which hosts the Kings' games. Sacramento is also now the fastest growing city in the State of California. So this goes way beyond just being a basketball game. I'm sure that India will look at it in a similar way.

Importance of India producing an NBA star: Having an Indian-descent NBA franchise owner helps in that direction, as does making the right investments with the NBA India Academy and other grassroots programmes.

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Waiting

TV PICKS

PVL: Sony Six & Ten 3 (SD & HD), 6.30 p.m.
UEFA Champions League: Sony Ten 1 & 2 (SD & HD), 1.30 a.m. (Wednesday)

IN BRIEF



Mourinho open to working in France

Jose Mourinho says he can see himself coaching in France one day. "I can imagine (coaching) in France one day," Mourinho said on Sunday. "I'm a man who's worked in four different countries, who likes that, who likes to know other cultures. I like to learn all the time, to work in a different league would be a fantastic experience." AFP



Stan Wawrinka returns to the top 50

Stan Wawrinka returned to the world's top 50 on Monday, sitting at 41, for the first time since last year's French Open after his run to the final in Rotterdam. The three-time Grand Slam champion is on the road back to his best after serious knee injuries and reached his first final last week since losing to Rafael Nadal at Roland Garros in 2017. AFP

RSPB women keep title

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Railway Sports Promotion Board (RSPB) defeated Madhya Pradesh 5-0 to retain the Hockey India senior women's National championship (Division A) title for a record sixth consecutive time here on Monday.

The results: Final: RSPB 5 (Neha 12, 16, Navneet Kaur 25, 28, Vandana Kataria 10) bt MP 0. Third place: Haryana 3 (Sonika 6, Rani Rampal 39, Deepika 49) bt Maharashtra 2 (Lalruathei 13, 42).

Nikhil in final

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Former junior world champion Nikhil Zareen (51kg) was among three Indian women boxers to enter the finals of the 70th Strandja Memorial tournament on Monday in Sofia, Bulgaria.

Zareen defeated Poland's Sandra Drabik 3-2 in an intense see-saw battle. Others who made it were Manju Rani (48kg) and Meena Kumari Devi (54kg).

India had won 11 medals at the 2018 edition, including two gold.

England women escape to victory

Komal's early strikes negated by Heather's diligence



Leading light: England skipper Heather Knight rallied her team from dire straits to pull off a fine win.

■ FILE PHOTO: TONY MARSHALL/GETTY IMAGES

G. VISWANATH
MUMBAI

Left-arm seamer Komal Zanzad is a seasoned campaigner in national one-day tournaments, but a paltry collection of wickets has seen her missing out on a place in the Indian team.

In 11 years of competitive cricket and 39 appearances for Vidarbha and Central Zone, she had a mere 29 scalps to show. But, on Monday, the 27-year-old would have impressed her captain Smriti Mandhana and demanded a call from the National selectors.

On the mat

Reeling at 11 for four in pursuit of 155 for a win, England – by the start of the sixth over – appeared to have lost its way, but a calm, composed and a highly skilful effort by skipper Heather Knight (64 not out, 86b, 9x4) enabled the visitors to prevail over the home team.

Heather found support from Lauren Winslet, a specialist opener arriving after the fall of the eighth wicket at 118. It was a practice match and England continued to bat even after the target was achieved.

From the home side's point of view, the day be-

longed to Komal.

In a six-over opening burst (6-3-9-3), she bowled with some pace and accuracy, and dismissed Tamsin Beaumont, Sarah Taylor and Natalie Sciver on what seemed a good batting track at the Wankhede Stadium.

It was the manner of the three batsmen's dismissal that mirrored her determined and focused undertaking with the ball; Komal trapped Beaumont and Taylor leg before and bowled Sciver.

Reemalaxmi strikes

Komal's new ball partner Reemalaxmi Ekka also excelled, getting rid of opener Amy Jones and Anya Shrubsole, who scored a quickfire 23 with four boundary hits. The two seamers were well supported by left-arm spinner Natalie Sciver.

Electing to bat, Board President's XI took 49 overs to make 154. Once Smriti, after showing her class with four boundary hits, nicked seamer Shrubsole to 'keeper Taylor, the home team lost wickets at regular intervals. Harleen Deol and Bharati Fulmali and Minnu Mani were dismissed in the 20s.

The scores:

Board President's XI: Priya Pu-

nia c & b Elwiss 15, Smriti Mandhana c Taylor b Shrubsole 19, S. Meghna b Shrubsole 1, Harleen Deol run out 21, Veda Krishnamurthy lbw b Elwiss 10, Bharati Fulmali c Taylor b Marsh 23, Ravi Kalpana c Knight b Hartley 10, Minnu Mani st. Taylor b Ecclestone 28, Tanuja Kanwer c Sciver b Shrubsole 11, Manali Dakshini b Shrubsole 2, Reema laxmi Ekka (not out) 3; Extras (lb-1, w-10); 11. Total (in 49 overs): 154.

Fall of wickets: 1-27, 2-29, 3-59, 4-61, 5-70, 6-104, 7-104, 8-133, 9-140.

England bowling: Brunt 8-1-30-0, Shrubsole 8-1-30-4, Cross 4-0-12-0, Elwiss 7-1-20-2, Ecclestone 7-0-13-1, Marsh 7-1-22-1, Hartley 4-1-11, Sciver 4-0-15-0.

England: Amy Jones c Kalpana b Reemalaxmi 2, Tamsin Beaumont lbw b Komal O, Sarah Taylor lbw b Komal 2, Heather Knight (not out) 64, Natalie Sciver b Komal O, Danielle Wyatt c Punia b Tanuja 22, Georgia Elwiss c Kalpana b Renuka 13, Katherine Brunt lbw b Tanuja 0, Anya Shrubsole c Kalpana b Reemalaxmi 23, Lauren Winfield (not out) 23; Extras (b-1, lb-3, w-4); 8. Total (for eight wkts. in 37.3 overs): 157.

Fall of wickets: 1-2, 2-4, 3-11, 4-11, 5-60, 6-78, 7-87, 8-118.

BP XI bowling: Komal 7-3-14-3, Reemalaxmi 9-2-24-2, Manali 3-0-17-0, Harleen 6-0-40-0, Tanuja 6.3-1-34-2, Renuka 6-0-24-1.

RACING

Blazer claims Alcock Arabian Million

HYDERABAD: Blazer (P. Trevor) won the Alcock Arabian Million, the chief event of the races here on Monday (Feb. 18). The winner is the property of M/s. A. Vellayani & Meka Yugandhar and trained by L. D'Silva. It was a wonderful day for trainer M. Srinivas Reddy and jockeys P. Trevor and Akshay Kumar who scored a treble each.

DELHI RACE CLUB CUP (1,200m), 3-y-o only (Terms): **PONTIUS PILATE** (P. Trevor) 1, Versailles (Kiran Naidu) 2, Her Legacy (N. Rawal) 3 and Blackfang (Md. Ismail) 4, 4-1/4, 2-3/4 and 2-1/4, Im. 10, 92s. ₹1 (w), 6, 5 and 7 (p), SHP: 25, FP: 14, FP: 25, Q: 9, Tla: 50. Favourite: Versailles. Owner: Mr. Aditya P. Thackersey. Trainer: M. Srinivas Reddy.

KALESHWARAN CUP (DIV. I, 1,400m), 3-y-o & over, rated 42 to 62 (Cat. II): **LONG RANGE** (Akshay Kumar) 1, One One One (Koushik) 2, Classy Guy (Nakhat Singh) 3 and Crimson Fire (G. Naresh) 4, 1-3/4, 1-3/4 and 2, Im. 11, 96s. ₹2 (w), 11, 8 and 10 (p), SHP: 22, FP: 105, Q: 40, Tla: 83. Favourite: One One One. Owner: Col. S.B. Nair. Trainer: Sequeira.

ALCOCK ARABIAN MILLION (1,200m), 3-y-o only (Terms): **BLAZER** (P. Trevor) 1, Artistry (Akshay Kumar) 2, Francis Bacon (Neeraj) 3 and Royal Ruby (Nakhat Singh) 4, 1-1/2, 3/4 and 3-3/4, Im. 25, 75s. ₹12 (w), 8 and 10 (p), SHP: 19, FP: 61, Q: 28, Tla: 58. Favourite: Francis Bacon. Owners: M/s. S. Daljeet Singh, Ashok Chukka & Dr. Prabhakar Chowdary Triparaneni. Trainer: M. Srinivas Reddy.

RED KNIGHT PLATE (1,200m), 4-y-o & over, rated 42 to 62 (Cat. II): **SECRETARY** (Akshay Kumar) 1, Long Range (Akhay Kumar) 2, Versailles (Kirun Naidu) 3 and Blackfang (Md. Ismail) 4, 4-1/4, 2-3/4 and 2-1/2, Im. 10, 92s. ₹1 (w), 6, 5 and 7 (p), SHP: 22, FP: 105, Q: 40, Tla: 83. Favourite: One One One. Owner: Col. S.B. Nair. Trainer: Sequeira.

KING'S CROWN PLATE (1,200m), 4-y-o & over, rated 26 to 46 (Cat. III): **SECRETARY** (Akshay Kumar) 1, Tokyo Jam (Akshay Kumar) 2, Southern Meteor (Gaurav Singh) 3 and Yogi (Deepak Singh) 4, 4-1/4 and 2, Im. 12, 75s. ₹32 (w), 10, 7 and 31 (p), SHP: 16, FP: 33, Q: 16, Tla: 142. Favourite: Nazariya. Owners: Mr. Marthand Singh Mahindra & Mrs. Rina Mahindra. Trainer: Robin Reddy.

JACKPOT: ₹2,340 (157 tkt.), Runner-up: 91 (1,715 tkt.), Treble (i): 34 (1,402 tkt.), (ii): 597 (119 tkt.).

Monfils downs Wawrinka for title

Wins his eighth career title at the Rotterdam Open

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
ROTTERDAM

Gael Monfils defeated good friend Stan Wawrinka 6-3, 1-6, 6-2 on Sunday to win his eighth career title at the Rotterdam Open.

Monfils, the runner-up three years ago, held off Wawrinka's second-set surge to ease through the decider. "It was an unbelievable week, a pleasure," said Monfils.

"Stan is a part of this win. We've been talking a lot and practising a lot. You're my brother," he told his Swiss opponent.

"This has been a good week for Stan and a good week for me. I hope we can have many more battles."

Wawrinka, the 2015 champion in the Dutch port city who is continuing an 18-month comeback from double knee surgery, was playing in his first final since Roland Garros in June 2017.

"It was great for sure to be in the final," Wawrinka said.

"I'm pleased with the way I played in it and the way I arrived to the final."

Four good matches
"I played four good matches here, I kept my level up all week."

Three-time major winner Wawrinka said he hopes to build on his run this week.

"I need to keep doing

Fighting fit: Gael Monfils showed no evidence of the wrist injury which has bothered him all week to put it past good friend Stan Wawrinka. ■ DEAN MOHTAROPOULOS/GETTY IMAGES

what I've been doing the last few months. I need to play events to gain confidence. Keeping going is the only way to get back my ranking," said the World No. 68.

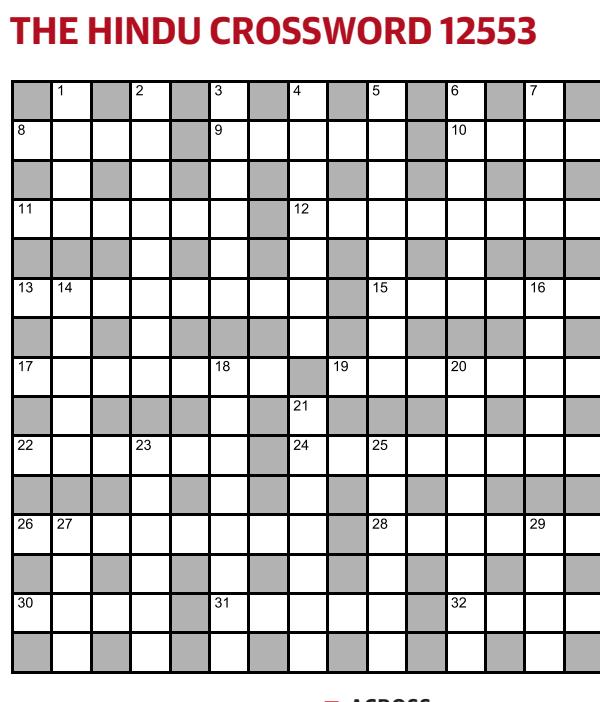
"But when I hit as hard as I could with the backhand – 'ohhh,'" he said in reference to the wrist pain he was feeling.

"I've been in worse shape, but I'm really exhausted after this week."

The Frenchman took the opening set with two breaks of Wawrinka, but the 33-year-old Swiss immediately returned the favour with a 6-1 second set.

In the third, Monfils broke for 2-1, taking control of his opponent's mighty backhand. The Frenchman moved to 5-2 and saved a break point a game later as he closed out victory.

THE HINDU CROSSWORD 12553



ACROSS

- 8 Initially, third Unidentified Flying Object flies back to get food (4)
- 9 A Greek letter in possession of the original Phantom (5)
- 10 Firstly non-vegetarians consume cattle (4)
- 11 Able – able to dance (3-3)
- 12 Politicians throw out cop and run amok, for starters (8)

(set by Incognito)

- 13 Brothel's doorbell is broken (8)
- 15 India has container storing energy for cold period (3,3)
- 17 These may be found in these clues and correspondence (7)
- 19 Equipment to synthesise plasma in the presence of gravity (3,4)
- 22 Mixed gin and tea for consumption? (6)
- 24 Safe vessel for a boy who did not grow up (5,3)
- 26 Princess's edict makes for confusion (8)
- 28 Marilyn is no more confused (6)
- 30 Test version of software found in Dushanbe, Tajikistan (4)
- 31 The Territorial Army's character (5)
- 32 Frenchman carries weapon back to trial (4)
- 33 A little bit of input-output tabulation analysis, for starters (4)
- 34 29's capital has German wine (8)

SUDOKU

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

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

Solution to puzzle 12552

A	S	T	R	O	T	U	R	F	I	N	G
E	E	R	I	R	O						
S	U	L	T	A	M	E	R	L	O	T	S
C	F	T	I	E	U						
T	E	A	B	T	O				</		

'Need funding for playing more tournaments abroad'

Injury-prone National badminton champion Sourabh Verma more aware about the play-rest balance



A champion's plea: Sourabh Verma says more international exposure will help him improve his world standings. ■ FILE PHOTO

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Reigning National badminton champion Sourabh Verma has appealed for financial help, which will enable him to play more international tournaments in order to improve his current world ranking.

The 26-year-old had burst into the scene with his first senior National title in 2011 but over-training led to frequent break downs, which stopped him from playing tournaments consistently. It affected his ranking as from a career-best ranking of 30 in 2012 he now finds himself at 55.

"I need to play at least 10-12 tournaments to get more ranking points. I had a knee problem last year, which I had to take care by myself. I am playing tournaments on my own. As a player, it becomes a big burden if you have to manage all by yourself," he said.

"I will be playing Swiss Open and Orleans Open next after Barcelona Masters. I have paid for my visa and financing everything (hotel and travel) all by myself. So I don't have much option to play bigger tournaments," he reasoned.

Last year, Sourabh recovered from a shoulder injury to win two Super 100 titles at

reduced and hence my ranking slipped," Verma said during an interaction.

He said that BAI did sponsor him for the Dutch Open but he needs more funding.

"After 2017, I had frequent injuries due to training overload. So I worked on my body and now I am more aware about the play-rest balance," said Sourabh, who will start his international season at the Barcelona Spain Masters, starting with the qualifiers on Tuesday.

"I also had a knee issue and I wasn't playing too many events. Now I'm stressing on fitness. I am looking at quality (of tournaments) and not quantity. I know if I can take care of my body, I can win tournaments," said Sourabh.

Sourabh had clinched his maiden international title at Bahrain International Challenge in 2013, before claiming the TATA Open.

Lanka names three new players

AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE
COLOMBO

Sri Lanka on Monday brought in three uncapped players to its 17-member squad for the five-match One-Day International series against South Africa.

Right-hand batsman Oshada Fernando was among those named for the series, which starts on March 3.

The other two are bowler Kamindu Mendis, 20, and all-rounder Priyamal Perera, 23.

The squad: Lasith Malinga (Capt.), Niroshan Dikwella, Avishka Fernando, Upul Tharanga, Kusal Janith Perera, Kusal Mendis, Dhananjaya de Silva, Thisara Perera, Akila Dananjaya, Angelo Perera, Oshada Fernando, Kamindu Mendis, Priyamal Perera, Isuru Udana, Vishwa Fernando, Kasun Rajitha and Lakshan Sandakan.

Ramkumar bows out

SPORTS BUREAU
DELRAY BEACH (USA)

Ramkumar Ramanathan lost to wild card Marcelo Arevalo of Estonia 6-2, 3-6, 7-6(1) in the first qualifying round of the \$651,215 ATP tennis tournament here.

In the Challenger in Bangkok, Saketh Myneni beat former Asian junior champion Tsung-Hua Yang of Chinese Taipei 6-3, 7-5. The results: \$2,828,000 WTA, Dubai: Doubles (first round): Hao-Ching Chan & Latisha Chan (Tpe) bt Eva Wancano (Ned) & Prarthana Thombare 6-2, 6-2.

\$651,215 ATP, Delray Beach, USA: Qualifying (first round): Marcelo Arevalo (Esa) bt Ramkumar Ramanathan 6-2, 3-6, 7-6(1).

\$54,160 Challenger, Bangkok: First round: Saketh Myneni bt Tsung-Hua Yang (Tpe) 6-3, 7-5.

England faces buoyant Windies with an eye on the World Cup

The host will look to feed off its Test success and do well in the shorter format

ENG IN WI

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
BRIDGETOWN

England enters the home stretch of World Cup preparation with a five-match One-Day International series beginning on Wednesday at the Kensington Oval against a West Indies team seeking to feed off the success of its Test side.

Fresh from a surprising 2-1 triumph in the Wisden Trophy duel, Jason Holder leads a Caribbean team which continues to struggle in the 50-over format and is hampered by the absence of key players for a variety of reasons.

In contrast, Eoin Morgan's England settled squad has powered to the top of the world rankings and a com-

fortable 171-run victory in the lone warm-up fixture on Sunday suggests that it will not be hamstrung by the challenges encountered by the Test team against surprisingly competitive and fiercely motivated opponents.

Complete disarray

While the memory of a 381-run thrashing in the first match of the three-Test series less than a month ago is painfully fresh, England's last ODI at Kensington Oval two years ago was a 186-run rout which completed a 3-0 sweep of a home outfit in complete disarray.

West Indies results have not improved significantly since that humbling, with the former champion missing out on the 2017 Champions

Trophy and scraping through last year's qualifying tournament in Zimbabwe to advance to the World Cup in England and Wales, which starts on May 30.

Already without mystery spinner Sunil Narine and all-rounder Andre Russell, West Indies has been forced to amend its original squad for the first two ODIs with injuries ruling out opening batsman Evin Lewis and all-rounders Rovman Powell and Keemo Paul.

Debut for Campbell?

John Campbell, who made a bright start to his Test career in the three matches against the English, looks set for an ODI debut opening the batting with Chris Gayle.

On Sunday, the 39-year-

old veteran of four World Cups revealed that the 2019 event will be his farewell to the format.

T20 captain Carlos Brathwaite and left-arm pacer Sheldon Cottrell are the recent inclusions in the West Indies squad along with Campbell.

The teams:

West Indies (probable): Jason Holder (captain), Chris Gayle, John Campbell, Darren Bravo, Shai Hope (wicketkeeper), Shimron Hetmyer, Carlos Brathwaite, Ashley Nurse, Kemar Roach, Sheldon Cottrell and Oshane Thomas.

England: Eoin Morgan (captain), Jason Roy, Alex Hales, Jonny Bairstow (wicketkeeper), Joe Root, Ben Stokes, Moeen Ali, Chris Woakes, Liam Plunkett, Adil Rashid and Mark Wood.



In form: Joe Root prepped himself for the ODI series against West Indies with a century in the tour match at Bridgetown on Sunday. ■ GARETH COPELEY/GETTY IMAGES



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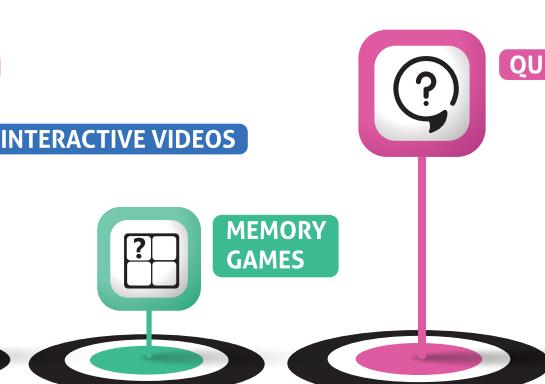
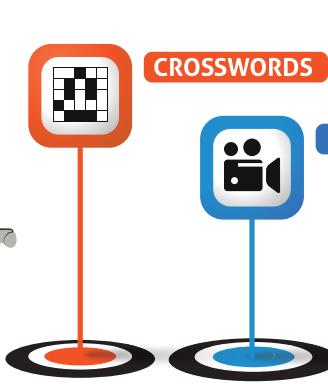
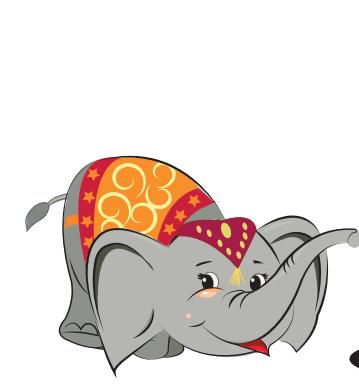


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IN BRIEF



First private lunar mission set for launch

YEHUD An Israeli nonprofit said it will launch what it hopes will be the first private spacecraft to land on the moon this week. SpaceIL and State-owned Israel Aerospace Industries said that the spacecraft, dubbed Beresheet, or Genesis, will ship from Florida, where, propelled by a SpaceX rocket, it will commence its voyage to the moon. AP



'Killer' cells raise hope of universal flu vaccine

PARIS Scientists said they had discovered immune cells that can fight all known flu viruses. It could lead to a universal, one-shot vaccine against the killer disease. Researchers in Australia said that "killer T cells" – found in over half the world's population – had shown to be effective in fighting all common flu varieties. AFP



Vinyl flooring in homes may put children at risk

WASHINGTON Children living in homes with vinyl flooring or flame-retardant chemicals in the sofa have significantly higher levels of potentially harmful toxins in their blood or urine, putting them at risk of cancer and other diseases, a study has found. PTI

Japan approves stem cells trial to treat spinal cord injuries

Researchers will transplant two million iPS cells into the spines of four patients

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
TOKYO

A team of Japanese researchers will carry out an unprecedented trial using human-induced pluripotent stem cells (iPS) to treat spinal cord injuries, the specialists said on Monday.

The team at Tokyo's Keio University has received government approval for the trial – which have the potential to develop into any cell in the body – to treat patients with serious spinal cord injuries.

The trial, expected to begin later this year, will initially focus on four patients who suffered injuries just 14 to 28 days beforehand, the university added.

The team will transplant two million iPS cells into the spines of the patients, who will be monitored for a year.

The strict limitations on the number of participants is necessary because the pro-



Breakthrough in sight: iPS cells have the potential to develop into any cell in the body. ■ GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

cess is an "unprecedented, world first clinical trial", the university added.

"It's been 20 years since I started researching cell treatment. Finally we can start a clinical trial," Hideyuki Okano, a professor of physiology, said at a press conference.

"We want to do our best to establish safety and provide the treatment to patients," he added.

The study will be carried

out on patients aged 18 or older who have completely lost their motor and sensory functions.

There are more than 1,00,000 patients in Japan who are paralysed due to spinal cord injuries but there is no effective treatment.

Parkinson's trial

The research team hopes to test the efficacy and safety of the treatment for chronic injuries as well in the future if

they can confirm the safety of the technique through the clinical trial.

The announcement comes after researchers in Kyoto said in November they had transplanted iPS cells into the brain of a patient in a bid to cure Parkinson's disease.

The man was stable after the operation and he will be monitored for two years.

The researchers injected 2.4 million iPS cells into the left side of the patient's brain in an operation that took about three hours.

Parkinson's disease is a chronic, degenerative neurological disorder that affects the body's motor system, often causing shaking and other difficulties in movement.

iPS cells are created by stimulating mature, already specialised, cells back into a juvenile state – basically cloning without the need for an embryo.

Composer cracks glass ceiling in concert halls of France

Camille Pepin is making a mark in Western classical music

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
PARIS

Camille Pepin is part of a very rare breed. She is a female composer.

Women have conquered space, risen in the military ranks, but some professions remain resolutely and bewilderingly masculine.

When Ms. Pepin turned up for her first day at the Paris Conservatoire – as usual the only woman in a class of men – an official told her that her name wasn't on the list.

But when she insisted that she was and that he look again, he cried, "Ah, you're a woman!"

Camille is also a man's name in France.

"I would never have thought," he apologised. "There are so many men..."

With so few female composers in the classical music repertoire, it was an easy mistake to make.

Ms. Pepin has never let everyday sexism get her down though, laughing it off like water off a duck's back.

"One male composer told me I was getting commissions because I was a woman and not too bad looking," said the 28-year-old, whose first album, *Chamber Music*, is to be released later this month.

Beyond labels

After a concert of one of her more combative pieces, "a man came to tell me my music was 'very fresh, flowery and sweet,'" she said. "I am a woman so clearly those three words" apply, she added wryly. Ms. Pepin, whose music recalls both Claude Debussy and American minimalist composers like John Adams, said sometimes the sexist stereotypes which persist in the classical music

world are hard to take. One "old school" music professor insisted she sit on his right at lunch "because that was a woman's place" and sent her off to make the coffee.

Ballet score

"I was the only woman in all my classes in the Conservatoire, and it was fine," said Ms. Pepin, who is now working on her first ballet score in her Paris apartment which doubles as a studio.

Mostly the young composer, who made her breakthrough with the orchestral piece *Vajrayana* in 2015, said she was treated exactly the same as her male colleagues in classes with French contemporary composers like Guillaume Connexion, Thierry Escaich and Marc-André Dalbavie.

Beyond the classroom, however, progress is slow in the conservative world of classical music.

Ms. Pepin believes it will take generations for the forgotten work of female composers to get just recognition.

Beyond the casual unthinking sexism, she said the biggest problem for young female composers was "a

lack of role models". A few women, such as the American composer Meredith Monk, Kaija Saariaho of Finland and Tansy Davies from Britain, have managed to break the glass ceiling.

But even Ms. Pepin admitted that when she was younger she didn't know of a single female composer. "We never studied them," she said.

Who has ever heard of Helene de Montgeroult (1764-1836), Louise Farrenc (1804-1875) or Fanny Mendelssohn (1805-1847)? Fanny was the older sister of the more famous Felix Mendelssohn, with many at the time saying her work was more expressive. But after she married she was limited to domestic duties and had to content herself with being her brother's chief editor and muse, which led him to call her his "Minerva" of wisdom.

"Lots of female composers were crushed like Clara Schumann [the wife of Robert Schumann]," despite being one of the most distinguished composers and musicians of the Romantic era, said the pianist Celia Oneto Bensaid, who often performs Ms. Pepin's work.

Synthetic fibres contribute to plastic pollution

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW YORK

Polyester and other synthetic fibres such as nylon are major contributors of microplastic pollution in the environment, say researchers and suggest switching to biosynthetic fibres may help prevent this.

"These materials, during production, processing and after use, break down and release microfibres that can now be found in everything and everyone," said Melik Demirel, professor at the Pennsylvania State University in the US.

Synthetic fibres are petroleum-based products, unlike natural fibres such as wool, cotton and silk, which are recyclable and biodegradable.

Mixed fibres that contain both natural and synthetic fibres are difficult or costly to recycle.

In the oceans, pieces of microscopic plastic are consumed by plants and animals and enter the human food chain through harvested fish.

In the study, Mr. Demirel suggested few things to prevent this: minimising the use of synthetic fibres and switching to natural fibres such as wool, cotton, silk and linen, even though synthetic fibres are less expensive and natural fibres have other environmental costs, such as water and land-use issues; large scale use of bacteria that could aid in biodegradation of the fibres for reuse; substituting synthetic fibres with biosynthetic fibres, that are both recyclable and biodegradable; and blending synthetic fibres with natural fibres to lend them durability and make them recyclable.

The study was presented at the 2019 annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

A radar to predict 'guerilla rains' in Tokyo

Ahead of the Olympics, Japan wants an accurate system to predict weather in place

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
TOKYO



Sudden and localised torrential rain can cause flash floods. ■ REUTERS

With an eye on the Tokyo 2020 Olympics, Japanese researchers are developing a new system to accurately forecast torrential downpours – known in Japan as 'guerilla rainstorms' – 30 minutes before they strike.

Scientists have created a high-tech radar capable of producing a three-dimensional map of a rain cloud in 30 to 60 seconds. They say this is a significant improvement on existing systems that measure only parts of a cloud in up to five minutes.

Along with the radar, installed last year at Saitama University, just north of Tokyo, the team is also using radio waves to estimate the

amount of water vapour in the air to improve their forecasts.

The waves slow down depending on the volume of vapour in the air, making for a more accurate forecast, said Katsuhiko Nakagawa, director of the Remote Sensing Laboratory at the National Institute of Information and Communications Technology.

Japan is one of the most seismically active regions in the world and routinely experiences severe natural disasters, including earthquakes, floods and

landslides that kill dozens of people every year.

Because of that, the nation has created sophisticated early-warning technology and disaster mitigation systems, and regularly holds emergency drills in schools.

Sudden and localised torrential rain can cause killer flash floods, submerge roads in low-lying areas, or overflow drainage systems.

Organisers of the Tokyo 2020 Olympics and the Rugby World Cup this year have voiced concern that extreme weather phenomena could throw events into chaos.

Tree of light



Green glow: People watching a tree-shaped lantern during the Lunar Year celebrations in Zaozhuang, China. ■ AFP

+ Lack of cleaning in brain cells causes Alzheimer's

Improving mitophagy led to reduced symptoms in animals

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
LONDON

A weakened cleaning system of the brain cells in animals and humans is central to developing Alzheimer's disease, according to a study which may lead to new treatments for the neurodegenerative disorder.

Researchers, including those from the University of Copenhagen in Denmark, found that improving mitophagy – the cleaning system of the brain cells – nearly removed the symptoms of Alzheimer's in the animals.

Scientists around the world are still struggling to understand Alzheimer's better in order to treat and potentially prevent the development of the debilitating disease in the future. No new medications have been



of defective mitochondria in the brain cells. And this may be really dangerous," said Vilhelm Bohr from the National Institutes of Health in the US.

"At any rate, the cleaning system is markedly weakened in cells from both humans and animals with Alzheimer's. And when we improve the cleaning in live animals, their Alzheimer's symptoms almost disappear," Mr. Bohr said.

The researchers looked more closely at the cleaning process in brain cells from deceased Alzheimer's patients, in Alzheimer's-induced stem cells, and in live mice and roundworms with Alzheimer's.

They plan to start clinical trials on humans in the near future.

approved in recent years. The study, published in the journal *Nature Neuroscience*, may lead to new treatments for the disease by targeting the mitophagy process.

When the cleaning system does not work properly, there will be an accumulation

of defective mitochondria in the brain cells. And this may be really dangerous," said Vilhelm Bohr from the National Institutes of Health in the US.

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They plan to start clinical trials on humans in the near future.

U.S. galleries sued over websites the visually impaired can't use

Among the businesses being served with website-access lawsuits include moving companies, insurance firms and sightseeing tour operators

ELIZABETH A. HARRIS
NEW YORK

On December 13, a blind resident of Manhattan named Henry Tucker filed federal lawsuits against 10 U.S. art galleries, saying their websites were not accessible to people who could not see. The galleries' names included Adam Baumgold Fine Art, Adelson, Agora, Albertz Ben-David and Acquavella.

The next day, Mr. Tucker and his attorneys moved on to the B's.

Making additions

For decades, lawyers for the disabled have used the Americans With Disabilities Act to force businesses to make their spaces more physically accessible, by adding ramps, widening doorways or lowering counter-

tops. But the steady migration of commerce and culture to the internet has given rise to a new flood of litigation, over the accessibility of websites to the visually impaired.

The number of such lawsuits nationwide nearly tripled in 2018 over the year be-

fore. The businesses being served with website-access lawsuits include moving companies, colleges, insurance companies, sightseeing tours, restaurants and yoga studios.

Representatives of practically every sector of the economy have been called to

task, from fashion company Anna Sui to Playboy.com to SoulCycle to Zachys Wine Auctions.

Among the latest batches of businesses taken to court were New York art galleries. Over 10 days in December and January, one plaintiff, Mr. Tucker, took letters A through H, and another man, working with the same lawyers, tackled the rest.

Depending on one's perspective, the suits are either salvos for civil rights or a way for lawyers to scrape the internet for a quick paycheck.

Most lawsuits are quickly settled, with the plaintiffs earning a few hundred dollars per lawsuit and their lawyers pocketing thousands in legal fees. "It's blackmail, that's really what it is," said Mark Borghi, owner of Mark

Borghi Fine Art.

The two New York lawyers who are suing the galleries, Joseph H. Mizrahi and Jeffrey M. Gottlieb, are among the most prolific in the country in this field.

In an interview, Mr. Gottlieb said he and Mr. Mizrahi "vehemently disagree" with the suggestion that these lawsuits are designed to extract money from defendants.

"This law has been around for a long time, and just like any other law, you can't plead ignorance as a defense," Mr. Gottlieb said.

"They knew they should have fixed the websites," he added. "